

CEPPS

Strengthening
Democracy
through Partnership

NITI SAMBAD (POLICY DIALOGUE) **Annual Work Plan (Year III)**

October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ASR	Abuse of State Resources
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections
CD-MUN	Capacity Development of New Municipalities
CFMS	Campaign Finance Management System
CEPPS	Consortium for Elections and Political Processes Strengthening
MC	Communist Party of Nepal – Maoist Center
UML	Communist Party of Nepal Unified Marxist-Leninist
CPPD	Centre for Public Policy Dialogue
CPRTA	Central Policy, Research and Training Academy
CS: MAP	Civil Society: Mutual Accountability Project
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DEO	District Election Officer
DRRM	Disaster Risk Reduction Management
ECN	Election Commission of Nepal
EDR	Electoral Dispute Resolution
EDR-CMS	Electoral Dispute Resolution Case Management System
EEIC	Electoral Education and Information Center
EVM	Electronic Voting Machines
FNCCI	Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry
FPTP	First-Past-the-Post
FPS	Federal Parliament Secretariat
FSFN	Federal Socialist Forum, Nepal
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GoN	Government of Nepal
HoR	House of Representatives
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEC	Information, Education and Communications

IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IRI	International Republican Institute
MEDIA	Media Empowering Disability Inclusion and Access
MoE	Ministry of Education
MOCIT	Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
MP	Member of Parliament
NASC	National Administrative Staff College
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NDWA	Nepal Disabled Women Association
NC	Nepali Congress
NCP	Nepal Communist Party
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLS	Nepal Law Society
NRA	National Reconstruction Authority
OCR/V	Out of Country Registration and Voting
OGP	Open Government Partnership
OPMCM	Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers
PFMSP	Public Finance Management Strengthening Project
PRF	Policy Research Forums
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PR	Proportional Representation
PRB	Policy Research Board
PWG	Policy Working Group
RJP-N	Rashtriya Janata Party - Nepal
SEJON	Society for Economic Journalist in Nepal
SIAS	South Asia Institute for Advanced Studies
SMS	Social Media School
SPN	Socialist Party Nepal
SPPELP	Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes

THM Town Hall Meetings

ToT Training of Trainers

UNDP-ESP United Nations Development Programme Electoral Support Project

USAID United States Agency for International Development

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	5
1. Context	11
2. Introduction of the Project	14
3. Results Focus, Strategic Approaches and Assumptions	16
4. Activity Description	21
5. Incorporation of Cross Cutting Interventions	63
6. Coordination and Collaboration	66
7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	66
8. Financial Plan/Budget	68
9. Human Resources Plan	68
10. Travel Plan	70

Executive Summary

The Consortium for Elections and Political Processes Strengthening (CEPPS) will implement the following activities through its three partners, namely the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), and the International Republican Institute (IRI) to achieve the objectives of the program titled “Nepal: Niti Sambad (Policy Dialogue).” The two principal objectives of the program are as below.

- 1) Nepal’s political transition process supported in order to institutionalize a more inclusive, effective, and democratic political governance.*
- 2) Nepal’s political parties function more inclusively and transparently and are more accountable to and representative of their constituents on national policy issues.*

The following workplan outlines activities that will be implemented by the CEPPS partners from October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020, through United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Cooperative Agreement No. AID-367-LA-17-00001.

In the third year of the program, CEPPS/IFES will expand its civic education and community engagement activities and continue its flexible capacity-building support to the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) to enhance inclusive and transparent political processes. CEPPS/IFES will work with civil society organizations (CSO) to expand the reach of its youth leadership program and its advocacy and leadership program for women with disabilities, *Power to Persuade*. These two programs will empower people from marginalized groups, youth and women with disabilities, to engage with local government officials and elected representatives to share and advocate for their policy priorities and ideas for local development projects.

CEPPS/IFES will expand its work with educational institutions, working with private schools to integrate its social studies teachers training manual into private school lesson plans and developing a new curriculum for social studies teachers for grades 11 and 12 for use in public and private schools. The ECN and CEPPS/IFES will work collaboratively with the Ministry of Education (MoE), in coordination with United Nations Development Programme Electoral Support Project (UNDP-ESP), to explore ways to integrate the social studies teachers’ curriculum into standard lesson plans. CEPPS/IFES will also support the ECN to develop an electoral education curriculum for use with various stakeholders, including university students, the National Administrative Staff College (NASC) and the police academy, if approval to support this activity is received from USAID. Finally, CEPPS/IFES will develop an online election information network to complement the ECN’s website that will share election information and civic education materials with a wider audience.

CEPPS/IFES will expand its support to the ECN in year three as it prepares for the November 30, 2019 by-elections for approximately 50 open seats.¹ CEPPS/IFES will provide technical assistance to the ECN as it updates the poll worker manual, conducts trainings of trainers (ToT) for poll workers and plans for the administration of by-elections. CEPPS/IFES' by-election assistance will also include developing voter registration and voter education strategies, developing a social media and communications strategy and supporting a social media voter education campaign. CEPPS/IFES will further support the ECN to implement the electoral dispute resolution case management system (EDR-CMS) for the by-elections and support the ECN to upload historical electoral dispute resolution (EDR) information into the system from the 2017/2018 elections.

Throughout the year, CEPPS/IFES will work with the ECN to prioritize necessary electoral reforms, identified through CEPPS/IFES' Electoral Needs Assessment, and provide flexible capacity-building support as the ECN develops its annual operational plan based on the goals set in its Strategic Plan, 2019-2023, including advancing ECN research efforts and building capacity of new ECN staff. CEPPS/IFES will encourage the ECN to hold stakeholder interactions to build consensus on identified reforms throughout the process. Through its subaward with the Nepal Law Society (NLS), CEPPS/IFES will provide technical assistance to the electoral legal drafting committee to finalize the integrated election law and build consensus with political parties and other stakeholders on the critical electoral reforms that need to be addressed in the new legal framework. Finally, CEPPS/IFES will identify methods of combatting abuse of state resources (ASR), including developing a constituency fund monitoring project and strengthening the ECN's internal processes to identify ASR issues and implement necessary control measures. All CEPPS/IFES' activities to support the ECN contribute to USAID's *Journey to Self-Reliance* by strengthening the ECN's capacity as an independent electoral management body (EMB) to administer credible elections.

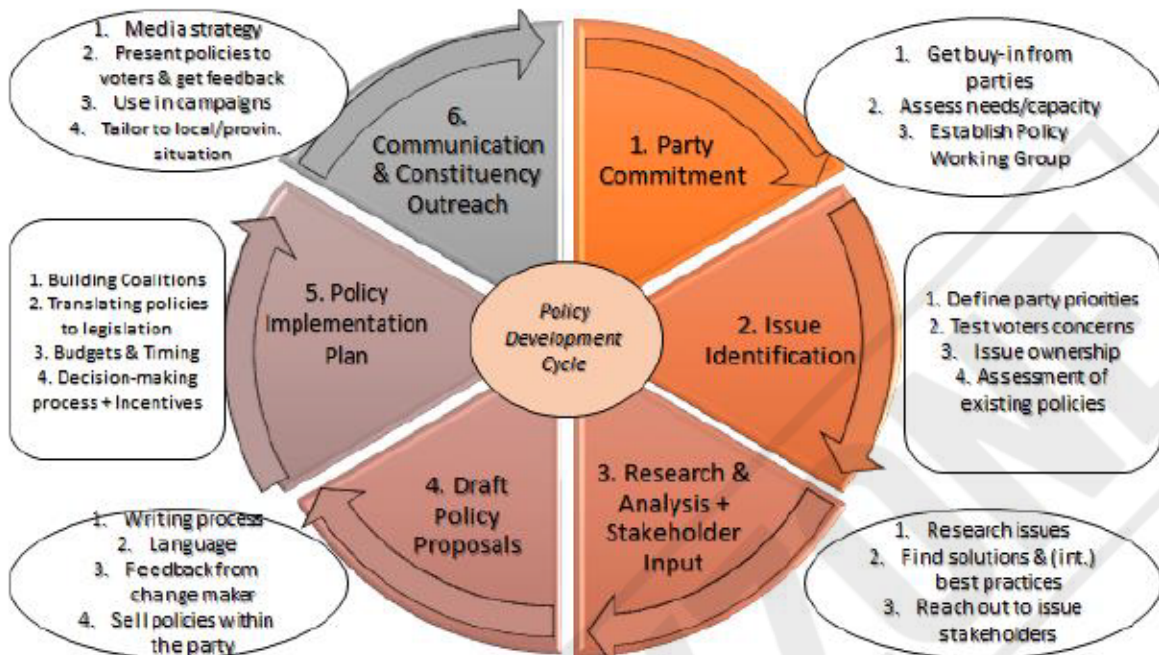
Building on the previous year's conclusion of the assessment of the Federal Parliament Secretariat (FPS) and the results of the completed National Public Opinion Survey, CEPPS/IRI will expand its efforts to provide elected representatives and officials with objective and actionable policy research and build their capacities to utilize that research in the legislative process. CEPPS/IRI, in close collaboration with a local partner, will establish the Policy Research Framework, which will support policy analysis capacity building at the federal and provincial levels, convene and engage key stakeholders on citizen priority issues, and provide timely and actionable policy research on issues most relevant to government representatives and citizens. CEPPS/IRI will also field the second of three planned National Public Opinion Surveys, to provide valuable insight into policy priorities and opinions across Nepal and inform program implementation for all CEPPS partners.

¹ House of Representatives member (1); State Assembly members (3); City Mayor (1); Rural Municipality Chairperson (3); Rural Municipality Vice Chairperson (1); Ward Chairperson (41). No vacancies for ward members will be filled through by-elections as there is no provision in the legal framework for this.

CEPPS/NDI will continue to support federal parliamentarians and committees of the federal parliament to strengthen their understanding and capacity to deliver on their multiple functions and roles as elected representatives and within committees. In particular, CEPPS/NDI will focus on building the capacity of individual members of Parliament (MPs) and committee structures in effective legislative drafting, their oversight function, legislative review and at an individual level, on representation. While the first few years of the Niti Sambad program were geared at ensuring parliamentarians and staff have a working knowledge of their functions and roles and responsibilities, in years three and four, there will be a shift toward developing the technical capacity of MPs and committees on specific areas to develop thematic expertise and, in the case of committees, to ensure inclusive and effective processes and systems are developed and implemented across their functions.

CEPPS/NDI will also continue to work with government bodies, including the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the Office of the President to strengthen their internal capacities. In the case of the NRA, the focus will continue to be support for communications in the post-earthquake reconstruction, while with the PMO and the Office of the President, the focus will be on organizational development support. In year three, new engagements with the Ministry of Urban Development and the National Planning Commission are planned which will look at improving processes within the institutions to better reflect citizen needs.

CEPPS/NDI will continue to work with parties and party representatives, including women, youth and marginalized groups, to strengthen their capacity to understand, develop and implement policies. This, in turn, renders parties and their representatives more accountable to and representative of their constituents. CEPPS/NDI political party activities should be understood as part of the larger policy development cycle that has been ongoing since year one. Different parties and activities are in different stages of the policy cycle (see below). This includes some that are nearing completion (stage 5) and, others that are at the beginning of the cycle (stage 2). The groups that are nearing completion are expected to yield concrete results by the end of year three, including finalized policy briefs and lobbying for adoption and implementation within parties. The parties and activities that are beginning the policy development cycle this year will complete their cycle in year four.



CEPPS/NDI will also continue to gather information through focus group discussions and mini public opinion polls to inform programming and allow political partners to better understand the needs of citizens and voters. Lastly, CEPPS/NDI will also continue to build technical and political skill for locally elected representatives to become more effective in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities in Nepal's new federal structure.

Across both objectives, CEPPS/NDI will look at ways in which the program activities can be more integrated. For example, the Generation Next Parliamentary Forum under objective one will utilize the research and policy brief developed by the Youth Policy Forum under objective two to ensure there is a unified approach to engaging youth. Similarly, the social media training component of the forum will also be linked to the social media school that will be offered to the political parties, following the assessment outlined in the activity.

In addition, there were a number of year two activities that CEPPS partners were unable to conduct. CEPPS has included a brief overview of these, including the rationale for not being able to conduct them and how they will be incorporated into the year three workplan:

CEPPS Implementing Partner:	Year Two Workplan Activity:	Reason why activity could not be implemented in year two	Incorporation of activity in year three
CEPPS/IFES	Activity 1.1.1.2: Voter List Assessment	CEPPS/IFES was unable to secure ECN buy-in in year two to conduct the voter list assessment.	CEPPS/IFES plans to conduct a voter list audit in year three to assess the data quality of the voter list and make recommendations for improvements to voter list management.
	Activity 1.1.1.4: Gender inclusion assessment of the ECN	CEPPS/IFES was unable to secure ECN buy-in in year two for this activity, as much of the ECN's attention was diverted to strategic planning.	CEPPS/IFES has not currently planned a formal gender audit for year three, but will work with the ECN to identify critical gaps in its internal inclusion practices through the post-election review activities.
CEPPS/NDI	Activity 2.1.8: Organize Policy Debates between Candidates or Locally Elected Officials	In coordination with USAID, it was decided that the candidate debates were more effective during the by-elections. These were announced at the end of year two and will take place in Q1 of year three	CEPPS/NDI will conduct this activity in year three.
	Activity 2.2.2: Conduct Focus Group Research	The results of the year one focus group discussions were not finalized until early 2019. As such, CEPPS/NDI determined that waiting until year three would provide for	CEPPS/NDI will conduct this activity in year three.

CEPPS/IRI

	a better comparison with the first year baseline report.	
Activity 2.2.3: Conduct Mini Political Party Public Opinion Research	Due to the ongoing party merger within the NCP, the party was not able to designate a formal point of contact with whom CEPPS/NDI could coordinate. CEPPS/NDI was unable to secure approval from the party for the public opinion research, and therefore decided to postpone the activity until it is able to secure their participation.	CEPPS/NDI will conduct this activity in year three.
Activity 2.1.13: Pilot a Better Bureaucracy Program	After an initial assessment, it was deemed to be politicized and sensitive to work with the bureaucrats in Nepal.	No, this activity has been withdrawn.
Activity 1.2.2.3: Provide Legislative Research and Policy Analysis Trainings	Legislative research trainings with legislators were scheduled to occur in collaboration with CEPPS/NDI after the completion of the Comprehensive Assessment of the FPS and the National Public Opinion Survey. This activity was delayed as the FPS Assessment findings and National Public Opinion Survey results were needed in order to be able to supply timely and publicly responsive legislative research topics and relevant policy analysis and trainings. Both the Assessment and Survey were completed in Q4 of year two.	Armed with a fully functional Policy Research Framework with a fully competent partner; the training assistance obtained on partnership with the Nepal Administrative Staff College; findings of the FPS Assessment and a wealth of timely data collected by the National Public Opinion Survey, CEPPS/IRI is confident that it will be able to conduct this activity in year three.
Activity 1.2.2.4: Support the	The activity was delayed as organizations initially	After having identified a highly professional

Development of a Policy Research Framework	solicited to support the implementation of this relatively demanding and complex activity lacked all of the necessary internal capacities and rounded expertise to fully implement and administer the Policy Research Framework as envisaged by Niti Sambad and CEPPS/IRI. This activity was partially completed in year two. CEPPS/IRI held extensive meetings and brainstorming sessions with potential local partners and beneficiaries and determined that the Policy Research Board (PRB) would require a redesign of what was initially envisaged. CEPPS/IRI subsequently sought sub-award approval for a local Policy Research Framework partner organization in Q4 of year two to fulfill the activity.	and fully functional local partner in the Kathmandu School of Law, CEPPS/IRI is now preparing to begin the implementation of this activity in fiscal year 2020 Q1. CEPPS/IRI does not foresee further delays or impediments to achieve the desired objectives and results.
Activity 1.2.2.6: Organize Targeted Policy Studies	This activity was partially completed in year two. CEPPS/IRI conducted extensive consultations with leading academics, think tanks and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who would be qualified to participate in a viable and sustainable Policy Research Framework that would also convene the Policy Research Forums to foster dialogue and formulate accurate and relevant policy research. The	In year three, CEPPS/IRI's local Policy Research Framework partner – guided in part by the national public opinion survey – will organize and convene a series of eight Policy Research Forums with invitees from federal and provincial legislatures; secretariat staff; local public/private policy research organizations and experts to convene and create targeted policy studies for

	Policy Research Forums had to be delayed in order to be informed by the findings from the FPS Assessment and data from the CEPPS/IRI national public opinion survey. These findings will inform key public concerns for the Policy Research Framework to focus upon and topics to be covered in subsequent policy research discussions and the production of targeted policy studies for the Policy Research Framework and topics for the Policy Research Forum discussion. This activity has also been expanded to eight Policy Research Forums that will be held nation-wide with one in each provincial capital and one in Kathmandu. The consultations determined that the structure of the Policy Research Board would have to differ from what was originally planned. CEPPS/IRI sought subaward approval for a Policy Research Framework partner in Q4 of year two to fill the role of the newly designed Framework.	legislators. These Forums will be informed by quantitative and qualitative data obtained through the FPS Assessment and the first of three CEPPS/IRI national public opinion surveys.
Activity 1.2.4.2: Develop an Orientation Curriculum and Platform for First-	The assessment of the FPS, finalized in Q4 of year two, revealed operational and structural gaps; staff deficiencies and capacity development needs at the Federal Parliament	CEPPS/IRI will conduct this activity in year three, in partnership with its local Policy Research Framework partner. The data from both the FPS Assessment and National

Time Sub-National Officials	Secretariat, with whom CEPPS/IRI had been planned to partner with under this activity. Given the findings and discussions with FPS leadership, CEPPS/IRI had no choice but to alter and postpone this activity to year three.	Public Opinion Survey will be of considerable importance to provide data to inform the work for the Policy Research Framework.
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1. Context

CEPPS program interventions consider a number of key factors in regions, districts and constituencies where they take place, including political representation across the spectrum of major political parties represented in Parliament; geography (Mountain, Hills and Terai); inclusion of youth and women and how best to reach different communities and citizens from marginalized groups.

With the successful completion of the local, provincial and federal elections in 2017, Nepal entered a new phase in its development. Through these historic elections, Nepal transitioned from a unitary to a federal state and elected local officials for the first time since 1997 with strong decentralized mandates and responsibilities. Moreover, a new level of government that had heretofore never existed was formed at the provincial level, while at the national level, Nepal saw a coalition of two major parties come into power with a collective two-thirds majority, though it has not legally completed the merger. The elections signaled a shift from political negotiations about the rules of the system to a focus on the implementation of the rules enshrined in Nepal's constitution. This significant political shift has created high expectations from citizens on development and progress from their elected officials.

However, challenges remain for the country's democratic development – many elected officials at all three governing tiers are unfamiliar with the roles, responsibilities and rules of the new federal system and the constitution. Local and provincial governments lack organizational structures, staff, funding and expertise that is necessary to effectively govern. There are many first-time MPs in the Federal Parliament with limited experience as elected representatives. The parliament secretariat, committees and parliamentary party offices also face human and institutional capacity challenges that need to be addressed to enable them to play their respective legislative and oversight roles effectively. This has created opportunities to address concerns related to MPs' interests and oversight mechanisms, such as supporting MPs with constituency outreach activities to meet with constituents, civil society, and local authorities and engage in discussions on issues of interest to the public. Limited capacity of parliamentary staff to provide responsive, accurate and effective research and analysis services to parliamentary committees on a timely manner continues to be a major challenge. The concerns are further compounded by the struggles between the three layers

of government to coordinate and collaborate on governance roles and responsibilities. In particular, difficulties have arisen in both the assumption of new responsibilities by local and provincial governments and with the delays and constraints often associated with the handover of those responsibilities and powers by the federal government that are authorized under the Constitution of Nepal. Frustrations have continued to build as a result of the implementation of the *Civil Servants Adjustment Act* of 2019, which has led to civil servant transfers around the country and left posts vacant, particularly at the local level which has impacted service delivery. In particular, several key posts at the ECN have been left vacant due to this process, which has slowed the ECN's movement on critical areas of reform, such as IT systems improvements. Furthermore, at the close of year two, there remain two vacant election commissioner posts, which has slowed high-level decision-making processes.

The elections and implementation of the constitution was also a major success from the perspective of inclusion as it set quotas for the inclusion of women and marginalized groups and saw a significant rise in the political representation of these groups throughout the country in political parties and parliament. As a result, these institutions have become more representative of the diversity among Nepali citizens. Unfortunately, this inclusion has often been symbolic. Many elected women and marginalized groups still experience difficulties in fulfilling their new roles and struggle to overcome traditional cultural and patriarchal norms that have existed in Nepal for decades. During its first year, CEPPS implemented numerous activities which revealed that women and marginalized groups are not always included in meetings and discussions or allowed to effectively fulfill their roles and responsibilities that are assigned to them under the constitution. There is much room for making inclusion meaningful and educating parties, elected officials and political stakeholders about their legal rights and the guiding principles for the implementation of a federal governing structure.

