Mapping and Analysis of

Existing Open Data Initiatives

at the Federal and local Government level in Nepal

Sustainable use of Technology for Public Sector Accountability in Nepal- SUSASAN

Global Affairs Canada

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FREEDOM FORUM

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Tara Nath Dahal
Chief Executive

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AMP	Aid Management Platform
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CECI	Centre for International Studies and Cooperation
CLD	Centre for Law and Democracy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DPO	Disabled People's Organisation
DCSO	District Civil Society Organisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
PWD	People with Disability
GESI	Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
GIDC	Government Integrated Data Centre
GIS	Geographical Information System
HH	Households
KII	Key Informant Interview
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
LGOA	Local Government Operation Act
MARS	Municipal Administration and Revenue System
MoFALD	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NIC	National Information Commission
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPR	Nepalese Rupee
NRA	National Reconstruction Authority
OD	Open Data
OGP	Open Government Partnership
PIO	Public Information Officer
RTI	Right to Information
SA	Social Accountability
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SUSASAN	Sustainable Use of Technology for Public Sector Accountability in Nepal
WMG	Women and Marginalised Groups
WCF	Ward Citizen Forum

Executive Summary

The Sustainable Use of Technology for Public Sector Accountability in Nepal (SUSASAN) project has three main output areas: (1) enhancing citizen engagement and influence; (2) establishing techno hubs; and (3) providing e-governance capacity building and accountability. One area of thrust is the use of digital technologies to enhance social accountability, focusing on women and marginalised groups (WMGs), defined through gender (example, women), age (youth), caste (e.g. Dalits), vulnerability (e.g. persons with disabilities), indigenous status (e.g. Tharu), ethnic minorities (e.g. AdibasiJanajati), minority groups (e.g. Muslims) and geographically isolated and communities in extreme poverty. SUSASAN engages with two local governments in each of the six project districts of Nepal (Achham, Bajhang, Dadeldhura, Kailali, Lalitpur and Sindhupalchowk). The work covers seven rural municipalities, four municipalities and one sub-metropolitan area.

This study is a mapping and analysis of existing public sector open data initiatives (ODI) at the central and local levels. It reviews and analyses supply side initiatives of the government and intermediaries, as well as access to information by citizens, particularly women and marginalised groups (WMGs). It identifies gaps in dissemination and the pickup/use of public information, with a view to assisting the project align its tools and mechanisms to enhance social accountability through disclosure of data and information using integrated technologies.

The study focuses on three main groups in the information regime: government (key individuals and institutions in Federal and local governments), intermediaries (media, CSOs, researchers and technology companies) and end-users (citizens, including WMGs). It had prepared different sets of questions for each group in an attempt to find out what information was available, where is the government is in terms of digitalisation and open data, the roles played by intermediaries, access of information to end-users and how, and capacity enhancement support required by all groups to enable them to enhance the production, effective dissemination, access to, and use of relevant information.

Three main data collection tools were used in this study. One was a household (HH) survey of 120 respondents (10 in each of the 12 municipalities). The study included 12 focus group discussions (FGDs), two in each study district; these included about six participants. The study also interviewed 26 key informants, consulted seven government, non-government representatives and technology service provider and carried out a desk review of various relevant documents.

The demographic covered included 65 percent women and an effort was made to include a higher percentage of WMGs. Age, educational achievement and other relevant demographic information were also collected.

Some of the key findings of the study are as follows:

- Access to information held by public authorities, especially if delivered fairly and equally to citizens, delivers a number of benefits, including better access to government services, more ac-

countability, less corrupt government, and more effective participation/engagement of citizens in all areas of government activity.

- There are two major ways of accessing information – information disclosed proactively and information received following requests (reactive), under the Right to Information (RTI) Act. The effective use of both these means can lead to a healthy ecosystem for accessing government information.
- Open data is a form of proactive disclosure of information disseminated in open (machine readable) formats, free of copyright restrictions and free of cost,including for reuse. Open data is the highest standard of proactive disclosure and therefore, it should be a long-term goal for all local governments.
- Nepal has made important strides forward in terms of disseminating public information at different levels. These include laws and policies mandating the disclosure of information, initiatives by governments at both the Federal and local levels to disclose information, including in open data formats, increased intermediaries' support in the dissemination and analysis of public information, and growing engagement of citizens in accessing and using public information. Much, however, remains to be done in this regard.
- The right to information (RTI) is constitutionally and legally enshrined and a number of structural measures have been taken to improve both supply and demand side performance regarding this right. However, there still are major barriers in terms of supply, with few local governments, even though they have public information officers. In terms of demand, only six percent of the survey respondents had "ever made" a request for information under the RTI Act.
- Some notable Open Data initiatives at the Federal level are the Smart Health Initiative, 2015 Earthquake: Open Data Portal, SDG Data Portal, Public Procurement Transparency Initiative, Aid Management Platform, Post-Earthquake Portal of Nepal's Aid Management Information System, Interactive Geographical Information System (GIS) portal, and e-registrations at the Company Registrar Office. Other government initiatives include the National Emergency Operations Centre, Department of Hydrology's flood forecasting project, Department of Environment's air quality monitoring project and Prime Minister's Disaster Relief Fund. Officials used a variety of tools to disseminate information, including websites and Facebook, in addition to more traditional approaches such as the legacy media, bulletin boards, personal contacts and even face-to-face interactions (e.g. door-to-door methods).
- According to the survey, respondents most commonly accessed open data for budget purposes (33%), followed by learning about accessing services (21%) and municipal plans (19%), and then engaged with local government (10%).
- In terms of their data/information needs, the highest response (88%) was for plans aimed at supporting different groups, followed by learning about benefits and entitlements (71%), the provision of public services (53%) and personal planning (36%). These trends largely held for gender and WMG disaggregated figures.
- In terms of using and reusing data, 69 percent said they shared it, 44 percent used it for personal reasons; 27 percent for participating in decision-making processes and 19 per cent used it to de-

velop awareness-raising materials (i.e. as intermediaries). Once again, this pattern largely held when the data were disaggregated by gender and WMG.

- Awareness about specific local services varied considerably ranging from 85percent for vital event registration, around 70percent for basic health and social security, about 60 percent for drinking water/alternative energy, local roads and agricultural services, and about 50percent for local development plans and basic education. But for eight other services available, the awareness was below 50 percent. Generally, awareness was lower among Adibasi Janajatis, Dalits, persons with disabilities and single women. Low or no awareness was highly evident among the less educated.
- Overall, 90 percent respondents agreed that availability of more information about services would be useful.
- In terms of how better access to data would help them, there was a positive response to three of nine options provided. The options receiving agreement were general awareness (69%), making it easier to access public services (63%) and reducing the time and effort taken to access services (51 %).
- Despite the low responses (above), 88 percent respondents felt the need to access information from local government, although only 41 percent had actually done this. Personal contact with officials and elected representatives was the most common means of accessing information for those who had done the same. Other sources of information were social mobilisers, telephones, notices/announcements and third party intermediaries (local CSOs). Overall, 88percent respondents were able to get the information they needed, although only 42 percent indicated that it had fully served their purposes, while 58 percent stated that their purposes were only partially served. This suggests the need for improvement in providing information by local governments and also a need for more citizens to ask for it.
- Forty-three respondents (36%) had accessed public information online at least once. Social media/networks were the most popular means for this (51%), followed by websites/public portals (23%), email (21%) and mobile apps (14%). WMGs and persons with disabilities accessed data online mainly through social media networks and websites/portals. When asked to compare online and offline modes of access, 69 percent of all respondents preferred offline systems.
- The main barriers to access and use of digital information were: education (57%), language (49%), technology (45%), and lack of interest (37%), data availability (33%), and presentation of information (26%). Interestingly, the financial cost (19%) and accessibility for the disabled (5%) were not seen as major barriers. This suggests that a combination of awareness raising (to address lack of interest), capacity building and supporting access to technology could be the main areas for intervention.
- In terms of capacity needs, the dominant issue was technological literacy (84%) followed by general literacy (43%), dialogue skills (41%), data literacy (39%) and presentation skills (33%). From among technological literacy skills, the most important were basic computer training, mobile (SMS), and on the effective use of the Internet and social media.
- Local governments still have a long way to go in terms of moving to digital information systems with many

still operating largely in non-digital formats. Progress is, however, being made in some areas, such as SMS and Facebook. The same challenge applies on the demand side, with many people, especially WMGs, lacking access to digital devices other than basic mobile phones. Internet access is also a problem in some communities, along with cost and speed issues.

Technology can play a significant facilitating role in supporting access to public information and has the potential to promote more equal access if specific efforts are made to enhance availability. Once front-end investments made in terms of equipment and human capacity, disseminating information digitally can become far more efficient in reaching a larger section of the population more cost effectively, resulting in similar savings for users. At the same time, offline systems will remain important for a significant part of the population and, in particular, the WMGs.

Some of the more pressing needs to be addressed include:

- Improving production of data/information by local government, focusing on information relevant to citizens' needs in terms of fair access to services, for holding government to account and facilitating participation.
- Local governments should start to transition to digital information systems, beginning with types of information in demand, such as municipal budgets and programmes, public services, policies and plans, decisions and public notices and announcements.
- Local governments should prioritise social networks, websites and mobile apps, which are important digital channels for disseminating information, especially taking into account that mobile phones are by far the most accessible digital devices.
- Local governments should continue using both proactive and reactive (RTI) offline dissemination tools, including media (radio and print), social mobilisers, notice boards, citizen charters, publications, toll free hotlines and help desks. Local governments should, in particular, make an effort to comply with legal requirements on proactive disclosure.
- Local governments should make specific efforts to reach out to WMGs and persons living with disabilities in terms of information dissemination and pickup.
- Carefully targeted capacity building directed at both local governments and citizens are needed to support better information dissemination and pickup. This should include targeted programmes on RTI.
- Interventions should also be directed towards information intermediaries in order to take full advantage of their potential to deliver information to the people.
- Local governments should consult all relevant stakeholders when updating and modernising information production and dissemination programmes.

Considering Nepal's overall level of development, the significant political challenges and changes that it has gone through in the last couple of decades, it has been doing relatively well in terms of both disclosure of public information and progress in integrating digital technologies in the political and development processes. Given that Federalisation is now underway, the country needs to focus on this area, with a view to taking full advantage of multiple benefits that transparency, based on a commitment to open data, can deliver.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Mapping Background

The Sustainable Use of Technology for Public Sector Accountability in Nepal (SUSASAN) project is designed to complement ongoing local governance and social accountability initiatives and programmes at the national level. It collaborates and coordinates with government agencies and civil society organisations (CSO), including local communities, to leverage and mainstream integrated technologies in governance processes.

The project has four components (1) Enhancing citizen engagement and influence; (2) establishment of techno hubs; (3) E-governance capacity building and accountability; and (4) project management. It focuses on the use of digital technologies to enhance social accountability and on developing specific strategies to reach particular marginalised groups, defined through gender (i.e. women), age (youth), caste (e.g. Dalit), vulnerability (e.g. persons with disabilities), indigenous (e.g. Tharu), ethnic minorities (e.g. Adibasi Janajati), minority groups (e.g. Muslims) and geographically isolated, and communities in extreme poverty.

This project is implemented in two local governments in each of six districts (Achham, Bajhang, Dadeldhura, Kailali, Lalitpur and Sindhupalchowk), including seven rural municipalities (Gaunpalika); four municipalities and one Sub-metropolitan area).

The overall outcome envisaged by the project is "increased empowerment of women and men, girls and boys, and marginalised groups, to engage in democratic processes and enjoy and exercise their human rights". It seeks to attain this through three intermediate outcomes:

1. Enhanced equitable and inclusive participation in democratic decision making process, especially by women and marginalised groups (WMG) through the use of technology.
2. Increased use of technology by people, especially WMG to hold government accountable, and
3. Increased responsiveness of public institutions to diverse needs and rights of people, especially WMG, through the use of technology.

Together, these three qualities – participation, accountability and responsiveness – comprise social accountability.

The project has envisioned establishing Techno Hubs (THs) at the national, provincial, municipal/rural municipal and community levels, within existing facilities of government, CSOs, and at community centres. The THs are for use by CSOs, communities, and WMGs, to access relevant data/information to hold local government accountable; it also works on developing offline mechanisms linking with online technology. The study maps and analyses existing open data initia-

The overall outcome envisaged by the project is "increased empowerment of women and men, girls and boys, and marginalised groups, to engage in democratic processes and enjoy and exercise their human rights".

tives of the government and non-government organisations in Nepal. This analysis is expected to guide the project team to develop strategies and activities to address open data related issues and gaps.

I.2 Relevance of the Study

The study represents a mapping and analysis of existing public sector Open Data initiatives by the government at the Federaland local levels.

The study represents a mapping and analysis of existing public sector Open Data initiatives by the government at the Federal and local levels. The effort is expected to be of use to identify gaps in the digitisation of public information by local government and help the project design appropriate tools and mechanisms to enhance social accountability, particularly through proactive disclosure of data and information via integrated technologies. The study is expected to assist the project to seek opportunities to enhance the provision of information by developing innovative mechanisms and tools for building capacity, filling information gaps and enabling citizens, particularly WMGs, to access relevant data/information to enable them to hold local governments socially accountable. These mechanisms will focus on technology while continuing efforts to enhance off-line access to relevant data and information.

I.3. Objective of the Study

The overall objective of the study was to understand and analyse the scope and shortcomings of current Open Data initiatives at Federal and local levels in Nepal to help focus project work on developing appropriate tools and mechanisms to address the shortcomings for enabling citizens, and in particular WMGs, to be able to access data and information they need for ensuring social accountability. The aim of this study is to map and analyse the availability of public data and information across three main vectors: accessibility (what, how); use/re-use and benefits; and gaps/barriers and capacity needs at the Federal and local levels. The analysis sought to capture the perspectives of different stakeholders: public bodies as providers of information, intermediaries – civil society, tech companies, academics, journalists – as both users and providers of information, and citizens as end users.

It is expected that the project can use the knowledge generated in programme planning and design and delivery of effective social accountability tools and mechanisms. The findings are also expected to assist local governments, line ministries and other development agencies to tailor interventions in the areas production and access to data/information. More generally, local governments are also expected to use the findings and recommendations, both within and outside the project area, in identifying the status of availability, accessibility, use/reuse and benefits, needs and barriers of public data and information.

I.4 Scope of the Study

The study has mapped Open Data initiatives both by government (line ministries and local government units at the rural municipality, municipality and sub-metropolitan levels) and intermediaries acting as providers, with a focus on public sector data and information that can help promote responsive, participatory and accountable governance. The study has also assessed policies and procedures that facilitate/regulate Open Data practices at both Federal and local levels. In addition, the study has focused on access to data and information by both intermediaries and end users. It has placed particular focus on WMGs and also how other end users take advantage of information/data to participate in governance, and to demand accountability and responsiveness.

The study,

- Assesses the governments' capacity to collect/generate information/data and to disseminate it proactively using technological tools, the adequacy of the tools and mechanisms used by government and its plans put in placefor new initiatives on Open Data, all with a focus on information on policy, planning, programmes and services being delivered to citizens, with a particular focus on WMGs.
- Analyses the access and use of Open Data by intermediaries and citizens in general, again with a focus on WMGs as specific end-users.
- Assesses the barriers and opportunities faced by citizens/WMGs in terms of accessing publicly available data/information.
- Assesses the demand for Open Data and information by civil society and citizens especially with a focus on WMGs, as well as their capacity to use that data.
- Makes recommendations regarding: a) types of Open Data not being collected/produced despite the existence of a need; b) appropriate means/technologies (online and off-line) for disclosing data to make it accessible to relevant local populations; c) potential intermediaries at the local level who could assist enhancement of dissemination of Open Data; d) capacity needs of citizens as end-users, intermediaries and public bodies (government) on production, dissemination, access to and use of public data and information.

I.5 Limitation of the Study

The study has attempted to cover the perspectives of concerned stakeholders, mainly the Federal and local governments (supply side), citizens including WMGs (demand side) and CSOs, community groups, journalists and technical service providers (intermediaries). The provincial structure had not taken effect when data collection was done. The major study focus was on supply-driven Open Data initiatives at the Federal and local levels and therefore household respondents were selected purposively based on disaggregation sought and considering the location and/or coverage of techno hubs to capture indicative responses on the demand side, including that of WMG for understanding their data and information requirements. It was not possible to cover all actors within the timeframe and resources, and therefore the results may not represent all Open Data in Nepal and its effects on public sector accountability. Nonetheless, the findings are expected to provide some insights that could help towards better targeting of project activities. The study does not cover the Open Data initiative at provincial level because the provincial governments and structures were not mature when the study was initiated.

The provincial structure had not taken effect when data collection was done.

I.6 Study Period

The study was carried out between November 2017 and June 2018.

I.7 Key Research Questions

The main research questions were related to government practices of data/information production, collection and dissemination (supply side - official), the activities of intermediaries in this regard, and access, demand and use of data and information by the end users.

a) **Supply side - officials** (MoFALD,[1] MoF, NPC, NIC and Local Governments):

1. What sort/type/kind of public data/information is being produced and collected by central (now Federal) government agencies and local governments?
2. What types of public data and information are being disseminated proactively?
3. What are the existing and established systems for proactive disclosure of data/information at Federal and local levels? Are special systems in place to ensure that information reaches WMGs?
4. Have you made Right to Information (RTI) requests for data/information to your local government?
5. How do you believe intermediaries (such journalists, CSOs, researchers and tech companies), citizens and other stakeholders make use of the data and information disseminated proactively by MoFALD, NPC, MoF, NIC and local governments? In which areas do the provisions of data/information make a particular difference to WMGs?
6. What are the gaps in information provision and how could governments at the Federal and local levels improve the provision (production and dissemination) and presentation of data/information? And
7. What are the needs of government agencies including MoFALD, MoF, NPC, NIC and local governments in terms of data/information capacity?

b) **Intermediaries** (Media, CSOs, researchers, tech companies):

1) What kinds of public data and information do intermediaries require? Is this information available?
2) What are the main means used to access public data/information? How, when, where and how often do intermediaries access information?

a. Do intermediaries receive data they need through proactive dissemination by local governments/MoFALD? (Questions on need of data, availability, approach to access, means of access, forms of data and data utility) Who did they get it from and how?
b. Do intermediaries use the RTI law to request public information and data from local governments and MoFALD? Who did they make a request to?

3) Does the current availability of data/information meet their requirements?
4) Which areas are important in terms of improving the availability and accessibility of data from the local governments?
5) As intermediaries, what do they see as the need of end-users (WMGs) for data?
6) How do they see their role as supply side? Do they disclose their own data and information to end beneficiaries including WMGs? With respect to public information/data, do they further disseminate it, repackage it foruse in different ways, interpret it or do other things with it? What mechanisms do they use to disseminate data and information? Do they comply with their obligation asa public agency to proactively disclose information in a routine manner and respond to RTI requests?

