

**Report on In-Country Consultation
Community of Practice on Social Accountability, Nepal
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Submitted to;

**Affiliated Network for Social Accountability
South Asia (ANSA-SAR)
Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Submitted by;

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A LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANSA-SAR	: Affiliated Network for Social Accountability-South Asia
CoP	: Community of Practice
CRC	: Citizen Report Card
CSC	: Community Score Card
INGOs	: International Non-Governmental Organizations
NCDI	: National Capacity Development Institute
PA	: Public Audit
PH	: Public Hearing
PRAN	: Program for Social Accountability in Nepal
SA	: Social Accountability

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1. Background:

Pro Public organized in-country consultation on Community of Practice (CoP) on Social Accountability approaches on 17 February 2012 at SAP Falcha, Kathmandu. A total of 34 representatives & social accountability (SA) practitioners from governments, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and also various civil society organizations actively took part in the program and provided inputs and reflections on the present context of the practice of social accountability tools in Nepal (See attached list of participants)



The main objectives of the meeting were to identify the agenda and needs of Nepal for promoting Community of Practice on Social Accountability in Nepal and across the South Asia region. Affiliated Network for Social Accountability, South Asia (ANSA-SAR) has been working for promoting CoP on Social Accountability in the region. For this purpose, ANSA-SAR has entrusted Consumer Unity and Trust Society of Jaipur, India, as a regional anchor while Pro Public and SAP Nepal has been designated as country anchor and member respectively.

The objective of in-country consultation was to identify country-specific needs, agenda and issues on social accountability that would be further taken up for regional-level design workshop scheduled from 28 February to 2 March 2012 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The invitees from civil society, social accountability practicing organizations, government agencies and constitutional bodies came up with their experiences and provided new insights and recommendations to spearhead social accountability campaign in Nepal.

2. Proceedings:

Mr Kedar Khadka, anti-corruption activist and Director of Good Governance Project (GGP), moderated the entire consultation workshop. Mr Bishnu P. Pokhrel, Senior Program Officer of GGP, Pro Public, welcomed all the participants.

Following the welcome speech, the floor was opened for discussion and sharing of experiences on social accountability tools by the invitees. During the discussion, the participants put forward their different experiences and knowledge, highlighted the needs and explored new areas of inter-organizations coordination and cooperation at national and regional levels.

The discussion lasted nearly for three hours which was concluded by Mr N. Belbase, Team leader of Management Team of Pro Public also team leader of National Capacity Development Institute (NCDI), a component of World Bank-funded Program for Accountability in Nepal (PRAN), thanked all the participants for their active contribution and support in making the entire discussion fruitful and productive.

3. Executive Summary

In-country consultation on Community of Practice (CoP) on Social Accountability successfully surfaced some of the needs, issues and challenges as well in strengthening CoP on Social Accountability. It was consensually agreed that as various organizations are practicing SA tools differently, there has been a strong need to standardize and develop common manuals/guidelines for SA tools (Public Hearing, Social Audit, Public Audit, Citizen Report Card, Community Score Card, Public Expenditure Tracking Survey etc) and maintain their uniformity in practice in Nepal.

The participants and the guests collectively realized that unless people are empowered to use these SA tools at their own level, the quality of accountability can't be improved. Thus, there should be a national campaign to empower and inform grassroots people about the benefits of the SA approaches/tools which as remained an uphill task for the civil society organizations due to lack of coordination and sharing of organization-specific experiences at the national levels.

It was collectively raised in the consultation workshop that since there has been no single depository E-domain either at national and regional levels for sharing experiences, best practices and knowledge on SA tools, E-portal needs to be formed for wider sharing and learning on Social Accountability approaches. They also stressed the need that as there are many new SA tools being practiced at the regional levels, customizing such new tools in the Nepali context for their wider application and use is also a greater need. Towards this end, Nepal needs to develop a national level network of like-minded organizations/people where others can learn and share their experiences on use of SA tools.

All the participants highlighted that present campaign for SA tools has been more project-driven which does not ensure its sustainability after the project phase out. So, it needs to be made sustainable through initiatives from the grass roots level. The education part of the SA tools needs to be increased through building capacity and awareness level of the people as well down from the local levels. Since Nepal has promulgated Good Governance Act in 2008 which has mandatory provisions for SA tools like public hearing, public audit and citizen report card, participants strongly pressed for sensitization among by the civil society organizations to implement such legislation and institutionalize these tools.