There are significant communication gaps between different institutions within the Government of Nepal (GoN), and between the government and citizens. These gaps, while evident throughout the course of Nepal's democratic history, were exacerbated following the April 2015 earthquake and continued through the anti-constitution protests later that year. In the years since, one of the major drawbacks of all governments has been the lack of effective working structures, mechanism and proactiveness necessary to begin the process of constitution implementation in terms of citizen outreach, communication and research. Government institutions, including the OPMCM, the NRA, and the MOCIT have nonetheless recognized the importance of developing a communication strategy and increasing communication to citizens through town hall meetings, press briefings, and social media. More recently, the need to ensure a participatory process in constitution implementation, through the initiatives of research, consultation and creation of feedback mechanisms is growing. In this regard, key government ministries like the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, and Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration which have been mandated with the significant responsibilities related to constitution implementation, will require support in ensuring their activities are not only communicated through a variety of media, but also that they are aware of and responsive to local needs and sentiments. Similarly, the Office of the President, as a relatively new office in the

country, has roles and responsibilities as prescribed in the Constitution of 2015. However, no clear analysis of its role, functions and relationship with other government agencies has been carried out to better inform government and citizens of its place in the new political arrangement.

There is also an increasing movement within the government to have greater oversight and control over international organizations through the Social Welfare Council and the Development Coordination Policy, which may impact CEPPS partners' ability to deliver on program objectives.

During the second year of programming, there were important changes in the political landscape of Nepal that affected CEPPS programming. Key developments include the increased infighting within the Nepali Communist Party (NCP) between the Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML) and Maoist Center (MC) factions. This has hindered implementation of the merger at all levels, with the heads of departments and district presidents and secretaries only appointed in August 2019, and impeded CEPPS/NDI's ability to engage the NCP in a robust manner. Furthermore, there is also a reluctance on the part of some members of the NCP leadership to engage with international organizations and the technical assistance offered by CEPPS/NDI internally within the party and parliament.

CEPPS/NDI parliamentary support was impacted as the committee chairpersons were not appointed until September 2018. Coupled with the new CEPPS/NDI Senior Country Director, a 'getting to know you' phase was necessary before CEPPS/NDI could proceed with more in-depth assistance to the committees. Additionally, the absence of a clear parliamentary calendar also impeded the implementation of many of the parliamentary support programs. The calendar is decided by the Prime Minister's Office and in many instances, MPs have been informed at short notice of House sessions. This has resulted in postponed activities as well as difficulty in planning constituency outreach activities with MPs.

2. Introduction of the Project

Niti Sambad's overall focus is on enhancing the performance of the key institutions in the governance system, namely political parties, parliament, provincial assemblies, government and the Election Commission. The approach to the assistance under Niti Sambad is geared towards promoting greater participation in democracy through inclusive and participatory policy development processes with political parties and both federal and provincial parliaments, to secure a higher degree of involvement and ownership by citizens in the policies and policy options selected by their representatives. Public consultations, multi-stakeholder discussions, and expert input on party policies, as well as parliament bills/policies, will make the latter stronger, more relevant, and resonant with citizens' aspirations and interests. In year three of Niti Sambad, the focus will be on supporting the ECN to hold successful by-elections for 50 open seats, using this opportunity to improve electoral processes on a small scale ahead of the 2022 elections. CEPPS/IFES will further support the ECN to identify and implement critical electoral reforms to enhance the transparency and integrity of the electoral process in Nepal. CEPPS/IFES CSO

partners will continue to work to engage marginalized groups through civic education activities that strengthen the communication and accountability mechanisms between voters and their elected representatives.

CEPPS/IRI's will focus on expanding its efforts to provide elected representatives and officials with objective and actionable policy research and build their capacities to utilize that research in the legislative process. CEPPS/IRI, in close collaboration with a local partner, will establish the Policy Research Framework, which will support policy analysis capacity building at the national and provincial levels, convene and engage key stakeholders on citizen priority issues, and provide timely and actionable policy research on issues most relevant to government representatives and citizens. In year three, CEPPS/NDI's focus will be on working with and strengthening the capacity of change agents along with creating greater linkages not only between assistance recipients, but also with USAID Democracy and Governance implementing partners. Through this more tailored assistance, programs will become more sustainable as assistance recipients are equipped with the skill set needed to become more self-reliant. CEPPS/NDI parliamentary support will focus on reviewing and analyzing legislation along with soliciting citizen input and feedback through the town hall meetings (THMs) and policy dialogues. New activities with the National Planning Commission and the Ministry for Urban Development will assist additional government entities to be more responsive to citizen needs. Under Objective 2, CEPPS/NDI will build on the work undertaken in year two on policy development with the political parties, women, youth and marginalized groups.

Prior to and during the development of the work plan, CEPPS partners consulted with all relevant program beneficiaries, namely political parties, parliamentarians and the parliament secretariat, ECN, NRA, and the OPM and council of ministers, the Office of the President, the Ministry of Urban Development, the National Planning Commission and the Visit Nepal 2020 Secretariat under the Ministry of Tourism, and took into account their current needs for assistance, combined with suggestions from CEPPS partners on what can be offered based on each partner's expertise, experience in Nepal, and value added overall.

Given the volatility of the political situation in Nepal, however, CEPPS will take into account any developments and/or changes that might be expected during the period of this workplan, and will continue to monitor and adjust programming accordingly and in close consultation with both the program beneficiaries and USAID. CEPPS/IFES' programming will focus on Result 1.1, with some activities also under 1.3, while CEPPS/IRI's programming will center around Result 1.2. CEPPS/NDI's activities fall under Results 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and all of Objective 2. See the table below for more details.

Objective	Results
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Objective 1	Result 1.1: Nepal's electoral system is more capable of holding credible elections in which citizens are able to select leaders peacefully and democratically at each level of government (CEPPS/IFES and CEPPS/NDI) Result 1.2: Members of Parliament and future legislative bodies are capable of improving policy, monitoring implementation, and more effective in national decision-making (CEPPS/IRI and CEPPS/NDI) Result 1.3: New political processes under the constitution's implementation are transparent and widely communicated within and outside the government (CEPPS/IFES and CEPPS/NDI)
Objective 2	Result 2.1: Political parties adopt more democratic internal structures to enhance their accountability and integrity to Nepali voters in and between elections (CEPPS/NDI) Result 2.2: Political parties, including their candidates, articulate better-formed policy positions to enhance voter's opportunities to select and hold accountable their representatives in and between competitive elections (CEPPS/NDI)

3. Results Focus, Strategic Approaches and Assumptions

Results Focus

In the third year of the Niti Sambahad program, CEPPS/IFES will continue its work under result 1.1: *Nepal's electoral system holds credible elections and is less dependent on donor support to continue carrying out its mandate of allowing citizens to exercise their choice to select leaders peacefully, democratically at each level of government.* Based on the findings of the CEPPS/IFES Electoral Needs Assessment conducted in year two, CEPPS/IFES will work with the ECN to prioritize electoral reforms needed ahead of the 2022 elections. The November 2019 by-elections will provide an opportunity for the ECN to pilot reforms on a smaller scale and conduct a post-election lessons learned workshop to assess adopting additional reforms. CEPPS/IFES will also continue its support to the legal drafting committee on the integrated election law and support NLS to facilitate stakeholder consultations to build stakeholder consensus. CEPPS/IFES will further support the ECN's work to combat ASR through strengthening internal systems to implement necessary control measures on political stakeholders.

CEPPS/IFES' civic education work will expand to reach more youth leaders and women with disabilities, to empower them to be advocates to local government representatives and share civic education materials with their communities. CEPPS/IFES will further support the ECN to institutionalize civic education and electoral education materials into various segments of Nepali society to ensure citizens can make informed decisions about the leaders they select and understand how to hold their elected representatives accountable. CEPPS/IFES will work with the MoE to integrate the social studies teachers' training manual for grade 10 and the new curriculum, which CEPPS/IFES will support the ECN to develop for grades 11-12, into standard lesson plans; CEPPS/IFES will also share the training manual with private school teachers. Furthermore, the ECN will develop a standard electoral education curriculum that can be adapted to different audiences to help stakeholders understand the important role they play in elections.

CEPPS/IRI will train national and sub-national representatives on how to incorporate policy research into their legislative development. CEPPS/IRI will leverage a core partner CSO to facilitate the formation of a Policy Research Framework; adapt a Terms of Reference for a redesigned Board; and develop parliamentary-approved standard operating procedures. CEPPS/IRI will also seek partners such as local academics and research organizations, advocacy groups and legal associations willing to commit, likely through memorandum of understanding mechanisms, to long-term engagement in the initiative. CEPPS/IRI will facilitate Policy Research Forums that will connect parliamentary staff and researchers to provide accurate and timely research to inform ongoing legislation. These actions will enable lawmakers to begin leveraging policy studies, policy research forum and the policy research board as critical resources. CEPPS/IRI will ensure the FP Secretariat is informed and trained on how to provide improved technical assistance to subnational legislators, as well as develop materials for a training program for subnational elected officials.

Under Objective 1, CEPPS/NDI will continue to make progress in achieving Result 1.2: *Members of parliament and future legislative bodies are capable of improving policy, monitoring implementation, and more effective in national decision-making.* During this work plan period, CEPPS/NDI aims to provide technical assistance to parliamentary committees to review, analyze and get briefed on prioritized bills. The approach for this assistance also includes the continuation of the organization of town hall meetings as a tool for collecting citizen input on legislation. Similarly, CEPPS/NDI will continue its support to parliamentary committees, including the Finance Committee, the Public Accounts Committee, the Women and Social Committee, the Development and Technology Committee and the Agriculture, Cooperatives and Natural Resources Committee. A focus on developing the capacity and skills of young MPs will commence in year three through the creation of a forum of young parliamentarians.

CEPPS/NDI will also make progress towards achieving Result 1.3: *New political processes under the constitution's implementation are transparent and widely communicated within and outside the government.* Through engagement with key government agencies, including the NRA, the Offices of the President and Prime Minister, and key ministries, CEPPS/NDI will provide support for various outreach, consultative, research and communication related activities as each agency works towards fulfilling its role in the implementation of the constitution. Some activities and partnerships will continue to be supported as a follow-on from year two activities, for example, providing capacity augmentation support, field visits and workshops for the NRA, while in other instances selected new programs will be added, such as the Social Media School for political parties, a collaboration with Visit Nepal 2020 and support for a local media landscape survey. These new partnerships will introduce activities such as the integration of a DemTools² platform, FixMyCommunity into the database for the Ministry of Urban Development and the development and support for a forum of young parliamentarians. An emphasis on support for parliamentary party offices will also be seen in year three, alongside more in-depth and technical assistance to the parliamentary committees.

Similarly, in year three, CEPPS/NDI will continue to engage with government, media and civil society to raise awareness about the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and lay the groundwork for implementation should the government join. In particular, CEPPS/NDI will work with relevant parliamentary committees and continue to work with the National Information Commission in pushing an open-government agenda forward. In addition, CEPPS/NDI will collaborate with CS:MAP on civil society engagement on OGP by identifying and working with a group of influencers within civil society and media to champion OGP eligibility and participation.

² DemTools is an open-source technology tools developed by NDI to apply technology solutions to common problems faced by NDI's partners around the world.

Under objective 2, CEPPS/NDI will continue its work to achieve Result 2.1: *‘Political parties adopt more democratic internal structures to enhance their accountability and integrity to Nepali voters in and between elections’* and Result 2.2: *‘Political parties, including their candidates, articulate better-formed policy positions to enhance voters’ opportunities to select and hold accountable their representatives in and between competitive elections’*. Almost all activities under this objective are now being implemented and many CEPPS/NDI partner parties have significantly progressed in their policy development cycle. Several groups have already developed their first policy briefs and will work toward adopting and implementing them within parties and among targeted locally elected representatives from their parties. It is expected that the remaining groups will develop policies during year three, which includes targeted policy briefs for women, youth and marginalized groups. In addition, the advocacy campaign of the Women Mentorship Program on economic empowerment of women will become a stand-alone activity that will begin to implement advocacy demands together with their stakeholder coalition and the women mayors/chairs group. Lastly, CEPPS/NDI’s focus group discussions and mini public opinion polls will inform programming and strengthen political partner’s understanding of the needs and policy priorities of citizens and voters. The debates that will be supported by CEPPS/NDI during the by-elections will directly enhance voters’ opportunity to select and hold accountable their representatives, based on their ideas and policies.

Strategic Approach

CEPPS will utilize the respective organizational strengths of its three partners and the broad networks developed over the last 20 years in Nepal to implement the proposed activities in this workplan. Cross cutting achievements instrumental to the success of Niti Sambad are the strong, constructive working relationships built between CEPPS partners and the ECN, Federal Parliament, government agencies, and political parties.

Lessons-learned and the changing political context during year two have informed the strategic approaches of all CEPPS partners. In the third year, CEPPS/IFES will use the Electoral Needs Assessment recommendations and the ECN’s Strategic Plan, 2019-2023 to support the ECN to strengthen electoral processes ahead of the 2022 elections. This year, the ECN will conduct further research on several key areas including election technology solutions, the administrative cost of elections and campaign finance. CEPPS/IFES will support the ECN’s stated objectives under its strategic plan and advance critical legal reforms, including establishing processes for out-of-country registration and voting (OCR/V) and strengthening monitoring mechanisms for EDR and campaign finance to enhance the integrity of the electoral process. CEPPS/IFES will further support the ECN to distribute voter education information through various media sources for the by-elections and integrate civic education materials in standard school curriculum and in training programs for university students, police and NASC trainees.

CEPPS/IRI will utilize the results of the FPS assessment and first National Public Opinion Survey, both of which were completed during the last quarter of FY2019, to inform its approach, and plans to field a second National Public Opinion Survey in this workplan year. Based on the information and analysis from those activities, CEPPS/IRI will conduct a number of activities: CEPPS/IRI will train an equal distribution of MPs from the major political parties at the national level to increase their understanding of and ability to conduct legislative research. In the trainings, CEPPS/IRI will impart the value of sustained outreach with CSOs, think tanks, and subject matter experts to inform accurate, timely, inclusive and representative policy development. Following the trainings, CEPPS/IRI will also work with the Federal Parliament and Federal Parliament Secretariat to develop parliamentary and institutional guidelines for evidence use in policymaking and decision-making. CEPPS/IRI will establish a Policy Research Framework in close coordination with think tanks, academics, research institutions and parliamentary stakeholders in order to form a sustainable mechanism for researching priority interest areas. CEPPS/IRI will partner with a local organization to share new and existing political and economic policy research and analysis with national and subnational lawmakers and their staff through the Policy Research Framework. Where research on a policy issue does not exist or is outdated, CEPPS/IRI will commission either its local organization partner and its extensive policy research capacities or another local research institution to conduct white papers, policy memos, and other research products. CEPPS/IRI will proceed to conduct capacity building workshops and trainings with secretariat staff throughout this workplan period. CEPPS/IRI will work with highly professional policy research partners aside from the Kathmandu School of Law. CEPPS/IRI will work with the Nepal Administrative Staff College; a consortium of Policy Research Framework and Forum participants and with respected and specialized local policy research organizations such as SAMATA Foundation to develop tailored orientation and capacity building; training packages and technical assistance materials on the roles and responsibilities of sub-national representatives.

CEPPS/NDI will focus on ensuring young, emerging and women MPs are equipped with the leadership skills and technical thematic skills necessary not only to fulfill their roles in parliament, but to enhance their capacities as future leaders in parliament, their parties and beyond. CEPPS/NDI will also strategically engage with government institutions to enhance the capacity of the government to communicate with citizens, through the NRA communication support work and the support to the Ministry of Urban Development on the implementation of the FixMyCommunity platform, and to support the organization development of key government bodies like Offices of the Prime Minister and President. These engagements also support the process of ensuring political buy-in for CEPPS/NDI support across the board and ensure that the Institute is continuously engaging with the executive branch alongside the legislature.

It is expected that CEPPS/NDI's dedicated long-term strategic approach in guiding selected groups of targeted party representatives through the different stages of the policy development cycle, in collaboration with research institutes, will begin to yield significant results in year three. As the cycle continues and deliverables become more concrete, CEPPS/NDI has seen a significant increase in the understanding and capacity among participants to develop policies. At the beginning of the program, participants often struggled to see the larger picture and understand how their capacity building helped reach program objectives. As the program has progressed it is clear

that participants are beginning to internalize the lessons learned and the importance of the policy process.

Some of the components that were built into the program will be operationalized during year three. Political party participants in the groups will start using their own political contacts within their party to lobby for their policies. The groups will benefit from political participants from different levels (from cadres to MP's) which will enable them to access different networks and contacts within their party, increasing the reach and impact of the lobby activities. Also, for the groups that include CSO representatives, these will help them broaden the coalition of support and advocacy beyond the party contacts of the participants. This will create external pressure and alliances that party representatives can use to leverage support for and adoption of policies. The partnerships with the research institutes have also worked well. They have strengthened the policy briefs, while ensuring buy-in and ownership of political participants. The research that CEPPS/NDI will conduct will also strengthen and inform the policy development cycle.

Moreover, in year three CEPPS/NDI will restructure and streamline some of their existing activities. For example, the deputy mayors program will see a reduction in the number of participants. Rather than working with 120 deputy mayors from three provinces as in year two, the focus of this activity will be to engage 30 to 40 deputy mayors from the three provinces who were the most receptive to assistance. In addition, CEPPS/NDI will create linkages between women's mentorship program (WMP) and the women's mayor/chairs program. This pilot program will see the women mayors/chair implementing the advocacy and policy demands from the WMP in their municipalities.

CEPPS partners will coordinate their programming interventions to ensure enhanced synergy and maximized impact, through exchange of information, and discussion of most adequate and timely activities and opportunities that should be capitalized on with the ECN, parties, parliament, provincial assemblies and government. CEPPS will also actively seek opportunities to coordinate its program intervention with relevant USAID projects such as FHI 360's CS:MAP, Winrock's Hamro Samman, Louis Berger's PFMSP and Abt Associates' Sajedhair STF project. Additionally, CEPPS partners will coordinate with other donors and their implementing partners on relevant projects, including United Nations Development Programme Electoral Support Project (UNDP-ESP) on election-related support, and the UNDP's Parliamentary Support Program. Through the CEPPS/NDI local level learning group it will also coordinate with other international organizations working with local governments. This group includes representatives from GIZ, International IDEA, Helvetas, the Asia Foundation and Sajhedari. CEPPS/IRI has also coordinated with Christian Aid of the UK to assist and participate in a National Policy Conference with elected Dalit representatives from all three levels of government in concert with SAMATA Foundation.

Assumptions

The key assumptions of this workplan are as listed below.

- The security situation remains stable and CEPPS can successfully conduct its programming – including travel throughout the country – without disruption.
- The programming environment is not further strained and/or weakened by natural disasters.
- The programming environment is not further strained, undermined and/or weakened by decisions from the central government aimed at limiting the working space of international organizations in Nepal-
- Programming is not delayed due to CEPPS partners being required to register the Niti Sambat project with the Social Welfare Council.
- There is broad political consensus on the legitimacy of institutions of government including the ECN, Prime Minister's Office, the Federal Parliament and sub-national government structures.
- There is a consistent and determined basis for eligibility to register as a voter.
- The ECN continues to be receptive to assistance from and cooperation with CEPPS, with the aim of making itself more able to operate effectively without external, international assistance.
- The ECN is active in seeking solutions to challenges that arise under its purview and is supportive of electoral reform initiatives.
- There are no unanticipated demands for technical support by the ECN caused by, for example, the departure of UNDP-ESP as a technical assistance provider, snap elections due to the dissolution of a Provincial Assembly or the federal parliament, unanticipated needs for the by-elections or the creation of provincial electoral management bodies that are outside of CEPPS' current budgeting flexibility.

- The ECN is adequately staffed on a consistent basis to work with CEPPS on program activities and has the overall financial resources to conduct ongoing electoral operations.
- The new federal parliament, through its new MPs, committee chairs and secretariat, is receptive to international and technical assistance in the areas proposed under Niti Sambat, such as reviewing legislation, THMs, and pre-budget discussions.
- There is political will and interest to engage in multi-stakeholder federalism dialogues that then influence the implementation of federalism and capacity building for sub-national officials.
- Parliament's schedule is not disrupted and MPs and committees are able to conduct their business both in and outside Kathmandu.
- NRA and other government agencies continue to be receptive to and have the capacity to absorb and make use of CEPPS technical assistance and strategic guidance on enhancing government communication and public outreach.
- Parties continue to be interested in receiving technical assistance from CEPPS, especially in the post-election environment, when there is possibility of some change in federal parliament representation.
- Political parties are interested in developing and/or enhancing the policy development process and use this as an opportunity to build their party structure, increase membership, and strengthen links with citizens in the new federal system.
- With the anticipated closing of the UNDP-ESP project, the ECN remains committed to working with CEPPS/IFES as a close partner on strengthening the electoral process in Nepal.

4. Activity Description

Joint CEPPS Activities

Cross-Cutting Activity: National Public Opinion Survey

Very early in the first quarter of this workplan, CEPPS/IRI will present results and analysis from the survey to elected leaders, political parties, and other project stakeholders to inform the development of a policy agenda for the upcoming year. CEPPS will leverage public opinion as a foundation for other Niti Sambad activities, such as the work with political parties engaged with CEPP/NDI as well as the entrenchment of CEPPS/IRI's Policy Research Framework and the holding of a series of policy forums. CEPPS/IRI will also brief demand-side stakeholders to support awareness and accountability to public needs.