[1] Now known as the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA).

c) **End-users** (Citizens including WMGs):

1) What types of public services do they get from local governments? Are they informed of the public services they are entitled to receive?
2) Did they involve themselves in the local governance planning process?
3) What types of public data and information do they access?
4) What are the existing systems of data/information disclosure to citizens, with special focus on WMGs? Can they download information? How do they use offline mechanisms to get the public information/data they need?
5) Do they understand the data? Is it simple, and in an interactive format?
6) How does the data help them?
7) What challenges and barriers do they face in accessing and using data/information related to public service?
8) Do they know about the RTI Act/Law? If yes, have they ever used it to obtain information from government agencies, particularly from local government?

Chapter 2

Study Design and Methodology

2.1. Overview

A series of consultation meetings were organized with SUSASAN's partners, including CLD, to obtain technical inputs before finalising the scope, methodology, tools and other issues associated with the study.

The study has mapped the existing initiatives, mechanisms, practices, perceptions, demand and readiness of leadership for openness in terms of data and information related to governance and service delivery, and its potential social accountability effects at the Federal and local levels. The focus was on availability of data and information, access, use, gaps/barriers, existing technical platforms and capacity, and needs of citizens, with a focus on WMGs. Further, the mapping exercise looked at information in the specific context of accountability with regard to decisions of municipal assembly and different thematic committees, with a focus on the participation of WMGs.

The methodology was designed to match the scope of the study. Desk review, consultation meetings (unstructured), household survey, focus group discussions, key informants interviews (KIIs) and direct observation were the major tools used. Both primary and secondary data sources were used to collect required information. Primary data were gathered through a sample survey of households (HH survey), FGDs, KIIs and consultation meetings; secondary data were collected from reviews of relevant literature.

The household survey tool was designed to capture quantitative data using a structured questionnaire. The tool included 41 questions in different thematic areas, with a focus on public services from local government, accessing public data and information, digital access to public data and information, areas of need of public data and information, barriers and challenges and recommended actions.

Likewise, a KII checklist with semi-structured questions was prepared to obtain information from elected representatives and government officials at municipality and ward levels,while consultation checklist was also prepared to collect information from government officials, open data community representatives and technology/Internet service providers, at the Federal level. Main questions in the checklist for KII/Consultation included production, public dissemination and use of public data and information, digital and non-digital means of dissemination, future plans for improvements, gaps and barriers, capacity needs, and GESI considerations.

The methodology was designed to match the scope of the study.

The FGDs were conducted separately with WMGs, and mixed groups. The FGDs were organised to validate and triangulate information collected from HH Survey and KIIs. The checklist included questions in the areas of availability, accessibility, use/re-use/benefits, gaps/barriers, capacity needs, and GESI considerations.

Enumerators were oriented on primary data collection tools i.e. HH Survey, KIIs and FGDs. As per the plan, two orientations were held, one in Kathmandu and another in Dadeldhura.The discussions here focused on the thematic and technical aspects of data collection instruments.

The study team reviewed literature and collected data from central government agencies, CSOs (open data community)and technology (Internet) service providers at the Federal level through consultations, and KIIs, while local district partners/DCSOs collected data at the local level (municipalities/wards and HH level) in all the six project districts using the HH questionnaire, KII checklist and through FGDs. A partner in the project, Young Innovations, digitised the HH survey tool to enable enumerators to collect field data using tablet devices.

2.2 Respondent ramework

The respondents approached for collecting both qualitative and quantitative data were:

Table 1: Instrument framework for collection of qualitative and quantitative data

Type of Instrument	Potential respondents / Data source	Number	Remarks
Consultation	Officials of Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, National Planning Commission and National Information Commission, open data community (Open Nepal and Open Knowledge Nepal) and internet service provider	7 institutions	Federal (National) level
KIIs	Mayor/Chairperson or Deputy Mayor/Vice-chairperson or Chief Administrative Officer/IT/Information Office and ward chairperson or secretary.	26 respondents (2 persons x 12 local governments) + 2 from Budhanilakantha municipality	Local government level
FGDs	A FGD included 6 to 8 persons. One FGD held with representatives of WMGs only included WMG-led CSO leaders, ex-social mobilisers/ex-Ward Citizen Forum representatives, female journalist and women community leaders in rural municipality. Another FGD had mixed representation of RTI campaigner/practitioner, representatives of Disabled People Organisations (DPOs) if any, representative of CSO working on transparency/accountability (such as Transparency International), ex-social mobiliser/ex-WCF Chair, researcher, youth activist, techies, representative of NGO Federation and working journalist/reporter at broadsheet dailies (Kantipur, Karobar, Nagarik, Annapurna) in municipality	12 FGDs (1 FGD X 12 local government)	Local government level
HH Survey	Citizens including WMGs	Total 120 respondents (10 respondents x 12 municipalities)	Household level

Table 2: Sample covered by HHs, KII and FGDs by district

Districts	Sample Size			
	Household Survey (HHs)	Key Informant Interview (KII)	Focus Group Discussions (FGD)	Consultations
Achham	20	4	2	
Bajhang	20	4	2	
Dadeldhura	20	4	2	
Kailali	20	4	2	
Lalitpur	20	4	2	
Sindhupalchowk	20	4	2	
Kathmandu	0	2		7
Total number of KIIs, FGDs		26	12	
Total Sample	120	26	12*6=72	7
Total respondents involved in the Open Data Initiative mapping study: 225				

2.3. Data Collection Tools

2.3.1 Desk Review

The desk study was carried out for collecting and reviewing secondary data for extracting relevant information. This was used to collect secondary information on constitutional provisions, laws, government policy, plans and programmes as well as practices facilitating Open Data in Nepal. The sources for the desk review included websites/online data portals of different ministries and local governments, government documents, study reports, blogs and write-ups on Open Data/RTI, data revolution and proactive disclosure, Local Government Operation Act-2017 and related directives, international best practices, and other relevant documents. It also involved observation or checking data availability.

2.3.2 Collection of Primary Data

Primary data was collected at four levels (i.e. Federal, local government, intermediary and end-users/beneficiary/citizen's levels) to map out two types of initiatives i.e. government initiatives and those by CSOs and service providers as both intermediaries and users.

The desk study was carried out for collecting and reviewing secondary data forextracting relevant information.

2.4. Household Survey

Each district had 20 respondents to the HH survey, representing each municipality and techno hub territory from the project target area. Priority was given to women, ethnic minorities, PWDs, etc., to ensure their strong representation in the sample. Table 3 shows the selected wards from municipality and rural municipality (Gaupalika) in each district.

Table 3: Selected wards from all six districts

SN	District	Municipality and wards	Gaupalika and wards
1	Achham	Sanphebagar: 4, 8	Banigadhi-Jaygadh: 3, 5
2	Bajhang	Jayprithvi: 10	Masta: 4, 6
3	Dadeldhura	Amargadhi: 5, 10	Navadurga: 2, 3
4	Kailali	Dhangadhi: 1, 15	Kailari: 1, 5
5	Lalitpur	N/A	Konjyosom: 1, 2 and Bagmati: 3
6	Sindhupalchok	Barabise: 4, 8	Sunkoshi: 7, 1

Characteristics of Respondents

The respondents were distributed across six districts in 12 local governments comprising five rural municipalities, six municipalities and one sub metropolitan area. The number of wards covered was 22. Ten respondents, representing the respective households, were interviewed. Of the 120 respondents, 65 percent (78) were female and 35 percent (42) male.

The study divided respondents into nine categories of WMGs -- Adibasi Janajati, Dalit, geographically excluded ,[2] Muslim, single women, persons with disability, others/non-WMG, others/women, and others/Badi(See: Figure 1). The share of respondents belonging to Adibasi Janajati communities was 27.5 percent and Dalits made up20 percent. Single women added up to 9.2 percent while persons with disability constituted 4.2 percent of the respondents. Muslims made up 1.7 percent of the respondents, other/non-WMG respondents 16 percent, others/women 18 percent and others/Badi, 0.83 percent of the total respondents. Of the five respondents with disability, one had hearing impairment and four were physically impaired.

The respondents were distributed across six districts in 12 local governments comprisingfive rural municipalities, six municipalities and one sub metropolitan area. The number of wards covered was 22.

From among the respondents, 75 perceived of themselves as a middle class, 27 percent as a poor and 3 as rich. In terms of educational attainment, 33 percent of respondents were literate, 23.3 percent had completed education below SLC/SEE, 20 percent had completed higher secondary education, 11.7 percent had completed the Bachelor's degree, six percent were illiterate, and 2.5 percent had a Master's degree or higher qualification (see Figure 2).

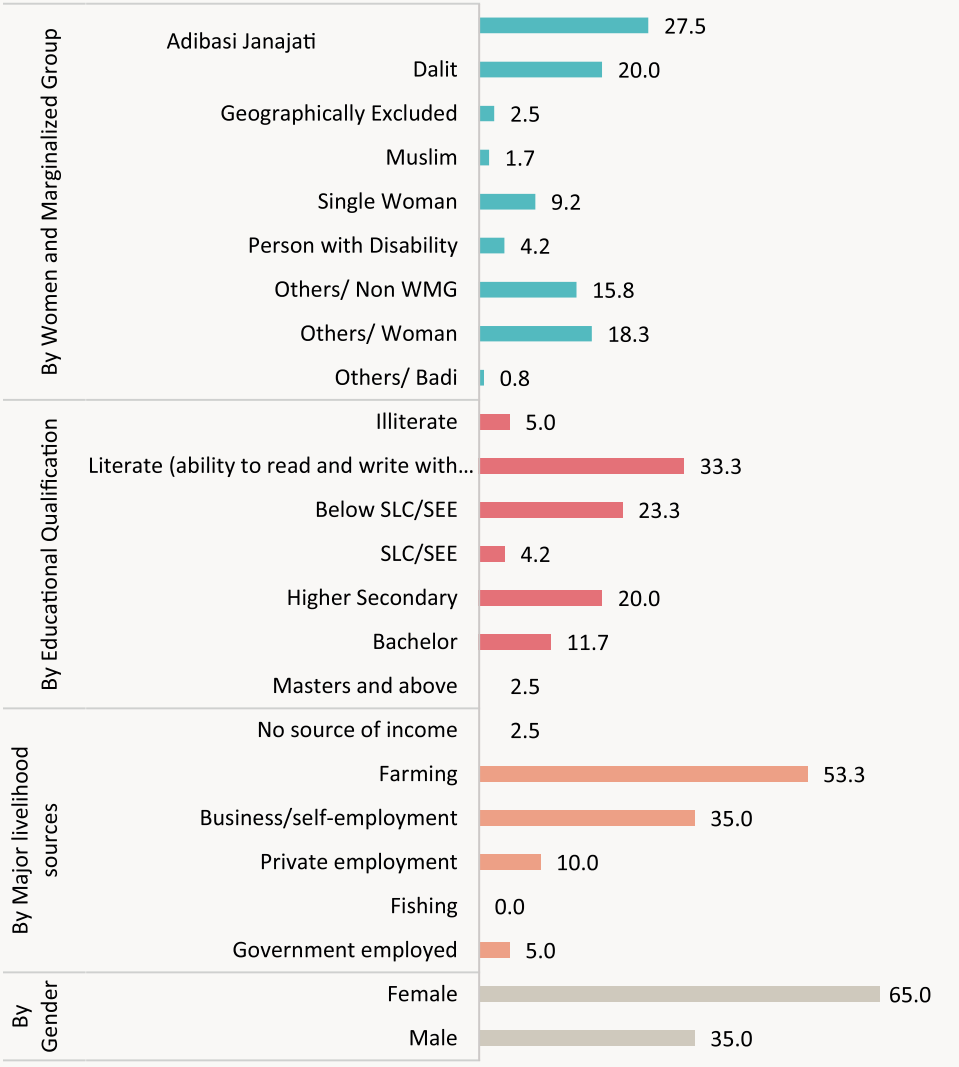
More than 39 percent of respondents were between 21-30 years old. The next highest age group were the 31-40 year-olds (33%), and 12 respondents were between 41-50 years of age. In terms of livelihoods, farming was the source of income for more than 53 percent respondents, business or self-employment for 35 percent, private sector jobs for 10 percent, government jobs for 5 percent and more than 2 percent said that they did not have a source of income. The remaining respondents depended on other sources for livelihood.

2.5 Data Entry, Analysis and Interpretation

Quantitative data was entered into an excel file through the Kobo tool and converted into a Statistical Packages for Social Science Software (SPSS) compatible file for further analysis after the validation and real time cleaning of the data set. The qualitative data obtained through FGDs, consultation meetings and KIIs were summarised and entered into a sheet for analysis. Data cleaning was carried out to ensure accuracy and authenticity. Consistency was checked at the stage of data entry and corrected, through real time technical feedback to the enumerators.

[2] According to the National Inclusion Commission Act-2074 BS, the backward (Geographically Excluded) area refers to the area specified by the Government of Nepal in line with the recommendation of National Inclusion Commission.

Figure 1: Respondents' Profile:



Chapter 3

Literature Reviews

3.1. General Background

Nepal has embarked on a journey to institutionalize a new political set up with the successful election of all three-tiers of governments – local, provincial and Federal – in 2017/18 The transition to a Federal structure from a unitary state under the new Constitution (2015) has almost been completed. The state has been putting structures in place for Federal democratic governance, which in many ways is conducive for instituting a regime of openness.

Disclosure and access to information is an essential component of participation and accountability. To be able to hold their governments to account, citizens need access to information about government decision-making processes and about its performance. Access to data and information not only empowers citizens to hold government to account, but also enables their engagement in public issues, and can help them make informed decisions to improve their lives. It is also widely accepted that citizens' input and engagement in decision-making and the development process is key to good governance.

In best practice terms, Open Data is the proactive publication of unpackaged, no-spin, information in open or digital formats in a way that can be reused and repackaged for different uses and audiences. This mapping exercise uses a broader definition focusing on the proactive disclosure of relevant information.

Proactive disclosure has always been an important part of RTI, while it is at the heart of Open Data. Proactive disclosure is important because, in Nepal, as in many other countries, demanding information or data can be time-consuming, whereas proactive disclosure provides far more immediate and convenient access to information for citizens, and equal access for everyone. At the same time, reactive disclosure remains a crucial element of the overall transparency ecology because, without it, governments will never disclose sensitive information or information which they deem to be of only minor public importance, but which could be important to a particular piece of research, particular investigative journalism stories or for the development of a particular app.

Nepal's RTI Act includes clear rules on proactive disclosure of information but implementation of those rules by public bodies has been rather poor. Alongside this, Open Data is gradually gaining ground as a movement to leverage more and better proactive disclosure. Growing Internet penetration, accompanied by the government initiative to set up the Aid Management Platform(AMP)and other online portals for disclosing information, as well as the

Nepal's RTI Act includes clear rules on proactive disclosure of information but implementation of those rules by public bodies has been rather poor.

CSO-run Open Nepal Initiative, have supported the development of Open Data in Nepal.[3] The CSO-led Open Data Portal has been used to collect and curate digital Open Data and to support organisations that can act as intermediaries to develop Open Data tools for nurturing the movement. Despite a good beginning, much remains to be done to promote a culture of disclosing data in open formats. This includes adopting a specific policy on Open Data so as to recognise its importance to open government, and to emphasise citizens' entitlement to public resources.

Within the framework of Open Data, there is a distinction between data provision being supply- or demand-driven. In a supply-driven model, governments choose what data they are going to publish and how, based on their own considerations of what is easier or more convenient for them. In a demand-driven model, more emphasis is placed on needs articulated by citizens and citizen groups in terms of the choice of datasets published. Thus, a good overall model involves both demand- and supply-driven, proactive transparency, alongside the inherently demand-driven reactive transparency.

3.2 Right to Information and Open Data

"The right to access information held by public authorities is a fundamental human right which should be given effect at the national level through comprehensive legislation" (2004 Joint Declaration of the Special International Mandates on Freedom of Expression).The RTI, also referred as freedom of information, is a fundamental human right allowing the general public access to government data. RTI is well established, both in legislation and in practice, and has been gaining in popularity in many parts of the world as an effective tool to strengthen participatory democracy, promote good governance, check corruption and help ensure other rights, thereby building an open and transparent society.

A piece of data or content is open if anyone is free to use, reuse, and redistribute it — a subject only, at most, to the requirement to attribute and/or share-alike" (Open Definition: Open Knowledge Foundation). Open data, in reference to government data, is the proactive publication of unpackaged, no-spin, open format government information in a way that can be reused and repackaged for different uses and audiences. By providing access to comprehensive, timely and detailed data, Open Data enables new forms of civic participation in decision-making processes. In contrast to the rights based rationale for information access, the Open Data community has been driven by technology and innovation. It enables third parties to leverage the potential of government data via the development of applications and services that address both public and private needs.

Similarities between Open Data and RTI

Drivers: Transparency and accountability

Both Open Data and RTI are driven by the motive to improve citizens' access to information held by public agencies, thereby facilitating greater openness in many areas of public life. Advocates of both movements argue that it is the obligation of public agencies to disclose public records as they hold

[3] Freedom Forum (2014), Briefing Note: Open Data and Right to Information in Nepal. Available at: http://opennepal.staging.yipl.com.np/sites/default/files/doc_briefings/Briefing-Open-Data-and-RTI.pdf

this information not for themselves but on behalf of citizens. Via RTI and Open Data, accountability activists such as watchdog organisations, CSOs and journalists, are able to find out where, how and when public money is being spent and how the government is performing in different sectors, and engage in public affairs. The participation and accountability resulting from improvements in access to information can support meaningful debate, enable evidence-based decision-making, and deliver more effective governance of public resources.

Goals: Citizen empowerment and engagement

Both movements are recognised for fostering greater citizen participation, government accountability and lowering corruption. The information availability resulting from RTI and Open Data provides opportunity for direct interaction by societal actors with government counterparts, thereby widening the space for citizens and their organisations to engage with the state. Enhanced access to information can lead to greater participation of individuals and groups in decision-making. Citizens are able to question authorities, demand accountability and exercise their freedom of choice. This empowerment of citizens builds bottom-up pressure for efficient and accountable use of public resources, leading to greater effectiveness of development efforts.

Distinction between Open Data and RTI

Type of disclosure: Information versus data

There is some debate about the difference between information and data, although both RTI and Open Data can result in the release of both. Formally, data is statistical information organised in some form, such as a table or spread sheet, whereas information is often seen more as text (although most RTI laws define it far more broadly than that). The Open Data movement has focused more on data and, in particular, data in digital formats, usually as broad disaggregated, machine-readable datasets.

Nature of disclosure: copyright considerations

Another distinction between Open Data and RTI is the understanding of copyright. To be classified as open, data must be provided under an open license. This means that the user is free to reuse the data with simple conditions that place very few restrictions on what can be done with the data. In contrast, there is often very little detail on whether and how the public may re-use information provided through RTI. Many of those that re-use public data do not have a wide knowledge about copyright law, and so there is a potential for confusion about how far information obtained by RTI can be used and reused.

Disclosure philosophy: Demand (reactive) versus supply (proactive) disclosure

The information released via the RTI process is usually in response to individual requests by the public, although in fact most RTI laws do also place broad proactive disclosure requirements on public bodies. This is the case, for example, in Nepal. In its information request form, RTI provides for seeking answers to specific questions, provides the information directly to the requester and places the onus on the providing agency to find the answer to the question asked. In contrast, with Open Data the providing agency has the choice over the data disclosed, so the data released is selected by the provider rather than by public demand.

