

Annual Report for the Nepal Development Framework MPTF

for the period 1 January to 31 December 2021

**Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
Bureau for Management Services
United Nations Development Programme
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PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS



International Organization for Migration



United Nations Development Programme



United Nations Population Fund



United Nations Children's Fund



UN Women



World Food Programme



World Health Organization

CONTRIBUTORS



Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

INTRODUCTION

This report provides an update of the progress achieved by the Nepal Development Framework Multi-Partner Trust Fund (Nepal MPTF) in 2021.

The Nepal MPTF was initially set-up in December 2019 to implement a joint programme focused on enhancing the quality of preparedness in Nepal. The scope of the fund was subsequently expanded and now its main goal is to support the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF 2018-2022) for Nepal.

The first joint programme funded through the Nepal MPTF supported the UN and partners to prepared for and mitigate the risks of disasters and climate change. In light of the emergency it generated, the Nepal MPTF was subsequently used to support a joint UN response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This report is the annual narrative report, which has been prepared by the Nepal MPTF Secretariat, currently hosted by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (UN RCO) in Nepal. The annual financial report, which has been prepared by the UNDP Multi Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO) in New York, as Administrative Agent of the Nepal MPTF, can be found on the MPTFO website [Nepal Development Framework MPTF | MPTF Office \(undp.org\)](#).

The Nepal United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2018-2022)

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2018-2022 for Nepal sets out the partnership of the UN with the Government of Nepal and development partners to support Nepal in its development into a peaceful and prosperous middle-income country. Informed by the lessons learned from the previous UNDAF (2013- 2017), the UNDAF builds upon good practices, incorporates emerging issues and agreements, and serves to guide a common UN response to address Nepal's economic, social, and environmental objectives. As such, the UNDAF is a platform upon which diversified expertise and resources of UN agencies can be integrated for the delivery of coherent development programmes.

At the core of the UNDAF are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Government of Nepal's Fourteenth Plan, and international commitments and norms to which Nepal is a party. It is also guided by the key principles of the 2030 Agenda ensuring all people enjoy peace and prosperity, while protecting the planet, as outlined in the Road to Dignity by 2030. These themes also underpin Nepal's 2015 Constitution and are in line with the Istanbul Programme of Action on the renewed and strengthened partnership for development. Despite Nepal's geographical disparities, these commitments are inclusive, transparent and ambitious.

The four UNDAF outcomes weave together linked thematic areas: 1) Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth; 2) Social Development; 3) Resilience, Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change; and 4) Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights. The UNDAF applies the global programming principles of: leave no one behind; human rights; gender equality and women's empowerment; sustainability and resilience; and accountability. The principle of accountability in leaving no one behind is embedded in the links between rights-holders and duty-bearers presented in each of the outcome statements.

The UNDAF strategizes social inclusion as a principle to address inequality and socio-cultural discrimination, which is perceived as one of the root causes of exclusion and vulnerability in the country. The UN Country Team strongly believes gender equality and social inclusion are not only fundamental human rights, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable Nepal. These programming principles are applied to all phases of programme

design and management including monitoring and evaluation. Data generation and adaptability to changing circumstances are cross-cutting strategies.

The Governance Structure of the Nepal Development Framework Multi-Partner Trust Fund

The Nepal Development Framework Multi-Partner Trust Fund (Nepal MPTF) decision-making structures include the Steering Committee, the Secretariat, Technical Committees and the Administrative Agent.

The Steering Committee is in charge of strategic guidance and general supervision of the Fund. It is chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator. The Steering Committee comprises of representatives of participating United Nations organizations and donors.

The Secretariat is responsible for the operational functioning of the Fund. The Secretariat provides technical and administrative support to the Steering Committee. This function is provided by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office.

The Technical Committees are responsible for reviewing projects or joint programmes submitted to the Fund. Once reviewed, they are submitted for approval to the Steering Committee through the Secretariat.

The Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO) in New York, as the Administrative Agent of the Fund, administers the Fund under the pass-through management modality.

Programmes by Pillars

As mentioned above, the goal of the Nepal MPTF is to support the implementation of the UN Development Assistance Framework (2018-2022) for Nepal. Funding windows of the Nepal MPTF can be opened under the four outcomes of the UNDAF.

