

Get to  
know us  
better

2001

2002

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Enabling State Programme

**HOW ESP CAME ABOUT...**

**ESP's ACHIEVEMENTS**

**ESP's CURRENT FOCUS**



# HOW ESP CAME ABOUT...

The Enabling State Programme (ESP) is a pro poor governance programme. It supports Nepali-generated ideas to help solve the many governance failings that are a root cause of why a third of Nepalis live below the poverty line. It targets the corruption, institutional inefficiency and the domination of decision-making by the elite that cause millions of Nepalis to lack access to basic services and justice and that prevents them from participating in politics and benefiting from development.

Since it began ESP has supported Nepali organisations and individuals who advocate for and practice governance reform to implement 17 satellite projects and more than 200 exploratory activities. The satellite projects are large-scale initiatives to directly bring about pro-poor change by strengthening governance institutions, pushing for policy reform and trying out new

initiatives for improving governance. The exploratory activities are smaller pieces of work that build up understanding about governance failings and identify and spread the word about possible solutions. ESP has worked with non-government organizations and their federations, government agencies and individual experts to develop and implement these projects and activities.

Many ESP-supported initiatives have sought to achieve change both from the top by influencing policy makers and from the bottom by strengthening and building up community organisations. The beneficiaries of ESP's work have ranged from policy makers and civil society federations to community people and their local organisations spread across many of Nepal's districts. ESP's support has reached nationwide and benefited people from most of the major ethnic and caste groups.

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## Enabling State Programme - Nepal:

- began in 1998 and was officially launched in January 2001;
  - is due to run until December 2008;
  - has a total budget of £ 27.5 million;
  - is funded by the UK Department for International Development; and
  - is now in its Phase 2. (Phase 1 ran to January 2006).
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# ESP's ACHIEVEMENTS

ESP has improved understanding about Nepal's governance situation, identified practical options for governance reform, and tested out the most promising of these options. ESP is constantly challenged to strike a proper balance across policy and operational programming implemented by wide range of strategic partners.

» **Anti-corruption** - The Sarbajanik Sunuwai televised public hearings and Civil Society Anti-corruption Project successfully raised awareness and promoted "Why?" culture amongst the general public about the services they should expect without having to bribe or seek favours from officials. At 10 project districts including center, civil society has been able to enforce public commitment from various political parties represented in parliament to curb corruption.

» **Social inclusion** - ESP's 2002 analysis of social exclusion plus its subsequent project support to Dalit and Janajati civil society made a major contribution to donors identifying this agenda for priority support. The two projects have raised the profile of the Dalit and Janajati NGOs and their federations representing both Terai and Hill regions. As a result they are now seriously consulted on policy matters by the government and donors both at district and central level.

» **Service delivery** - The Self-reliant Development of the Poor by the Poor Project has established a large network of community groups federated into 61 self-reliant cooperatives at VDC and district level that play a leading role in local government planning and community development in the absence of elected local government. Majority of the groups are represented from isolated VDCs in Terai region.

» **Access to justice** - The Community Mediation Extension Project has established an accessible low-cost system for resolving local disputes which is appreciated by local government and is in the process of being institutionalised. The mediation programme has also significantly



contributed towards women empowerment, social harmony and peace building.

» **Political governance** - Strategic seminars run by international experts have improved the understanding of politicians and high level decision makers about electoral system reform and affirmative action. National and international seminars helped to conceive the Rights, Democracy and Inclusion fund, which is the first joint venture of donors in Nepal.

» **Civil society and the media** - The Patrakarita Pathsala Project improved the reporting skills of 50 young journalists from more than 30 districts whilst the NGO Federation Project strengthened the main umbrella body for Nepal's NGOs to serve its member NGOs. The project helped to extend NGO Federation network to more than 70 districts and establish regional secretariat along with resource centre.

» **ESP's publications** - ESP's Pro-poor Governance Assessment, 2001, has been widely used to inform major government and donor policy making. The ESP-supported books, A Kingdom under Siege: Nepal's Maoist Insurgency; CVICT's Nepal's Penal System: an Agenda for Change, Anatomy of Corruption and Nirbachan Pranali giving insights of election process worldwide. The publications have inspired debate and informed thousands of people about important government subjects.



## ESP's CURRENT FOCUS

Nepal is currently undergoing a major political transition that aims to put in place a system of governance that addresses the widespread grievances that fuelled the ten year long conflict. ESP with its long track record of providing governance support is well placed to support this transition and is now directing a large proportion of its efforts to promoting democratic governance and building a more inclusive state. ESP also continues to provide one of DFID's main means of taking forwards its major strategic objective of 'Helping lay the foundations for an effective and inclusive state.'

ESP is directly supporting wide range of initiatives from community to central level to increase knowledge about state restructuring, social inclusion and other governance issues as mentioned before. State restructuring is currently of particular concern with the focus on introducing a federal system of government, affirmative action, and an election system for the proportionate representation of all major population groups. The small initiatives complement the larger support on these topics under the ESP-managed Rights, Democracy and Inclusion Fund.

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### The Rights, Democracy and Inclusion Fund (RDIF)

ESP manages a major multi-donor fund that supports Nepali partner organisations to promote democratic values, policies and practices across the country's political and constitutional spectrum. RDIF was established by DFID and the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) in February 2006. The subsequent involvement of AusAID and the Norwegian government generated interest across other donors.

The fund is supporting four projects that promote greater women's political inclusion, four to build awareness about the constituent assembly and the constitution drafting process, two to increase the political participation of Dalit women and Madhesi Dalits, and one on access to justice.

Go to [www.rdif.org.np](http://www.rdif.org.np) to find out how to apply for funding.

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### Re-engaging with the government

- Accountable government systems that delivers are a critical foundation for an effective and inclusive state. The loss of democratic government between 2002 and 2006 led to ESP withdrawing much of its involvement with government agencies. While aligning with State Building initiatives the improved political situation means that ESP is beginning to re-engage with government agencies to promote improved public financial management, a more accountable and efficient government system, an improved law and order situation and a sys-

tematic planning process that identifies the priorities of the poor and address their needs. ESP is supporting National Planning Commission in diverse studies to recommend policy reform for improved programming outreach. The Social Inclusion Action Programme (SIAP) proposes a range of initiatives designed to support current opportunities for influencing peace and political processes, and investments to support Social Inclusion through State Building and to further mobilise the media sector for wider debate and discussion on contemporary issues.





**Enabling State Programme**

**Kiran Bhawan, Sanepa-2, Lalitpur, Nepal**

**PO Box: 15142/PPC 333**

**Telephone: 977-5555766, 977-5555763, 977-5555764**

**email: [mail@esp-nepal.com](mailto:mail@esp-nepal.com)**

**website: [www.esp-nepal.com](http://www.esp-nepal.com)**