Approach: Rights-based versus technical

RTI is a rights-based movement advocating

that everyone has the right to seek, obtain and impart information. It advocates for improved access to information via the implementation of obligations enshrined in law. Although Open Data's proponents acknowledge this crucial right, its approach to improve access to information has largely been technical rather than rights-based. Open Data takes the approach that legal availability of information does not necessarily ensure everyone's access to it. To address this, Open Data offers a technical solution by providing usable and consumable data that is accessible via digital devices.

Enforcement: Legal enforcement versus moral pressure

Access to information delivered via RTI is legally enforceable. RTI's information seeking procedure has clear-cut timelines, provisions for reward and punishment, an independent information commission, a records management obligation, and whistle-blower protection. In contrast enforcement of Open Data relies on arguments of moral pressure for transparency and accountability, and incentives based on innovation and efficiency gains.

3.3. Constitutional and Legal Mandate

Openness basically underpins the principles of access to information, civic participation, and accountable public institutions, and technological innovations. It serves as an important support pillar for Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The core values of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) also directly contribute to develop effective and accountable institutions – which is also the crux of Goal 16. Specifically, Goal 16.10 seeks to ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements. The emphasis of both these initiatives is to increase the availability of information on government activities and deepen civic participation. As a member state of the United Nations, Nepal participates in the UN General Assembly and endorsed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, which took effect in 2016. The Nepal government has aligned its development plans and programmes accordingly. The goal of leaving no one behind fits well with the inclusive political order that Nepal has been building.

The new Nepal Constitution (2015) aspires to create a prosperous, egalitarian and pluralistic society enabled with good governance and accountability, and serves as the overarching guide to all development policies, plans and programmes. The constitutional guarantees of the right to information and right to privacy have provided the framework for openness in Nepal. Article 27 of the Nepal Constitution guarantees citizens the right to access information on any matter of public importance held by public agencies except some matters on which confidentiality must be maintained under law. The RTI Act 2007 and Regulation 2009, as legal mechanisms, along with the establishment of National Information Commission, as an institutional mechanism, have enabled the implementation of RTI. Appointments of Public Information Officers (PIOs) in government agencies, a steady increase in proactive disclosure of information at the centre and districts, and growing awareness on RTI are some achievements.

The thrust of the Good Governance (Management and Operation) Act 2008 is to make public administrators pro-people, accountable, transparent, inclusive and participatory, and to improve governance practices. The Act stresses the importance of adopting

the basic values of good governance such as rule of law, corruption free, smooth administration, financial discipline, and efficient management of public works and resources to ensure citizen-friendly service delivery.

The Statistics Act 1958 provides the legal basis for the collection, consolidation, publication and analysis of statistics in order to formulate policies that may bring forth substantial benefit to the people, enhance the administrative efficiency of government departments and acquire reliable information on economic activities in the country.

The Local Government Operation Act 2017 focuses on ensuring citizen's participation in local development, local leadership and governance processes. The Act has made local governments autonomous and has provided citizens the space to engage with them. Inclusive provisions, such as reserved seats in local governments (LGs) for women and marginalised groups (WMGs), have been added to promote and institutionalise inclusive and participatory local governance. The Act was introduced to uphold the spirit of full decentralisation with the aim of distributing democratic gains in a proportional, inclusive and just manner. It has presented a list of the functions of local governments, under 22 broad areas including communication services, Internet, advancement and promotion of information technology at local level, use, promotion and regulation of ICT in the management of local services, collection of local data and records and local development schemes and projects, among others. Likewise, the Ward Committee is obliged to maintain records of marginalised and excluded people including women, children, Dalits and persons living with disability, and to work for their development. Local governments are also required to ensure maximum participation of local people, including WMGs, while formulating and implementing development plans.

Further, the Local Level Budget Planning, Implementation, Financial Management, and Property Handover Guidelines, 2017 seek to ensure inclusive participation in local decision-making processes. Provision for participation in planning processes, allocation of budget for targeted communities, especially women, children, ethnic minorities, Dalits and other marginalised people and the system of public hearing, social audit, women's empowerment and social inclusion to maintain accountability at the local level are included in the guidelines.

In line with the Good Governance (Management and Operation) Act 2008, the Directive on Government Bodies' Website Construction and Management 2011 has directed government agencies to provide a search engine for websites, provide website contents in HTML, Word and .pdf formats, and also metadata for public understanding.

Nepal's National ICT Policy 2015 has the objective of transforming government service delivery regime by promoting transparency, efficiency, inclusiveness and participation through effective use of information and communication technologies. This policy is intended to create the groundwork for an overarching vision of "Digital Nepal". As per this vision, ICT will be a key driving force in transforming Nepali society into one based on knowledge and information, and in strengthening Nepal's pursuit of equality and sustainable growth by leveraging Information and communication technology.

The Local Governance Resource Book produced by MoFALD has emphasised the maximum use of ICTs for effective delivery of services at the local level. It has focused on the use of Municipal Administration and

Revenue System (MARS) – a modern computer based system with inbuilt integrated information programmes connecting the public with services, and a comprehensive database of the local context – and in putting in practice Internet-enabled tools such as websites, social media and group email.

Nepal has a Copyright Act (2002) and Regulation (2004). However, intellectual property rights are considered weak due to a general lack of awareness and technical problems, particularly as regards patenting. Nepal has a Copyright Registrar's Office, NCRO, which looks after copyrighting creative works of literature, art, science and in other fields as well as the related rights of performances, phonogram productions and broadcasting programmes.[4]

Several other legal instruments have been created to develop the ICT sector and augment e-governance in Nepal. These include the IT Policy (2010), Electronic Transaction and Digital Signature Act (2000), Telecommunication Act (1997), National Communication Policy (1992), and National Strategy Paper on ICT (National Planning Commission).[5]

3.4. Technology for Improved Local Governance[6]

Initiatives such as e-services for all taxpayers by the Inland Revenue Department (IRD), interconnection between the IRD and the Office of Company Registrar for registration of companies, online passport applications by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, e-procurement system, the Ministry of Home Affairs' Citizenship Management System and several other projects are fully operational and successfully providing services to the public.

One particular success story has been the telecom sector, where laws and policies have enabled a rapid increase in coverage and use of fixed and cellular phones. Similarly, broadband and WiMax technologies have reached rural areas and made faster Internet access a reality at considerably cheaper cost. Internet penetration has increased by 27 percent in three years. Through the Rural Technology Development Fund, the Nepal Telecom Authority (NTA) has been able to extend Internet infrastructure across the country. After setting up a fibre backbone, access to which has been provided to various Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in all seven provinces, the Authority is considering new tenders to award contracts to ISPs for connecting government agencies in each province. The Department of Information Technology is focused on implementing e-governance with IT-related laws, plans and policies. The National IT Centre is up and running along with the government's Integrated Data Centre and Disaster Recovery site in Hetauda. The Government Enterprise Architecture and the Government Interoperability Framework have been published, a rare practice by software developers.

[4] Nepal Copyright Registrars Office (no date), Copyright Protection, Accessed on 12 March 2018, Available at: http://www.nepalcopyright.gov.np/.

[5] Banepali R M (2013) E-readiness of citizens and communities for their active engagement with local governments. Available at: http://endconflict.files.wordpress.com/2013/12/field-research-proposal-e-governance-cpds-rmb.pdf.

[6] Nagesh Badu, Technology for Improved Local Governance. Available at http://www.np.undp.org/content/nepal/en/home/blog/2018/technology-for-improved-local-governance.html

Partial achievements in e-governance have also been attained by way of the e-Government Master Plan (e-GMP) initiated in 2008: online Vehicle Registration and License Systems have been developed; the Land Reform Information Management System is in its final stages of commissioning; and the National Identity Project has also been underway, although implementation dates for these have not yet been fixed.

These developments mean that of the five stages of e-governance (UN, ASPA 2002), Nepal is headed towards the fourth phase, namely transactional presence. As per the e-Governance Development Index (UNPACS, 2016), Nepal climbed 30 positions between 2014 and 2016 and now ranks 135th out of 193 countries.

Chapter 4

Results and Analysis

The chapter presents the results of the study that assessed proactive disclosure by supply side actors at the central and local levels, as well as the role of intermediaries, in regard to production and collection, use of different tools and mechanisms to disseminate information, specific initiatives to ensure information reaches WMGs, and forward looking plans. It has examined the practices of Federal government agencies and local governments, including sub-metropolitan city and municipalities of six districts in addition to Budhanilakantha municipality. The approach taken looked at the issue from the perspective of a broad range of stakeholders. It should be noted that this study does not present any technical assessment of Open Data against the Open Definition in terms of machine-readability, licensing and data quality.

4.1 Assessment of Proactive Disclosure from Supply Side

The agenda for greater openness in many areas of public life, including around public service and governance, has emerged through mechanisms such as Open Data initiatives and RTI laws in addition to different social accountability tools. There has been progress in the production, sharing and use/re-use of data for awareness, advocacy and accountability work. A recent increase in government and civic initiatives, along with private sector engagement around Open Data, indicate a growing movement of openness in Nepal.

The presence of CSOs already experienced in advocating for openness, securing government buy-in, and improving technical capacity,paired with an emerging community of techies engaging with public policy issues, provides a good foundation to push the agenda for openness. The constitutionally-guaranteed RTI enabled with constitutional, legal and institutional provisions and setups, growing civic campaigns for information requests, proactive leadership of NIC, and capacity strengthening of both the demand and supply sides, including building the capacity of journalists, have established RTI as a popular tool for exercising citizenship. The RTI Act, 2007 has already been tested as a tool to expose public and private sector irregularities, and improve the meaningful participation of people in holding the government to account. This can be seen in case studies produced by Freedom Forum on how RTI has supported work to improve citizens' access to information and the accountability system in Nepal.

There is also progress in understanding the contextual challenges for data and information sharing, and use and in piloting inter-

ventions to address these. There is growing interest from government and civil society for better production, sharing and use of data, irrespective of whether or not the process is called 'open development', 'Open Data', 'access to information', 'evidence for development' or 'the data revolution for sustainable development'. Nepal's nascent and dynamic community of data enthusiasts has played an important role in this process. There is growing involvement of a community of practice in how access and use of Open Data can be applied to improve accountability, and to lead to more participatory and effective development at Federal and local level.

4.1.1 Data Production and Sharing

a. Central Level Government Initiatives

The government is a key agency that produces, shares and uses data for development planning, design of interventions, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, among others. Nepal's sector line ministries, particularly Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development and Ministry of Home Affairs, are active producers and users of data. Other ministries also collect and generate data for day-to-day administrative functions. About half of Nepal's 7,000 government offices have computers but the paper-based systems of data collection and management are still common.[7]

Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) (http://www.cbs.gov.np/) is the key government agency responsible for compiling and disseminating data for development planning and policy-making. It conducts the decennial population census (last census, 2011), agricultural census (2011), 5-year census of manufacturing establishments (2011), and periodic surveys, including Nepal Living Standards Survey (2010), Nepal Labour Force Survey (2008), Nepal Vegetable Survey (2010) and Nepal Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey (2010). As part of the National Planning Commission (NPC), the CBS has a mandate for overseeing national statistics.[8]

Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (http://www.mofald.gov.np/en) collects data on vital events under the Department of Civil Registration, local government spending, and maintains websites and general geo-coded data of all 753 local governments. The Central Bank – Nepal Rastra Bank (https://www.nrb.org.np/) – produces financial and macroeconomic statistics including cash flow, Consumer Price Index, Wholesale Price Index, external merchandise trade, and other current and capital transactions and regulates monetary policy. It discloses data of its half yearly review. The Ministry of Finance (http://www.mof.gov.np/en/) generates budget data focusing on revenues, allocation, spending and monitoring as well as details of financial flows from different ministries and agencies and makes them available on its website. Data reflecting overall budget operation such as allocation vs spending and the purpose is also available on its website. As a subordinate body of the Ministry, the Financial Comptroller General Office (FCGO) maintains records of spending and the Treasury Single Account keeps up-to-date daily spending data. The National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) has been an important collector and user of humanitarian data since the 2015 Gorkha Earthquake.

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7 Development Initiatives, Nepal's Emerging Data Revolution (Background Paper), 2017, Available at: http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Nepals-emerging-data-revolution.pdf.

8 ManojLalPradhan, Open Data Initiatives in Nepal, 2017. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/meetings/sdg-seminar-seoul-2017/S6_P4_Manoj_Lal_Pradhan.pdf

The Ministry of Health conducts the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) once every five years (most recent, 2011) and also compiles annual health service data. The Ministry of Education compiles data on student enrolment, teachers, resource persons and schools. The Ministry of Agricultural Development compiles data on production, area and yields of cereals, horticultural crops, and livestock and livestock products. The Ministry of Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation had piloted a national household survey in 25 districts to identify poverty levels. The Ministry of Home Affairs had also undertaken a biometric national ID card scheme, covering 110,000 people by 2017 on a pilot basis.

The National Information Commission (NIC) has maintained a database on RTI appeals, has required designation of public information officer at public agencies, encouraged proactive disclosure of information, and keeps records of best practices of RTI in a disaggregated manner using the RTI Management Information System (MIS) online.

Among the key innovative mechanisms put in place from supply side for data and information disclosures are websites, social networking sites (Facebook, and Twitter), mobile apps, data portals, e-governance platforms, digitised management information systems, and digitised population surveys. However, only few champions have adopted newer concepts for data and information disclosure.

Nepal has some noteworthy initiatives for improved sharing and use of data in government. The health sector has come up with transparent data systems, most notably through the Smart Health initiative, which is a web-based Open Data system to enable monitoring of plans and to track performance of different health agencies. Similarly, the NPC developed two important data portals – '2015 Earthquake: Open Data Portal' and 'SDG Data Portal' -- for sharing data. The Earthquake Open Data Portal has provided public access to data produced by CBS through a massive household survey to assess building damage in earthquake-affected districts. The Public Procurement Transparency Initiative of the Public Procurement Monitoring Office (PPMO) is also a significant milestone in the growth of Open Data in Nepal.

Likewise, the Aid Management Platform (http://amis.mof.gov.np/portal/) – an online aid information management system (AIMS) operated by the Ministry of Finance – shares data on official development assistance in Excel format. It produces and shares data on foreign aid related to the national budget. It also runs the Aid Management Information System, started after the earthquake, and provides public access to information on all-donor funded reconstruction-related projects.

The MoFALD had published online the personal details of all beneficiaries of the Earthquake Housing Reconstruction Project, including names, location, gender, payment serial number and citizenship card number. Some of this data is sub-nationally disaggregated to the district level and the online platform allows the information to be downloaded in Excel format. Recognising the importance of ICT for efficient public service delivery, MoFALD has maintained a website with maps of the local jurisdictions and a map portal to support the slogan of 'Digital Governance of New Nepal'. The interactive Geographical Information System (GIS) portal (www.mofald.gov.np/GIS) showcases geo-coded information and details of all local government units including wards. The ministry has also developed

a mobile app to proactively disclose information on Federal affairs and local development and has a MIS, a computer-based system with software to help managers with information-based decision-making. It has brought into use the Integrated Financial Management Information System, Results-based Monitoring System, Web-based Reporting System, Vital Events Registration, Social Security Management Information System, Web-based Revenue Accounting System, Checkpoint Entry System and Web-based Migration. In order to effectively mechanize information management and proper disclosure, MoFALD has developed a standard template for a website for all 753 local governments. With this in place, many local governments have begun using websites to share information.

There is a centralised Official Government Portal (https://www.nepal.gov.np/) initiated by the National Information Technology Centre but its information is limited. The NIC has used its website, public outreach programmes and hard copy publications to disseminate information. Importantly, it has developed a National Open Data Action Plan for the government

At the central level, the main administrative information collected and produced are not being disseminated. The government agencies regularly produce administrative, financial and procurement data, along with programme monitoring data, for internal use and monitoring and evaluation purposes. The administrative data thus generated have not yet been fully used for statistical purposes due to inaccessibility and differences in concept, definition and methodologies used. Beside websites, the government agencies also use other means such as publications (book, report, flier) and media channels (radio programmes and news), public outreach programmes and media briefing/ press releases to disseminate information. The public, generally,use information obtained online, off-line and through third party intermediaries. There are very limited measures and initiatives aimed at getting information to WMGs. The NIC had published a booklet explaining areas where women could benefit from state-supported services. Though the Constitution has enshrined provisions on inclusive development and equality for all, governments at different levels have not put in place measures to address information need of all citizens.

b. Civil Society and Private Sector Initiatives

As users and intermediaries, CSOs have emerged as an important information community of practice over the last couple of years. This influential sector is re-using and sharing data to support evidence-based decisions and accountability and many take part in the Open Nepal (http://opennepal.net/), an initiative set up in 2013 by a group of stakeholders working in the areas of access to data and information for development. The Freedom Forum, Young Innovations, NGO Federation of Nepal and Development Initiatives are some CSOs that have joined Open Nepal. It has since developed an online knowledge hub and conducted various technical research and engagement projects.[9] Of late the Open Data community has become wider and includes Accountability Lab, Local Inter-

[9] Development Initiatives, Nepal's Emerging Data Revolution (Background Paper), 2017,Available at: http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Nepals-emerging-data-revolution.pdf.

ventions Group, Open Knowledge Nepal, Kathmandu Living Labs, Code for Nepal and BikasUdhyami, to name a few. These organisations are supporting better production, sharing and use of data through with the government. They also conduct regular events to raise awareness of Open Data and issues, for example, the annual Open Data Day events.

Many organisations including CSOs and private initiatives had launched information and data focused accountability initiatives in the aftermath of the '2015 Gorkha Earthquake' that left nearly 9,000 people dead, around 20,000 injured, and damaged property worth about NPR 670 billion (National Planning Commission 2015). Among the initiatives in place were Mobile Citizen Help Desk Project, mobilising volunteers for collecting information (quakemap.org) with the aim of bridging the information gap to support rescue and relief, tracking rumours, monitoring budgets and spending, etc. for bringing institutions to account.

Cashing in on the opportunity of Nepal's growing technology and software industry, the private sector has arguably played important role in driving innovation and new approaches in the data field, advancing their own projects and ideas as well as providing outsourcing services to national and international actors. Young Innovations have been a longstanding developer of data publishing and access tools. Similarly, Bikas Udhyami (http://bikasudhyami.com/) – a think tank social innovation hub – has come up with Nepal In Data Initiatives (https://nepalindata.com/) aiming to increase the availability, accessibility and use of development data on Nepal, and to enhance data literacy among different stakeholders including government. In addition, data journalism has been catching up resulting in evidence based reporting and making information more easily accessible to the public. The use of info-graphics and geo-coded presentations are now quite common in Nepali's print media.

c. Initiatives by Local Governments

Local governments elected in 2017 are important institutions for institutionalising Federalism. These governments have executive, legislative and semi-judicial authorities and therefore provide an opportunity to promote open government and a culture of greater accountability and transparency. The local governments provide services in 22 different areas and this has widened the scope of local data production.