The National Public Opinion Survey will provide a comprehensive understanding of public opinion and citizen priorities and inform the programming of all CEPPS partners. Early in the first quarter, CEPPS/IRI will brief all major political parties in the Federal Parliament and thereafter in the various Provincial Assemblies directly on the findings of its national survey. In addition, CEPPS/IRI and CEPPS/NDI will work with lawmakers at the federal and provincial level to incorporate relevant survey findings into their legislative agendas; committee studies and draft law priorities.

Cross-Cutting Activity: Mid-term Evaluation

During the third year of implementation, CEPPS partners will conduct a midterm evaluation. The midterm evaluation will help CEPPS understand its progress to date, gauge the likelihood of meeting program objectives, document best practices and effective strategies, as well as make evidence-based course-corrections, if necessary. Beyond programmatic progress, the midterm evaluation will also help CEPPS partners assess internal collaboration, coordination, and learning processes. CEPPS began preparations for the mid-term evaluation in year two and plans to begin the evaluation in early FY 2020.

Cross-Cutting Activity: Campaign and Political Party Finance Program

CEPPS/IFES and CEPPS/NDI will build upon the co-hosted, campaign finance multi-stakeholder workshop held in year two to identify areas of collaboration in year three for reform to campaign finance and political party finance regulations. Many MPs have said that the cost of running for election in Nepal is prohibitive. While there are reporting mechanisms and campaign spending limits in place, the ECN's enforcement mechanisms for enforcing campaign spending limits were weak in the 2017/2018 elections. Additionally, though many elected representatives have stated the cost of campaigning was too high, many political party representatives have stated they believe the limits, intended to put candidates on equal footing with one another, are unrealistic. CEPPS/IFES and CEPPS/NDI will bring together representatives from the ECN and political parties to explore potential reforms to the electoral regulations and the legal framework to ensure a fair and equitable playing field in future elections.

Objective 1: Nepal's political transition process supported in order to institutionalize a more inclusive and effective and democratic political governance.

Expected Performance Milestones: CEPPS/IFES will expand its civic and voter education work with its CSO partners and the ECN; social studies teachers' training curriculum integrated into public and private school curricula; electoral education curriculum developed; the ECN will build capacity in critical electoral administration areas; the ECN will conduct stakeholder consultations on the newly drafted integrated election law and begin the process of submitting a bill to change the law to Parliament; key electoral reforms will be advanced following by-elections; civil society strengthens links with government and elected officials to strengthen public accountability; the ECN strengthens ASR and EDR processes; the ECN develops a plan for OCRV; the ECN strengthens its communication processes. CEPPS/IRI will train national and sub-national parliamentarians on how to incorporate policy research into their legislative development. CEPPS/IRI will leverage a core partner CSO to facilitate the formation of a Policy Research Framework; adapt a Terms of Reference for a redesigned Board; and develop parliamentary-approved standard operating procedures. CEPPS/IRI will also seek partners such as local academics and research organizations, advocacy groups and legal associations willing to commit to long-term engagement in the initiative. CEPPS/IRI will facilitate Policy Research Forums that will connect parliamentary staff and researchers to provide accurate and timely research to inform ongoing legislation. CEPPS/NDI builds the capacity of elected officials to better communicate with their constituents, to internalize best practices in legislative drafting and create agents of change through capacity building of young and emerging parliamentarians; Parliamentary Committees are better equipped to incorporate best practices into their legislative review process, including engagement with diverse stakeholders on draft legislation, and to effectively perform their oversight function. Government offices are clear about their roles under the new constitution and use different avenues to communicate more effectively with citizens; MPs benefit from in-depth thematic issue trainings to ensure more public engagement and informed legislation.

Result 1.1: Nepal's electoral system holds credible elections and is less dependent on donor support to continue carrying out its mandate of allowing citizens to exercise choice to select leaders peacefully and democratically at each level of government.

Sub-Result 1.1.1: Participation in electoral processes is broadened through inclusive civic education and voter registration efforts.

Activity 1.1.1.1: Design and implement inclusive civic and voter education campaigns

Youth Leadership Program

At the end of year two, CEPPS/IFES conducted a competitive process to identify a suitable local partner to implement a youth leadership program, contributing to CEPPS/IFES' work to build a community of youth peacebuilders and leaders under the *Indo-Pacific Strategy*. In this program, the selected partner will identify youth leaders in five districts and in the Kathmandu Valley to

complete a two-module training course on leadership and advocacy skills as well as technical sessions on Nepal's federal system, elections and political processes. Following each training, the youth participants will complete community mobilization and advocacy activities, specifically interacting with locally elected representatives during the annual budgeting and planning process. Through these assignments, youth will practice the skills they developed during the trainings and cascade their knowledge to other young people and community members about the planning and budget process. CEPPS/IFES will support the local partner to develop the tools used for the trainings and post-training assignments, including the training curriculum, training resources and civic education materials, including flipcharts, brochures and other information, education and communication (IEC) materials. The local partner will further conduct civic education activities that targets rural and urban youth using innovative methods including social media campaigns, mobile outreach and other information technology methods.

Dalit Inclusion Conference Support

As a critical part of its inclusion work in the Nepal, CEPPS/IFES conducted targeted civic education programming with Dalit communities and worked to empower Dalit leaders to participate in political processes. In addition, CEPPS/IFES worked with the ECN to integrate the inclusion of Dalits throughout the electoral process. To build upon this work, in year three, CEPPS/IFES will support the International Commission for Dalit Rights to hold the *Second Global Conference on Dalit Rights, 2020*, planned for July 2020. The conference will bring together social activists, leaders, advocates, journalists from around the world together with Nepali stakeholders. The conference will include panel discussions on political participation, economic empowerment, youth and gender equality and the UN Sustainable Development Goals relating to inclusion of Dalit persons in Nepal and around the world. CEPPS/IFES will provide technical support to the conference organizers and connect the ECN and its CSO partners to the conference as participants and panelists.

CSO Voter Registration Activities

CEPPS/IFES will support CSOs to conduct voter registration and citizenship certificate joint mobile drives, with a focus on rural communities and communities with high percentages of marginalized communities and in areas with low voter turnout in the 2017/2018 elections. These activities will be conducted in coordination with ECN voter registration drives and will focus on the months before the November by-elections. CEPPS/IFES expansion of joint mobile drives for voter registration and citizenship certificates will help the ECN to reach communities that may otherwise lack easy access to local offices to register to vote or obtain their citizenship certificates.

Support ECN Voter Education Initiatives

For the November by-elections, CEPPS/IFES will support the ECN to develop its voter education strategy, focusing on inclusive representation of marginalized groups, including accessible voter education strategies for persons with disabilities and voters with low levels of literacy. CEPPS/IFES will collaborate with the ECN to develop accessible voter education materials, such

as printing voter education brochures and posters and supporting the development of voter education videos. CEPPS/IFES will further use its network of CSO partners to disseminate voter education materials, working with the ECN to coordinate geographical areas of focus between the ECN and other partners to prevent duplication of efforts.

Electoral Education Curriculum and Trainings

Resulting from discussions with the ECN on how it can expand the activities of its Electoral Education and Information Center (EEIC), CEPPS/IFES will support the ECN to develop an electoral education curriculum that will enhance stakeholders' understanding of electoral processes and conceptualize the important role they play in the electoral cycle. A core curriculum will be developed in partnership with the EEIC and contextualized for applicable stakeholder groups. CEPPS/IFES anticipates facilitating this curriculum for university students, the NASC and the police academy, provided approval to work with the police academy is received from USAID. After finalizing the curriculum, CEPPS/IFES will support the ECN staff at the EEIC to facilitate a training of trainers for each stakeholder group.

With university students, CEPPS/IFES plans to pilot the curriculum with undergraduate students at Tribhuvan University and will incorporate community engagement activities outside of class to apply concepts they learned to engage with their fellow students, communities, government officials and elected representatives. In its trainings with the NASC, CEPPS/IFES will support the implementation of trainings for incoming civil servants, as most civil servants work on some aspect of elections during their careers, whether at the ECN or other government offices. It is essential that incoming civil servants have a good basis of understanding in fundamental electoral concepts, and the trainings will enhance the capacity of civil servants to work in elections. In its trainings with the police academy, the curriculum will be contextualized to help police understand their role in providing security during elections and provide a good basis of understanding for electoral operations that will facilitate them to support peaceful elections.

Social Studies Teachers' Trainings

In year three, CEPPS/IFES will support the ECN to develop new civic education content for social studies classes in grades 11 and 12. The existing social studies teachers training curriculum covers grades 9 and 10, and the new curriculum for grades 11 and 12 will build on the existing curriculum to expand students' understanding of elections and the ways they can become active and engaged citizens. CEPPS/IFES will continue to support the ECN to strategize how to contextualize and institutionalize the social studies teachers' curriculum across public schools to promote the sustainability of the framework, instead of continuing to hold individual trainings. CEPPS/IFES will seek connections with the MoE, in coordination with UNDP-ESP and UNESCO, to institutionalize the social studies teachers' training lesson plans into standard curriculum for the existing grades 9-10 curriculum and the new curriculum for grades 11 and 12. Furthermore, CEPPS/IFES will establish connections with private school institutions to integrate social studies training materials into private school curriculum, as private schools operate independent of the

MoE.

Activity 1.1.1.1 Output: civic education materials; voter education materials; voter registration mobile camps; youth leadership trainings; electoral education core curriculum; training of trainers for electoral education curriculum; social studies teachers curriculum.

Activity 1.1.1.2 Conduct an Assessment of the ECN's Voter List System

Support to ECN to improve the quality of the Voter List

In year three, CEPPS/IFES plans to work with the ECN to conduct an audit of the voter list to assess the data quality and make recommendations to improve the voter list and voter registration processes moving forward to ensure the voter list stays updated and is safeguarded against cybersecurity threats. The ECN's voter list is outdated, with multiple entries for some individuals and people who have died remaining on the list years after their death. Conducting an audit of the voter list information the ECN currently has in their system will help the ECN identify weaknesses in the data and recommend ways to improve the data moving forward. As the ECN is fast-approaching the 2022 elections, CEPPS/IFES will encourage the ECN to improve voter list data quality this year, as otherwise there may be insufficient time to complete this process fully. CEPPS/IFES will further work with the ECN and other concerned government ministries to explore ways to connect census data from the upcoming 2021 census to draw connections and identify discrepancies between census data and voter list data.

Activity 1.1.1.2 Output: recommendations to the ECN on improving voter list quality; voter list audit report.

Activity 1.1.1.3: Provide Technical Guidance on Out-of-Country (OCV) and Absentee/Advance Voting

Support for OCRV systems and processes design

Following the 2018 Supreme Court decision that voting options must be provided to Nepalis living abroad, CEPPS/IFES supported the ECN to conduct a study on OCRV in year two. CEPPS/IFES will continue to support the ECN OCRV Working Group to finalize the study and respond to requests for additional information from the multi-stakeholder OCRV Steering Committee. After the OCRV study is submitted to Parliament and decisions are taken by parliament on the future approach for OCRV, CEPPS/IFES will provide technical assistance to the ECN on its plan to operationalize OCRV. If parliament is supportive of the ECN's proposed approach for OCRV, which suggests development of a software system to register Nepalis living abroad and to possibly

also be used for voting, CEPPS/IFES will work with the ECN to develop technical specifications and procurement of the software system.

CEPPS/IFES will also encourage the ECN to facilitate stakeholder consultations to build a strong consensus on the approach for OCRV and incorporate stakeholder feedback into the ECN's approach and inform Parliament's decision-making. If possible, CEPPS/IFES will hold a joint stakeholder workshop with CEPPS/NDI on OCRV for political parties.

Activity 1.1.1.3 Output: technical specifications for OCRV software; OCRV operational plan; recommendations for the ECN on OCRV.

Activity 1.1.1.4: Improve Gender Responsiveness and Sensitivity of the ECN

Capacity Building Support to the ECN GESI unit

CEPPS/IFES will continue its flexible support to the ECN Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) unit in year three, building on CEPPS/IFES' close relationship with this unit following its support to create the department under the Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes (SPPELP) project. CEPPS/IFES will expand its support of the GESI unit to include technical support to the ECN on gender responsive budgeting. This will include working with the GESI unit to develop guidelines for a gender-inclusive framework to use for elections budgeting and for the ECN's organizational budget between elections to ensure the budget appropriately considers inclusion measures and prioritizes representations of marginalized groups in ECN activities. CEPPS/IFES will also work with the GESI unit to incorporate the findings from its gender and political finance report into its gender-responsive budgeting activities.

Support ECN Gender Inclusion Trainings and Stakeholder Interactions

Using the updated gender inclusion training manual that was finalized in year two, CEPPS/IFES and the ECN will facilitate gender inclusion trainings for new ECN staff and electoral stakeholders, including representatives from political parties, civil society and the media. In addition CEPPS/IFES will further support the GESI unit to facilitate stakeholder interactions, which may include workshops or multi-stakeholder roundtables, on gender and social inclusion topics identified by the ECN to increase stakeholder support for increased representation of marginalized groups in electoral and political processes. Potential topics for these interactions include discussions on CEPPS/IFES gender and political finance report, use of braille ballot guides and other disability-inclusive considerations in elections and a post by-election review of inclusion measures.

Activity 1.1.1.4 Output: Gender Inclusion trainings; gender-responsive budgeting guidelines and training; GESI stakeholder interactions.

Activity 1.1.1.5: Conduct Leadership Training for Persons with Disabilities

Power to Persuade Women with Disabilities Leadership Program

CEPPS/IFES will expand its *Power to Persuade* leadership and advocacy program with women with disabilities in partnership with local partner the Nepal Disabled Women Association (NDWA). Under its new subaward with CEPPS/IFES, NDWA will expand the reach of the program in Morang, Kavre, Kanchanpur, Dhading and Gorkha districts, directly training 100 new women with disabilities in 17 new local units, in some districts covering all local units. At the end of year two, the master trainers who attended the initial ToT in August 2018 attended a refresher training that allowed trainers to exchange experiences and lessons learned and review the curriculum for the district trainings they will lead. The curriculum covers different types of advocacy and leadership techniques, how to communicate with government stakeholders, including locally elected representatives and how to design and implement an advocacy campaign. With the addition of 100 new women trained on the *Power to Persuade* curriculum, NDWA will expand its network to 225 women who have built capacity as advocates for themselves and other women with disabilities in their communities. Following the district-level trainings, all 225 *Power to Persuade* participants will complete advocacy and community mobilization assignments, including advocacy meetings with local officials and using NDWA's civic education flipchart on the rights of women with disabilities in community interactions.

In addition to the trainings and participant assignments, NDWA will contextualize CEPPS/IFES Media Empowering Disability Inclusion and Access (MEDIA) guidelines, which provide guiding principles to journalists on disability inclusive reporting. CEPPS/IFES and NDWA will further contextualize the guidelines for gender sensitive reporting and will facilitate a workshop for media representatives and *Power to Persuade* participants to introduce and review the guidelines. NDWA will further hold district-level and central-level policy dialogues with political stakeholders on recommendations for reform using NDWA's policy platform. Finally, NDWA will facilitate a workshop between *Power to Persuade* participants and local elected women representatives in Morang district, who are engaged in CEPPS/IFES' *She Leads Women Leadership Program*, funded by DFAT and SDC.

Activity 1.1.1.5 Output: Updated civic education and advocacy materials; Power to Persuade trainings; workshop with elected women representatives; policy dialogues; contextualized MEDIA guidelines.

Sub-result 1.1.2 Oversight of Nepali political parties and process by the Election Commission

of Nepal, the media, and civil society groups before, during, and after elections incentivizes political parties to attend to citizen concerns

Activity 1.1.2.1: Strengthen the Electoral Legal Framework

Ongoing support for development of laws and amendments

In year two, CEPPS/IFES supported local partner the Nepal Law Society (NLS) to coordinate the election legal drafting committee, which completed an initial draft of the integrated election law. The integrated election law will clarify election regulations and processes that are currently unclear or contradictory in the existing election laws. In addition to consolidating the legal framework, in year three CEPPS/IFES will support the drafting team to include critically needed legal reforms to make the electoral process more efficient, inclusive and in line with international best practices. CEPPS/IFES will continue to provide technical support to the drafting committee and the ECN to finalize the integrated election law and provide support as it works with electoral stakeholders to build consensus before presenting the bill to parliament. CEPPS/IFES will also provide support to the ECN on legal needs as they arise, including with drafting directives and procedures for November by-elections, and through the development of topical legal notes as requested by the ECN.

Legal stakeholder consultations

CEPPS/IFES will continue to support NLS and the ECN's legal division to hold consultative legal workshops with electoral stakeholders. Receiving feedback on the integrated election law from electoral stakeholders, such as CSOs and political parties, is critically important to ensuring the electoral framework has broad acceptance and considers the concerns of stakeholders. Following the workshops, NLS will subsequently present recommended legal revisions to the ECN and the legal drafting committee based on stakeholder feedback.

Support to update election code of conduct

In year three, CEPPS/IFES will support the ECN to update the election code of conduct, which establishes rules of behavior for political parties, candidates and the media during the election period. CEPPS/IFES will use findings from its Electoral Needs Assessment in year two and its campaign finance monitoring project during the 2017 House of Representative (HoR) elections to suggest updates to the code of conduct. The Electoral Needs Assessment highlighted stakeholder consensus on the need for greater transparency in the electoral process from the ECN, especially regarding campaign expenditures, results determination and the recruitment and training of temporary ECN staff. The campaign finance monitoring report from the 2017 HoR election included recommendations to strengthen the campaign finance reporting mechanism and establish punitive measures for candidates who violate campaign spending limits.

CEPPS/IFES also recommended in the Electoral Needs Assessment that the ECN develop its own code of conduct, separate from the civil service code of conduct ECN staff are currently held to. The code of conduct that applies to all civil servants does not encapsulate the responsibilities exclusive to ECN employees. To address this need, CEPPS/IFES will advocate to the ECN on the need to develop its own staff code of conduct, and support the ECN to draft the document, based on the ECN's specific mandate as election administrators.

Activity 1.1.2.1 Output: integrated election law; legal drafts and regulations; legal notes; stakeholder consultation events; revised election code of conduct; ECN code of conduct.

Activity 1.1.2.2: Improve the Institutional Capacity of the ECN

Capacity-building trainings and support

CEPPS/IFES will support the ECN to identify areas for capacity building and encourage increased ECN ownership over staff trainings, including by rolling out Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) modules. CEPPS/IFES will also continue to be an engaged and active member of the BRIDGE working group, comprised of the ECN, International IDEA, UNDP-ESP and CEPPS/IFES. CEPPS/IFES will further support the ECN to develop its annual operational plan based on the final Strategic Plan, 2019-2023. CEPPS/IFES' flexible, capacity-building support to the ECN will continue to strengthen the integrity of the elections and political processes in Nepal and empower the ECN to be gradually less dependent on foreign assistance, contributing to USAID's goals under the *Journey to Self-Reliance*.

In its Strategic Plan for 2019-2023, the ECN set a goal to establish seven provincial election offices and decentralize district election offices' duties to the municipal level. Should the ECN move forward with its decentralization plan in year three, CEPPS/IFES will coordinate with UNDP-ESP to advise and support the ECN's restructuring. CEPPS/IFES will support the ECN to develop terms of reference for the new provincial election offices, provide training and training materials for provincial election office staff and potentially support professional development exchanges. CEPPS/IFES will also support the ECN to identify communications and IT needs to strengthen communication between offices, uploading of voter registration data and tracking campaign finance reports.

Support to by-elections

In anticipation of the November by-elections, CEPPS/IFES will provide flexible support to the ECN on key pre- and post-election needs, including the development of an election calendar, design and dissemination of ballot papers, voter registration and voter education strategies and the tabulation of election results. CEPPS/IFES will also support the ECN to update the poll worker manual to reflect regulatory changes to polling station operations and lessons learned from the

2017/2018 elections. CEPPS/IFES will then support the ECN to facilitate a ToT and four subsequent regional trainings for district election officers (DEOs) and poll workers to ensure election staff are trained on the updated poll worker manual. CEPPS/IFES will also work with the ECN to explore the use of braille ballot guides for by-elections to pilot an important inclusion measure the ECN should consider for future elections.

Support ECN research efforts

In year two, CEPPS/IFES supported the ECN in conducting a study on OCRV, which is expected to be presented to parliament by the ECN in late 2019. In year three, CEPPS/IFES will continue to provide technical assistance to ECN research studies so that they develop skills in evidence-based decision making. The ECN has identified research areas of interest in their Strategic Plan, 2019-2023, including political and campaign finance, the administrative costs of elections and the feasibility of the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM). CEPPS/IFES will provide international and regional best practices and support the ECN to identify areas for improvement in Nepal's electoral cycle based on the findings of their assessments. In particular, should the ECN choose to move forward with an assessment for EVMs, CEPPS/IFES will provide guidance on software specifications, practical implications and risks associated with use of EVMs. CEPPS/IFES will also support the facilitation of an ECN study trip on use of election technology if deemed beneficial for research purposes.

Activity 1.1.2.2 Output: ECN capacity building trainings; support to the ECN to contextualize BRIDGE modules; updated poll worker manual; poll worker TOTs; technical support for ECN research studies.