4. Key Opinions & Insights

The participants said that there was great difficulty in ensuring uniformity in the practice of SA tools being practiced at national and local levels in Nepal. This has been a great challenge among the SA tools practitioners in Nepal as all of them are practicing the same tools in different ways creating confusion among the practitioners themselves. The participants highlighted the need to maintain uniformity in terms of methodology and process through standardized SA tools manuals and guidelines. The use of such standardized single manual would help develop "common understanding" of the SA tools among the organizations.

The focus was also laid on setting up a network forum of SA practitioners at the national level and hold a quarterly meeting for sharing of best practices, experiences, lesson learned and challenges faced. Since different organizations and practitioners have specific experiences and success stories on social accountability practices, there has been no such cross-sharing of good practices; the consultation workshop participants stressed the need to develop country-specific web portal and e-learning domain for larger benefits and learning at the national and regional levels. The other need as collectively raised during the workshop was to archive and document grassroots experiences and case studies for wider sharing and dissemination.

5. Recommendations & Inputs

The following recommendations and Inputs were identified and discussed in the consultation workshop.

Sr. No.	Issues	Level	Proposal
1.	<i>Maintain uniformity in practice of SA tools</i>	National	As various organizations are practicing SA tools differently, there is a need to standardize and develop common manuals/guidelines for SA tools (Public Hearing, Social Audit, Public Audit, Citizen Report Card, Community Score Card, Public Expenditure Tracking Survey etc) and maintain their uniformity in practice.
2.	<i>Formation of E-portal on SA</i>	National	Since there is no single depository E-domain for sharing experiences, best practices and knowledge on SA tools, E-portal needs to be formed for wider sharing and learning on Social Accountability approaches.
3.	<i>Customization of SA tools and approaches</i>	National	As there are many new SA tools being practiced at the regional levels, it is the need to customize such new tools in the Nepali context for their wider application and use.
4.	<i>Establish a SA network</i>	National	Nepal needs to develop a national level network of like-minded organizations/people where others can learn and

Sr. No.	Issues	Level	Proposal
	<i>forum</i>		share their experiences on use of SA tools.
5.	<i>Documentation of the best practices and case studies on SA tools and approaches</i>	National	Many organizations have been using SA tools and have rich experience on it. But due to poor documentation system, organization-specific experiences and best practices don't have gateway to others. Thus, a documentation approach needs to be pursued for sharing best practices and case studies among the likeminded stakeholders.
6.	<i>Periodic meeting and sharing of SA activities</i>	National	Since there is no such meetings among the SA tools practitioners, a periodic meeting needs to be held among them for sharing and learning from each other's experiences.
7.	<i>Sensitize people on use of SA tools</i>	National	Unless people are empowered to use these SA tools at their own level, the quality of accountability can't be improved. Thus, there should be a national campaign to empower and inform grassroots people about the benefits of the SA approaches/tools
8.	<i>Organize Share-Fair on SA tools and experiences</i>	National	This offers an opportunity for like-minded organizations to come together and share their experiences/lesson learnt on SA tools and mechanisms.
9.	<i>Marketing of the SA tools</i>	Regional	Nepal has promulgated a unique Good Governance Act in 2008 which provisions SA tools like public hearing, public audit and citizen report card. So, this kind of legal provisions may be useful for partner organization to institutionalize these tools. Similarly, Nepal also needs to engage civil society organization and government oversight agencies to implement act's provision effectively.
10.	<i>SA Tools Campaign</i>	National	As present campaign for SA tools has been more projects driven which does not ensure its sustainability after the project phase out. So, it needs to be made sustainable through initiatives from the grass roots level. The education part of the SA tools needs to be increased through building capacity and awareness level of the people.
11.	<i>Develop a SA tool hand book</i>	National	Nepal has been practicing several SA tools in isolation. So, it has been felt to develop a hand book on SA tools to develop common understanding among the practitioners.
12.	<i>National sharing event on SA tools</i>	National & Regional	Organize five regional SA tools events and one national level event to share and learn from each others experiences on SA practices.

Sr. No.	Issues	Level	Proposal
	<i>practitioners</i>		
13.	<i>Develop SA tools training video documentary (PH/PA, CRC & CSC</i>	National	It has been felt that the SA tools training video documentary would be useful to develop common understanding among the practitioners. This can also be disseminated among the regional participants.
14.	Constructive engagement of service providers	National	Engaging government service providers will ease to lobby at policy level and also to internalize SA tools in their regular annual plan.



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