Respondents interviewed during the study said that local governments generally produce a wide range of data and information on issues including social security allowances, agriculture and livestock, health, education, public directories, annual policy and programmes, details of expenditure, revenues, approved budget and programmes, municipal council decisions, policy decisions and annual reviews. They also compile data and information on ward-level plans and projects, list of taxpayer forms, total population with disaggregated data on males and females based on the census, records of elected people's representatives and employees and their contact details.

However, the production of data and information varies from one local government to another as it is governed by political will, resource availability and public demand, in addition to legal mandate. Municipalities with relatively better physical and technological infrastructures are ahead in terms of data production and sharing compared to newly constituted ones.

The ward, the smallest unit of local government, is in closest contact with service

recipients, and generates data on different local user groups, community-based networks and organisations, and their activities. According to the Local Government Operation Act-2017, the ward committee is responsible for forming and mobilising-Tole Development Organisations and Users' Committees for executing development plans within the wards, and to monitor progress.

More specifically, information and data associated with governance and accountability, such as agendas and decisions of municipal councils, public services and facilities, grant assistance to disadvantaged and marginalised people, fiscal year plans and budget, ward level plans, project details, income resources and expenses and capacity building programmes for target groups (e.g. farmers and marginalised people) are more important for beneficiaries to be able to participate in decision-making to influence the governance process. According to respondents, the local government offices produced disaggregated information related to public spending on approved programmes, revenue, administrative and performance related data, grants to different interest groups, project monitoring and evaluation, contract-related information and sectoral planning and progress. But this information is not made public in its original form. The data and information are mostly disclosed in tabular forms lacking granular data, which also limit the space for demanding accountability. Respondents said that such information and data could assist in identifying irregularities and unlawful transfer of funds earmarked for targeted sectors to other headings without prior discussions, planning and approval. Without transparency, this can result in siphoning of public money appropriated for weaker sections, including WMGs, to other sectors.

Most local governments both urban and rural use paper-based filing, computer data storage system (word, excel, power point) and websites while some have digitised much of their information and data. Local governments also used radio, newspapers, bulletins, citizen charter and notice boards to share and disclose data and information. Most municipalities have their own websites and Facebook pages to disseminate information on e-governance services, budget and programmes, plans and projects, public procurement notices, social security details and progress reports. The websites, based on a standard template, are populated with information but contain no name and contact details of the PIO or Section, which is a key mechanism to manage and disclose public information, and is also a requirement of the RTI Act. There were designated PIOs or spokespersons in urban municipalities whereas most rural municipalities had not made the appointments.

Information officers have not been disseminated at the ward level. From interviews, it was evident that ward offices used door-to-door information dissemination methods before distributing the social security allowance. For example, this was true at Amargadhi Municipality, Ward No 5 where officials visited the households of marginalised people to inform them about old-age allowance. Many local governments shared and disclosed information through short messages on mobile phones (SMS), hard copy publications and data/information transfers on portable data storage devices. Some municipality officials said they had adopted the practice of proactive information disclosure through letters, phone calls, radio, newspapers and oral communications while some said they used billboards, pamphlets and posters for disseminating information.

No local government had a systematic practice of proactive disclosure of public information, which by law is a requirement for all public agencies, including local governments. The RTI Act requires them to disclose 20 different types of public information once every three months. Some information was disseminated but it was done without systematic planning. Although there were no specific and dedicated information dissemination mechanisms to link WMGs with public information and data,the local governments said they had taken measures for promoting access to public information. Keeping in mind the need to facilitate the understanding of constituents about public services and their right to participate in the governance processes, some local governments had started presenting information in simplified forms but not in local languages. For instance, Kailari rural municipality had initiated measures to direct information towards women and marginalised groups and deprived sections in relation to targeted programmes such as gender violence, drug abuse, human trafficking, etc. In the absence of dedicated and skilled human resources, such as Information Technology (IT) officers, digital mechanisms such as websites and Facebook were being operated on an ad hoc basis even though the elected representatives had committed to launch new digital tools and mechanisms for disclosing public data and information for effective service delivery.

There were exceptions: Budhanilakantha municipality was developing a mobile application with atwo-way interface (municipality and people) with technological space for the public to record complaints and grievances. It also had a website to disseminate information on policy decisions and project implementation.

4.1.2.Who is Using Information, For What Purpose and How?

Data users in Nepal are policy makers, citizens, CSOs, government agencies, parliamentarians, independent researchers, donors, columnists/journalists, intermediaries/publishers, academics, techies, Open Data community and students. Citizens used data to know and access public services while CSOs used data for a wide variety of purposes including developing awareness-raising and evidence-based advocacy materials, tracking public revenue and expenditure, preparing proposals and reports, etc. CSOs have increasingly used data to produce budget analysis (e.g. health, agriculture or education reports) and to create briefs from different policy perspectives such as pro-poor, gender and social inclusion, etc. in order to provide policy inputs. Government officials used data during budgeting, decision-making, policy development, planning,programme formulation, among others. Primarily government offices used information to predict investment, set priorities and ensure effective roll out of plans and programmes. The donor community used data to take decisions on investment, evaluate returns and set financing priorities. Journalists used data to develop to tell stories, investigate and create info-graphics.

An Open Data community of practice transforms government data in portable document format(.pdf) format into open data formats such as CSV and XML, among others. An example is Open Nepal, a collaborative platform to promote availability, accessibility and use of data. The platform builds on Nepal's existing information systems and processes, including the RTI Act and Open Data portals, to provide a hub to support individuals and groups to access, analyse and use data/information.

Table 4: Purposes of accessing public data/information

Purpose of accessing public data and information	Frequency	Percent
Knowing about municipal policies and plan	23	19
Knowing about provisions of public services	25	21
Knowing about programmes and budget	40	33
Engaging with the municipal governance process (Such as planning, budgeting, project implementation, monitoring, interface and dialogue with municipality)	12	10
Others (Household reconstruction)	1	1

(Source: Household survey)

During interviews, local government representatives and officials noted that they wanted citizens to use information and data to access the public services they delivered. They also wanted media and CSOs to further disseminate the data and information to make the public aware of the services offered, and to empower WMGs to use citizen engagement opportunities in the local governance process.

The HH Survey respondents were asked to identify why they accessed public data and information with five possible choices (multiple choice). Only 101 out of total 120 respondents responded to the questions in which 40 respondents (33%) said their purpose was to 'know about the programme and budget'. Likewise, 25 respondents (21%) said their purpose was 'knowing about the provision of public services' while for 23 respondents (19%) it was for 'knowing about the municipal policy and plans'. Twelve respondents (10%) said the purpose was to engage with the municipal governance process (such as planning, budgeting, project implementation, monitoring, and dialogue with municipality).

The HH Survey had given respondents six options for how they used and re-used data. Most respondents said it was for 'sharing' (83 out of 120 respondents,or 69.17%), followed 'personal use reasons' (44%), 'participation in decision-making process' (27%), 'developing awareness raising materials' (19%), 'sensitising local government officials and people representatives on development' (17%) and 'preparing advocacy issues' (12%).

Table 5: Using and re-using data

Using and re-using data	Frequency	Percentage
Sharing	83	69
Developing awareness raising materials	23	19
For personal use reasons	53	44
Sensitizing local government officials/people representatives on development	20	17
Preparing advocacy issues	14	12
Participation in decision-making process	32	27
Others	19	16

(Source: Household survey)

Table 6: Use and re-use of data in terms of gender (%)

Gender	Use and re-use data							
	Sharing	Developing awareness raising materials	For personal use reasons	Sensitizing local government officials/ people representatives on development	Preparing advocacy issues	Participation in decision-making process	Others	Total Responses
Female	37	8	19	8	5	13	8	154
Male	29	11	26	8	7	13	7	90

(Source: Household survey)

Table 6 below shows the gender-disaggregated information on the use and re-use of data/ information. The three most preferred purposes for both female and male respondents were 'sharing', 'personal use reasons' and 'participation in decision-making process'.

The following table (Table 7)shows the WMGs largely used and re-use of data for sharing, personal reasons, participation, and for developing awareness materials. The respondents were asked to determine three priorities in terms of data and information they needed. Most respondents (106) said it was information on 'target group plans and budgets', 85 said 'knowing benefits and entitlements' and 63 respondents said' public service provisions'. The table below shows three types of information most needed by respondents. The trend was almost similar in terms of gender and among WMGs. The priority areas identified were target group plans and budgets, benefits and entitlements and public service provisions; some respondents had also said they required information for personal planning.

Table 7: Use and re-use of data among WMGs(%)

WMGs	Use and re-use data							
	Sharing	Developing awareness raising materials	For personal use reasons	Sensitizing local government officials/people representatives on development	Preparing advocacy issues	Participation in decision-making process	Others	Total responses
Adibasi/ Janajati	32	15	20	8	8	15	1.5	74
Dalit	27	11	20	11	7	11	13	55
Geographically Excluded	23	8	23	15	8	23	0.0	13
Muslim	67	0.0	33	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3
Single Woman	50	0.0	29	0.0	0.0	21	0.0	14
Person with Disability	38	0.0	25	12	0.0	13	12	8
Others/ Non WMG	38	6	31	3	6	3	12	32
Others/ Woman	36	7	16	10	2	16	14	44
Others/ Badi	100	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1

(Source: Household survey)

Table 8: Three priorities in terms of data/information required by WMGs (%)

	Need of the areas of the data and information									
WMG	**Personal planning**	**Public Services provisions**	**Target group plans and budgets**	**Knowing benefits and entitlements**	**Policy provisions**	**Public procurement and expenditures**	**Tracking of performance of government officials**	**Project progress**	**Others (No use)**	**Total Responses**
Adibasi Janajati	8	23	34	27	4	2	1	1	0.0	92
Dalit	18	11	33	24	6	3.0	2	1	1	66
Geographically Excluded	11	33	22	22	0.0	0.0	11	0.0	0.0	9
Muslim	33	0.0	33	33	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3
Single Woman	10	27	33	30	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30
Person with Disability	15	15	31	31	0.0	8	0.0	0.0	0.0	13
Others/ Non WMG	11	21	28	19	9	0.0	4	8	0.0	53
Others/ Woman	15	17	31	26	3	2	1	5	0.0	65
Others/ Badi	17	0.0	17	17	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	6

(Source: Household survey)

4.1.3 Plans for Improvement

a. Central (Federal) Level

The devolution of power and resources to the local level has created opportunities for citizen-state engagement. The Constitutional and legal frameworks have leveraged openness and good governance; the devolution of power and resources has provided powerful mechanisms for enabling citizens. These are expected to influence the formulation and enforcement of laws and functioning of institutions. MoFALD had planned to recruit Information Technology (IT) Officers at all local government units, placing emphasis on digitising and disclosing public data and information to facilitate delivery of public services.

Similarly, the MoF had plans to migrate the web-hosting server of AMP to the ministry from an outsourced company, and focus on analysing disaggregated data for policy making and planning.

The Internet makes it possible for anyone access aid-related information and data

"This is to archive and promote availability of data related to local governments in open format", said an Under-Secretary at MoFALD. Moreover, the Ministry is also configuring its own online mechanism to receive and redress complaints from service recipients. There is a plan to replicate the success of Hello Sarkar – a complaints redress mechanism at the Prime Minister's Office – at MoFALD to facilitate complaint registration and redress through online measures.

(Source: Consultation)

"A plan has been prepared to present and share disaggregated aid data in terms of provinces and sectors in the new Federal setup. We are also planning to add dashboards based on the needs of users to make the online platform more user friendly". --Under-Secretary at Ministry of Finance.
(Source: Consultation)

from the AMP dashboard. As other users, WMGs can also access this data and find out about sector and region-wide mobilisation of foreign aid. Data related to projects responding to gender are also available, and accessible on the AMP, which will address information needs of WMGs.

The NPC had plans to institutionalise its open data portals – 2015 Earthquake Portal and SDG Portal – by hosting the URLs and keeping the data up-to-date. Likewise, NIC had a five-year strategic action plan (2015-20) on the right to information, which emphasises capacitating the demand side, and enabling supply side to address the demand for information; strengthening NIC for protection and promotion of RTI, and effective implementation of information system based on information technology. In order to address the gaps between information provisions and practices, the NIC has published awareness raising booklets on information rights and entitlements for women in an effort to address the gaps in information provided and the legal provisions.

The CBS had drafted a national strategy for the development of statistics for improving the production of official economic, social, cultural and environmental data. The draft plan aimed at raising awareness about the role of official statistics in development, better mobilising national funding and technical partners, and improving the quality, and dissemination of data. Generally, it is apparent that there a limited efforts at the central level to facilitate the dissemination of data/information among WMGs and this has limited their abilities to access information and explore possible engagement approaches in the decision-making process.

b. Local Level

The expansion of their roles, authority and functions has caused some local government leaders to consider plans to digitise and disclose more data and information on programme and policies. While continuing the existing initiatives for production and dissemination of information, local governments have begun considering plans to digitise data and launch web-based services using mobile apps and SMS, websites, techno hubs (virtual and physical), toll free numbers and media.

Plans put forward by local governments included expansion of Internet networks, creating information management systems, mandatory digital education in school, arrangement of computer labs, promotion of online services, capacity building of WMGs on technology use to access public information, recruitment of IT Officer and collection of information and dissemination data using email and Facebook. Design and delivery of digital literacy in each ward for people's representative and staff, and awareness building activities were also in some of the plans.

Municipal authorities were concerned about developing 'smart municipality', not limited to data disclosure, while rural municipal authorities were focused on adopt-

ing new technology based mechanisms to take information (mainly programmemes and budget, policies and decisions, e-profile and services)to the public. Rural municipalities were considering websites with strong backup and record management systems as a dissemination mechanism. The local governments also indicated that they would put in place sector-wise data collection, management and digital archiving systems.

The local governments were also continuing with offline efforts for information dissemination. The plans included development of publicity materials (both audio and video), improvement of citizen charters and notice boards, oral communication, mobile SMS and group email.

4.2 Assessment of Proactive from Demand Side

This section presents results of the assessment of proactive information disclosure and contains data obtained mainly through the HH and FGDs carried out in 25 local governments, including two each from the six project districts.

4.2.1 Impressions about Information Government Produced

According to CSO representatives, local governments were producing different types of public data and information including thaton social security, agriculture, sector-wide budget, development plans and activities, vital events registration, public service delivery, disaster management, demography, employment, education, poverty, gender-based violence, training, procurement, target groups (women, children, Dalit and indigenous nationalities) and revenues. The production and compilation of data varied with the need and demand of the public. All data and information were being produced and compiled in line with the list of functions that local governments are required to carry out.

4.2.2 Public Services from Local Government

More than 97 percent of respondents said they were aware about public services that were available, while only 3 percent were not. However, more detailed information about specific services (Table 10) was analysed, it was evident that awareness about specific services provided were much lower than what the respondents claimed. This suggested existence of an awareness gap between what respondents actually know about services and what they think they know.

All of those who said they were not aware of the services belonged to 31-50 years age group. All male respondents said they were aware of the available services, while 4 percent female respondents said they were not aware. All of those who said they were unaware were just literate (7.5%; Table 9).

From among WMGs, only Adibasi Janajati (indigenous nationalities) and single women said that they were not aware of public services that were available. In terms of caste, those who were unaware of services belonged to the Janajati, Dalit and Tharu groups, while all persons with disability said they were aware. In terms of livelihood, all who said they were unaware had farming as main occupation or were in business/self-employment (3.1% and 2.4%,respectively). In terms of class, only 3.3 percent belonging to the middle class were unaware, while all of those who claimed to be rich or poor were aware.

The study had divided available public services into 16 categories (Table 11). Only four of these categories received a score of more than two-thirds (66%) in terms of

Table 9: Awareness of the services delivered by local government

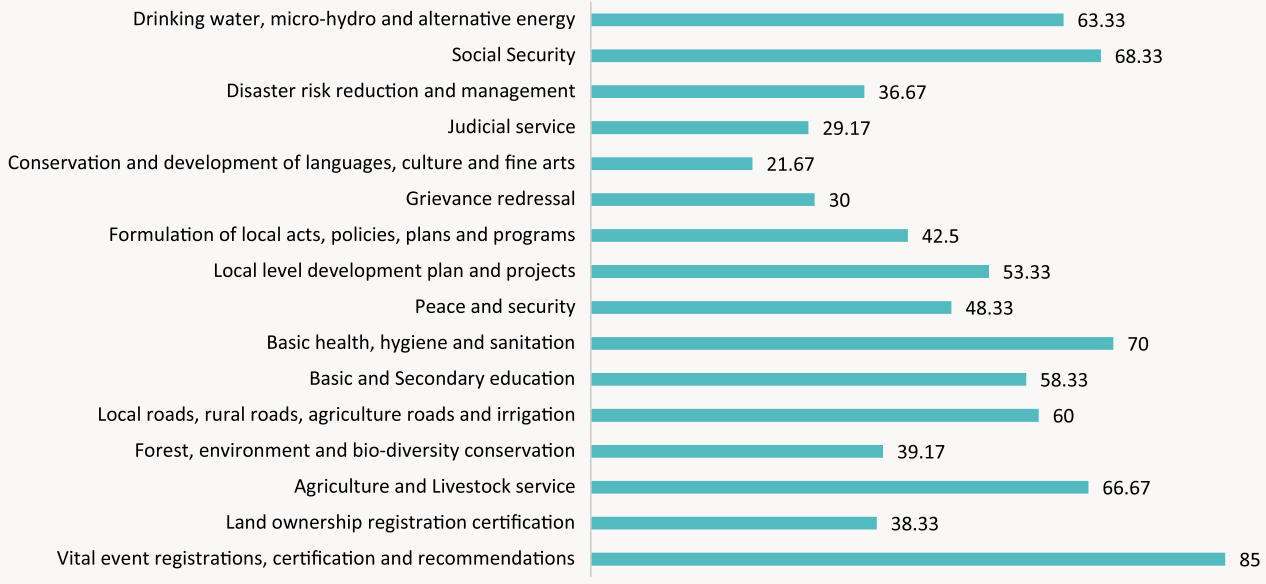
Educational Status	Awareness of the Services being Delivered by Local Government		
	No (%)	Yes (%)	Total number
Illiterate	0	100	6
Literate	7.5	92.5	40
Below SLC/SEE	0	100	28
SLC/SEE	0	100	5
Higher Secondary	0	100	24
Bachelor	0	100	14
Masters and above	0	100	3

(Source: Household survey)

awareness: vital event registrations, certifications and recommendations (85%), basic health, hygiene and sanitation (70%); social security (68%); and agriculture and livestock service (67%). The awareness level for three services was below 33 per cent. These were grievance redress (30%); judicial services (39%), and conservation and development of languages, culture and fine arts (21%). This suggested that contrary to the claims made by respondents, awareness about public services was low.