Activity 1.1.2.3: Assess and Develop Recommendations on Political Finance and ASR Framework

Support the ECN to combat ASR

As part its work under the *Indo-Pacific Strategy*, CEPPS/IFES' continues to work with the ECN to combat ASR to enhance the transparency and integrity of elections in Nepal. With the finalization of the Campaign Finance Management System (CFMS) and the Political Party Registration and Annual Financial Reporting software systems in year two, the ECN, will integrate the systems into its existing IT infrastructure through CEPPS/IFES support. As these systems require stakeholder consensus and cooperation, with candidates and political parties needing to submit information for both systems to make them effective, CEPPS/IFES will continue supporting the ECN to raise stakeholders awareness about how to share information on campaign and annual political party finances. This will ensure the systems are consistently updated and allow the ECN to enforce ASR regulations. CEPPS/IFES will advocate for the ECN to implement recommendations from its gender and political finance study, conducted in year two, to ensure its political finance work is gender inclusive.

Constituency fund monitoring

In year three, CEPPS/IFES will identify an appropriate subaward partner, that has national reach and a proven record of working with a wide variety of stakeholders, for a project on constituency fund monitoring. The 165 MPs whom were elected through first-past-the-post (FPTP) from single-seat constituencies receive approximately USD \$600,000 in public funds for use in constituency development projects. No formal reporting on the use of these funds is required, which increase the risk that these funds will be misappropriated or not used for its intended purpose. CEPPS/IFES will work with a local partner to design a system to allow MPs to self-report what the funds are used to and crowdsource information on the use of the funds from civil society. This will enhance public accountability of MPs use of public funds and contribute to preventing ASR, contributing to USAID's goals under the *Indo-Pacific Strategy* and the *Journey to Self-Reliance*.

Activity 1.1.2.3 Output: CFMS and Political Party Registration and Annual Party Finance software systems integrated into ECN processes; recommendations for gender inclusive political finance work; stakeholder interactions on ASR topics; constituency fund monitoring subaward.

Activity 1.1.2.4: Develop Election Dispute Resolution Procedures

Support the ECN to conduct EDR for by-elections

For the November by-elections, CEPPS/IFES will provide technical support for the ECN to complete EDR procedures, collecting and organizing complaints and tracking decisions on each case. Using the EDR-CMS, CEPPS/IFES will support the ECN to integrate the new software system throughout the EDR process, supporting the ECN to input information throughout. CEPPS/IFES will also support the ECN to enter historical EDR information from the 2017/2018 elections once the EDR-CMS software is fully integrated into the ECN's IT infrastructure and update the EDR complaints forms to match the EDR-CMS categories. Having all EDR case information in a central location will allow the ECN to easily refer to past EDR decisions on a sustainable, secure software system.

Activity 1.1.2.4 Output: EDR-CMS software implemented for 2019 by-elections; contextualized; updated EDR complaints form.

Activity 1.1.2.5: Conduct Post-Election Assessments to Identify Lessons Learned

Support the ECN to hold post-election lessons learned workshop

Following the November by-elections, CEPPS/IFES will support the ECN to hold a post-election lessons learned workshop internally with ECN staff and an external stakeholder post-election lessons learned workshop with political parties, civil society and the media. Based on the outcome of the elections and the identified lessons learned, CEPPS/IFES will support the ECN to develop recommendations for improvements to election processes. In particular, CEPPS/IFES will work with the ECN to identify possible areas for reform ahead of the next general elections anticipated for 2022.

Activity 1.1.2.5 Output: Post-election lessons learned workshop; recommendations for electoral processes improvement.

Result 1.2: Members of Parliament and future legislative bodies are capable of improving policy, monitoring implementation, and more effective in national decision-making

Sub-result 1.2.1: Elected legislators and their constituents openly and regularly engage each other over matters of transparency and public policy at federal and subnational levels

Activity 1.2.1.1: Solicit Citizen Input through Town Hall Meetings and Public Policy Forums

Nepal's geography often makes it difficult for those in remote villages to meet with elected officials and provide input into the legislative process. Nepal's new federal system aims to lessen this distance by providing citizens with closer access to elected officials. To promote legislative transparency and citizen input into initiatives at the federal level, CEPPS/NDI will assist legislators, including MPs from selected committees to ensure citizen participation in the policy and legislative formation process.

While CEPPS/NDI has regularly been engaged in consultations with the committee secretaries to discuss areas of collaboration and planning of activities, CEPPS/NDI has also held meetings with elected committee chairs and other key committee members to orient them on program approach, identify the legislation that will be prioritized for support in year three, and solicit their active engagement in the program. In year two, upon discussing the best approaches to roll out the town hall meetings (THMs) in an inclusive and broad manner, CEPPS/NDI engaged the Nepal Law Society, a national CSO, to conduct the THMs. Altogether 28 THMs were completed in year two, where emphasis was given to ensure inclusive and equitable participation from women and other marginalized communities. CEPPS/NDI, through its sub-grantee, engaged MPs and committee members to lead and facilitate these events to increase their commitment and ownership of the discussions and outcomes.

Similarly, in year three, CEPPS/NDI will continue its collaboration with the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) and the Society for Economic Journalist in Nepal (SEJON)

to conduct targeted public policy forums around economic policy and legislation as prioritized by FNCCI, the Parliamentary Committees and USAID.

Town hall meetings between MPs and citizens

In year three, CEPPS/NDI will continue its collaboration with the Nepal Law Society in rolling out the THMs and public policy forums. Partners' orientation and moderators' training programs have already been completed in year two, but should the need arise, a refresher training may be offered in the first quarter of year three. CEPPS/NDI will continue to closely coordinate with the Federal Parliament Secretariat, relevant committees and USAID's economic and social sectors to ensure there is necessary information and analysis on the types of bills that have been tabled to prioritize ones that will be subject to public solicitation and participation. CEPPS/NDI will work closely with the Federal Parliament and its committees to identify pieces of legislation. Priority will be given to those included in USAID's priority sectors and that are key to Nepal's political, economic and social development. As of August 2019, USAID priority agendas have been identified as being related to water and foreign investment, both policy level issues which will be addressed through THMs in year three. However, policy priorities and legislation around which THMs will be conducted will be discussed during periodic meetings among the stakeholders, which includes CEPPS/NDI, USAID, NLS and parliamentary committee chairs.

In year three CEPPS/NDI will conduct THMs through a sub-grantee, with at least six events in each province which will be a mix of both policy dialogues and citizen input on legislation. Civil society partners will provide input from town hall meetings in the form of reports distributed to MPs and committees. This input then will be compared to the MP and committees' suggestions on amendments to legislation under review and any changes to the legislation once it is passed. Civil society partners will play a facilitating role to ensure direct engagement of the Federal Parliament and relevant committees in discussions and legislation review once the legislation is submitted to the Federal Parliament from the relevant line ministry. This approach worked well under the previous USAID-funded program implemented by CEPPS through SPPELP and also in year two of Niti Sambad, and allowed project beneficiaries to keep track of changes in legislation as a result of citizen input and stakeholder discussions.

CEPPS/NDI will also use THMs to review the Local Infrastructure Development Partnership Program which is a continuation of the previous Constituency Infrastructure Special Programme. In the fiscal year 2019/20, the government allocated 60 million rupees to each of the 165 directly elected MPs. CEPPS/NDI will coordinate with CS:MAP on a monitoring and advocacy program to keep track of the spending process for this fund.

The THM's will be cyclical in nature to address the need for consultations at both legislative and policy making levels. As committees have two roles: to review legislation and also to recommend policy to the government, THMs will encompass the implementation of both of these functions. This means that THMs will focus first on policies related to a particular theme and followed up by THMs on the legislations around the policies that were discussed in the previous round of THMs. For example, if a priority issues is identified

to be education, THMs would first focus on education policy and followed up by THMs on recent legislation on education.

Public policy forums on specific legislation

Under the previous USAID-funded SPPELP program, CEPPS/NDI collaborated with the FNCCI, an umbrella organization of the private sector, to organize policy dialogues on specific pieces of legislation. This brought together young parliamentarians and their counterparts from the business sector to discuss political and economic policy issues and initiatives. These dialogues were helpful for parliamentarians to understand the issues more comprehensively and strategize to advance it within their respective committees. In the last quarter of year two, this collaboration was renewed and a series of policy dialogues on economic issues of concern were held with an additional partner, SEJON, who acted as facilitators and stakeholders for the dialogues.

CEPPS/NDI has been in regular consultation with the leadership and senior officials of FNCCI to resume similar policy forums in year three. There has been broad agreement that a dedicated and regular dialogue, “Eco-talk” would continue through year three with three organizational partners working to implement the series: CEPPS/NDI, SEJON and FNCCI. CEPPS/NDI will bring to these dialogues a solid network among parliamentarians and committees. Similarly, SEJON will bring in another key stakeholder—the media, while FNCCI will ensure engagement of the private sector, the key stakeholder in this activity. In year three, CEPPS/NDI will seek to build collaboration between committees and relevant policy research institutes and/or think tanks, the private sector and media, by providing a platform for committees to hold public hearings with relevant experts on specific pieces of legislation and/or policy which the current legislative facilities cannot support. CEPPS/NDI will consult with the stakeholders at the beginning of each quarter to identify one policy or legislative priority for the quarter around which to hold the forums, amounting to a total of four forums through year three. In the case that additional priorities emerge with the introduction of new legislation or amendments and new policy, an additional two forums may be organized depending on need and urgency.

Activity 1.2.1.1 Output: Citizens are able to discuss issues of concern with parliamentarians and committees; parliamentarians and committees receive research and analyses on key legislation.

Activity 1.2.1.3: Improve Constituent Relations

The Constituency Outreach activity seeks to rebuild constituents’ confidence in their elected representatives. Apart from local development issues, constituents will also be provided with an opportunity to voice their concerns about political party policy platforms and priorities shared during their campaigns, and provide feedback on their perceptions of MP and party performance. In the constituent outreach activity, MPs will engage with local government officials, CSOs, media representatives, youth groups and citizens to identify

and discuss local development issues and outline recommendations on how to support local development projects while leveraging the network within their party, and at the national level through the parliament and government. CEPPS/NDI will encourage MPs and local moderators to ensure meaningful participation of youth groups in each of these public forums providing them with an opportunity to engage and actively contribute to public debate.

In year three, CEPPS/NDI will continue to support MPs to improve constituent communication and outreach activities to promote greater citizen-government engagement. Through increased citizen-government interaction, participating MPs would gain first-hand knowledge of citizen concerns; enhance their capacity to become more representative of their constituents; and contribute to the formulation of more responsive public policy.

In addition, these activities aim to enhance MPs' constituency outreach skills and identify avenues to improve communications between MPs, CSOs, and constituents. This will allow CEPPS/NDI to help bridge the gap between MPs and their constituents to increase awareness and engagement in the work of the parliament. This activity has been ongoing since the last SPPELP programming and through the first two years of the Niti Sambah program.

In year two, CEPPS/NDI gave consideration to MPs from various parliamentary caucuses to ensure there is a balance between the different parties in the FP. As MPs' level of interest in outreach varies from one constituency to another, CEPPS/NDI responded to requests from various parliamentarians while taking into account a balance of gender, age, ethnic group, and geographic location. In year three, CEPPS/NDI will continue to ensure that the process of selection of MPs is politically inclusive, but will be only engaging MPs from the two groups identified above, i.e., young and women parliamentarians. Altogether, CEPPS/NDI aims to work with six MPs in year three; three women PR MPs and three FPTP MPs. The target is to undertake two outreach activities per quarter with the MPs in their constituencies in two constituencies. This includes stakeholder discussions, local media engagement and citizen engagement. However, this will be contingent on the parliamentary schedule and while CEPPS/NDI will make an effort to undertake two activities per quarter in two constituencies which are in close proximity to each other to ensure timely implementation, the ad-hoc scheduling of House sessions may well impact this activity. Nonetheless, in implementing the activity, efforts will be made to ensure MPs from across the political and geographical spectrum are included. However, as outlined below, CEPPS/NDI will engage more women PR MPs and youth MPs on capacity building around improved constituency outreach through a process of coaching on key outreach components. This would include workshops on effective constituency outreach and its various components to assure a level of sustainability to the activity beyond CEPPS/NDI direct support for MPs to conduct constituency outreach activities.

In year three, CEPPS/NDI plans to implement this activity through two strategic approaches: First, through engagement with women MPs who are elected through the proportional representation (PR) system and second, through MPs selected through the FPTP system who are also members of CEPPS/NDI's group of

Generation Next leaders. Selection criteria for MPs include- balance in gender, ethnicity, political parties, and representation from diverse geographical location, i.e., hills, plains and mountains.

In year three, CEPPS/NDI will look into the possibility of collaborating with Viamo for the constituency outreach activities so that constituents are able to communicate digitally via SMS or otherwise with their MPs in the case that some constituents are not able to travel to the outreach activity sites, particularly for constituents from more remote areas of each constituency.

Constituency Outreach Activity with women MPs

Women MPs who have been elected through the PR system will be engaged on constituency outreach activities to support them in building better relations with their constituents so as to create a political base for them to graduate from their PR status into the directly elected seats. By working with women PR Members of Parliament on constituency outreach, CEPPS/NDI would be providing a platform for women MPs to understand the priorities of their constituents and relay these priorities in parliament, while also supporting the MPs to become better known in their constituencies and establish them as credible faces for future political leadership at the federal level as candidates for election in the next general election. This is an important approach because since 2008, there have been three elections in Nepal, but the number of women winning elections through the FPTP system has not increased. At present, there are only six women out of 165 elected through the FPTP. A strong political base whereby women PR MPs are well-known and are able to voice the concerns of their constituents would also encourage political parties to consider the MPs as FPTP candidates in future elections. In addition to this, a group of 15-20 women PR MPs will be identified through a process of mixed selection³, to work on the capacity development of women PR MPs on improving their constituency outreach skills, such as public speaking, speech writing, media and PR management. In year four, depending on the success of this approach, CEPPS/NDI will look at creating a 'campaign school' targeting the next election cycle.

Constituency Outreach activity with young MPs

Similarly, the second strategic approach that CEPPS/NDI will implement for the constituency outreach activity will be to engage FPTP MPs who engage with CEPPS/NDI under the Generation Next platform of young and proactive MPs who are agents of change in their constituencies and across their functions in parliament. This platform is outlined below under Activity 1.2.2.7.

Workshops with young parliamentarians through the Generation Next Parliamentary Forum (as outlined in Activity 1.2.2.7) will include improving constituency outreach components in which CEPPS/NDI will include issue identification research conducted by the youth policy forum (Activity 2.1.12) and invite the research institute that will have developed the policy brief on youth unemployment to present its findings and recommendations.

³ Party recommendations, parliament recommendation and USAID and CEPPS recommendations

Activity 1.2.1.3 Output: Constituency outreach activities such as town hall meetings will be conducted and citizens discuss issues of concern with elected officials.

Sub-result 1.2.2: Improved policy dialogue on key issues prepares elected legislators for an increased and substantive role in lawmaking and oversight at federal and subnational levels

Activity 1.2.2.3: Organize Orientations for Federal-level MPs

In year two, CEPPS/NDI organized trainings for MPs of the FP representing four national-level political parties -- NCP, Nepali Congress (NC), Rashtriya Janata Party-Nepal (RJP-N), and Federal Socialist Forum, Nepal (FSFN) on the use of social media and media engagement. These trainings were focused on supporting new and emerging MPs on the role of social media in getting their message across, using social media platforms to engage with constituents and the media and in creating public profiles for MPs to establish their policy positions. Similarly, CEPPS/NDI also supported new MPs to engage with senior media experts to enhance their understanding of the media landscape and what media is looking for in political leadership and how both groups can work together to institutionalize democratic policies and processes in the country. In year one, support was focused on orienting all new federal level MPs on their roles and responsibilities and the Rules of Procedure through separate party-wise orientations. However, now having been active in their roles as parliamentarians for almost two years, the support will evolve to meet changing demands of MPs towards increasing their technical expertise on key issues in parliament, for example, the budgeting process, economic and fiscal policy, the use of traditional and new media, the relevance of SDG's and others.

Thematic trainings for MPs

In year three, CEPPS/NDI will continue to support MPs with trainings across a range of themes. The success of the trainings around social media have created a demand for continued training on social media use, but also along different technical areas such as planning and budgeting cycle, economic literacy, public speaking and others. CEPPS/NDI will build comprehensive packages of training on three or four technical thematic issues over year three on the basis of consultations with MPs to provide MPs with technical and practical skills on core issues that are integral to the success of their jobs. There will be one thematic training per quarter. For any further training on social media use, there will be coordination with the Social Media School activity, as outlined under Activity 2.1.14

Support for Parliamentary Party Offices on Capacity Development

Similarly, CEPPS/NDI will support all four parliamentary party offices to organize any refresher orientations for their federal parliamentarians on their roles and responsibilities in light of the new Rules of Procedure which were not finalized in year one when such orientations were organized. However, this will

be subject to party need and demand. Similarly, CEPPS/NDI will also support parliamentary parties to organize thematic capacity development or policy forums for specific areas of interest, in particular for the opposition party which may want to orient its MPs on government policies, developing counter positions and policy.

Activity 1.2.2.1 Output: New and merging MPs receive training on instrumental technical subjects that impact their roles and responsibilities.

Activity 1.2.2.2: Consult on the Policy Formation Process

Activity 1.2.3.1: Provide Technical Assistance to Parliamentary Committees

CEPPS/NDI will combine activities 1.2.2.2 and 1.2.3.1 to allow synergy between both activities and to avoid repetition.

Provide Capacity Development Support to Committees

Building on the consultations and discussions with the Secretary General and the secretaries of the various parliamentary committees that took place in year two, CEPPS/NDI will continue to collaborate with selected committees of the House of Representatives (HoR). In year two, CEPPS/NDI met with all committee chairs and leaders in parliament to discuss areas for support across the committees. Almost all committees have shown an interest in collaborating with CEPPS/NDI for support on their roles in legislative drafting and policy formation. As such, in year three, CEPPS/NDI will identify key committees to engage with on the policy formation process in consultation with experts and in coordination with USAID to align priority areas for support. CEPPS/NDI will work with three or four HoR committees in a more in-depth manner than previously. The strategic shift in year three will be to engage more regularly and substantively with a few core committees so that these committees receive a wide range of CEPPS/NDI support to enhance their legislative drafting and oversight function, as well as around developing internal capacity to perform better as MPs. For example, with the Women and Social Committee, we would look at supporting the individual MP's capacities to perform their functions, while also supporting committee work such as legislative review, oversight, multi-stakeholder discussions and field visits, which would include workshops for both MPs and committee staff. This would likely provide better impact as engagement would be long-term and not limited to one-off activities. However, CEPPS/NDI will also continue to support other parliamentary committees with targeted and on-demand trainings and workshops around using research or analysis and consultations on policy formation on specific pieces of legislation. The priority committees however will be given more in-depth and substantive support and will be identified through consultations with our donor and based on responsiveness and impact from years one and two.

This will include technical assistance to specific committees on relevant bills as needed, depending on timing and these committees' demonstrated interest. While CEPPS/NDI assistance is open to all committees, experience in Nepal has shown that not all committees and committee chairs are interested in receiving assistance from international organizations. CEPPS/NDI will focus its assistance on committees

that review and analyze legislation that is part of USAID's priority sectors and is key to Nepal's political, economic and social development. Based on experience from years one and two, CEPPS/NDI will continue engagement with the Finance Committee with a focus on pre-budget discussions and fiscal policy, the Women and Social Committee focusing on capacity development on the civil code and fundamental rights of women and girls and the Development and Technology Committee on oversight of major infrastructure projects and legislative review of Bills related to media and technology.

Under the leadership of the Women and Social Committee, CEPPS/NDI will support the capacity development of the women committee chairs in Parliament. This effort was initiated in year two through informal discussions and meetings, but will take a more solid shape in year three. The purpose of the activity is to provide a platform for the nine committee chairs (out of a total of 16 across both Houses) to share best practices, learn new skills and improve on the delivery of their roles as committee chairs. CEPPS/NDI aims to support informal gatherings for the group as well as at least two capacity building trainings in year three.

In year three, CEPPS/NDI will further explore opportunities for collaboration with other USAID funded projects that are working in different sectors such as health, climate change, environment, food security, and public finance management, by utilizing experts from relevant socio-economic areas of USAID, to brief and provide relevant materials to relevant committees in order to better equip them with up to date information and data in this regard. This includes collaborating with PFMSP's experts to provide technical assistance to the Finance Committee on citizen budgets, analysis and oversight of state budget and fiscal policy as well as to providing additional support to MPs, the parliamentary secretariat and parliamentary committees on areas that are related to budget processes, budget and fiscal policy analysis, budget oversight, fiscal accountability, gender budgeting and familiarizing them with GoN budget tools. CEPPS/NDI will also coordinate with the committees on behalf of Hamro Samman to provide opportunities for the CSO network to meet with the relevant committee chairpersons to brief them on the Palermo Protocol, the amendments to the Human Trafficking & Transportation (Control) Act and the Foreign Employment Act.

In coordination with other CEPPS partners, CEPPS/NDI's technical assistance will continue to include providing local issue experts, researchers, and interns to parliamentary committees to support legislative research and analysis on priority legislation that is critical to Nepal's political, economic, and social development. Similar assistance will be provided to specific parliamentary party offices in order to strengthen their legislative and research capacity. Parliamentary party offices do not have adequate human resources and they lack expert staff to support them with research and analysis on policy and legislation.