To date, only the window for disaster risk reduction has been operational. The initial Joint Programme on disaster preparedness recognised that Nepal's inherent vulnerability to disaster and climate change, and the continued degradation of the environment threaten the country's economic growth. Without inclusive and effective strategies and plans for disaster risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery, disasters and climate-change in Nepal can impact negatively on a wide range of sectors and services. The COVID-19 pandemic was a global emergency at a massive scale which also threatened Nepal's development achievements and called for an immediate life-saving response. The Nepal MPTF was an efficient means to facilitate a joint UN response to the emergency. As a result, two Joint Programmes have been implemented under the disaster risk reduction window of the Nepal MPTF by seven UN agencies (IOM, UNDP/RCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, WFP and WHO) in close partnership with the Government of Nepal, civil society organizations, the private sector and the UK/Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). The total envelope of the two implemented Joint Programmes has been USD 6.6 million.

1. Enhancing the quality of preparedness in Nepal: making preparedness pay-off

The purpose of this Joint Programme was to adopt a coordinated approach to the development of national capacity to manage disasters and to strengthen community resilience using strong contingency planning, thereby contributing to the building of national systems that can cope with and respond to crises.

In particular, the goal of the Joint Programme was to complete comprehensive preparedness efforts which enable a Government of Nepal led and managed humanitarian response system, and to ensure that the UN in Nepal is better prepared to support the Government of Nepal in case of a request for international humanitarian assistance.

The programme was completed on 31 December 2021 after being granted a no-cost extension.

The main results of this Joint Programme were:

- Coordinated UN preparedness efforts effectively and jointly support a Government of Nepal -led and managed humanitarian response system.
- Joint analysis of key humanitarian concerns to underpin preparedness and response.
- Joint minimum preparedness actions undertaken by UN agencies.
- Enhanced inter-agency multi-purpose cash preparedness.
- Learning by doing: Monitoring, reporting and building on the lessons learned.

The agreed results under this programme supported the achievement of Nepal's UNDAF outcome area 3 on 'Resilience, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation'.

2. Preparedness and Response to COVID-19 in Nepal

The purpose of this Joint Programme was to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to support the overarching objectives of Nepal's National Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19.

In particular, the Joint Programme sought to:

1. Support the Government of Nepal in preparing and responding to an outbreak of COVID-19 of a scale necessitating an international humanitarian response (including mitigation of social and economic impacts).
2. Ensure that affected people are protected and have equal access to assistance and services without discrimination, in line with humanitarian principles and best practice.

The programme was completed on 31 December 2021, after being granted a no-cost extension.

The main outcomes of this Joint Programme were:

- Improved, equitable access, availability and utilization of quality basic social services and assistance for all, particularly vulnerable people affected by COVID-19, including migrants.
- Mitigation of protection and public health risks arising from the spread of COVID-19.
- Nutrition interventions including Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) treatment of children and piloting of the Family Middle Upper Arm Circumference - approach.
- Adequate and safe water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and disinfections, including in quarantine centres, schools and high-density areas vulnerable to COVID-19.
- Mitigation of the impact of a reduction in the availability and use of essential and integrated sexual and reproductive health services.
- Expanded gender-based violence information and services that are gender-responsive, survivor-centred and meet human rights standards.
- Effective health response to COVID-19 emergency.

The agreed outcomes support the achievement of Nepal's UNDAF outcome areas 2 on Social development and 3 on Resilience, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

Nepal Development Framework Multi-Partner Trust Fund Key Results in 2021

To date, the Fund has strengthened resource mobilization and allocation to under-funded cross-sectoral areas which the UN has a comparative advantage to jointly implement. This has promoted inter-agency cooperation. Below follows a summary of the key achievements of the Fund in 2021.

1. “Enhancing the quality of preparedness in Nepal: making preparedness pay-off” (UNICEF, UN Women, WHO, WFP)

The Joint Programme “Enhancing the quality of preparedness in Nepal: making preparedness pay-off” was conceived in light of evidence which shows that investment in preparedness delivers significant savings – in terms of lives and financial resources – in response.

Though planned and developed before the pandemic, when the implementation of the Joint Programme started in April 2020, COVID-19 had already reached Nepal. Consequently, the implementation environment for some of the planned activities changed and became significantly more complicated. The pandemic also revealed critical gaps in preparedness and created momentum among agencies to address those gaps. Objectives such as the localization of several key clusters was accelerated through COVID-19 response activities. In addition, many of the preparedness plans and tools developed, including data collection tools, were directly responsive to the pandemic context in which they were developed. Complementarity was achieved with the UN Joint Programme on Preparedness and Response to COVID-19 in Nepal, through which some tools and systems developed under this Programme were rolled-out.