A very high percentage of respondents (85%) also indicated that they were aware that the local government provided services and entitlements to targeted groups. This finding is not conclusive given the low levels of awareness about specific services. Lack of awareness was concentrated among respondents

Table 10: Awareness of services being delivered by Local Government by Type



(Source: Household survey)

Table 11: Degree of benefits from local government information on public services

Caste and Ethnicity	Beneficiary ranking about public services			
	Agree (%)	Neither agree nor Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Total
Badi	0	100	0	1
Brahmin	94.4	5.6	0	18
Chhetri	90.6	9.4	0	32
Dalit	82.1	10.7	7.1	28
Janajati	95.7	4.3	0	23
Muslim	50	50	0	2
Tharu	100	0	0	16

(Source: Household survey)

with lower levels of education: 33 percent of Illiterate persons were unaware and it was 23 percent for the (just) literate.

Most (90%) respondents agreed that information related to public services available was beneficial, while 2 percent disagreed and 8 percent neither agreed nor disagreed. About 91 percent of single women disagreed that information was beneficial, suggesting -- perhaps -- that they did not feel they were receiving appropriate benefits from public services. Apart from Dalits(7%), none of the other caste and ethnic group respondents disagreed with the statement that information was beneficial, while some neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 11).

4.2.3 Impressions about Information Disseminated

This section looks at perceptions of respondents about local government's performance in terms of information dissemination (what and how). The section synthesises responses of the respondents in terms of how they access public data and information through offline mechanisms including RTI requests; do they understand the data; can they download data they need from online sources; is the downloaded data understandable and in in useful formats and how the data helps them.

Generally, local governments were disseminating public information through both digital and non-digital means. Most of them had been able to disseminate information and data through radio, public notice, personal contact, knowledgeable people, and through elected people's representatives. However, such practices of dissemination were not consistent, reliable and systematic.

Most often websites had been used to disclose and disseminate information where tabular data was available but they were not updated and were incomplete. Posting data on open formats was rare. Mostly, official documents, such as annual approved budget and programme, laws, directives, procedural guidelines and public procurement notices are in .pdf formats. The RTI Act-2007 requires public agencies to designate a public information officer to manage and disclose information through reactive (responding to information requests) and proactive measures (routine disclosure once every three months).

Respondents said that most local govern-

Table 12: Medium of accessing public data through offline mechanism across women and marginalised group

WMGs	Third party intermediaries (e.g. local CSO)	Digital display/ notice board	Through personal contacts with officials and elected representatives	Through mobile SMS	Through offline media (radio, TV, newspaper)	Via a press conference or press release	Through telephone	Through public notices/ announcements	Via right to information requests	Through IEC Materials	Through social mobiliser	Others	Total Responses
AdibasiJanajati	7	5	25	4	17	2	12	10	3	3	12	1	118
Dalit	3	3	26	6	32	2	14	6	2	0	6	1	66
Geographically Excluded	0	0	43	0	43	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	7
Muslim	0	0	25	0	25	0	25	0	0	0	25	0	4
Single Woman	15	0	26	0	26	0	4	11	0	0	18	0	27
Person with Disability	10	5	24	5	19	5	9	5	0	5	14	0	21
Others/ Non WMG	8	4	21	2	24	3	12	8	2	4	11	2	66
Others/ Woman	10	4	21	11	21	1	10	9	1	2	9	0	70
Others/ Badi	0	0	0	50	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

(Source: Household Survey)

ments had public information officers but obtaining information they needed was still difficult.

According to the HHs Survey, WMG respondents mostly preferred 'personal contacts with officials and elected representatives', 'media such as radio, TV and newspaper', 'telephone' and 'social mobilisers' to access public information. Similar preference was also found among non-WMG respondents. Table 13 shows that the Adivasi Janajati respondents ranked 'personal contacts with officials and elected representatives' as the most preferred medium,followed by 'media such as radio, TV and newspaper', 'through telephone' and 'through social mobiliser'. Likewise, the Dalit respondents preferred 'media (radio, TV and newspaper)' followed by 'personal contacts with officials and elected representatives', 'telephone' and 'SMS' for accessing data and information. Women respondents also preferred 'contacts with officials and elected representatives', 'media such as radio, TV and newspaper', 'through SMS' and 'through third party intermediaries'.

There was clear preference for obtaining information through 'personal contacts with officials and elected representatives', 'media such as radio, TV and newspaper', 'through telephone', 'through social mobilize, 'through third party intermediaries such as CSOs' and 'through public notices/announcements'. Making RTI or obtaining information from press conference or press release and IEC materials were relatively less popular.

4.2.4 Digital Access to Public Data and Information

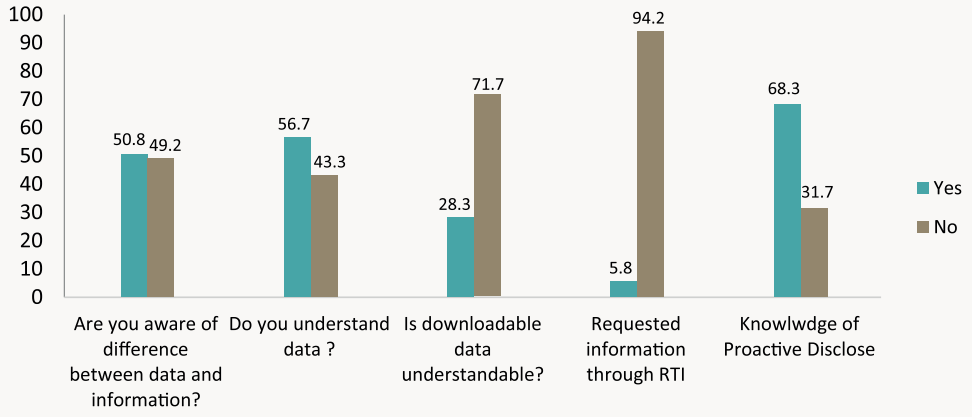
This section assesses the extent to which digital means were used to access public service-related data and information. Almost half of the respondents were unaware about the difference between data and information. However, during the FGDs, most respondents were found to have a common understanding about data being a 'fact, number, statistics, evidence and raw materials' to substantiate the information, and that information was something that provided people with primary knowledge about something. Some respondents said that data was numerical and stored at the office while information is subject to dissemination and disclosure. There were gaps in understanding about data particularly considering the response that data was for storage rather than disclosure.

When it came to questions about access to and use of data, 57 percent said they understood data. However, 72 percent said they could not download data from online sources and the same percentage said that downloaded data was not understandable. Another 75 percent said that the downloaded data was not in a useful format (Figure 4).

When asked how the data would help them, only three of nine FGD participants had suggested answers that it was useful, a response rate of more than (50%). They said it would increase general awareness (69%),make it easier to access public services (63%) and reduce time and effort in accessing services (51%). Four responses had response rate of less than one-third (33%), particularly for the given options -- demanding transparency/accountability (29%), enabling participation in democratic decision-making process (27%), holding local government to account (26%) and Increasing efficiency and innovation (21%). This suggested a problem either in data that was being made available or in the ways that citizens accessed and used the information.

Despite the relatively low response rates to use of data by respondents, more than 88 percent of survey respondents said they

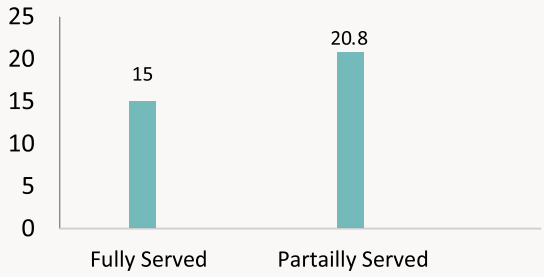
Figure 4: Data Awareness and Understanding (%)



needed information from local government. A large proportion of Janajati respondents (21%) felt that information was not useful, suggesting -- perhaps -- the need for special outreach efforts to reach this group. Responses of other groups were closer to the average of 12 percent who said information was not needed, including 11 percent Dalit, 13 percent Chhetri, 11 percent Brahmin, and 9 percent single women.

Despite the high interest in accessing information from local government, only 41 percent of the respondents had actually accessed information, which was low given that 88 percent among these respondent had been able to get the information they required from local governments. Of those who were able to get required information, 42 percent said it had served their purpose, while 58 percent said that their purpose was partially served (Figure 5) (There was no category not served so the results may be a distorted). Nine out of 13 (69%) Adibasi Janajati respondents said information had fully served their purposes, but only one Dalit respondent out of eight (13%) was fully satisfied, while seven (88%) were only partially satisfied with the data they received.

Figure 5: Received Information and Purpose Served (%)



A total of 43 respondents had accessed public information online at least once. Interestingly, 28 women respondents out of a total of 33, (85%), said they had been able to get the required data, while 15 male respondents out of 16 (94%) had been able to do the same.

Of 43 respondents who had accessed public information online at least once, 22 (51%) had used social media/networks, 10 (23%) had used websites/public portals, nine (21%) had used email and six (14%) had used mobile apps (Figure 6). This suggests that social media was the most important outreach tool for local public bodies followed by websites and email. Surprisingly, mobile apps had the lowest response, despite the high penetration.

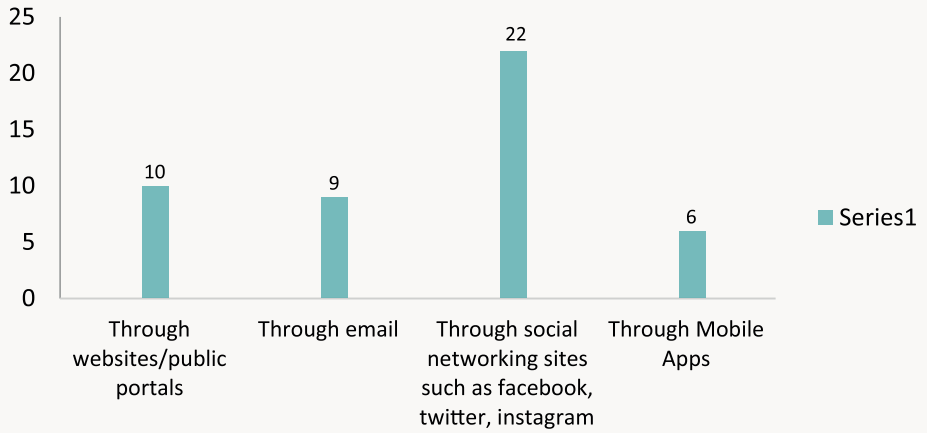
Dalits, Adibasi Janajati and persons with disabilities mainly accessed data through social media networks and through websites/portals. Tharu, Chhetri, Dalits, Brahmin and Janajati ethnic groups were among those who accessed data from local government. Most of the requested documents received were as either pdf or Word documents, or as website text.

Only 4 female respondents of 78 (5%), had used RTI requests to obtain information from local government agencies, while 3 out of 52 male respondents (7%), had used RTI to access public information. The use of RTI requests was low for all respondents, including WMGs. Among WMGs, only 2 of 33 Adibasi Janajati respondents, 2 of 21 Dalit, 1 of 19 non-WMG respondents, and 2 of 22 other/women respondents had used RTI to obtain information. Only 1 among 18 Brahmin respondents, 2 of 32 Chhetri respondents, and 2 of 16 Tharu respondents had made RTI requests.

Despite the low access, 68 percent of respondents said they knew about the information that local governments were required to disclose proactively.

Respondents were given four options to understand why they accessed data/informa-

Figure 6: Number of Respondents who Accessed Data Online



tion from local government the results are as follows:

- To learn more about programmes and budgets (33%)
- To learn about the provision of public services (21%)
- To know about municipal policies and plan (20%)
- To engage with municipal governance process (such as planning, budgeting, project implementation, monitoring, interface and dialogue with municipality) (10%)

Significantly, the lowest percentage was reported in relation to engagement.

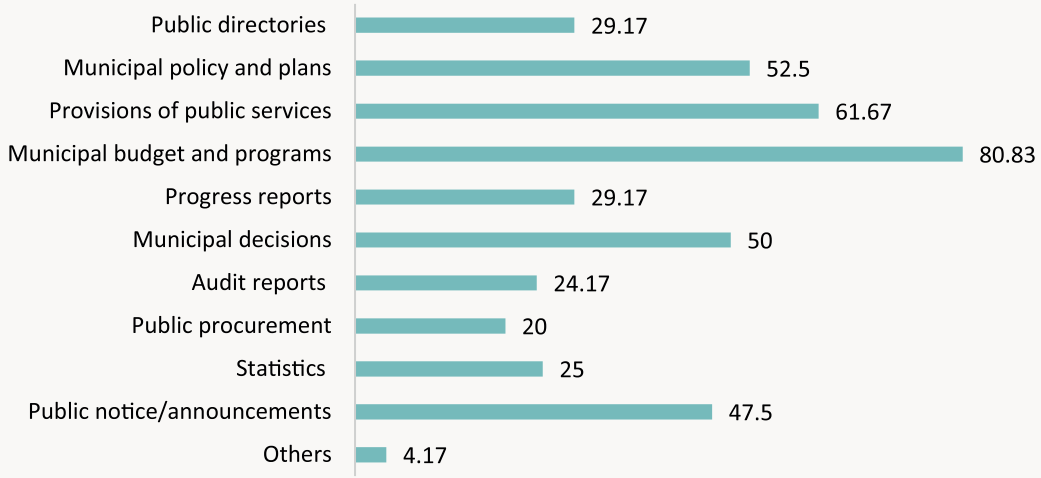
Respondents were asked about the type of information that would useful to them and asked to select from 11 options. The results here were consistent with the results to the question on why people accessed information, with the highest response for information on municipal budget and programmes (81%) followed by provision of public services (62%), municipal policy and plans (53%), and municipal decisions (50%). Only one type of information scored higher than two-thirds (67%) -- municipal budget and programmes -- while four types fell below one-third (33%). These included progress reports (29%), statistics (e.g. socioeconomic and demographic information) (25%), audit reports (financial, performance) (24%) and public procurement (20%). The two lowest scoring categories were related to financial information.

Among women and marginalised groups, Adibasi Jananjati, Dalit and single women found the data on municipal budget and programmes, provision of public services, municipal policy and plans, public directories and municipal decisions more useful, and was consistent for all sub-groups. The least useful information was that related to public procurement, statistics, audit reports and progress reports for the group.

4.2.5 Non-digital Access to Public Data and Information

Respondents had also accessed data and information using offline mechanisms. Two means stood out: accessing public information/data through personal contact with

Figure 7: Type of public data and information that would be useful (%)



officials and elected representatives (76%), and through legacy or offline media (radio, TV, newspaper) (73%). The next popular way of accessing information in non-digital formats was the telephone (36%). While personal contacts were very popular, they were not a preferred way of sharing information because it depended on your contacts and therefore tends to reinforce the status of those who are already privileged. Every other means of accessing information were social mobilisers (33%), public notices/announcements (26%) and third party intermediaries (e.g. local CSOs) (23%). Women and respondents from marginalised groups used various offline means to obtain information and the most used ones were personal contacts with official and elected representatives, and radio, TV, newspapers.

The FGD respondents said that publicly available data and information related to public services did not meet their needs. The public data was not up-to-date or archived systematically. The representatives said that government agencies do not have adequate and proper information and data. "Some local government offices provided old data in hard copy. There is no updated and real time data at local government," a respondent said.

Journalists suggested that they needed more specific year-wise and sector-wide data related to the local development plan and progress report in order to prepare comparative reports for media. Likewise, women respondents said they wanted databases on the victims of gender-based violence as well data of women living with disabilities for advocacy purposes. Information and data on drug abuse, scholarship, implementation of the budget earmarked for WMGs and children, and the areas stated by the RTI Act and Regulations would also be useful.

Users said they were compelled to obtain information using personal relations or from notice boards because it was not available online. Information disseminated through public notice boards at specific locations makes it difficult to access. Likewise, there was no practice of demanding information at the ward office, said a respondent, adding, "Government officials say they are busy in day-to-day work and have no time for managing and providing data and information".

4.3 The Role of Intermediaries

Intermediaries are individuals and institutions who provide a bridge between public sector producers/collectors of information and end users. They can provide access to information services (as in ISPs), disseminate and/or translate/interpret information, or work closely with citizens and translate information into knowledge and action. The role of intermediaries is not just technical. An independent and organized intermediary can support citizens to learn about how they could demand social accountability from government, remain informed, raise their voices and demand accountability. Since intermediaries are an integral part of information ecosystem, it is crucial that they can access information from public agencies and pass it on to beneficiaries in easy to understand formats.

Community centres, groups and organisations, university teachers, researchers, tech communities, social activists, social mobilisers, CSO/NGOs, and media – play the role of intermediaries in the project districts. Among them local CSOs/NGOs, media and ISPs were most visible the intermediary role. The intermediary-respondents used public data and information from the local government for different purposes. Journal-

ists used it for news production and dissemination while CSOs used it for developing proposals, preparing institutional by-laws, advocacy, engagement with government and informing communities, youth clubs and targeted beneficiaries. CSOs representatives said they had used and re-used information and data to empower citizens and to enable their engagement in local decision-making.

Intermediaries re-used information for different public awareness objectives, to support the government in public service delivery, and to help locals engage in decision-making, for example, the women's network and community groups. Sometimes, local government data and information was used to track and monitor the performance of public officials and to design thematic advocacy and awareness.

Women respondents said they were using violence against women-related information from their communities as evidence to work on the issue. They used the information to secure support for the targeted beneficiaries.

One example of CSO use of local information was evident in the activities of the Freed Kamaiya Bikaas Manch – an organisation working with previously bonded workers (Kamaiyas). It shared relevant data and information with the end beneficiaries focusing on women Kamaiyas in Kailali. The researchers found no evidence where users have received raw data in open formats and were able to re-use as required.

During FGDs, WMG respondents said that intermediaries had helped them to know about the types of data and information available from the local government such as income generation related services (vegetables, fishery and poultry farming, etc.). CSOs supported WMGs to receive data and information they needed from the local government (e.g. budgets, plans, disbursements and progress in the programme for WMGs). The respondents added that besides facilitating the process for accessing public services and understanding data/ information, the CSOs had helped them to save time and also provided skills and knowledge obtaining information and data from local governments.

Media, especially FM radio, accessed and used WMG-related information for preparing and broadcasting content. One example was found at Radio Janapriya in Achham District. The station used data obtained in interviews and discussions with elected representatives.

The role of the ISPs is crucial to increase people's access to data and information through Internet and intranet services. SUBISU Cablenet Pvt Ltd, said it provided both online and offline services including network, equipment provisioning and equipment maintenance, real time performance monitoring, video conferencing, IP surveillance (real time surveillance on location through IP address), managed services (router, switches, firewall and other devices), email hosting services, digital attendance, and all IT solutions. The ISP wasalso working with theNepal Telecommunication Authority to provide internet services in three earthquake affected districts (Gorkha, Makawanpur and Dhading), as part a project -- 'Building Broadband Network and Provide Internet Access Connectivity in Earth-quake Affected Districts. SUBISU will provide Internet services to health posts, ward offices, schools and local government offices for two years. Internet services make it easier for service providers to deliver information for producers and provide easy access to users who have the

service, including WMGs who can also use internet to learn about their rights and entitlements and also register their complaints. Technology can also help local governments to learn about public grievances and plan effective remedies. However, none of the intermediaries focused on providing information specifically to WMGs.

4.4 Assessment of Reactive Disclosure

During FGDs it was evident that intermediaries ability to acquire information/data depended on informal individual access to the authorities. It was still very difficult for the general public to access data/information online. More often information is provided in ad hoc ways and through oral means. However, media persons said that their access was comparatively easier.