In year two, CEPPS/NDI supported two committees and one parliamentary party office with legislative interns -- the Legislative Management Committee, the Women and Social Committee and the RJP-N. In year three, CEPPS/NDI will offer this support to more committees and all parliamentary party offices. This support has been viewed positively by the committees and the parties and there is both demand and scope to expand on this support in year three.

Multi-stakeholder discussions, public hearings, and field visits

In year two, CEPPS/NDI will provide assistance to multiple committees with a focus on the core committees identified through consultation with USAID and other stakeholders and based on the priority of their working areas, including but not limited to the Finance Committee; Women and Social Committee; Education and Health Committee; and Public Accounts Committee to hold organized multi-stakeholder discussions, public hearings, and field visits between legislators, experts, relevant stakeholders and citizens on key issues. CEPPS/NDI will provide support to parliamentary committees to understand, review, and make amendments on legislation through discussions with local and international experts, interest groups, and citizens, both in Kathmandu and in other selected districts, to ensure that amendments reflect a wide range of citizens' and experts' voices. In addition, CEPPS/NDI will continue its support to parliamentary committees on specific bills tabled through expert briefings and field visits.

This programming will be designed based on CEPPS/NDI's previous experience conducting these activities. The assistance will be targeted to each committee based on its specific needs at the time and will be delivered in a manner that enables meaningful participation of women and other marginalized groups, in accordance with the 'Do No Harm' principles to avoid inadvertently reinforcing barriers to inclusion. During year two, CEPPS/NDI supported the Finance Committee to organize field visits in five locations on multiple issues, including the oversight of major infrastructure projects and customs offices along the border.

Assistance will be provided to HoR committees that express interest in receiving assistance, have the capacity to absorb the assistance, and are willing to receive assistance towards enhancing their legislative and oversight role. However, in the spirit of ensuring robust impact of CEPPS/NDI assistance, an effort will be made to ensure that at least some of the committees that receive support on multi-stakeholder discussions are receiving all-round CEPPS/NDI support so as to maximize impact and overall capacity building of the committees. CEPPS/NDI will hold a series of consultations with committees' secretaries and the chairs to assess any further priority pieces of legislations of the GoN and committees' interest for collaboration with CEPPS/NDI. In year three, CEPPS/NDI will conduct at least one event each with four of the committees.

Constitutional Dialogues at the Provincial Level

In the last quarter of year one, CEPPS/NDI supported the Southasia Trust and the Kathmandu University School of Law to organize an International Conference on Nepal's Constitution. Upon the success of the event, it came to the fore that such deliberation on the Constitution was needed at the provincial level. The merits and weaknesses of the Constitution needed to be discussed at length among a variety of stakeholders to work towards charting a clear path for implementation of the statute. As a key committee responsible for the implementation of the Constitution, the Law, Justice, and Human Rights Committee of the Federal Parliament took the initiative to lead the Conferences at the provincial level and approached CEPPS/NDI for support. With additional coordination and planning support from the Supreme Court Bar Association, CEPPS/NDI supported two provincial level conferences on Nepal's constitution in year two, bringing together stakeholders from the local, provincial and federal levels. This included MPs, locally elected officials, lawyers, private sector representatives, civil society, media and others. With the conferences completed in Provinces 3 and 4, in year three, conferences will be supported in the remaining five provinces.

These events will be officially jointly organized by the Law Justice and Human Rights Committee and the Supreme Court Bar Association, with support from CEPPS/NDI.

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Pre-budget discussions and field visits

In year two, CEPPS/NDI assisted the Finance Committee to organize pre-budget discussions in 12 districts to identify priority areas for the budget and provide feedback to the government on public interests around the budget. A questionnaire was administered for data collection on the priorities and opinions of the stakeholders who attended the discussions, including but not limited to the private sector, civil society, media, locally elected representatives and others. The qualitative and quantitative findings were then presented to the government who incorporated some of the recommendations from the committee report into the budget. In year three, CEPPS/NDI will work with the Finance Committee to make the pre-budget discussions more robust, better organized and implemented in a timelier manner. CEPPS/NDI will also look at the feasibility in organizing the discussions to ensure citizen participation from across Nepal's geographical terrain, as opposed to being centered in urban and easy-to-reach areas only. Similarly, particular attention will be given to the development of a suitable questionnaire that is simple and easy to understand among the participants of the discussions, from which policy recommendations can be meted out. CEPPS/NDI will also provide technical assistance to the Finance Committee to organize multi-stakeholders' interaction, including beneficiaries, and field visits in some districts to oversee the impact of recently amended Public Procurement Act. Similarly, in the run-up to the pre-budget discussions, CEPPS/NDI will work with the Finance Committee on building a better understanding of Gender Responsive Budgeting through a workshop and interaction.

Study Mission for the Finance Committee

As a core committee for program engagement, CEPPS/NDI will organize a study mission for Finance Committee members to provide exposure to best parliamentary practices of a similar committee in a more developed democracy. This exposure will then build the capacity of the committee to more effectively engage with other CEPPS/NDI support to the committee, primarily with a focus on the pre-budget and post-budget activities of the committee, and in improving the committee role in enhancing improved public financial management. The study mission will focus on giving exposure to key committee members, including the committee chair and leaders alongside one or two committee staff to examine and better understand how their committee can perform more effectively to engage with citizens and the government on budgetary planning and implementation, revenue generation and expense and reforming the public financial management processes practiced in Nepal. Prior to the trip, an agreement on how to institutionalize and internalize the learnings from the trip into the committee's practices will be discussed. Upon returning, a roadmap for implementation of key learnings will be drafted and CEPPS/NDI will support its implementation.

Creation of a research directory

To ensure that parliamentarians and committees have access to resources for future legislation, CEPPS/NDI will collaborate with MPs and committees to create a directory of Nepali experts and stakeholders on

specific thematic areas such as education, health, and the environment, which will be inclusive of women and other marginalized groups. This directory will build the capacity of elected officials, political parties, and government institutions to reach out to these groups.

Activity 1.2.2.2 Output: Parliamentary committees receive feedback from relevant stakeholders on key pieces of legislation. Policy discussions held and inputs provided to the members, MPs are equipped with quality resource materials on public budget, fiscal policy and oversight. Finance Committee receives budget support; research directory; recommendations for updates to the rules of procedure, improved social media and media engagement.

Activity 1.2.2.7. Create, Support, and Build the Capacity of the Next Generation Leaders in Parliament (NEW)

During the first two years, CEPPS/NDI support to parliamentary committees has led to the engagement of the Institute with almost all parliamentarians. It is increasingly clear that the capacity, skills, intent and orientation of MPs in Nepal's parliament are wide-ranging. Through continuous engagement over the past two years, CEPPS/NDI has identified potential emerging leaders across the political spectrum who could also act as agents of change in parliament. As such, CEPPS/NDI will engage with a group of 25 to 30 young and emerging MPs in year three to create the Generation Next Parliamentary Forum, representing Nepal's diversity in terms of gender, region and ethnicity to harness their enthusiasm and channel their energy towards their own leadership capacity as change makers within the political machinery of the parliament. CEPPS/NDI will focus the constituency outreach programs within this group and work with them on increasing their public exposure, supporting them in tackling contentious national political issues through a presentation on policy and policy positions, provide them with a series trainings on social media, public relations, public speaking and overall leadership development.

CEPPS/NDI will identify the MPs based on prior engagements and performance and consultations with USAID, CEPPS partners and other USAID partners. The objective of this activity is largely to build a community of young parliamentarians who act as agents of change on an everyday basis both externally and within their roles as parliamentarians. This would also create a community of friendship and solidarity across the group and bolster young parliamentarians to collectively push through progressive and democratic agendas. These trainings will be administered through four workshops and trainings (one per quarter) under a year-long course which is co-designed in quarter one with the selected parliamentarians.

Once the Forum takes shape, as part of the objective of improving constituency outreach of the MPs, including with the youth, there will be collaboration with Activity 2.1.12 for the participants of the youth policy forum to engage the Generation Next leaders in parliament. This consultation meeting will serve as a platform for participants of the youth policy forum to share, explain and lobby for their policy brief on

youth unemployment with national MP's. Similarly, MPs will be oriented on youth policy priorities and expectations from the new generation of leaders in parliament.

Activity 1.2.2.3: Provide Legislative Research and Policy Analysis Trainings

Legislative Research training with elected legislators

CEPPS/IRI will train an equal distribution of MPs from the major political parties at the national level to increase their understanding of and ability to conduct legislative research. CEPPS/IRI will draw upon domestic and regional research expertise to conduct policy research training on timely subjects identified in part from the data obtained from the national public opinion poll conducted by CEPPS/IRI. Additionally, CEPPS/IRI will work closely with CEPPS/NDI to ensure that activities complement each another and avoid duplication of efforts. Trainers and topical experts will be identified from established local think tanks, research firms, and universities and may feature respected legislative and policy research analysts from South Asia (India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Etc.) where such policy research expertise is recognized. The selection of trainers will also be informed by the policy priorities identified by the CEPPS/IRI national survey. In the trainings, CEPPS/IRI will impart the value of sustained outreach with CSOs, think tanks, and subject matter experts to inform accurate, timely, inclusive and representative policy development. Following the trainings, CEPPS/IRI will also work with the Federal Parliament and Federal Parliament Secretariat to develop parliamentary and institutional guidelines for evidence use in policymaking and decision-making. This activity will take place from the first quarter of the workplan and be supported by the implementation of CEPPS/IRI policy research framework and the attendance of parliamentarians and FPS staff to the first Policy Research Forum that is to be held in Kathmandu and later in each provincial capital under the auspices of the Policy Research Framework and supported by CEPPS/IRI and its local partner.

Activity 1.2.2.3 Output: National MPs are trained on how to incorporate policy research into their legislative development.

Activity 1.2.2.4: Support the Development of a Policy Research Board

CEPPS/IRI will establish a Policy Research Framework in close coordination with a highly professional local partner in the Kathmandu School of Law. It will also draw upon its intended collaboration with Nepal Administrative Staff College and with policy research relationships established with local institutions such as SAMATA Foundation, Samridhi Foundation; Nepal Development Research Institute; Center for Legal Research and Resources Development; Foundation for Development Management; Kathmandu University School of Arts and representatives and secretariat staff, in order to form a sustainable mechanism for researching priority interest areas.

Introductory brainstorming meetings on the Policy Research Framework

During the first quarter of the workplan, CEPPS/IRI and a partner CSO will hold a series of introductory series of meetings with think tank and legal experts, academics, members of the Federal Parliament, parliamentary committee members and Federal Parliament Secretariat staff to discuss the Policy Research Framework's core objectives and structure. The discussion will revolve around the procedures that will govern the framework activities. The participants also will begin to identify priority policy issues and to discuss the methods by which to generate evidence that is necessary for comprehensively addressing priority issues.

Develop Policy Research Framework mission statement, code of ethics and guiding documents

CEPPS/IRI and a partner CSO will finalize the Policy Research Framework's mission statement, code of ethics and guiding documents during an event following previous introductory meetings, including participation from members of the Federal Parliament, parliamentary committee members, Federal Parliament Secretariat staff, think tank and legal researchers and academics. The consultative event will result in the formation of the formal Policy Research Framework and a mechanism by which parliamentarians, committees and secretariat staff are able to submit policy research topics. The event will serve as a relationship and trust-building activity between civil society and parliamentary representatives, as well as detail the procedures that will govern relations between the Policy Research Framework and Federal Parliament members and Secretariat.

Convene regular meetings of Policy Research Framework

Following its establishment, the Policy Research Framework will begin regular meetings to discuss priority policy research topics, conduct research and develop policy briefs to be provided to parliamentarians and secretariat staff. The Framework's work will be informed by CEPPS/IRI's previously conducted Federal Parliament Secretariat assessment and national public opinion surveys and facilitated by the previously identified core partner CSO.

Activity 1.2.2.4 Output: A core partner CSO facilitates the formation of a Policy Research Framework. TOR for the framework adapted, memorandum of understanding signed, FP approved framework standard operating procedures.

Activity 1.2.2.5 – Conduct Policy Research Forums

CEPPS/IRI will strengthen cooperation between national and subnational lawmakers, party leaders, think tanks and research institutions through the facilitation of research and policy forums, which will feature briefings, panels, roundtables and discussions.

Conduct Policy Research Forums

CEPPS/IRI and its Policy Research Framework local partner will conduct a series of Policy Research Forums (PRF). The first of the series will be held in Kathmandu early in the first quarter. After, a forum will be held in three of Nepal's seven provincial capitals in the workplan period, with the remaining provincial capitals covered in future years. Topics of the forums will be determined by citizen priorities identified from the concluded first and two subsequent CEPPS/IRI national public opinion surveys. Each day-long forum will gather parliamentarians; legislative staff and senior officials of the secretariats where the forum is being held. Policy research partners will be invited to present thematic papers through a series of lectures, panels and roundtables. The primary objective of the PRF is to connect parliamentarians and secretariat staff with qualified researchers and receive actionable research to inform ongoing legislation. The primary target audience will be first-time elected parliamentarians and their respective legislative staff. The PRF will also be a platform to provide policy research materials and nonpartisan, accurate, statistical policy information services to parliamentarians and secretariat staff at national and sub-national levels.

In coordination with Federal Parliament Secretariat, CEPPS/IRI and the local partner organization will bring together representatives from think-tanks, research firms and academia to provide policy research capacity, allowing parliamentarians access to necessary policy support. The local partner and CEPPS/IRI will identify organizations to participate based on the quality and relevance of their research to the policy subject matter being studied.

In addition to convening at the federal level in Kathmandu, three of the seven planned provincial Policy Research Forums will be conducted in the workplan period - most likely in Provinces 1, 2, 5 or 7 where demand is most highest – and will be comprised of members of the Provincial Assemblies and secretariat staff of each respective province; representatives from local think tanks; research firms and academics to provide topical policy research discussions; present policy papers, materials and nonpartisan accurate and timely statistical information to the intended beneficiaries. An objective of these Forums is to build sustainable local sources of policy research and to encourage and improve the dialogue surrounding pressing provincial legislative and public policy priorities.

Activity 1.2.2.5 Output: Policy research forums are held that connect federal and provincial parliamentary staff and researchers to provide actionable research to inform ongoing legislation.

Activity 1.2.2.6 – Organize Targeted Policy Studies

CEPPS/IRI will partner with a local organization to share new and existing political and economic policy research and analysis with national and subnational lawmakers and their staff through the Policy Research Framework. Where research on a policy issue does not exist or is outdated, CEPPS/IRI will commission either its local organization partner and its extensive policy research

capacities or another local research institution to conduct white papers, policy memos, and other research products.

Research Briefings with the Federal Parliament Secretariat, Parliamentary Committees and Secretariat Staff

CEPPS/IRI's partner, in coordination with IRI, will schedule briefings and question and answer sessions between the researchers and lawmakers and relevant parliamentary committees who will benefit from the research. The partner organization will carry out research on the policy research priority areas and will present the findings of the research at the policy research forum serving as panelist.

Embed Graduate Research Assistants in Designated Parliamentary Committees

In consultation with CEPPS/NDI and to avoid the potential for duplication, the local partner organization will coordinate with the FPS; selected parliamentary committees and CEPPS/IRI to embed two graduate research students into certain parliamentary committees who have requested additional policy research support. To assist the graduate students with personal costs, they will be provided with stipends. They will provide policy research and analysis services to the committees and other resources to help the committees obtain accurate and timely policy and statistical information. The partner organization in coordination with CEPPS/IRI will recruit graduate research students, provide orientation and then embed them in the committees. Terms of reference with key deliverables will be developed to orient and supervise the work of graduate students. These graduate students will report to the partner organization on monthly basis. Potential parliamentary committees who have approached CEPPS/IRI include: the Law, Justice and Human Rights Committee; International Relations Committee; Legislative Management Committee; Sustainable Development and Good Governance Committee; National Concern and Coordination Committee; and Monitoring and Evaluation Committee on National Directives and Roles and Responsibility.

Conduct Policy Research Studies on Targeted Priority Issues

The partner organization in close coordination with the Policy Research Framework will share new and existing political and economic research and analysis with national and sub-national lawmakers and their staff. The partner organization will propose rigorous research questions and models that will result in applicable data and actionable policy recommendations to be shared with parliamentarians and FPS staff. CEPPS/IRI's partner will submit a set of policy analyses or recommendations and subsequent presentations and briefings with policymakers.

Activity 1.2.2.6 Output: A sustainable framework for producing actionable and objective policy research is created. Lawmakers begin to use policy studies, policy research forum and policy research framework as resources.

Sub-Result 1.2.3: Enactment of key laws follows informed policy analysis, stakeholder consultations, and public vetting at federal and subnational levels

The activities under this sub-result have been moved under 1.2.2.2.

Sub-Result 1.2.4: Best practices employed and capacities developed within the Federal Parliament to strengthen sub-national councils through elected officials, government, political parties, and civil society

Activity 1.2.4.1: Conduct an Assessment of the Parliament Secretariat

In the previous workplan period, CEPPS/IRI partnered with the Centre for Public Policy Dialogue (CPPD) to conduct a full assessment of the Federal Parliament Secretariat. Based on the analysis and recommendations contained in the final assessment report, CEPPS/IRI will proceed to conduct capacity building workshops and trainings with secretariat staff throughout this workplan period.

Capacity-building workshops

In the first quarter of the workplan period, CEPPS/IRI will identify technical experts to train the Federal Parliament Secretariat and relevant members of the Federal Parliament based on the capacity-building areas outlined in the assessment. These trainings with the Federal Parliament Secretariat and members of the Federal Parliament are expected to cover core knowledge areas of sub-national councils as outlined in Figure 1 of the assessment report. Technical experts may include representatives from selected local government associations; service delivery and communication consultants, and government officials from neighboring South East Asian countries who have undergone similar transitions.

Activity 1.2.4.1 Output: FP Secretariat is informed and trained on how to provide improved technical assistance to subnational legislators.

Activity 1.2.4.2: Develop an Orientation Curriculum and Platform for Newly Elected Sub-National Officials

Finalization of inclusive curriculum and training module

CEPPS/IRI's resident senior governance advisor will work with a local partner to develop products

such as an inclusive curriculum and set of informational resources for first time elected officials and civil servants. CEPPS/IRI will work with a local organization partner to develop a tailored training package and technical assistance materials on the roles and responsibilities of sub-national councils. These materials will inform and educate local officials on the significance of federalism and its impact on their roles and responsibilities, as well as address gaps in knowledge and understanding. Practically, these resources will include concise infographics of specific operational, staffing and organizational structures; best practices; information services and resource transfers.

Activity 1.2.4.2 Output: FP Secretariat develops materials for a training program for subnational elected officials.

Result 1.3: New political processes under the constitution's implementation are transparent and widely communicated within and outside the government

Sub-Result 1.3.1: Government agencies have the tools to improve outreach capabilities and institutional capacities to streamline government communications across agencies.

Activity 1.3.1.1 Develop and Implement the NRA's Unified and Inclusive Communication Strategy and Action Plan

Augment the Capacity of NRA Communication Unit

CEPPS/NDI will continue its support to the NRA to enhance internal communication by improving agency performance, with a focus on the communication unit within the office. CEPPS/NDI will provide local and international experts to the NRA as needed to continue to provide technical advice and support for the implementation of its communication strategy. In the beginning of year two, CEPPS/NDI supported the NRA with HR capacity augmentation and identified a local expert to serve as the senior program manager to lead the communication unit and to oversee the development and implementation of a Communication Action Plan and Strategy. The local expert will continue to be supported through year three. This support to the NRA will be done in coordination and close consultation with other development partners and INGOs that are also providing assistance to and working with the NRA. Year three may also call for a need to support up to one other staff within the communication unit to support the senior manager, with a focus on digital media and radio. Year three will be the final year for such support to the NRA as the NRA's five-year mandate will be up in the last quarter of year three.

NRA District Level Post-Earthquake Reconstruction Forums/Town Hall Meetings

In year two, CEPPS/NDI supported the NRA with town halls focused on soliciting citizen feedback and input on the reconstruction process and government procedures around reconstruction. In year three, with

both a stable government and stable NRA leadership, CEPPS/NDI will continue to assist the NRA to organize district level post-earthquake reconstruction forums/ town hall meetings in at least 8 earthquake-affected districts to provide an opportunity for NRA officials to interact with the general public and exchange information and experiences about the post-earthquake reconstruction process, including progress and challenges. Such forums were conducted under SPPELP in the past. The forums will create a platform for people to express their views, concerns and complaints to NRA representatives and at the same time provide a much needed platform for NRA to share updates and progress of government reconstruction efforts. As the Housing Reconstruction Program at NRA winds down, these town hall meetings will slowly focus on longer-term resilience-building issues and the reconstruction of public buildings and heritage sites as identified in advance by the NRA. At the end of year three, the NRA is set to be dissolved and a broader natural disaster resilience and preparedness unit to be hosted under the Ministry of Home Affairs. As such, support to the NRA will wind down in the last quarter of year three.