The implementation of this Joint Programme has allowed some of the underlying challenges in the preparedness and response system in Nepal to be addressed, including:

- a) **Improved UN preparedness:** The overarching humanitarian plans developed, namely the UN’s Monsoon Emergency Response Preparedness Plan 2020 and the COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan (CPRP), have guided the UN to be more coordinated and effective, including in identifying priorities. The mainstreaming of gender and social inclusion priorities into these plans has strengthened the UN’s commitment and capacity to Leave No One Behind. Collecting analysis and needs assessments, building logistics capacities for storage and prepositioning, putting in place coordination structures, and developing standard operating procedures which clarify both response mechanisms and roles and responsibilities have further strengthened preparedness.
- b) **Enhancing cluster coordination:** Over the implementation period the following provincial level clusters were activated:
 - Health: all seven provinces
 - Nutrition: all seven provinces
 - Protection: five provinces (Province Two, Gandaki, Lumbini, Karnali and Sudurpaschim)
 - WASH: four provinces (Province Two, Gandaki, Lumbini and Karnali)
 - Logistics: three provinces (Karnali Province, and provinces One and Two)

Evidence of the benefits of inter-cluster cooperation has emerged, for example with regards to joint advocacy efforts and regarding the use of the Protection Monitoring and Incident Reporting system to identify emerging risks for and to support programming, advocacy and coordination among several clusters.

- c) **Building local government-led preparedness and disaster response systems and initiatives:** Partnerships with local governments have led to independent local government initiatives in emergency response. Similarly, women’s groups have organically mobilised to respond to humanitarian emergencies such as floods, through

locally-led fundraising and provision of relief. Enhanced collaboration between civil society and local governments has also emerged.

- d) **UN joint programming:** UN joint programming holds the potential for many efficiency and coherency gains. The first steps to achieve them take time to navigate, due to differing operational and programming approaches. However, investment into the identification of building blocks based on mutual agendas and into inclusive coordination processes has allowed for a reduction in duplication and joint response efforts.
- e) **Learning by doing:** Incorporating learning and documentation in programming is valuable, particularly when new approaches and systems, including joint UN approaches, are being introduced and piloted. However, they need to be fully integrated and extensive enough to capture lessons and good practices to the extent desired.

2. “Preparedness and Response to COVID-19 in Nepal” (IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, WHO, WFP and RCO/UNDP)

The Joint Programme “Preparedness and Response to COVID-19 in Nepal” was conceived as a joint UN initiative to support the Government of Nepal to respond to pandemic while ensuring that affected people are protected and have equal access to assistance and services without discrimination.

The participating UN organisations (PUNOs) were successful in achieving the purpose of this joint programme despite several challenges including the soaring number of infections among both beneficiaries and implementing organisations, particularly during the second wave of infections in the spring of 2021; the movement restrictions affecting coordination, response and monitoring opportunities; and an operating environment in which multiple things needed to happen simultaneously and sometimes within hours yet encountered severe delays in formal decision-making processes. Successful programme implementation required flexibility, including from the donor, and effective formal and coordination to allow PUNOs to keep up with constantly and rapidly changing needs.

While the activities were targeted towards the COVID-19 response, PUNOs took into consideration broader humanitarian needs of affected populations as well. Some efficiency gains and impact were also derived from UN agencies working across clusters, seeking to integrate for example analysis and advocacy efforts. The experiences will have an impact beyond this programme to the formulation of good practices for future emergency preparedness and response plans and action.

The Joint Programme progressed several approaches to effective and human rights-based programming, including:

- a) **An effective joint UN response to the COVID-19 pandemic following humanitarian principles:** The UN agencies supported the gathering and dissemination of information that, together with coordination support, allowed for a more efficient and effective response. At the same time, the UN improved equitable availability and utilisation of basic social services such as food, nutrition and livelihoods assistance and psychosocial counselling services. Efforts to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus included both the improvement of infrastructure, such as handwashing facilities and the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE), and the building of capacity of officials including at shelter homes and points of entry.
- b) **Adoption of the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) approach:** The PUNOs invested in targeted measures to address the needs of particularly vulnerable people. A significant effort was made to support returnee migrants and link them to referral services, particularly pregnant and lactating women and those with medical conditions, left in a particularly challenging position by the pandemic and restrictive measures implemented in an effort to curb its

spread. The specific challenges faced by people with disabilities were also recognised and addressed through targeted interventions. Some support measures were designed to specifically consider household composition and to ensure that the measures were comprehensive of a wide range of needs.

- c) **Coherence and added-value through inter-cluster approaches:** Leaning on their roles as cluster co-leads, PUNOs worked with the Protection Cluster to ensure that health, WASH, nutrition and food security sectors integrated protection analysis, mitigation, early identification and referrals into sectoral responses. As a result of collaboration between the Protection and WASH Clusters, protection messaging and referral information was included in hygiene kits. Having nutrition activities integrated in other response elements such as health response was another good practice which increased particularly advocacy efficiencies.