According to the HH Survey, the use of the RTI law among rural populations was very low. Only seven respondents from 120, or 6 percent, had made a RTI request. Of those, 4 were women (5 percent of all women) and 3 were men (7 percent of all men). In terms of social groups those who had asked for information were Brahmins, Chhetris, Dalits and Tharus. From among WMGs, only Adibasi Janajatis, Dalits and women (no single woman) had made RTI requests. An illiterate and six literate persons had made RTI requests.

For the most part, local governments had not updated the citizen charter while at some local units the services not being provided by government offices were also included in the charter. There was low awareness about the constitutionally guaranteed and legally established citizen's right to seek and receive information. However, even social mobilisers were not aware of this the RTI tool. The government officials did not entertain RTI requests arguing that took more time to comply with the process and that disturbed their regular work. They preferred providing information outside the formal RTI process.

> A Dalit respondent said that she had registered a RTI request despite low awareness about the law. She had been asked to pay Rs. 500 for receiving information from the district public health office. Later the office chief directed the concerned unit to provide information at not cost after she had told him that she would file a RTI-related complaint.

Requesting information is still considered to be something that could strain personal relations. Government officials threatened when information is requested as a RTI request and prefer to provide it if RTI is not invoked. "I was told I could be killed while demanding information from the District Health Office using the RTI law," a journalist said. The respondents said it was comparatively to obtain information and data from local governments when approached through an organisation rather than individually.

> A journalist at Bagmati Rural Municipality, Lalitpur said information in his ward was made available through hand written public notice. He added that some information was provided on request but this was often time consuming. Another journalist said he had been denied public information on birthing centres and road construction. He added that the RTI law had enabled them to access some important information from local government even if the information was incomplete. Information related to budget transfers and allocations and expenditure of sector-wise budget such as that for disability had not been made available.

Supply side actors said they had received very few requests for information from citizens end, and that civil servants had been providing information free of cost. They added that complaints were being addressed promptly after elected representatives took charge of local governments.

A supply side respondent of Dhangadhi sub-metropolis said there was a RTI request by a journalist seeking information on municipal decisions taken before the local election. The information was provided in accordance with the RTI provisions, including a charge of Rs 6,000 in accordance with the RTI law. The information was provided to the journalist by following the RTI process. Some officials said they had been proactively disclosing information and data so there was no need for citizens to use RTI to demand information and data.

4.5 Gap/Barrier Analysis

4.5.1 Overview

This section assesses the gaps in producing and providing information and the challenges and barriers in accessing and using the information. The major challenges and barriers faced by respondents while accessing and using digital information were education (57%), language (49%), technology (45%), lack of interest (37%), data availability (33%) and presentation of information (26%). Interestingly, the cost of access (19%) and accessibility for the disabled (5%) were not identified as major barriers.

The most common barrier to access was education that is difficult to address. However, public agencies could efforts to ensure that information was available in local languages (the second barrier). Ability to use technology can be addressed by capacity building and for using simpler dissemination tools. The relatively high responses suggesting "lack of interest" was also a matter of concern and it suggested the need for awareness raising on how digital information could be used.

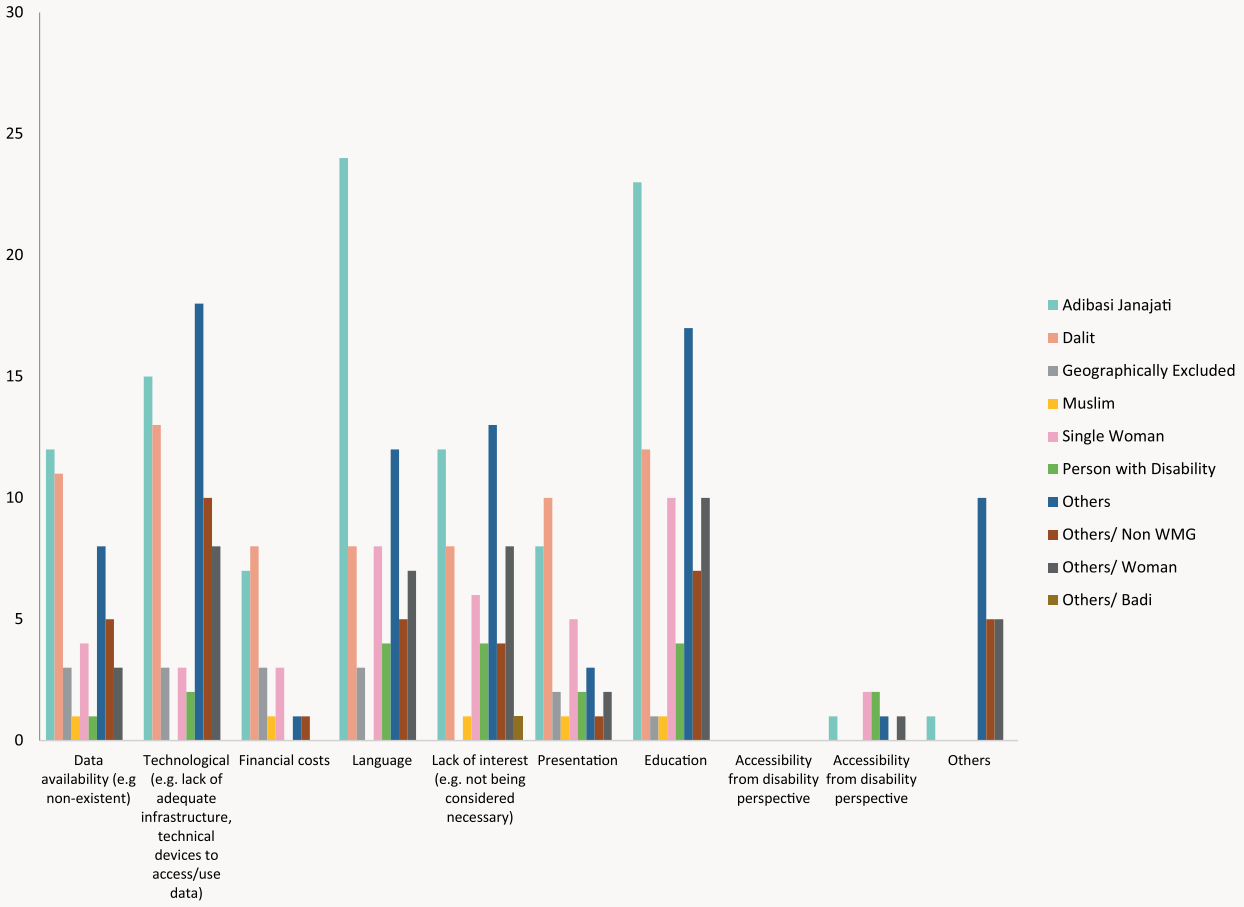
The FGD respondents echoed the same challenges in accessing and using digital data. The general challenges they mentioned were language problems, socio-cultural and religious beliefs, illiteracy and cost of access. Respondents said they knew

Table 13: Challenges and barriers in accessing and using digital data/ information

Challenges and barriers in accessing and using digital data/information	Frequency	Per cent
Data availability (e.g. non-existent)	40	33.33
Technological (e.g. lack of adequate infrastructure, technical devices to access/use data)	54	45.00
Financial costs	23	19.17
Language	59	49.17
Lack of interest (e.g. not being considered necessary)	44	36.67
Presentation	31	25.83
Education	68	56.67
Accessibility from disability perspective	6	5.00
Others	11	9.17

(Source: Household Survey)

Figure 8: Challenges and barriers in accessing and using digital data/information



how to use mobile phones but did not know how to search for data and information.

> A respondent in Achham said, even if the information and data were available online ordinary people lack technical knowledge, understanding of language (English) and are not interested and this digital access. WMGs also faced this challenge and they generally had lower levels of education.

A range of issues – such as high expectations from people from local governments, pledges and promises made by representatives during elections, limited human resources; and inadequate knowledge and experience on planning and development have created confusions among the target populations. Further, the prevalence of a culture of secrecy, and knowledge gap among many government officials on their responsibility to provide data and information for public consumption was a major challenge to promoting openness.

Additionally, both the demand and supply sides had strong attachments to hard copies, which has remained as an impediment to putting technology-driven measures data production, archiving and dissemination.

Other challenges, included discretionary responses while responding to demands for information, low awareness of information officers of the RTI process, including complaint and appeal; and reluctance to respond to requests (albeit limited) were some of the supply side problems. Low demand for information was another challenge.

The existing physical infrastructure and information on service delivery mechanisms were not user-friendly for people living with disability. Also the local governments did not use audio-visuals and digital notice boards to disseminate information.

The other challenges to openness were lack of skilled human resources, insufficient knowledge about the new political and administrative framework, geographical complexities (remoteness and scattered settlements), low education, etc.

4.6.2 Technology Use

Most of the wards used hard copy sheets and ledgers to keep records required for daily administrative and service delivery functions. The wards had not digitised data and information or made online disclosures, even though many municipalities had begun using technology-enabled tools for the purpose. Most wards had been using FM radio; newspapers, public notice boards and letters to disseminate information while some had begun using SMS and Facebook. Service recipients, including WMGs, tended to use the offline tools to receive information, as this did not require technological devices and the knowledge to use them.

Supply side respondents indicated that slow and unreliable Internet, insufficient skilled human resources and equipment, and the lack of computers, Internet and electricity at ward level, lack of data storage skills and limited offices space were some challenges.

4.6 What is needed to Address the Gaps/Barriers?

This section assesses the information needs of the respondent. The major areas where they needed information were target group plans and budgets (88%), information about bene-

Figure 9: Access to Data and Information Needs (%)

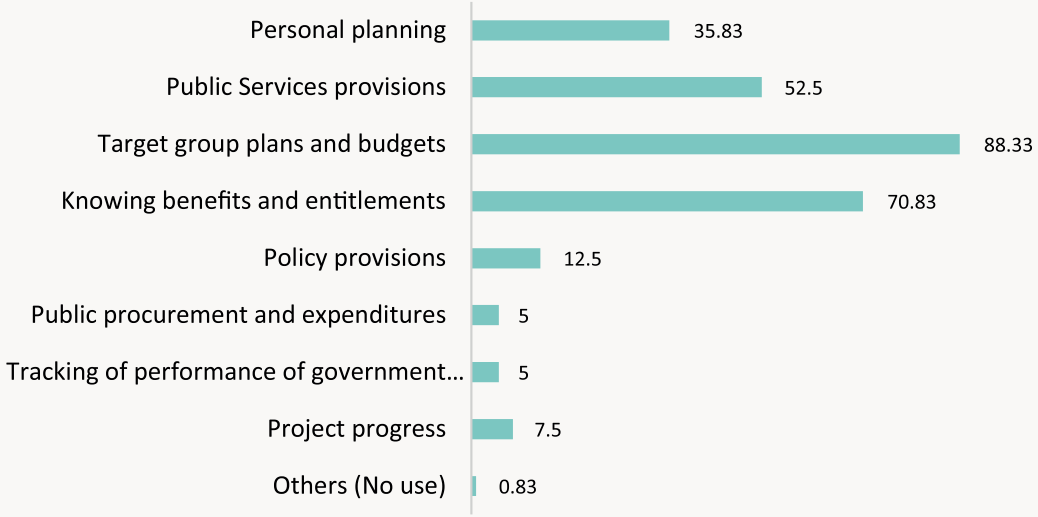


Table 14: What would help in making data and information more useful (%)?

What would help make the data and information more useful?	Percentage
Release in electronic format (as opposed to just on paper)	53
More regular dissemination of information	53
Release in more summary and simplified form (i.e. in less detail)	47
Release in 'open data' format (i.e. which is machine readable)	36
Presentation (e.g. info-graphics)	34
Less technical formats	32
Less technical/complicated language	27
Other	3

fits and entitlements (71%), and information on public service provision (53%). The other significant area of information need was personal information (36%) (Figure 9).

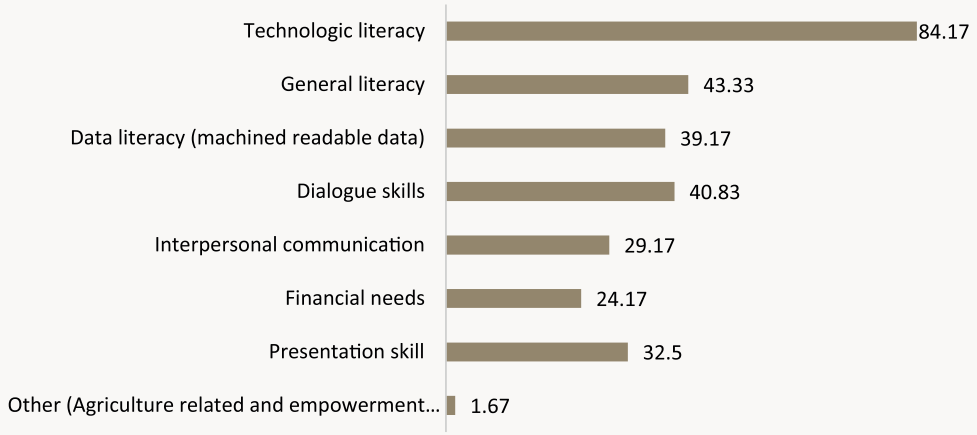
Respondents (52%) said data would be more useful if provided in the electronic format (as opposed to just on paper) and if information dissemination was more regular (53%). The response to other potential ways of ensuring ease of use were releasing information in summarised and simplified forms (47%), releasing data and information in open format (36%) and presentation of data (e.g. info-graphics) (34%) (See: Table 15).

The results above were similar for men and women except in two categories, namely presentation in less technical formats and use of info-graphics. In both cases, the percentage of women supporting this was around 25 percent, whereas more than 40 percent men supported both options. This is somewhat counter-intuitive since one might assume that women would generally prefer less technical formats.

Across different groups, single women and the other category had lower responses in most options. Generally, the educated respondents preferred more information/data in electronic and open data formats. Those with lower education preferred data/information in less technical formats. When asked to compare various online and offline technology platforms to access data and in-

Figure 10: Preference of technology/platforms for accessing data and information (%)

Figure 11: Capacity needs for accessing and using data and information (%)



formation, 69 percent respondents preferred offline platforms like radio, TV, newspaper, SMS, notice boards and oral communication. Thirty-one per cent preferred online platforms(Figure 10).

Technological literacy was a capacity need identified by over 84 per cent of respondents. Other capacities identified were general literacy (43%), dialogue skills (41%), data literacy (39%) and presentation skills (33%), (Figure 11).

Respondents said access to information held by local government could benefit them in many areas such as tracking social security allowances, knowing how to access services, understanding development plans and programmes, design future interventions regarding the working areas, participate in local governance process and allow citizens to provide constructive inputs to the local government.

FGD participants suggested several specific areas of information and data needed. The common areas identified were services, social security, approved budget and plans, programme for women, children, Dalit and people living with disabilities, local government taxes, and public expenditure. Other prioritised areas were development works, information on local government boundaries, tourism sites, road, agriculture, education, culture and economics, disaggregated demographic information, and employment and entitlements of different groups. The data needs for the people of Sindhupalchowk –a district that was badly affected by the 2015 earthquake – were related to reconstruction such as grant instalments, application process, house re-construction standards, and process. Other information needs were that on local development and governance, civic space and engagement in the decision-making process, roles and responsibilities of local governments, law-making process, local planning and service flow mechanisms, etc.

Respondents said there was need for capacity enhancement for all involved in the information ecology in supply and demand side. Most respondents said they required support for technical training and digital literacy measures.

Under the LGOA-2017, the mechanisms and spaces for civic engagement in the local governance process are available mainly in budgeting (policy, plan and programming), service design and delivery, civic oversight, feedback and complaints. The law has entrusted local governments with responsibility for maintaining and managing records and information by establishing ICT centres, and the execution of this requires the formulation of new laws, directives and procedural guidelines. Technology can help deliver citizen-centric, efficient and transparent local services.

Some respondents suggested the need for training on using computers and applications such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. Some said that the local government should provide such training to service recipients, including WMGs, while others said this was an area where intermediaries could take up the role. The respondents also underlined the need to create free Wi-Fi hotspots, provide technological device support and trainings on use of social accountability tools such as RTI and its processes, knowing and using civic engagement spaces, role and responsibilities of elected representatives, service flows and complaint registration, among others.

Access to Internet services and technological devices, including computers, was a need in most communities. There was limited availability of such devices at public libraries and centres.

Finally, information was not managed well at the municipalities. There was no dedicated data desk or department responsible for this. The wards had started producing and sending public service delivery-related information to local governments, but the latter did not have proper systems to manage the information. They also lacked disclosure systems.

Chapter 5

Key Findings

There has been a growth in government and civic initiatives, along with private sector engagement, around Open Data. Greater access to information can increase accountability and support wider participation, among others. Civic campaigns to promote demand for information have been growing alongside the NICs' proactive leadership, and capacity strengthening of the supply side. Still the use of RTI in the project districts was limited. Only seven of 120 respondents in the survey (6%) had filed a RTI request, and five of those making the requests had comparatively higher education. There was also some evidence that officials preferred to provide information informally rather than going through RTI process, while citizens were also reluctant to use it and instead preferred other ways to acquire the information.

Both RTI and Open Data share the goals of promoting transparency for participation and accountability. But there are important differences as well. RTI focuses on information, while Open Data is more focused copyright-free data. RTI is more about demanding information (requests), while Open Data focuses on the supply (proactive disclosure). Further, RTI is rights based, while open data more technologically driven.

There are a number of legal measures that support Open Data. In addition to the RTI Act, both the Good Governance Act and the Local Government Operation Act support openness and transparency. The expansion of telecommunications in Nepal -- particularly mobile phones -- provide an important support system for both e-governance and information disclosure.

There is growing interest from a growing community of practice about how access to and use of Open Data can be used to improve accountability and lead to more participatory and effective development at the Federal and local levels.

Key Federal government institutions involved in data production and sharing are the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture Development, Nepal Rastra Bank and the Nepal Reconstruction Authority. Further, a number of other ministries also generate data for day-to-day operations and to support government activities.

Some notable Open Data initiatives at the Federal level are the Smart Health Initiative, 2015 Earthquake: Open Data Portal, SDG Data Portal, Public Procurement Transparency Initiative, Aid Management Platform, Post-Earthquake Portal of Nepal's Aid Management Information Sys-

tem, Interactive Geographical Information System (GIS) portal, and e-registrations at the Company Registrar's Office. Other government initiatives include the National Emergency Operations Centre, Department of Hydrology's flood forecasting project, Department of Environment's air quality monitoring project and Prime Minister's Disaster Relief Fund. Officials used a variety of tools to disseminate information, including websites and Facebook, in addition to more traditional approaches such as the legacy media, bulletin boards, personal contacts and even face-to-face interactions (e.g. door-to-door methods).

Some Open Data initiatives in civil society are the Open Nepal, Nepal in Data and the Open Street Map portals. In addition, there has been a growth of data driven journalism.