NRA Background Meetings/Briefings with Journalists, Civil Society and Development Partners

CEPPS/NDI will assist the NRA to organize regular background briefings for various stakeholders, including journalists, CSOs, development partners and other partners, focusing on specific priorities of NRA. This activity was also carried out in years one and two with positive feedback and results. This serves as a platform for the NRA to discuss its progress on the work at the district level, and for the journalists to ask questions to relevant NRA officials in a closed session. These forums also provide a direct way to pass information to the public through the media and allows for the NRA leadership to develop positive associations with the media towards rectifying a negative image of the NRA, encouraging a balanced narrative about the performance of the NRA and GoN efforts on reconstruction that takes into account challenges that still need to be addressed, and progress that has already been achieved, at the public level. These will be organized as and when needed, beginning in the first quarter of year three. When these activities are held at the sub-national level, CEPPS/NDI will coordinate with the CS:MAP project to implement the activity taking into consideration their local level journalist and CSO network.

Journalist and NRA Site Visits

CEPPS/NDI will continue to support the NRA to conduct site visits for journalists covering reconstruction to promote positive coverage of the NRA across media platforms. On a regular basis, CEPPS/NDI will provide support to enable a group of six to eight journalists and one to two NRA officials' travel to an earthquake-affected area to observe the reconstruction process and develop content for positive stories on Nepal's reconstruction. As often as possible, these visits will be combined with the town hall meetings and journalist trainings to reduce costs and to conduct coordinated field-level activities. For each trip, at least two well-informed and researched stories are expected to be published/aired on mainstream national media outlets through print, broadcast and radio channels. When these activities are held at the sub-national level, CEPPS/NDI will coordinate with the CS:MAP project to implement the activity. CEPPS/NDI will also work with the GESI unit at NRA to ensure some field visits are targeted for women journalists and/or also encompass GESI perspectives in story collection and reporting.

District-level Journalist Training

CEPPS/NDI will support the NRA to train journalists at the district level on the technicalities of the reconstruction process and best practices in post-crisis journalism. These trainings could not take place in year two as NRA priorities were still set on the actual reconstruction process, which began to slow down in the final quarter of year two. As such, in year three, there will be more opportunity to engage with the NRA on more long-term and sustainable capacity building exercises such as trainings for journalists to prepare them in the event of another crisis. These trainings will be in coordination with the town halls and site visits and consist of a local media expert and local reconstruction expert who will facilitate trainings at the district level for journalists. As and when the NRA's priorities change, the contents of the trainings will reflect these changes and shift in focus.

Support NRA capacity building on GESI

In year two, CEPPS/NDI conducted two trainings on GESI for NRA staff. These trainings were useful for staff to get a better understanding of the GESI perspective around reconstruction and how government officials can be more gender-sensitive in their approaches in the work environment. CEPPS/NDI will continue this support into year three with consultation meetings at the local level in earthquake impacted districts to gather evidence of women, poor and marginalized groups to ensure GESI compliance in the recovery plan of future government programs and projects. Similarly, CEPPS/NDI will support training for elected representative (women, men, youth and related stakeholders) in earthquake affected districts on the recently endorsed GESI Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) manual and the DRRM strategy Plan 2018 - 2030.

Support for NRA's Communication Tools

In years one and two, CEPPS/NDI supported the NRA with the publication of a bi-monthly news magazine and e-newsletter in both English and Nepali which was distributed among development partners, local governments and other stakeholders to ensure effective and efficient communication on NRA and partner organizations' activities around reconstruction. The human resource capacity augmentation feeds into the publication support as the individual deputed by CEPPS/NDI to the NRA is the coordinator of these publications and their editorial advisor. In year three, CEPPS/NDI will continue this support, along with other select print publications for archival and institutional memory purposes, including a comprehensive book detailing the reconstruction activities over years that have been led by the NRA with support from donors and development partners in both Nepali and English.

In response to a request from the chief executive officer of the NRA and NRA leadership, CEPPS/NDI will support that NRA in year three to produce a comprehensive documentary of about 25 to 30 minutes detailing the overall activities of the NRA in the post-earthquake reconstruction. This would be tentatively produced at the end of NRA's tenure, i.e., December 2020, for which an external video production consultant will be hired. In addition, as the government plans an international conference to take place tentatively in the third quarter of year three, CEPPS/NDI will support the production of a shorter documentary production on the reconstruction process for the purpose of airing at the conference. From the footage that is collected over the production of these two documentary videos, shorter, thematic videos on different aspects of the NRA's reconstruction process will be produced for mass consumption through social media and others. The themes

will include reconstruction of private housing, schools, health facilities, public buildings, security sector buildings, cultural heritage, drinking water facilities, road reconstruction etc.

Activity 1.3.1.1 Output: NRA has the capacity to deliver on communication needs; NRA communicates frequently across government agencies and the public; the public image of the NRA is improved.

Activity 1.3.1.2: Develop an ECN Media Policy

Support the ECN's media and communications

For the November 2019 by-elections, CEPPS/IFES will provide technical support to the ECN's external relations department to develop a media and communications strategy. Building off the success of the ECN's first election social media strategy developed for the 2017/2018 elections, CEPPS/IFES will support the ECN in developing a social media policy to enhance interactive public engagement and awareness of by-elections as well as to counter disinformation as it arises in the lead up to the elections and during results tabulation. Furthermore, CEPPS/IFES will continue to provide updates to the ECN website to improve its utility for ECN staff and electoral stakeholders.

Develop an online election information network

In year three, CEPPS/IFES will identify a web-hosting platform to develop an election information network to collate election information, including voter information and voter education materials surrounding elections, voter registration resources and civic education materials on the electoral process and importance of political participation. CEPPS/IFES will coordinate with the ECN to ensure the materials on the election information network complement the ECN's website and will work with local partners to ensure website materials are inclusive of marginalized groups and accessible to voters with disabilities. CEPPS/IFES will connect electoral information network resources with the CEPPS/IFES Nepal Facebook page to expand the reach of the network and its resources.

Activity 1.3.1.2 Output: ECN communications strategy for by-elections; ECN social media policy; online election information network.

Sub-Result 1.3.2: Government agencies improve the quality and quantity of communications with citizens.

Activity 1.3.2.1: Conduct Citizen Outreach

PMO Staff Study Mission

To learn how PMOs in other countries implement its internal and external communication, CEPPS/NDI will organize an international study mission and exposure visit for four to five staff from the PMO. This support is based on discussions with the PMO as an effort to provide targeted activities to increase staff capacity. Participating staff members will be in high-profile positions that have the ability to influence PMO official communication, namely the PMO secretary, spokesperson, press advisor, and chief political advisor. Their ability to understand their role in PMO communication and to work collaboratively towards streamlining government communication is critical. After the international exposure trip, CEPPS/NDI will facilitate discussions among the PMO staff members on recommendations for improved communications and next steps going forward. CEPPS/NDI will conduct this activity only if these individuals express and demonstrate a commitment to working together and institutionalizing a protocol and guidelines for PMO communication. This activity is anticipated to occur under the current NCP-led government, and the four current PMO staff members would increase the possibility of the PMO adopting a communication protocol and guidelines while this government is in place. Once the policies are institutionalized, the probability increases that the protocol and guidelines will be followed by succeeding administrations.

To learn how PMOs in other countries operate from the standpoint of citizen outreach and feedback mechanisms, CEPPS/NDI will organize an international study mission and exposure visit for four to five staff from the PMO. This support is based on discussions with the PMO as an effort to establish working procedures and protocols within the PMO that fall in line with international best practices. This activity is important considering the government in Nepal will likely be in office for another four years, making it the most stable democratic government the country has seen in over six decades. As such, there is a need to support the institutionalization of best practices within the country's highest executive office. This activity will be carried out upon full agreement on implementation of some best practices upon returning from the study mission and after other initial outreach activity support has already commenced. This activity would take place in the last quarter of year two. CEPPS/NDI is exploring countries within the region where this study mission could take place. Indonesia may be a suitable match considering the relatively organized nature of the Office of the President and the possibility to also look at the implementation of OGP as a part of the mission, which is moving forward with pace in Indonesia.

This activity could not take place in year two due to the unsettled nature of business within the PMO. It took the first two quarters of year two for all PMO staff to be formally appointed, including the foreign affairs adviser, who is the main contact for CEPPS/NDI for this activity. The Office was focused on internal adjustments, and as such, priority for this activity was low. In year three, the study mission is more viable due to the stability of personnel now within the PMO and the institutionalization of procedures for carrying out day-to-day tasks.

Integrating FixMyCommunity; a product of NDI's DemTools into the Government Database through the Ministry for Urban Development

In year two, CEPPS/NDI supported the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration to support with identifying barriers and opportunities in local governance by holding multi-stakeholder discussions, implemented by a CSO. In year three, CEPPS/NDI intends to take a different approach supporting the government to collect and receive input from citizens by working with the Ministry of Urban Development to integrate 'FixMyCommunity'⁴ into the Ministry's database.

To ensure that citizens have a user-friendly digital medium to report everyday issues to relevant government authorities and the authorities have an efficient system of collecting data on citizen's problems and tackling them, CEPPS/NDI will work with the Ministry of Urban Development on integrating the FixMyCommunity Tool into the Government databases.

FixMyCommunity, originally created by civic tech NGO MySociety, routes citizen-submitted reports together with photos to the key government institutions who can address them. By making complaints and government updates visible to the public, the tool helps officials demonstrate that they are taking action on the issues that concern citizens. Systems like FixMyCommunity have been used for reporting everything from potholes to bribes and are a useful bridge between citizens and their representatives. In Nepal's case, the public will be able to report everyday issues via a user-friendly mobile application. The areas for reporting will be identified by the ministry.

The pilot phase of the program will take place in the city of Nepalgunj⁵. The city has been chosen as the location of the pilot due to its proactive locally elected representatives, who will also be engaged in the program. CEPPS/NDI will also support training on the use of the tool for government officials at the ministry and local levels, alongside orientations for civil society and youth groups in and around Nepalgunj. CEPPS/NDI will also support some marketing for the tool to ensure that the availability of the new tool is widely communicated and thus utilized. Preliminary work on the tool will begin in the first quarter of year three.

Similarly, necessary experts from NDI headquarters or experts from other countries who have implemented a similar tool may also be engaged for training purposes.

Workshops for the Office of the President

In year three, CEPPS/NDI will continue and build on year two support to the Office of the President to better understand the role of the Office of the President in Nepal. In year two, four experts were engaged to

⁴ <https://dem.tools/fix-my-community>

⁵ The hometown of the Minister for Urban Development

develop a working paper on the role of the President and its office. In year three, this paper will form the basis of closed door roundtable discussions between the President's advisors, experts on Nepal's constitution, the law, government organizations and later, an international expert to understand the place of the Office within Nepal's context as mandated by the Constitution. An international expert, with experience of working in a similar-context country with a non-executive President will also take part in the review process which will be carried out through quarters one to three. With input from multiple stakeholders through small roundtable discussions, a finalized working paper will be drafted which will form the basis of the ToR for the President.

In the last quarter of year three, CEPPS/NDI will support the Office of the President to prepare an organizational structure and terms of reference for the Office of the President which would be adopted and implemented by the Office. As it stands, the only point of reference that the Office of the President has is the Constitution of Nepal and a brief generic one-pager for the Office insofar as its terms of reference is concerned. Once this process is complete, CEPPS/NDI will provide support with the implementation of this new structure and terms of reference, and this will likely commence in the last quarter of year three or the beginning of year four. This activity is being carried forward in consultation primarily with the political advisor to the president.

Research Support to the National Planning Commission

In year three, CEPPS/NDI will begin a small engagement with the National Planning Commission in an effort to develop new areas of outreach support to core government agencies. The National Planning Commission is an integral government body responsible for the planning of all major government activities and priorities in the short, medium and long term across the sectors. It is the apex advisory body of the Government of Nepal for formulating a national vision, periodic plans and policies for development. It is headed by the Prime Minister. The NPC assesses resource needs, identifies sources of funding, and allocates budget for socio-economic development. It serves as a central agency for monitoring and evaluating development plans, policies and programs. The NPC also serves as an intellectual hub for the exchange of new development ideas and proposals from scholars, private sector, civil society, and development partners.

CEPPS/NDI began discussions with the Planning Commission to discuss research gaps that NDI may be able to support in filling. Based on the discussions, in year three, CEPPS/NDI plans to either engage with independent consultant/s who will work with the NPC, with NDI as a liaison, or NPC will partner with a local think tank with CEPPS/NDI as a liaison. The subject of initial research is yet to be finalized, however, areas that have been identified with immense research gaps include a focus on local governance, youth, federalism, parliamentary practices, and the media.

Activity 1.3.2.1 Output: Government agencies communicate with non-government entities and the public on major issues; a feedback mechanism is created to give input into the constitution-implementation process; People are more and better informed about the

constitution, its implementation and government priorities; Government agencies have the communication tools necessary to carry out their ToR.

Sub-Result 1.3.3 GoN understands the relevance and processes related to joining the Open Government Partnership

Activity 1.3.3.1 Provide support to the GoN through efforts to join the OGP and enhance openness and transparency.

Support to the Parliamentary Committee on OGP

This year, CEPPS/NDI will engage with one or more of the Federal Parliament's thematic committees to provide committee members with an orientation on the OGP, its values and processes. The pitch will be made in line with all of the concerned committees' responsibilities to provide feedback on the government's conduct of business related to the issues outlined under the OGP. Although a National Action Plan is required to join the OGP, it is possible for the Parliament to independently engage with OGP through a Legislative Openness Plan as well. As such, CEPPS/NDI will support one or more Committees to become better acquainted with the OGP framework. This activity will commence in year three, likely towards the end of the first quarter. The level of engagement will largely depend on the level of interest shown by the committees on OGP core tenets, in particular, the committee chairs.

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Workshops on the OGP with the National Information Commission: This year, CEPPS/NDI will continue to implement activities around the OGP initiative towards building public knowledge and consensus around the Partnership. To this end, CEPPS/NDI will work with the National Information Commission to hold a series of discussions and workshops on various issues related to OGP bringing together members of civil society, government, MPs and the private sector. The purpose of the workshops will be to have thorough discussions on the opportunities and challenges for Nepal on OGP and to prepare a roadmap for further action, eventually leading to the basis for what would become the National Action Plan to join the OGP. For this purpose, experts on good governance issues will be engaged for presentations, including RTI, transparency, budget, legislative transparency and others. This activity will begin in the second quarter of this year, and be executed on an as and when needed basis, depending on the outcome of each workshop.

Activity 1.3.3.1 Outputs: Government agencies show some level of willingness to engage on OGP issues; Media and Civil Society are better informed on OGP

Objective 2: Nepal's political parties function more inclusively and transparently, and are more accountable to and representative of their constituents on national policy issues.

Expected Performance Milestones: Under Objective 2, CEPPS/NDI expects to produce several policy briefs during year three, both for individual single party partners as well as in multi-party setups. Furthermore, selected components of the policy briefs that were already produced during year two are expected to be adopted and implemented by local representatives of CEPPS/NDI partner parties.

Result 2.1: Political parties adopt more democratic internal structures to enhance their accountability and integrity to Nepali voters in and between elections

Activity 2.1.3: Develop National-level Policy Working Groups and Provincial Focal Persons

Needs for policy-development capacity and support are different for each CEPPS/NDI party partner. Some parties have a relatively well-developed set of existing policies and a department that is responsible for developing policies within the party, whereas other parties do not have structured policies, are unfamiliar with the process and have no prior experience with developing them. CEPPS/NDI's approach for the Policy Working Groups (PWG) has been tailored to address these differences. This targeted party approach worked well in year two, allowing CEPPS/NDI to focus on areas of support that are most impactful for parties. The Institute will build on this approach in year three.

During year two of Niti Sambah, the NC was in the process of forming a Central Policy, Research and Training Academy (CPRTA), responsible for taking the lead in these respective areas within the party. The academy falls under the direct responsibility of the vice president. The formation of the CPRTA was recently completed and NC is finalizing the internal structure of the academy, formalizing its statute and assigning responsibilities among participants in the academy. CEPPS/NDI expects to work with the policy department within the CPRTA. This group will most likely be divided into smaller groups who will be responsible for specific policy topics. CEPPS/NDI will provide support to a minimum of three of these groups who will work to develop policy briefs for the party. This support will focus on exposing the party to policy experts, support the collection of data and setting up effective policy processes and organizational steps for policy development. In coordination with NC, CEPPS/NDI will also offer the party the opportunity to work with selected research institutes to support the development of policy briefs, as CEPPS/NDI has done with other parties. CEPPS/NDI will conduct four activities for the party, which will be conducted in December 2019, May, July and September 2020. Based on experience from prior years, CEPPS/NDI is aware that NC often have additional ad-hoc requests from the party team, and as such, the schedule has the flexibility to incorporate selected components of those requests.

The FSFN, now the Socialist Party of Nepal (SPN,) worked closely with CEPPS/NDI during years one and two. With the help of the Institute, the party formed a policy working group. The group

identified 'Unemployment' as their policy priority, with a particular focus on Province 2. This has led to the development of a policy brief by the party on that topic. In the third year, CEPPS/NDI will build on this work to complete the remaining stages of the policy development cycle, which includes 1) developing an implementation plan, 2) lobbying for the adoption and implementation of the policies and developing draft legislation for local governments based on it and 3) larger constituency outreach and communication. In consultation with the party, the PWG will be expanded with representatives of the former Naya Shakti party. CEPPS/NDI will conduct two single party support programs for SPN. These activities will focus on the stages outlined above and will take place in November 2019 and June 2020.

In the second year, RJP-N successfully developed a policy brief on 'Improving School Education in Province 2' and produced implementation plans. The PWG, led by the senior vice-chairman/National Assembly member, vowed to take the policy brief to the local level and initiated groups at all three tiers to begin lobbying for the policy brief and its six recommendations. In the third year, CEPPS/NDI will build on this work and support the party to share and implement the policy recommendations in targeted municipalities and at the provincial level (in Province 2). In addition to facilitating lobbying activities among elected representatives from RJP-N, CEPPS/NDI will also support the party to develop communication strategies based on the policies and present the policies to voters for feedback. RJP-N and CEPPS/NDI will also begin working on one or more policy briefs with the party, which will be based on the issue identification that the party already completed during activities in year one. The activities will be conducted in November 2019 and April 2020.

The NCP is currently in the process of finalizing its merger, including assigning personnel to oversee party departments. These include the international department and school department, which have traditionally been the departments that CEPPS/NDI coordinates with for their programs. CEPPS/NDI expects that the completion of the merger will streamline coordination with the party and structure party requests. To date, much of the work with the NCP required extensive coordination with different leaders, who often had different and opposing party requests, making it difficult for CEPPS/NDI to develop a structured and institutional capacity building support program. Once the merger is finalized, CEPPS/NDI will attempt to form a PWG for the party. However, past experiences have indicated that the NCP can be specific in their request for support and are more resistant to certain types of capacity building, including on policy development. This has to be factored in when designing the workplan for this year. To that end CEPPS/NDI is planning to adopt a more flexible approach towards NCP in year three, with three potential scenarios. Firstly, CEPPS/NDI will try to develop a policy working group that will focus on building the governing and policy capacity of the party, particularly at the local level. Alternatively, CEPPS/NDI can build on the work completed in year two with the party, which strengthened the coordination between and collaboration among local, provincial and federal elected representatives from the party in targeted constituencies in each province. This will help identify priority needs in each constituency and allow elected representatives from all three governing tiers to coordinate to develop a unified strategy to address those problems. At the same time it increases awareness about the new federal governing structure, key constitutional governing

provisions and the different responsibilities that have been assigned to each governing tier. This program was conducted in Province 3 and 5 in year two and can be expanded to the remaining five provinces in year three. Thirdly, in the event that the NCP is reluctant to work on the above approaches, CEPPS/NDI will work on targeted support programs at the request of the party. CEPPS/NDI will ensure that these activities will be in line with USAID expected performance milestones and result indicators and most likely focus on building technical governing skills of NCP elected representatives and/or creating understanding of key federal governing processes. In year three of the program, there will be four activities for NCP in January, June, July and September 2020.

Where possible, CEPPS/NDI will work on national lobbying activities of its PWG's through existing contacts the parliamentary support program has with federal MP's. In addition, when policy topics overlap with Activity 1.2.2.2, CEPPS/NDI will ensure that there is coordination and exchange of policy work between the party and parliamentary programs.

Activity 2.1.3 Output: Policy working groups are operational for all four partner parties; each PWG will develop one to three policy briefs.

Activity 2.1.5: Establish Women's Policy Forum

The Women's Policy Forum is the furthest along in the policy development cycle of all CEPPS/NDI policy groups. In partnership with the South Asia Institute for Advanced Studies (SIAS), the Women's Policy Forum created a policy brief on '*Access to Water*' and developed an implementation plan. In year three, CEPPS/NDI will complete the policy cycle on access to water by lobbying for the adoption and implementation of the policy recommendation among party contacts identified by the group, particularly in local governments. The participants will leverage their own party contacts to do so, supplemented by CEPPS/NDI's network where necessary. This program will be conducted in December 2019.

Similarly, during year three the existing group will start work on formulating two additional policy briefs. Since the group has already conducted the first stages of the policy cycle, i.e., understanding the steps that are involved and have strengthened their capacity to develop policies, they can begin these two additional policy briefs from the third stage. The issues will be based on the earlier outcomes of their survey questionnaire. The group will be divided into two policy groups, each focusing on one policy issue while working together with a research institute, similar to their brief on access to water. These activities will be conducted in March, May and July 2020. At the end of the third year this group will have completed all stages of the policy development cycle for three policy briefs.

Activity 2.1.5 Output: The policy recommendations for the Women's Policy Forum will be included in the planning and budgeting cycle of targeted pilot municipalities.

Activity 2.1.8: Organize Policy Debates between Candidates or Locally Elected Officials

Based on a review of the USAID impact evaluation and in coordination with USAID, it was decided that this activity as outlined in the year two workplan, would be more effective during by-elections due to the difficulty holding a debate when there are no elections. Rather than linking the activity directly to the outcomes of the impact evaluation it was decided that CEPPS/NDI would support candidate debates for several of the by-elections. In August 2019, the ECN announced that the by-elections would take place at the end of November 2019, meaning that this activity from year two carries over to year three.

In the lead-up to the by-elections, CEPPS/NDI will support three candidate debates for the following races: 1) Member of the House of Representatives for constituency Kaski-2, 2) Mayor for Dharan Sub-metropolitan in Sunsari district and 3) Chair for Phalgunanda in Panchthar district. The debates will be implemented by a sub-grantee.

Lessons learned from the previous candidate debates that CEPPS/NDI organized in the lead-up to the 2017 elections will be incorporated into the approach. These include working with a strong and connected local sub-grantee, making sure there is a respected and known moderator, conducting the debates far in advance of the election, gathering input about issues to be discussed during the debate from candidates and ensuring buy-in and collaboration from local partners such as local FNCCI chapters and media outlets. In addition, CEPPS/NDI will offer a brief training to participating candidates which will help strengthen their understanding about how a debate works and how they can perform well. However, based on past experiences, candidates often decline participating in these type of activities.

The debates will have the following structure: 1) introduction of the debate, its format and the participating candidates, 2) brief opening statements from candidates, 3) questions about three predetermined policy priorities that are relevant to the areas the candidates are running in (which will allow candidates to share their plans and ideas), 4) selected pre-screened questions from attending audience members and 5) brief closing statements from candidates. For the debate in Kaski, CEPPS/NDI will facilitate coverage of the debate on local television and radio outlets, whereas it will only facilitate coverage on local radio stations for the mayor/chair races, in addition to a live audience. CEPPS/NDI will require the sub-grantee to coordinate with Viamo Nepal (a mobile technology platform) to explore ways in which their applications can be included in the candidate debates. CEPPS/NDI needs further clarification from the ECN about the campaign period and code of conduct that applies to the by-elections. This information will inform CEPPS/NDI when it is allowed to conduct the debates.

Activity 2.1.8 Output: Three debates organized with one federal and two local races.

Activity 2.1.9: Organize Post-Election Orientation for Women and Other Marginalized Group Office Holders at the Local-level

Capacity Enhancement and Policy Development Program for Women Deputy Mayors

Since the beginning of the grant, CEPPS/NDI has focused on building the technical skills of women deputy mayors and chairs in Provinces 2, 4 and 6. All responsibilities that are assigned to them in the constitution and the *Local Governance Act* have now been covered, allowing the deputy mayors/chairs to strengthen their understanding of how to effectively fulfil their roles and responsibilities. CEPPS/NDI will build on this success, but change the approach and the selection of participants in year three.

In year three CEPPS/NDI will form a new group of 35 to 40 top performers from the three prior groups in Provinces 2, 4 and 6. Although most participants were active and benefited from activities in years one and two, it was clear that there were top performers in each of the groups. These were women that were the most active (consistently participating and asking questions) and showcased the capacity to internalize and apply the skills that CEPPS/NDI assisted with. The selection of these top performers will take the earlier selection criteria used by CEPPS/NDI into account. These include political representation, geographic distribution and the inclusion of marginalized groups. CEPPS/NDI will start pivoting the program to focus more on supporting concrete policy agendas. In particular, CEPPS/NDI will support the selected deputy mayors/chairs to play an active role and submit concrete plans for the planning and budgeting cycle in their municipalities in 2020. CEPPS/NDI will conduct three two-day trainings in the third year, during November 2019, January and March 2020, in the lead-up to the planning and budgeting cycle.

Women Mayor/Chairs Program

Similar to the Deputy Mayor Program, the Women Mayor/Chairs Program also focused on familiarizing mayors/chairs with their local roles and responsibilities and strengthening their capacity to effectively fulfil their elected roles. In year three, CEPPS/NDI will transition the program as a pilot to implement the outcomes of the advocacy campaign of the WMP. The WMP has identified three policy demands⁶ that aim to improve the economic empowerment of women

⁶ Improving Nepali women's access to capital, investment, and loans by enforcing existing policies, especially among banks and for women cooperatives; also simplifying the process of gaining access to credit and improving the awareness of the opportunities to access credit; Increasing government investment in women's economic empowerment through allocating up to 25 percent of local-level budgets on women's economic empowerment. In addition, allocate targeted budgets to tailored employment initiatives that create income opportunities for women per province; Empowering women in the country's economy by changing traditional attitudes and behaviors of families toward women so that women have more control over their finances and access to finance.

at the local level. Since the WNP represents the only women mayors/chairs in the country, CEPPS/NDI will work with them as pilot municipalities to introduce, adopt and implement targeted sections of these three policy demands from the WMP. This will require an exchange between participants and mentors from the WMP and the Women Mayor Program, which CEPPS/NDI will facilitate. In addition, CEPPS/NDI will identify a former women mayor of a city in the Asia region to share her experiences and explain how she developed a strategic agenda for her city. CEPPS/NDI will organize three rounds of two-day trainings. The timing of those activities will be tailored to the timing of the 2020 planning and budgeting cycle for local governments. These activities will be conducted in January, June and August 2020.

Assess the necessity and added value of developing a manual for locally elected representatives

During the second year of the project CEPPS/NDI explored the possibility of developing a local governance manual by conducting an assessment among major international organizations that work with local governments. The manual would explain basic governing processes and political skills for locally elected representatives. The assessment made it clear that the development of a single manual would be difficult to develop and provide limited added value to existing publications. The assessment and reasons for not pursuing the manual were explained more elaborately in the quarterlies submitted to USAID in year two.

However, during the assessment a desire for stronger coordination among agencies and organizations working with local governments became evident. Realizing the need for a platform to discuss programs, exchange experiences and to avoid duplication of activities among donor programs, CEPPS/NDI established a Local Governance Learning Group. The group consists of representatives from the Capacity Development of New Municipalities (CD-MUN) GIZ, HELVETAS, International Idea, and The Asia Foundation. CEPPS/NDI has invited ABT Associates, implementer of Sajhedari - Support to Federalism, to join from the second round of the meeting. CEPPS/NDI hosted the first two rounds of the group. In year three it will pass the coordination of this group to another organization, while continuing to participate. The meeting will take place every three months on a rotational coordination basis.

Nepal Mayors Network

The Nepal Mayors Network includes mayors of the 10 largest municipalities in Nepal (excluding Kathmandu): Lalitpur, Pokhara, Bharatpur, Biratnagar, Birgunj, Nepalgunj, Janakpur, Dhangadhi, Hetauda and Ghorahi. The network aims for the mayors and their top advisers to learn from each other's policy approaches and successes. The goal is to expose the mayors to effective national and international urban policy interventions that will allow them to strengthen their local policy agendas. The first four meetings were hosted by Pokhara, Bharatpur, Lalitpur and Janakpur. The agenda will continue to include the following three components:

1. A presentation of the policy agenda by the mayor of the visiting city and his/her team.
2. Site visits of successful projects/policies in each city.
3. A presentation of senior local or international experts on important urban policy issues.

The consistent attendance of mayors in all four meetings has showcased that the network is perceived as an effective platform to learn and share experiences. In year three CEPPS/NDI will build on this success, incorporating lessons-learned from the activities that have already been conducted and will include inviting more senior government bureaucrats. These sessions were well-received by the mayors and their advisors, as they allowed them to gain understanding about programs and priorities of the government and how local initiatives can be integrated in or supported by ministries. Another lesson is that CEPPS/NDI is going to invite more ‘eminent personalities’, rather than academic experts. The mayors responded better to the former group, who proved to have more practical advice than academics, who are more theoretical in their approach. Moreover, CEPPS/NDI has also increased room for more discussions among mayors, which has proven to be one of the most active sessions during the program. Lastly, at the request of the mayors, CEPPS/NDI is going to improve its reporting and documentation of the meetings. Allowing the mayors and CEPPS/NDI to follow up on any activities or requests that come up during discussions. A visiting female former mayor from a city in Asia will be invited to share her experience in creating development with the group. The Network will visit three more participating cities in December 2019, March and August 2020.

Support Visit Nepal 2020 for Local Governments

In year three CEPPS/NDI will support the *Visit Nepal 2020* secretariat for one of their activities. The secretariat has been working on developing a *Visit Nepal 2020* strategy for local governments, yet they lack the network to reach many local governments and do not have much experience with conducting training activities. Therefore, CEPPS/NDI, in close collaboration with *Visit Nepal 2020*, will leverage its network among local governments to conduct one coordination meeting with senior locally elected representatives from 25 municipalities in Nepal. These 25 municipalities will be selected based on their importance for the tourism sector of Nepal. During the activity *Visit Nepal 2020* will present what local municipalities can do to prepare for and benefit from *Visit Nepal 2020* initiative. CEPPS/NDI and *Visit Nepal 2020* will share costs for the activity. This will be a two day training that will be conducted in November/December 2019.

Activity 2.1.9 Output: Increased understanding by locally elected officials of their roles and responsibilities, the federalist structure and basic governing principles. Improved capacity to include concrete policy recommendations into the 2020 budgeting and planning cycle.

Activity 2.1.10: Establish Women in Politics Mentorship Program

After the establishment of the WMP in year one, CEPPS/NDI conducted two rounds of the event in year two. Through the program, 100 women from different political parties and eight women mentors worked together to develop, launch and initiate an advocacy campaign on the Economic Empowerment of Women. The progress of this group has been impressive. The women have developed three concrete policy demands, laid the foundation for a broad stakeholder coalition by reaching out to key partners and strengthened their political networks and advocacy skills in the process.

In year three, CEPPS/NDI will support the group in establishing themselves as an independent local NGO. This will include working with the mentors to assist them establishing a constitution, setting up an organizational structure and board and guiding them through the registration process. Equally important, the group will work on developing a multi-year strategic plan that includes fundraising and activities the organization is planning to work on, which will be based on their existing policy demands and incorporate alliances with their stakeholder coalition. CEPPS/NDI will also support the facilitation of a fundraising event, identifying avenues and partners that might be willing to provide the group with start-up funds. Depending on the quality of the organizational set-up, including the establishment of a fully functional secretariat and management structure, the weight of the alliances with external partners and strength of the strategic plan, CEPPS/NDI will assess whether to provide financial assistance to help get the organization started. As mentioned earlier, CEPPS/NDI will also create avenues for engagement with the women mayor/chairs program (Activity 2.1.9), who have expressed interest in serving as local pilot municipalities to implement some of the policy demands. The main activity will take place in April 2020, but there will be at least three preparatory meetings with mentors, external partners and selected party participants to prepare for the event.

Activity 2.1.10 Output: Launch and roll-out the advocacy campaign for the Women's Mentorship Program.

Activity 2.1.11: Analyze Current Political Party Law

During year two of Niti Sambad, CEPPS/NDI and CEPPS/IFES organized a round table discussion on campaign finance reform, moderated by a former chief election commissioner. Representatives from the ECN, senior political leaders and civil society leaders attended the program and showed keen interest to continue the conversation. During year three CEPPS/NDI, in collaboration with CEPPS/IFES, and in coordination with the Finance Committee, will conduct another round table discussion.

Activity 2.1.11 Output: Heightened awareness about the need and necessity of campaign finance reform among key stakeholders.

Activity 2.1.12 - Establish a Youth Policy Forum and a Marginalized Groups Policy Forum

During the second year, CEPPS/NDI successfully established a multiparty Youth Policy Forum and Marginalized Group Policy Forum. Both groups were established based on the constructive experience of the Women's Policy Forum, which began in the first year of Niti Sambat. Both groups consist of 40 to 45 leaders from political parties (from the corresponding demographic groups) and also include representatives from five leading civil society organizations in their fields. CEPPS/NDI designed this set-up to improve coordination and collaboration between party representatives and CSOs. Moreover, the CSOs are expected to play an important role in the lobbying and advocacy component of the policy development cycle to ensure buy-in and support beyond political parties.

CEPPS/NDI will continue its work and complete the remaining stages of the policy development cycle in year three. Based on a substantive issue identification process the youth policy forum has chosen to work on developing a policy brief on 'Youth Unemployment', whereas the marginalized group policy forum has decided to work on 'Caste Discrimination'. In contrast to the youth policy forum, the work of the marginalized group policy forum will focus on lobbying and advocacy, rather than policy development. This is an outcome of the work of the marginalized groups forum, which found that there is already a large number of existing provisions regulating discrimination that are aimed at improving the participation and inclusion of marginalized groups in Nepal. However, there are challenges that include the lack of awareness, implementation and enforcement of these constitutional and legal provisions. Therefore, this group will focus on how the existing legal framework can be better implemented and enforced through lobbying and increased awareness.

CEPPS/NDI will conduct three two-day events in year three which will focus on: 1) developing an implementation plan for the policies, focusing on building coalitions, translating policies into legislation and influencing the decision making process, 2) conducting lobbying and awareness activities based on their implementation plans and 3) communication and constituency outreach. During step two, participants of the youth policy forum will engage the Generation Next leaders in parliaments outlined in Activity 1.2.2.7. This consultation meeting will serve as a platform for participants of the youth policy forum to share, explain and lobby for their policy brief on youth unemployment with national MPs. Also, issue identification research and the policy brief on youth unemployment will be shared by the research institute during constituency relation activities for youth MP's outlined under Activity 1.2.1.3.

In line with the objectives of the *Indo-Pacific Strategy*, CEPPS/NDI will work with youth to empower them to become more actively involved in the political process and strengthen their voice and standing within parties. Activities with both groups will build the capacity to influence decision making processes within parties and their political skills in general. Similar to the second year workplan, CEPPS/NDI will continue to coordinate with CS:MAP and the participating CSOs throughout the process, ensuring their inclusion and active participation and collaboration. The programs will simultaneously be conducted for both groups in November 2019 and March and July 2020.

Activity 2.1.12 Output: Participants of the Youth and Marginalized Group Policy Fora have a better understanding of policy development and are in the process of developing basic policy proposals for their demographic. They also would improve their capacity to become more politically engaged, represented in political parties and included in public debate.

Activity 2.1.14 Social Media School (NEW)

Social media and digital outreach and communication by parties are becoming increasingly important, as their reach and use among citizens is increasing. Yet the digital outreach through social media and party websites is not well organized within most parties in Nepal. Most party websites are updated infrequently or not at all or, other parties have numerous Twitter handles and Facebook pages that seem to operate independently from each other, rather than in coordination. In year three, CEPPS/NDI will conduct two activities to improve digital communication and outreach of parties through a Social Media School (SMS). The first activity will be a multiparty forum in which CEPPS/NDI's four national partner parties (NCP, NC, SPN and RJP) will receive advice on how best to use social media (specifically Facebook and Twitter) and party websites in outreach and party communication. The second round will be tailored activities for NC and NCP (separately), during which each party will receive targeted feedback on their social media strategy and party website. This feedback will be based on an assessment of their current use of and content on their social media and party websites. An international consultant with an expertise in digital outreach and communication will conduct this assessment and lead the activities for NC and NCP. This activity will be closely coordinated with the social media work that is being done with MP's described under Activity 1.2.2.1. This activity will focus more on the digital communication strategy within the party rather than individuals' capacity. Nonetheless, the assessment will include the social media presence of senior party leaders who have an active and broad social media presence. If the outcomes of the assessment prove valuable for MPs they will be shared with them through Activity 1.2.2.1. These activities will be conducted in January, May and August 2020.

Activity 2.1.14 Output: Increased institutional capacity of parties to make better use of social media and their party website in their strategic communications.

Result 2.2: Political parties, including their candidates, articulate better-formed policy positions to enhance voter's opportunities to select and hold accountable their representatives in and between competitive elections

Activity 2.2.1: Support Policy Working Group (PWG) in Policy Development

During year three of Niti Sambad, CEPPS/NDI will continue to support the formation of PWGs for all four national party partners (see specific approaches for each party outlined under Activity 2.1.3). As outlined, each PWG is tailored to both the stage of the policy development cycle they are in, as well as to the specific party needs and its internal policy capacity and set-up. It is expected that SPN and RJPN will complete the policy cycle this year. This should lead to the adoption and implementation of suggested policies among some of their elected officials.

This work will lead NC and NCP to develop at least three concrete policy briefs, which are based on an assessment of party priorities. With RJPN and SPN, who are further ahead in their PWGs and are relatively smaller parties, year three should lead to the adoption and implementation of their existing policy briefs most likely on the provincial and local level. CEPPS/NDI will also start work with both parties on an additional two policy briefs each. The topics for these two additional briefs will be based on the issue identification that the parties conducted during the first round of the policy cycle. Since the parties and participants already have familiarity with the policy development process, it is expected that the parties will be able to develop these policy briefs at a faster pace than the first one. Similar to the development of the first policy briefs, CEPPS/NDI will support the PWGs with a dedicated local policy institute that will take the lead in conducting the research and analysis, with input and guidance from the PWGs. As outlined under Activity 2.1.3, NCP and NC will each receive five activities, and SPN and RJPN will each receive three activities.

Activity 2.2.1 Output: Policy Working Group are operational for all four National Political Parties. Each develop a minimum of one policy brief.

Activity 2.2.2: Conduct Focus Group Research

CEPPS/NDI conducted three rounds of focus group discussions in year one in Kathmandu, Dadeldhura and Birgunj for five demographic groups per location: men above age 35; women above age 35; marginalized groups; youth under age 35; and a mixed gender group over age 35. The focus group discussions discussed the following topics: 1) the direction of the country; 2) the election results and current political situation; 3) priority issues of citizens; 4) perceptions about political parties and; 5) government priorities and perceptions of government. CEPPS/NDI will conduct another round of focus group discussions, in the same locations, for the same demographic groups (but different participants) and on the same topics. Similar to the first round, CEPPS/NDI

will work with a sub-grantee to conduct the focus group discussions. The results of this research will be compared to the findings from the first focus group discussion report. Specifically, CEPPS/NDI will assess what the most significant changes in (political) perceptions by citizens are since the first round, which were conducted shortly after the elections.

CEPPS/NDI will make two adjustments to the discussion guide for year three. Firstly, targeted sections will be deleted from the discussion guide to make the activity more efficient. Secondly, the political context and realities have changed since the first round of focus group discussions, which were conducted briefly after the 2017 elections. As such, select questions will be adjusted to reflect current political dynamics. The report that will be developed based on the outcomes of discussions during the second round and will be used to inform CEPPS/NDI programming and be shared with USAID. In addition, selected sections of the report that are expected to increase the understanding of citizens' needs and expectations for parties will be used to brief political parties and leaders. This will enable them to use the information to articulate better-formed policy positions and become more representative of and responsive to citizen's needs. CEPPS/NDI will hire an international consultant to draft the final report, which will combine the three separate location reports from Kathmandu, Daddeldhura, and Birgunj developed by the sub-grantee. The districts for the focus groups will remain the same and will take place in February and May 2020.

Activity 2.2.2 Output: A focus group report with key findings about political perceptions about selected issues.

Activity 2.2.3 Conduct Mini Political Party Public Opinion Research

In year two, CEPPS/NDI planned to conduct mini public opinion research for each of its four national political partners, to provide information about the opinions and expectations of their voters, highlighting needs and policy priorities and gathering feedback on party specific questions. CEPPS/NDI held discussions with all four national parties about the research, developed a briefing document outlining what a poll is and how the party can benefit from it, selected several suitable sub-grantees and shared draft questionnaires with the parties. Based on this work, RJPN, FSN (now SPN), and NC expressed interest to participate. All three submitted the draft-questions that they want to field among their voters.

However, it has been more difficult to obtain approval from NCP leadership. Several leaders have expressed interest in participating in the research, but due to the ongoing merger and the lack of a party focal person, CEPPS/NDI has been unable to secure institutional approval and buy-in. Because of the importance of the buy-in and participation of the governing party CEPPS/NDI decided to delay the research until the NCP comes on board. CEPPS/NDI wanted to avoid a situation in which it could be perceived to be conducting polls for several parties, excluding the NCP.

Since, from a cost perspective, different party questionnaires need to be fielded by the same enumerators, CEPPS/NDI was unable to move forward with any of the polls. With the NCP merger moving forward and department heads being assigned within the party CEPPS/NDI expects to be able to discuss the party's participation in the research in the upcoming months. If and when CEPPS/NDI secures their buy-in, the Institute will be able to immediately move forward with the implementation of the research, as all of the preparatory work has already been completed. The results for each party will be disaggregated by age, gender, caste and province and be shared with each party. As mentioned, CEPPS/NDI will closely coordinate with each respective party to finalize the questionnaire for their party and set-up a briefing meeting with the sub-grantee prior to fielding the questionnaires. In addition, the selected sub-grantee will be required to formulate a strict privacy statement, ensuring the acquired data is secure and protected. The roll-out of the activity will take place following buy-in to the research by the NCP.