Local governments produced a lot of data/information of importance to the public, although it varied from context to context. Information disseminated was aggregated rather than granular, in contrast to Open Data principles and there were also problems with dissemination. Standardised website templates have been made available to local governments that they have begun using. However, few local governments had appointed PIOs as required by the RTI law and there was limited demand for information making use of the RTI provisions, including by WMGs. Local governments also failed to meet the proactive publication requirements of the RTI Act. Some FGD respondents said publicly available information was not adequate to meet their needs, especially on the accountability side.

However, local governments do have some important future plans. These include, variously increasing their production and dissemination of digital information, improving use of websites, introducing digital awareness training in schools, recruiting IT officers and better tailoring dissemination using digital tools, including Facebook.

The range of Open Data users has been growing. Citizens used it for accessing services while CSOs used it for advocacy and analysis, acting as intermediaries (along with the media) and also for transforming non-open data into machine-readable formats. Government used it for policy and programming work.

According to the HH survey, the most common purpose for accessing open data was for budget purposes (33%), to learn about accessing services (21%), municipal plans (19%), and to engage with local government (10%). Respondents used and reused data for sharing (69%), personal reasons (44%), for participating in decision-making(27%) and 19 percent used it to develop awareness-raising materials (i.e. intermediaries). This finding was also largely consistent for women and WMGs.

In terms of data/information needs, that on target group plans was 88 per cent, followed by learning about benefits and entitlements (71%), the provision of public services (53%) and personal planning (36%). Once again, this was consistent for gender and WMG disaggregated figures.

A majority (97%) of respondents said they aware about local government services. But responses on awareness of specific services resulted otherwise. Knowledge about vital event registration was highest (85%), followed by for basic health and social security (70%), drinking water/alternative energy, local roads and agricultural services(over 60 per cent), and it was above 50 per cent for local development plans and basic education. For eight other services,

the awareness was below 50 per cent. Generally, awareness was lower among Adibasi Janajati, Dalits, persons with disabilities and single women. Lack of awareness was high among those with lower levels of education.

Ninety per cent respondents agreed that availability of information on services was important, but 91 per cent single women disagreed, suggesting that their access may not be at par with others.

Most WMGs preferred to obtain information through personal contacts, media (radio, TV, newspaper), telephone, social mobilisers, notice boards and third party intermediaries, with the preferences varying among different groups. The less educated groups also had similar responses. While useful, some of these mechanisms have clear disadvantages. Contacts are obviously not equal among citizens, while notice boards require you to be physically present at the specific location to access information.

Respondents had made very few RTI requests -- 94 per cent said never done the same. Another 86 per cent said that the data they had downloaded was not easy to understand, suggesting a clear need for improvement. Further, 68 per cent said they were aware about proactive disclosure.

In terms of how the data would help them, respondents agreed with only three of the nine suggested responses at a rate of above 50 percent: increasing general awareness (69%), making it easier to access public services (63%) and reducing time and effort in accessing services (51%). However, 88 per cent respondents felt the need to access information from local government, although a large proportion of Janajati respondents (21%) disagreed. At the same time, only 41 per cent of respondents had actually accessed information from local government, and 88 per cent of these respondents had not been able to get the information they needed. However, only 42 per cent said that the information fully served them, while 58 percent said their purposes were only partially served. This suggests a need for local governments to improve the information provided and also a need for more respondents to seek information.

Acquisition of public information/data through personal contact with officials and elected representatives was the most common means used, followed by information from social mobilisers, telephone, notices/announcements and third party intermediaries (local CSOs).

Forty-three respondents (36%) had accessed information online at least once. Social media/networks topped the online mechanisms used (51%) followed by websites/public portals (23%), email (21%) and mobile apps (14%). The WMGs and persons with disabilities accessed data mainly through social media networks and websites/portals.

A large number of actors – including community-based centres, groups and organisations, university teachers, researchers, tech communities, social activists, social mobilisers, CSO/NGOs, and media – served as intermediaries at the local level. Among these, local CSOs/NGOs, media and ISPs were most visible. Among other things, intermediaries shared information to promote better access to government services, and to support advocacy work and other forms of participation. Disaster preparedness and relief was also a major area for open data, particularly after the April 2015 earthquake.

According to the survey, the main barriers to access and use digital information were education (57%), language (49%), and technology (45%). Others were lack of interest (37%), data availability (33%), and presentation of information (26%). Interestingly, cost (19%) and accessibility for the disabled (5%) were not seen as major barriers. This suggests need for a combination of awareness raising measures (to address lack of interest); capacity building and supporting access to technology as some intervention areas. In terms of technology, mobile phones were most widely distributed.

The shift to local governance had brought about a number of challenges. There were challenges in terms of human resources, as well as cultural values (such as a culture of secrecy and a preference for hard copies of documents). Lack of awareness about RTI on both sides – supply and demand – was another challenge. There were also important challenges in terms of the existing physical infrastructure and information delivery mechanisms for persons living with disabilities. Remote and scattered geographical communities also posed distribution challenges.

Many information systems at the local level were still offline (preference for hard copies and ledgers). Some progress was evident in terms of use of SMS and Facebook. The same challenges were true on the demand side, with many, especially WMGs, lacking access to digital devices other than a mobile phone. There was also an awareness gap about digital devices. Basic reliable and affordable Internet access was also a problem in some communities.

The most preferred options for providing information to the respondents were using electronic format (as opposed to paper only), and more regular dissemination (both 53%), more summarised/simplified versions (47%), open data formats (36%), and in understandable formats/presentation (e.g. info-graphics) (34%), among others. However, when asked to choose between online and offline formats, 69percent preferred offline platforms.

Technological literacy (84%) was the most needed capacity intervention. It was followed by general literacy (43%), dialogue skills (41%), data literacy (39%) and presentation skills (33%). Among digital literacy skills, respondents said they most needed basic computer training, mobile (SMS) use training, using the Internet, and use of social media, mainly Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Information need was highest in terms of the following services: social security, approved budget and plans, programmes for women, children, Dalits and people living with disabilities; local government taxes and public expenditure.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Recommendations

Information held by public authorities can not only improve access to government services but also improve the design and delivery of those services. It supports increased government accountability, reduces corruption and encourages participation. However, in a situation of unequal access, these effects can also be unequal, often leading to a situation where groups in society that are already better off become more advantaged.

Technology can playa facilitating role in reducing unequal access to data and information, enriching understanding of operation of government (including local government), and helping citizens to engage through informed participation in governance processes. Using online mechanisms to disseminate information can help reach larger sections of the population. It can assist in reducing administrative hassles and the costs of disseminating public data and information. Further, it can save time spent by data users in accessing public information. However, a one-size-fits-all approach cannot be effective in terms of delivery of technological tools, keeping in mind the diversity of beneficiaries in terms of capacity, education, awareness and technical know-how. Such diversity is also true among WMGs.

Open Data -- data/information disseminated in open (machine-readable) formats, copyright free, and free of cost -- represents a high standard for proactive disclosure. While it will not be possible to move immediately to this for all proactive disclosures, it should be the longer-term goal. This also needs to be accompanied by a strong reactive disclosure mechanism, so that citizens can demand and access the information they need, regardless of what government has chosen to disclose proactively.

Nepal has made important advances in information dissemination in recent years in government and in the private sector, including civil society. But much remains to be done. Full implementation of the RTI Act has remained weak even though there have been improvements in proactive disclosure. There have been little or no efforts towards tailoring dissemination to ensure information reaches WMGs and people with disabilities.

The following are some key recommendations:

- Widespread interventions need to be devised to translate potential benefits of Open Data into reality. These include technical support to strengthen local systems, incentives and opportunities to support local government to embrace technology, transparency and accountability, and support for raising awareness of all actors to access and data/information.

- Local governments need to improve significantly in terms of service-wide data and information production, and archiving systems. The goal should be to satisfy citizens' information needs at all levels, including that on access to services to enhance their capacities to hold government to account. This information is also important for them to participate as informed citizens in planning and other decision-making processes.
- As far as possible, local government information systems should move towards digital formats. Local governments should work towards digitising data production, entry, coding and dissemination to support 'information and data for all' and to ensure no one is left behind. As a first step, local government should digitise and disseminate data and information in the five most needed areas: municipal budget and programmes, provision of public services, municipal policy and plans, municipal decisions and public notices and announcements.
- Key online systems include social networking sites (such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.), interactive websites, data portals, mobile apps and digital citizen charters. Given that mobile phones, including smart phones, are widely available, special efforts should be made to develop information dissemination compatible tools for these devices.
- The local government should also disseminate information using offline tools and mechanisms. This can assist both reactive and proactive disclosures and could take place through media (radio and print), third party social mobilisation, mobile SMS (both text and voice), notice boards, citizens charter, audio-visual clips with captions, narrow casting and documentary screening, dedicated publications related to public services, toll free number/hotline, and help desk.
- Both the Federal and local governments should comply with rules regarding the proactive disclosure as set out in the RTI Act. As far as possible, this information should be disseminated in machine-readable formats and in granular form as much as possible.
- Disclosure should take into account the needs of people from different backgrounds, including WMGs and persons living with disabilities, and particularly, the need to increase access for this group to information to facilitate their informed engagement in local decision-making processes. Targeted approaches to data and information literacy and dissemination are the other interventions required.
- Capacity building plans (training, orientation and exposure visits) for newly elected representatives and administrative staffs need to incorporate sessions on specific skills (mentioned above), taking into account the desire for government to improve their data and information management, analysis and dissemination skills.
- Interventions should also be designed to encourage people to use RTI to obtain the information they require. Massive public awareness campaigns about the RTI Act are needed, along with capacity support on the supply side on information management and for changing cultural attitudes that prevent openness.
- Major capacity building initiatives also need to be directed at citizens, particularly WMGs to ensure that they are aware of the information that is available, understand the uses of information and on using technology to maximise access to information.

- Interventions to support local information intermediaries are required for taking full advantage of their potential to interpret and analyse, and deliver information to citizens.
- Regular thematic dialogues among different actors and stakeholders need to be held to identify data needs, challenges and solutions.
- National level advocacy efforts should be targeted towards creating an enabling environment for the government to adopt the National Action Plan on Open Government Data submitted by National Information Commission and to join the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in a coordinated manner.
- The central and local governments should direct investments towards digital literacy, information demand and supply, capacities of information intermediaries, infrastructure development, technological devices, awareness raising, capacity building of human resources and for setting up digital information management systems at the Federal, provincial and local levels.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Households Survey

Households Survey Questionnaire

The purpose of this survey is to map and analyse the existing open data initiative at local government level in order to help the project design tools and mechanisms for public sector accountability through the integrated technologies. It is intended to identify gaps in the digitisation of public data and information by local government and explore opportunities for promoting proactive disclosure of public information and data. The survey will also identify opportunities for WMGs engagement to foster responsive, inclusive and accountable governance.

The survey is being conducted by Freedom Forum as part of Sustainable Use of Technology for Public Sector Accountability in Nepal (SUSASAN) – a project implemented by CECI. All responses are confidential and will not be attributed to any individual or specific organisation. We expect you will help us by providing true data and information.

Section i. General Information

1) Household Number: ……(Achham: 01-100; Bajhang: 101-200; Dadeldhura: 201-300; Kailali: 301-400; Lalitpur: 401-500; Sindhupalchowk: 501-600)
2) Full Name of Respondent: ……
3) Age Group(Please tick as appropriate)
   a. <20
   b. 21-30
   c. 31-40
   d. 41-50
   e. 51-60
   f. 60+
4) Gender: M ☐ F ☐ TG ☐
5) District: …… Code :
   (Achham: 01; Bajhang 02; Dadeldhura; 03; Kailali:04; Lalitpur: 05; Sindhupalchowk: 06;

6) Gaupalika/Municipality with ward. (Please select as appropriate)

SN	District	Municipality	Wards	Gaupalika	Wards
1	Achham	Sanphebagar	4☐8☐	Banigadhi-Jaygadh	3☐5☐
2	Bajhang	Jayprithvi	10☐	Masta	4☐6☐
3	Dadeldhura	Amargadhi	5☐10☐	Navadurga	2☐3☐
4	Lalitpur	-		Konjyosom	1☐2☐
	Lalitpur	-		Bagmati	3☐
5	Kailali	Dhangadhi	1☐15☐	Kailari	1☐5☐
6	Sindhupalchok	Barabise	4☐8☐	Sunkoshi	1☐7☐

7) Tole :…….
8) Caste and Ethnicity: (Please specify)): ……Code :
9) Women and Marginalised Group: i) Dalit ii) Person With Disability iii) AdibasiJanajati iv) Muslim v) Geographically Excluded vii) Tharu viii) Single Woman ix) others (Please specify ….)
10) If the respondent is person with disability please specify the types of disability Please tick (✓)as appropriate
    a. Physical Impairment
    b. Visual Impairment (e.g. blind, low vision)
    c. Hearing Impairment (e.g. deaf, hard of hearing)
    d. Deaf blind
    e. Psycho-social Impairment (e.g. mental illness, autism)
    f. Multi-disability
    g. Others, specify……
11) Major livelihood sources: (Please tick as appropriate)
    a. No source of income
    b. Business/self-employment
    c. Farming
    d. Fishing
    e. Private employment
    f. Government employed
    g. Others, specify _____
12) Where do you rank your family: 1=Rich 2= Middle Class 3= Poor 4= No Response
13) Educational Qualification: 1=Illiterate 2=Literate 3=Below SLC/SEE: 4=SLC/SEE 5=Higher Secondary 6= Bachelor 7=Masters and above
    Literate: ability to read and write with understanding and to perform simple arithmetic calculations (CBS, 1995, 2001 census)

Section II: Understanding About Public Services from the Local Government

14. Are you aware of the services being delivered by local government?
    a. Yes
    b. No

14.1 If yes, what do they deliver? Please tick (✓) as appropriate
    a. Formulation of local acts, policies, plans and programmes
    b. Peace and security
    c. Local level development plan and projects
    d. Basic and Secondary education
    e. Basic health, hygiene and sanitation
    f. Forest, environment and bio-diversity conservation
    g. Local roads, rural roads, agriculture roads and irrigation
    h. Land ownership registration certification
    i. Agriculture and Livestock service
    j. Social Security
    k. Drinking water, micro-hydro and alternative energy
    l. Disaster risk reduction and management
    m. Conservation and development of languages, culture and fine arts
    n. Vital event registrations, certification and recommendations
    o. Judicial service
    p. Grievance redressal
15. Are you aware of the local government services and entitlements to targeted groups?
    a. Yes
    b. No

16. How do you agree that making local government information related to public services made available to the public is beneficial?
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. isagree
    d. Strongly disagree
    e. Neither agree nor disagree

Section III: Accessing Public Data and Information

This part of the survey is intended to assess the ways regarding the use of public service related data and information, the availability of this information and any gaps.

17. Have you ever felt need of accessing public information/data from your local government?
    a. Yes
    b. No
18. Have you ever accessed information/data from local government?
    a. Yes

b. No

19. Usually for what purpose you access public data and information? (Tick (✓)as appropriate)
    a. Knowing about the municipal policies and plan
    b. Knowing about the programmes and budget
    c. Knowing about the provisions of public services
    d. Engaging with municipal governance process (Such as planning, budget ing, project implementation, monitoring, interface and dialogue with municipality)
20. Were you able to get the information/data you required?
    a. Yes
    b. No
21. If yes, does that information/data serve your purpose?
    a. Fully served
    b. Partially served
    c. Not served

22. What sorts of public data and information would be useful to you? (Tick (✓)as appropriate)
    a. Municipal policy and plans
    b. Municipal budget and programmes
    c. Provisions of public services
    d. Municipal decisions
    e. Progress reports
    f. Public procurement
    g. Audit reports (financial, performance)
    h. Public notice/announcements
    i. Statistics (e.g. socioeconomic and demographic information)
    j. Public directories (e.g. addresses and contact information)
    k. Other (Please elaborate in more detail on the types of data and information that you would be particularly interested in accessing :)

    _____
    _____
    _____

23. How do you access public data and information?

(Tick (✓)as appropriate)

25.1 Online mechanisms:
    a. Through websites/public portals ☐
    b. Via social networking sites such as facebook, twitter, instagram ☐
    c. Through email ☐
    d. Mobile Apps ☐

25.2 Offline mechanisms
    a. Through personal contacts with officials and elected representatives ☐
    b. Through offline media (radio, TV, newspaper) ☐
    c. Through mobile SMS ☐
    d. Through telephone ☐

e. Via a press conference or press release ☐
f. Via right to information requests ☐
g. Through public notices/announcements ☐
h. Through social mobiliser ☐
i. Through IEC Materials ☐
j. Digital display/notice board ☐
k. Third party intermediaries (e.g. local CSO)☐
l. If others, please specify _____

24. In which forms and formats the public data and information you received in electronic version from the local government? (Tick (✓)as appropriate)
    a. PDF
    b. MS Word
    c. Website text
    d. Excel file
    e. Comma separated files
    f. GIS
    g. Others (please specify……)
25. Have you ever made a RTI request to obtain information from government agencies particularly from local government?
    a. Yes
    b. No

26. Are you aware that it is mandatory to local government to proactively disclose certain set of public information available to citizens?
    a. Yes
    b. No
27. Are you aware of such disclosure from your local government through any online platforms or mechanism as well?
    a. Yes
    b. No

Section IV: Digital Access to Public Data and Information

28. Are you aware of difference between data and information?
    a. Yes
    b. No

29. Did you ever access any data?
    a. Yes
    b. No

30. Do you understand data?
    a. Yes
    b. No

31. Can you download the data of your need from online source?
    a. Yes
    b. No

32. Is the downloaded data understandable?
    a. Yes
    b. No

33. Does the data is in useful format to serve your data need?
    a. Yes
    b. No

34. How does the data help you?(Tick (☐)as appropriate)
    a. Increasing general awareness
    b. Making it easier to access public service
    c. Reducing costs in obtaining services
    d. Reducing time and effort in accessing services
    e. Increasing efficiency and innovation
    f. Enabling participation in democratic decision-making process
    g. Holding local government to account
    h. Understanding local government's decisions
    i. Demanding transparency/accountability
    j. Others, please specify ……..

35. How do you use and re-use data? (Tick (☐)as appropriate)
    a. Sharing
    b. For personal use reasons
    c. Developing awareness raising materials
    d. Preparing advocacy issues
    e. Sensitizing local government officials/people representatives on development
    f. Participation in decision-making process
    g. If others, please specify …….

Section V: Areas of Need of Public Data and Information

36. What are the areas of your data and information need? (Only tick (☐)the first three priorities)
    a. Personal planning
    b. Target group plans and budgets
    c. Public Services provisions
    d. Policy provisions
    e. Knowing benefits and entitlements
    f. Tracking of performance of government officials
    g. Public procurement and expenditures
    h. Project progress

i. If others, please specify ……

37. What would help make the data and information more useful?(Tick (✓)as appropriate)
    a. Release in electronic format (as opposed to just on paper) ☐
    b. Release in 'open data' format (i.e. which is machine readable) ☐
    c. Release in more summary and simplified form (i.e. in less detail) ☐
    d. Less technical/complicated language ☐
    e. Less technical formats ☐
    f. More regular dissemination of information ☐
    g. Presentation (e.g. info-graphics) ☐
    h. Other _____

38. Which platforms of technologies do you prefer for accessing data and info?
    a. Online (like website, facebook, twitter, online news media, digital notice board , email)
    b. Off-line (like radio, television, newspaper, SMS, notice board, oral)

Section VI: Barriers/Challenges

39. What are the challenges and barriers you see in accessing and using digital data/information related to public service? (Tick (✓)as appropriate)
    a. Data availability (e.g non-existent)
    b. Financial costs
    c. Technological (e.g. lack of adequate infrastructure, technical devices to access/use data)
    d. Lack of interest (e.g. not being considered necessary)
    e. Language
    f. Education
    g. Presentation
    h. Accessibility from disability perspective
    i. If others, please specify.....