Activity 2.2.3 Output: Mini public opinion survey conducted for all four national political parties.

Activity 2.2.4 Support Local Media Landscape Survey (NEW)

In the last few years, a local NGO, Sharecast Initiative Nepal, conducted a yearly Nepal Media Survey, on the media landscape in the country. During the start-up phase, the organization worked on improving the quality of its methodology, sample size and coverage, questionnaire and presentation of findings. This has led to significant improvements of the survey, allowing it to become a leading source of information on issues related to media use. Recently, Sharecast Initiative has requested support from CEPPS/NDI in two areas: 1) technical support in improving the quality of the questions, as the questions, scope and sample size has increased over the year and 2) analytical support for raw data and assistance in drawing recommendations and conclusions from that data. In addition to technical assistance, CEPPS/NDI will also provide financial assistance to Sharecast Initiative Nepal for the 2020 media landscape survey. This activity will serve two goals. Firstly, it will strengthen the local capacity to conduct research and inform stakeholders from the media and politics to make data driven and evidence based decisions about their communication, media strategy and media outreach. Secondly, for a relatively low investment, CEPPS/NDI will be able to add selected questions to the survey and receive access to a wealth of information about the media landscape in Nepal, which will be used to inform programming and share with political stakeholders. The survey will be fielded during January and February 2020 and CEPPS/NDI will support Sharecast through technical capacity building in the lead-up to the survey.

Activity 2.2.4 Output: Improved wording of questions for media landscape survey 2020. Better analysis of the outcomes and broader sharing of results with political stakeholders.

5. Incorporation of Cross Cutting Interventions

CEPPS' approach to the Niti Sambat program recognizes the complex and fragile political environment in Nepal and builds upon the partners' decades of experience working in the country and USAID's identified principles of engagement. The program scope and interrelated nature of activities and objectives will require close coordination among CEPPS partners. The Niti Sambat program incorporates cross-cutting approaches and priorities, such as flexibility of program design, research, and the inclusion of women and other marginalized groups.

Flexibility of Program Design:

Building on its experience in Nepal, CEPPS has designed the Niti Sambat program to be adaptive to changing political and organizational circumstances, allowing it to quickly respond to any changes in the political and security environment. CEPPS has outlined its proposed activities based on immediate priorities and the current operating environment. Using evaluations and public opinion research—and in consultation with USAID—CEPPS will reevaluate the operating environment and the functioning and receptivity of its institutional partners during the workplan process each year. For example, in CEPPS/IFES' work with the ECN, should the ECN prove unwilling to work with CEPPS/IFES on certain reform measures, CEPPS/IFES will engage civil society actors to advocate for reform from outside the ECN. Additionally, if the ECN is unwilling to participate in certain CEPPS/IFES-planned capacity building trainings, CEPPS/IFES will identify priority areas for ECN capacity-building where this is more buy-in from the Commission.

CEPPS/IRI has followed a similar approach of flexible program design with specific emphasis on receptiveness to public opinion polling, the policy research board and consultations on best practices for policy development. Should certain political parties choose to limit their collaboration with CEPPS/NDI, it will use those resources to increase activities to partner parties that are receptive to support. Also, when necessary the party team will identify groups within each party that are most in need of capacity building support, like youth, women and marginalized groups. CEPPS/NDI would also develop varying support aimed at the local, provincial and federal level, depending on what level the parties want support for. However, as many activities with political parties have been built on existing groups that have already been established and are actively engaged with the program, CEPPS/NDI does not expect many problems on this front. On the parliamentary level, CEPPS/NDI might expect reluctance from the Federal Parliament secretariat and some parliamentary committees to collaborate following concerns of some MPs about the parliament receiving assistance from any international organizations. Should that be the case, activities would instead focus on: supporting individual MPs to organize constituency outreach activities and strengthening of constituency offices, town halls meetings, technical support to the interested parliamentary committees for the review and analysis of new legislation, implementation of passed acts, and committee oversight.

In addition, as outlined in the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan, CEPPS commits to collaborating, learning and adapting (CLA) as a strategic priority for the Consortium. This will be

accomplished by using analysis of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data to identify trends, lessons learned, and best practices to inform programmatic approaches. CEPPS' approach to CLA will include engagement with stakeholders, including the ECN, elected officials, government agencies, and political parties, to ensure that the program adapts its approaches as conditions on the ground merit to meet program objectives or respond to emerging opportunities.

Research:

As part of the Niti Sumbad program, CEPPS will carry out coordinated national public opinion surveys, three rounds of focus group discussions, and one impact evaluation in consultation with USAID. CEPPS/IRI will oversee the national public opinion surveys which will provide a snapshot of public opinion on a range of subjects, such as the perceptions of government institutions and political parties, regional disparities in unemployment, economic priorities, participation in public life, political reform, and the electoral process. Results and analysis will inform CEPPS activities under both project objectives. For example, national surveys might be used to develop standardized questions that cover national policy issues to be answered by parliamentary candidates during candidate debates. As a complement to the public opinion surveys, CEPPS/NDI will again organize three rounds of focus group discussions centered on the public opinion surveys and building on the results of those conducted in the first year. Public opinion research is a valuable tool that provides broad and representative quantitative information about what citizens think, and the focus groups will provide insight into citizens' behaviors and thought processes. In addition, CEPPS/NDI will also conduct mini public opinion research for each of CEPPS/NDI partner political parties. These will be small scale tailored research that will be developed and conducted in close coordination with each individual party.

CEPPS/NDI will also support crucial ministries to review and research provisions, policies and draft legislation by engaging experts on issues related to constitution implementation. These papers will only be utilized by government agencies and help to inform them about best practices on various issues related to constitution implementation.

CEPPS/IFES will expand upon its previous research efforts in year three, incorporating findings from its Electoral Needs Assessment and the gender and political finance study to strengthen the capacity of the ECN and inclusion of political processes. The ECN also self-identified several research areas in its Strategic Plan, 2019-2023, including on the administrative cost of elections, the use of EVMs and campaign finance. CEPPS/IFES will support the ECN as it undertakes these research projects, providing technical expertise and supporting a study trip on the use of election technology, if an appropriate election can be identified that would align with the ECN's election technology interests and trajectory.

Inclusion:

CEPPS activities under Niti Sambat will prioritize the engagement of women, youth, minorities, and persons with disabilities, particularly in leadership and decision-making positions. CEPPS is also committed to ensuring all its programming and activities engage a gender equitable and representative group of participants.

Gender Integration:

Equitable representation of women in politics helps develop more inclusive political and social benefits, including greater responsiveness to citizen needs, economic progress, increased cooperation across party and ethnic lines, and more sustainable peace. While the GoN has implemented quotas and other gender-sensitive policies, traditional views of women continue to stifle their political participation. CEPPS' gender-sensitive, inclusive approach in Nepal is designed to help overcome the barriers to women's political participation that exist at the socio-cultural, institutional, and individual levels. Past examples of this approach include: work with the Inter-Party Women's Alliance, the multiparty women's wings working committees, and women MPs; support to women's CSOs on an advocacy campaign for 33 percent women's representation in the Federal Parliament; and programming with a local CSO to analyze and report on how women have fared in the earthquake reconstruction process. CEPPS will respond to these barriers to advance women's inclusion in politics and decision making with targeted activities, in addition to including women and mainstreaming gender in all program components. At the same time, CEPPS will actively support women's rights activists such as Ranju Darshana and Radha Paudel to improve the female-friendly social environment in Nepal. At the same time, CEPPS will actively support women's rights activists such as Ranju Darshana and Radha Paudel to improve the female-friendly social environment in Nepal.

Youth:

Young women and men in Nepal are often excluded from leadership roles in political parties and in elected bodies because of social traditions and the hierarchical nature of politics in Nepal. Youth are typically engaged in parties only when senior leaders need human resources to mobilize members for rallies or for specific election-related activities. CEPPS will ensure equitable inclusion of young women and men in program activities and will prioritize support to youth through targeted skills-building activities. CEPPS partners will also provide support to senior leaders to highlight the work of young party and parliamentary leaders to demonstrate their capacity and form new working relationships that can further engage young women and men in decision-making processes. CEPPS partners will widely engage youth leaders from Nepali political parties. Gagan Thapa and Bishwa Prakash Sharma, prominent young reformists within the Nepali Congress Party, have gradually been gaining popularity. Additionally, efforts should be made to reach out to younger leaders from Nepal's left-wing parties to explore potential areas for cooperation. Meanwhile, CEPPS will support catalytic civic leaders in Nepal such as Ujwal Thapa, Sudan Gurung, Balen Shah, Sagar Dhakal, and Rabi Lamichhane.

Ethnic-Sensitive Inclusion:

To enable increased access to the political system for ethnic minorities, including Dalits, Janajatis, Muslims, and Madheshis, CEPPS will support the ECN to conduct outreach to ethnic minorities and will conduct targeted civic and voter education programs using materials in a variety of ethnic languages. CEPPS partners will also connect with minority representatives such as Upendra Yadav, Mahanta Thakur, CK Raut, and Ang Kaji Sherpa to fully understand the situation and carry out targeted work.

Disability-Sensitive Inclusion:

Persons with disabilities in Nepal have little protection under the law and are frequently barred from access to political and electoral spheres due to discriminatory practices, exclusionary regulations, and social stigma. Therefore, CEPPS will work with disabled people's organizations to increase access of persons with disabilities to the political process through civic education and advocacy with the ECN and through the inclusion of persons with disabilities within other program activities. CEPPS will strongly support the work of relevant individuals such as Shudarson Subedi, Birendra Raj Pokharel, and Tika Dahal to promote political empowerment for people with disabilities in Nepal.

6. Coordination and Collaboration

The CEPPS workplan involves close collaboration with key stakeholders, namely, the Nepal Parliament, political parties, ECN, and GoN on strategic communication. Activities and program interventions were discussed with key stakeholders and with GON both by USAID and by CEPPS partners during the development of this workplan.

Given CEPPS partners' long presence in country, and their up to date information about relevant USAID grantees and programs, CEPPS will ensure continued coordination and collaboration with other USAID programs, namely CS:MAP, PFMSP and Accountability Lab. CEPPS partners will also maintain an understanding of programs sponsored by other funders including Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

In year three, CEPPS will continue the process of strengthening M&E systems for data collection, storage, management, presentation and reporting. CEPPS Nepal will begin reporting through the EPT database starting FY20 Q1. CEPPS Nepal will look for opportunities to improve reporting on program outcomes and results utilizing a combination of performance monitoring and qualitative methods, as well as applying CLA.

Refining MEL Activities:

The CEPPS/NDI regional M&E manager will assist the team in the development of tools and methodology for public opinion polls, focus group research, community assessments, and outcome harvesting, which will be linked to the learning agenda questions and the theory of change finalized in the Baseline Assessment Report. These evaluative methods will enable CEPPS to review outcomes on a continuous basis and provide data for reflection, analysis and discussion sessions.

Additionally, CEPPS has begun to track program results and information collected through the learning agenda and progress towards sustainability benchmarks identified in how the program is contributing to the Sustainability Plan and Exit Strategy. Collected information will be used to assess sustainability and the extent to which the remaining activities in the program can be oriented toward ensuring that these actions support the sustainability of CEPPS's partner institutions and organizations. The CEPPS/NDI regional M&E manager will coordinate with all partners to develop tracking mechanisms for the sustainability metric and a template for annual reporting.

Reflection, Analysis and Discussion:

CEPPS is committed to evidence-based learning throughout the program cycle and will identify key opportunities for learning activities and knowledge sharing. CEPPS will integrate CLA into existing business processes including, but not limited to, work planning, activity planning, performance monitoring, and partner meetings.

The CEPPS M&E manager in coordination with NDI and IRI M&E focal points, partners and program managers will lead reflection, analysis and discussion sessions to assess the political, social and democratic environment as it pertains to activity implementation, day-to-day management, program outcomes, challenges, unintended results and lessons learned. This information will be used for collaborative learning, to apprise leadership on progress and make recommendations for adjustments to targets, indicators, activities and/or objectives.

The results of these sessions will be documented in official reporting and used to inform potential programmatic shifts; changes to the program would be communicated with USAID. The results of the reflection sessions will also be shared with the GEPT knowledge management working group so that the results can inform the design and implementation of overall GEPT programming approaches.

Quarterly Reporting:

CEPPS will produce and submit quarterly reports and annual reports that include updates and narratives on performance monitoring and evaluation. In FY 2020 Data Quality Assessments (DQA) are not planned, however, CEPPS will cooperate and act according to the DQA

requirements of USAID and will ensure all its programs adhere to data collection and security standards. CEPPS will implement training sessions for staff and liaise with USAID M&E staff on any new M&E requirements. CEPPS will ensure all data and reports are entered into USAID database/s in a timely and effective manner while ensuring accuracy, reliability, integrity and privacy.

Evaluation:

In year three in November, CEPPS will utilize the methodologies and frameworks established at baseline to conduct the midterm evaluation. The midterm evaluation will help CEPPS understand its progress to date, gauge the likelihood of meeting program objectives, document best practices and effective strategies, as well as make data-based course-corrections, if necessary. Beyond looking at programmatic progress, the midterm evaluation will also help CEPPS partners assess internal collaboration, coordination, and learning processes. CEPPS began preparations for the mid-term evaluation in year two, and plans to begin the evaluation in early FY 2020.

Learning agenda and Utilizing M&E Data

CEPPS partners are committed to conducting quality data collection and utilizing M&E data in regular program reports to USAID. Through systematic reporting and evaluations, CEPPS partners ensure lessons learned from the Niti Sambat program are shared with stakeholders and inform programming priorities to maximize program impact.

CEPPS will focus on learning questions such as factors contributing to long-term continuation of government, political party and civil society organizations without USG or other foreign government support; ways these factors validate, challenge, or add to our development hypothesis on these organizations sustainability; successful program strategies, approaches and tools in promoting improved and reformed internal processes; status of inclusiveness in these organizations and ways for improvement.

8. Financial Plan/Budget

Budget by Categories

Category	IFES	IRI	NDI	Total 2019-2020
Personnel	\$540,954	\$210,231	\$716,000	\$1,467,185
Fringe Benefits	\$124,641	\$101,542	\$200,700	\$426,883

Travel	\$68,790	\$11,000	\$401,709	\$481,499
Equipment & Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Supplies	\$600	\$6,000	\$16,894	\$23,494
Contractual	\$215,830	\$150,000	\$219,709	\$585,539
Other Direct Costs	\$172,338	\$32,500	\$234,186	\$439,024
Indirect Costs	\$285,426	\$125,211	\$497,250	\$907,887
CEPPS Indirect Costs	\$27,761	\$14,321	\$20,345	\$62,427
TOTAL	\$1,436,340	\$650,805	\$2,306,262	\$4,393,407

9. Human Resources Plan

CEPPS partners will engage staff in their Washington, DC headquarters, as well as international and local staff based in Kathmandu, and international and local expert consultants on an as-needed basis, in order to carry out 2019-2020 activities under the Niti Sambad program. CEPPS plans the following staffing needs for the workplan duration:

For staff resident in Kathmandu, CEPPS will have teams consisting of both international and local hires. Teams will be structured around core categories of Niti Sambad activities, including election/voter education, government communications, monitoring and evaluation, parliamentary programming, political parties, public opinion polling, as well as necessary administrative and finance support.

In their Washington, DC headquarters, CEPPS staff will consist of the program implementation team -- focused on project management, monitoring and evaluation, oversight, and donor compliance -- as well as support where needed from key administrative, finance, and functional expertise staff.

CEPPS plans to engage a number of expert consultants in fulfillment of year three activities. Consultants are identified through a competitive process consistent with standards and methods.

Outlined in 2CFR200.317-.32. Consultants will be hired to support the following activities:

Consultant Type	Objective Supported	Activity	Hiring Partner Organization
Monitoring and Evaluation	Overall	Conduct mid-term evaluation	CEPPS/NDI
Constituent Engagement Expert	I	Provide strategic support to the field office and conduct workshops as required	CEPPS/NDI
Strategic Communications Expert	I	Provide strategic support to the field office and conduct workshops as required	CEPPS/NDI
Political Party Expert	II	Conduct trainings and provide strategic program support to CEPPS/NDI	CEPPS/NDI
Former Woman Mayor from a Another Country	II	Share experiences with the Women Mayor's Group and the Nepal Mayor's Network	CEPPS/NDI
Advocacy Expert	II	Support the final round of the Women Mentorship Program	CEPPS/NDI
Digital Media and Communication Expert	II	Conduct a training and an assessment of party websites and use of social media by the NC and NCP	CEPPS/NDI
Legal Advisor	I	Provide support to CEPPS/IFES, the ECN and NLS is drafting an integrated election law and other election laws as necessary	CEPPS/IFES
Voter List Advisor	I	Conduct a data quality audit of the ECN's voter list and provide recommendations for improving voter list data quality and processes	CEPPS/IFES

Policy Research Expert	I	Additional Policy Research Framework support for the production of specifically requested research papers. Provincial policy research experts as required.	CEPPS/TRI
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10. Travel Plan⁷

In accordance with Standard Provision Section M17. “Travel and International Air Transportation (December 2014)” of Attachment C –Mandatory Standard Provisions of the Cooperative Agreement, international travel approval is no longer required. Nevertheless, in this section CEPPS has summarized expected trips as included in the approved award budget. As is the common practice, CEPPS will continue informing USAID of all upcoming program-related travel through regular updates, however, per the updated regulations no further approval would be required for additions and/or changes in travel plans. CEPPS confirms that all travel costs will (1) be in accordance with Section A.4 of the Award Schedule; (2) in compliance with the Standard Provisions; and (3) any substantial changes to the budget will be requested in accordance with 2 CFR 200.308.

Title (who travels?)	# of Trips	Travel Place (where?)	Tasks and results (what to do and what to produce?)
CEPPS/NDI Senior Resident Director– Chief of Party	1	R/T Nepal to Europe	Home leave airfare for employees and authorized dependents once every twelve months
CEPPS/NDI Resident Senior Program Manager - Political Parties & 3 Dependent	4	R/T Nepal to Europe	Home leave airfare for employees and authorized dependents once every twelve months
CEPPS/NDI DC-Based Program Management	2	R/T DC to Nepal	Provide programmatic support
CEPPS/NDI DC-Based Regional Director	1	R/T DC to Nepal	Provide programmatic support
CEPPS/NDI Nepal-Based Program Staff	2	R/T Nepal to DC	Consultations with NDI's thematic experts and the administrative, operations, and financial teams.

⁷ Please note that this travel plan reflects currently anticipated travel for the fiscal year and is for USAID's information. Per the updated mandatory standard provision, prior approval for travel is no longer required.

CEPPS/NDI Monitoring and Evaluation Expert	1	R/T DC to Nepal	Conduct a mid-term evaluation
CEPPS/NDI Constituent Engagement Expert	1	R/T North America to Nepal	Provide strategic support to the field office and conduct workshops as required
CEPPS/NDI Parliamentary Committee Expert	1	R/T Asia to Nepal	Provide strategic support to the field office and conduct workshops as required
CEPPS/NDI Political Party/Policy Expert	1	R/T North America to Nepal	Prepare and facilitate two policy working group sessions for political parties. Share experiences about policy development and develop a brief report.
CEPPS/NDI Former Woman Mayor from Another Country	1	R/T Asia to Nepal	Share her experience of developing a strategic agenda for her city with the Women Mayor's Program and the Nepal Mayor's Network
CEPPS/NDI Advocacy Expert	1	R/T Jordan to Nepal	Support the official launch of the advocacy campaign for the Women Mentorship Program. Develop a debrief report.
CEPPS/NDI Digital Media and Communication Expert	1	R/T Nepal to North America	Conduct a training and an assessment of the party websites and use of social media by the NC and NCP.
CEPPS/IFES Country Director	1	R/T Nepal to North America	Home leave airfare for employees and authorized dependents once every twelve months
CEPPS/IFES Program Management (Regional Director, Program Manager/Officer)	2	R/T North America to Nepal	To provide oversight and support to ongoing ECN programming and civil society projects
CEPPS/IFES Monitoring and Evaluation Director	1	R/T North America to Nepal	To conduct mid-term evaluation activities for CEPPS/IFES objectives
CEPPS/IFES Legal Advisor	2	R/T Europe to Nepal	Provide support to CEPPS/IFES, the ECN and NLS is drafting an integrated election law and other election laws as necessary
CEPPS/IFES Voter List Advisor	1	R/T Regional	Conduct a data quality audit of the ECN's voter list and provide recommendations for improving voter list data quality and processes

		Asia to Nepal	
CEPPS/IFES Disability Inclusion Specialist	1	R/T North America to Nepal	Support CEPPS/IFES Power to Persuade program for women with disabilities
CEPPS/IRI Program Management (Regional Director, Program Manager/Officer)	2	R/T North America to Nepal	To provide oversight to ongoing ECN programming and civil society projects
CEPPS/IRI Country Director and one dependent	1	R/T Nepal to North America	Home leave airfare for employees and authorized dependents once every twelve months

Note: CEPPS will make every effort to identify local experts and, where appropriate and if available, will engage such experts for programmatic support