40. What are your capacity needs in accessing and using data and information from local government agencies?
    a. Technologic literacy
    b. Data literacy (machined readable data)
    c. General literacy
    d. Interpersonal communication
    e. Dialogue skills
    f. Presentation skill
    g. Financial needs
    h. If other, please specify ……..

Section VII: Recommendations

41.Please provide specific recommendations on the ways your data and information needs can be addressed in receiving public services and advancing your engagement with local government.

General questions	Recommendations
1) What is your main recommendation to local government about data/information?; 2) Do you feel you need training or awareness raising about data/information; 3) If so, what are your main training needs (provide a list and then 'other'?; 4) Would it be more useful for you for government to focus on offline or online dissemination of data/ information? 5) Please rate the public services in terms of importance of making more data/information available 6) Do you face any other barriers in accessing information (could perhaps suggest any discrimination)?	1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

Full name of the Enumerator: ……
Survey Start Time: ……
Survey Finish Time: ……
Date of the Survey……

The End

Annex 2: Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Checklist for KII (Mayor/Deputy Mayor or Chairperson/Deputy Chairperson or Chief Administrative Officer)

Section A: General Information

1.	Participant's Name:	
2.	Municipality/Gaupalika:	
3.	Date (dd/mm/yyyy):	
4.	Time at beginning of interview:	
5.	Time at end of interview:	
6.	Interviewer:	.....

Section B: Background Information

1.	Participant's age:		Years
2.	Ethnicity/Caste		
3.	Participant's sex (please put an **X** in the appropriate box)		
			Female
			Male
			Others
4.	Educational attainment (please put an **X** in the appropriate box)		
			Secondary
			Higher Secondary
			Bachelors Degree
			Masters Degree / Post Graduate
			M. Phil. and Ph.D
			Other:
5.	what is your current position?		

Section C: Background Information

Areas	Responses
Production, public availability and use of Public Data and Information	
What are the specific data and information being produced by the local government?	
What are the thematic areas of data collection?	
What system are you using to manage and archive data and information?	
What are the data and information being made available to general public?	
How do you disseminate the data/information publicly? Do you have any special means to get the information to WMGs?	
To what extent is public data and information available in digital formats? (versus available only on papers) What about in open versus fixed formats (pdf)?	
How do citizens make use of the data and information being produced by local governments? What about specifically WMGs?	
Do groups such as local CSO and journalists make the use of the information? Do they act as intermediaries in providing the information to local citizens? Do they do anything special to reach WMGs?	
Capacity and commitment regarding disclosure of Public Data and Information	
To what extent is there political commitment from elected representatives to ensure citizen's access to information, transparency and accountability?	
What tools and mechanisms do the local government use in making the information available to the public? (Please specify digital and non-digital tools)	
To what extent are civil servants sufficiently skilled and resourced to digitise and disclose public information using tech tools?	
What are the key needs here (in terms of training, more staff, equipment)?	
What are the policy provisions that enable disclosure of data and information? (e.g government/local government policies and directives, Acts)	
How do civil servants respond to citizen's requests for public information? Have you ever had a request under the RTI law? How did you respond to it?	
Are you able to assess what information citizens needs? What about specifically WMGs? How?	

Gaps and Barriers for disclosing public data and information (Civic engagement and capability)	
Are there any policy constraints that limit the local government to disclose data/information?	
What are the technical challenges they are facing in disclosing information? (e.g infrastructures, internet access, electricity, technical devices, data storage)	
What other challenges are being faced in doing this job? (e.g lack of human resource, culture, lack of interest/ motivation)	
Future Plans for Further Improvements	
Do they have any plans to make more public data and information in coming days?	
If so please list five main types of new information/data that you plan to make available. (Listing plan of the local governments for making more data public in coming days)	
What plans, if any, do you have to use technology (both online and offline) to improve the dissemination of information?	
Do you have plans to promote access of citizens having different forms of disabilities to the information and data of their needs?	
What are the areas that the use of technology could make differences to citizens? What about specifically WMGs?	
Do you have any plans and programmes to implement efficient production, sharing and archiving public data and information?	
Do you have any plan and programmes to build capacity of employees in using tech tools for disseminating public data and information?	
What needs do you have – in terms of staff, training, equipment – to implement your future plans?	
What are the incentives/motivations that encourage them to do so?	
Cross-cutting – Gender and Social Inclusion	
To what extent are there programmes to address the digital divide? What about specifically in relation to gender? Discuss the situation of gender and social inclusion with reference to the local government's works on disclosure of public data and information in order to facilitate their engagement	

Note: Enumerator can request the key informant to invite other members of his team to respond to the questions. For example if Mayor is the key informant, s/he can invite Chief Administrative Officer, IT officer and other as and when necessary.

KII Checklist for Chairperson of Ward (Municipality / Gaupalika)

Section A: General Information

1.	Participant's Name:	
2.	Municipality:	
3.	Date (dd/mm/yyyy):	
4.	Time at beginning of interview:	
5.	Time at end of interview:	
6.	Interviewer:	.....

Section B: Background Information

1.	Participant's age:		Years
2.	Ethnicity/Caste		
3.	Participant's sex (please put an **X** in the appropriate box)		
			Female
			Male
			Others
4.	Educational attainment (please put an **X** in the appropriate box)		
			Secondary
			Higher Secondary
			Bachelors Degree
			Masters Degree / Post Graduate
			M. Phil. and Ph.D
			Other:

Section C:

	Areas	Response
1.	What are your major roles/responsibilities in managing records and data for public service delivery? Are you aware of this according to law?	
2.	How do you ensure your political/administrative commitment to facilitate citizen's access to information, transparency and accountability in public service delivery?	
3.	What are the specific public data and information being produced by the ward? How do you keep data and information? Please describe both digital and non-digital means.	
4.	How do citizens focusing WMGs make use of the data and information being produced by ward?	
5.	How do actors (like journalists, CSOs and researchers) make use of the data and information? Do they act as intermediaries, in the sense of facilitating access by others? Do they play any special role in relation to WMGs?	
6.	Do you have information/IT section at the ward level? Is it equipped with necessary human and technological sources?	
7.	To what extent are civil servants sufficiently skilled and resourced to digitise and disclose public information using tech tools?	
8.	What data/information at the Ward level are you disseminating to the public? What are the existing tools and mechanisms for data/information disclosure at ward level? Please list online (e.g website, facebook page, SMS, mobile apps) and offline mechanisms (radio, newspaper, notice board etc)	
9.	What are the barriers and challenges (e.g technical, cultural, infrastructure) in terms of access to public data and information by citizens? What about especially WMGs?	
10.	What are the needs of the ward office in terms of data/information capacity? Distinguish between the need for more people, for training and for equipment.	
11.	Have there been requests for data/information at your office? How did you respond to them. What about specific requests under the RTI law? Again, how did you respond to RTI requests?	
12.	How could the ward office improve the presentation of data/information? Which are the fields where the digitisation and disclosure of data could make a difference to WMGs?	
13.	How do you assess what information citizens need? Do you have any means to assess the specific information needs of WMGs? If so, what are they?	
14.	What is your future plan to provide more information to support informed citizen engagement in local government? Are there any specific plans to try to provide information for women? What about marginalised groups?	
15.	Final remarks (if any)	

Consultation Checklist for Internet Service Provider (NTC/NTA or Ncell or WLINK or SUBISU)

Section A: Service Providers' Information

1.	Name of Respondent:		
2.	Company:		
3.	Address : City/Village:		
4.	Date (dd/mm/yyyy):		
5.	Time at beginning of interview:		
6.	Time at end of interview:		
7.	Interviewer:		
6.	Participant's age:		
7.	Ethnicity/Caste		
8.	Participant's sex (please put an X in the appropriate box)		
		Female	
		Male	
		Others	
9.	Educational attainment (please put an X in the appropriate box)		
		Secondary	
		Higher Secondary	
		Bachelors Degree	
		Masters Degree / Post Graduate	
		M. Phil. and Ph.D	
		Other:	

Section B: IT Information

1.	What are the online and offline services beingprovided by your company?
2.	Are they helpful for facilitating the sharing of public information? (both offline and online) how?
3.	What are the technologies that can be helpful to common citizen (illiterate, poor, person with disability)? (ask in points and how they are useful)
4.	Have you worked with any government office? If yes, what are the services are you providing? Do they facilitate the dissemination of public information? How?
5.	What are the common difficulties/ challenges using information sharing technologies in government offices? How might these be addressed?

6. What are the other areas that you can work with government office?

Offline Services			
SN	Services	Function	Particularly beneficial to
Online Services			

7.	Can technology help local government effectively disseminate information? How do the technologies contribute citizens (WMGs) better access local government information?	
8.	Which types of technology (both offline and online) do you think more feasible/effective in your area? What about specifically to promote greater access to information by WMGs?	
9.	What measures, if any,are you putting in place to ensure easy and reliable interment access? What about to increase awareness about how to use technology?	
10.	What inputs would help to make your future plans more effective? (please do not refer to providing financial support here)	
	Thank you for your Time! General thoughts, impressions, or observations from the interview:	

Annex 3: Checklist for Focus Group Discussion

Checklist for KII (Mayor/Deputy Mayor or Chairperson/Deputy Chairperson or Chief Administrative Officer)

Place: Date: Time
Begins:
Ends:

A. Attendance

S.N.	Participants' Name	Organisation	Group					Position
			Age	Sex	Caste	Ethnicity	WMGs?	
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								
6.								
7.								
8.								
9.								
10.								
11.								
12.								

B. Checklist for Focus Group Discussion and Exercises
Method: Plenary discussions. (Please collect and report the responses from participant's cross sections)

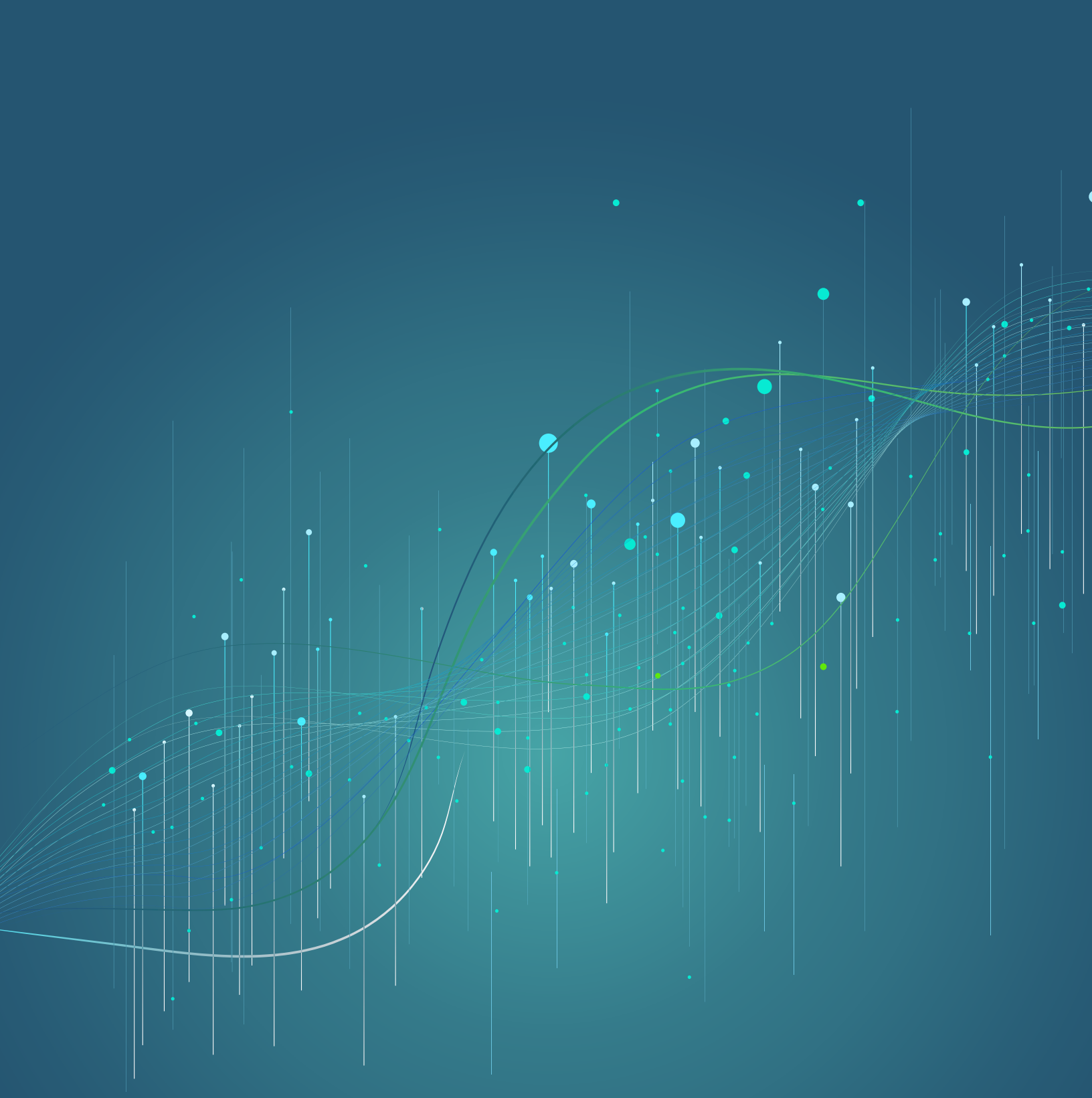
Areas	Response
Availability of Public Data and Information (This will create an environment for further discussions.)	
Do you know the difference between data and information?	
What public data and information are generally available from the local government? In what different ways is this information disseminated? Are they available online? Are the data made available in open formats (e.g Excel, CSV, Word)?	
Does the currently publicly available data and information related to public services meet your needs? If not, what other data/information would you need?	
Accessibility of Public Data and Information (List the data/information accessed, purposes for accessing, online and off-line mechanisms, areas of RTI requests and information received.)	

Did you access any data? Have you ever accessed data and information from local government? Are they free?	
For what purpose you access these data and information? Were you able to access the data you required?	
How do you access public data and information? Please list online and offline mechanisms. If online, was the data/information machine readable or in a fixed format (i.e. like .pdf)?	
Have they ever made a request to obtain information from government agencies particularly from local government? What happened? What about a specific request under the RTI law? Again, what happened?	
Use/re-use and benefits of Public Data and Information (Note the use and re-use of public data and information)	
How do you use and re-use the publicly accessible data and information?	
What are the areas of your data/information need?	
What areas would benefits from the availability and accessibility of public data and information of the local government?	
Where do you see the role of technology to support the provision of information to citizens, especially to help them engage in decision-making process regarding public services at local level? Does it help? If not, why?	
Gaps/Barriers in accessing Public Data and Information (List the technical, cultural, financial, education and other challenges ; List the tools and mechanisms ; Note anecdotal stories explaining barriers in accessing information/data)	
Are you facing any challenges in accessing public data and information? Please specify the technical, cultural, financial, education barriers	
What sorts of tools and mechanisms should the government develop to address these barriers in facilitating access?	
Capacity Needs (List out the areas where capacity is required , List the potential intermediaries)	
What are the areas of your capacity needs in accessing and using publicly available data and information? How does it help your informed participation in local government affairs?What about other needs (e.g. is the cost of access to technology an issue; do you lack appropriate equipment)?	
Do you see any role of intermediaries to help you understand and use data and information? If yes who may be helpful? How might they help you?	
Gender and Social Inclusion (List the measures as recommendations)	
What measures should be taken to onboard WMGs to the use of technology to access information relating to local government affairs?	
Final Remarks if any:	

Annex 4: Sample Plan

Districts	Household Survey (HHs)								KII	FGD	Consultations
	Municipality	Ward	Sample subtotal WMGs	Sample disaggregation							
				Women*	MGs except women	Youth***	Non WMGs**				
Achham	BannigadhiJayagadh	3	5	3	2	1	3	2	4		
	BannigadhiJayagadh	5	5	3	2	1	3	2			
	Safebagar	4	5	3	2	1	3	2			
	Safebagar	8	5	3	2	1	3	2			
	subtotal		20	12	8	4	12	8			
Bajhang	Jayaprithvi	4	5	3	2	1	3	2	4	2	
	Jayaprithvi	8	5	3	2	1	3	2			
	Masta	4	5	3	2	1	3	2			
	Masta	6	5	3	2	1	3	2			
	subtotal		20	12	8	4	12	8			
Dadeldhura	Amargadhi	5	5	3	2	1	3	2	4	2	
	Amargadhi	10	5	3	2	1	3	2			
	Nawadurga	2	5	3	2	1	3	2			
	Nawadurga	3	5	3	2	1	3	2			
	subtotal		20	12	8	4	12	8			
Kailali	Dhangadhi	1	5	3	2	1	3	2	4	2	
	Dhangadhi	15	5	3	2	1	3	2			
	Kailari	1	5	3	2	1	3	2			
	Kailari	5	5	3	2	1	3	2			
	subtotal		20	12	8	4	12	8			
Lalitpur	Bagmati	3	5	3	2	1	3	2	4	2	
	Bagmati	3	5	3	2	1	3	2			
	Konjyosom	1	5	3	2	1	3	2			
	Konjyosom	2	5	3	2	1	3	2			
	subtotal		20	12	8	4	12	8			
Sindhupalchowk	Barabise	4	5	3	2	1	3	2	4	2	
	Barabise	8	5	3	2	1	3	2			
	Sunkoshi	7	5	3	2	1	3	2			
	Sunkoshi	1	5	3	2	1	3	2			
	subtotal		20	12	8	4	12	8			

Kathmandu			0	0	0	0	0	0	2		Total Consultations 7 (All at Federal Level)
KII, FGD total				0	0	0	0	0	Total KII 26	Total FGD 12	
Sample subtotal			120	72	48	24	72	48	26	12*6=72	7
Total respondents involved in the Open Data Mapping study will be 218+7=225											
* Prioritize vulnerable women (disable, single, ethnic minority, poor etc.) as it can be very depending upon the field situation. Overall representation of women in the sample is 60%. ** Non WMGs can be privileged male (eg. Brahmins, Kshetris, Thakuri…) *** Youth should also be the priority and the number to reach youth in the sample is based on ideal estimation of reaching 50% youth as per the project target											
Note: Sample disaggregation for HH survey is purposively disaggregated considering the project target to represent them throughout the research process and will report accordingly. Selection of the respondent will also be purposive based on the disaggregation considering the location and or coverage of techno hubs.											



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