Building Trust through Community Engagement: A Case from Nepal's Hydropower

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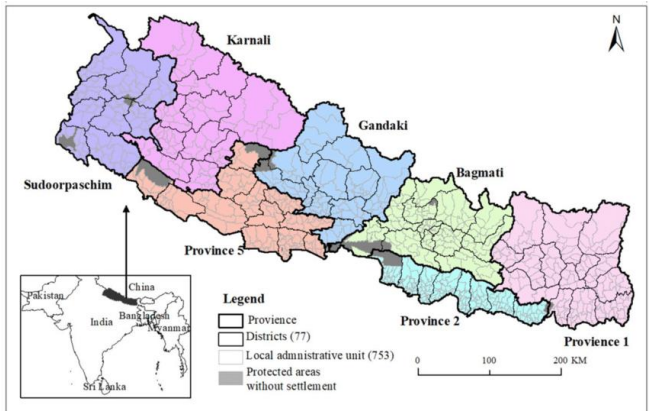
Presentation Outline

- About Nepal
- Hydropower in Nepal: Key Facts
- Why Community Engagement?
- Case of Dudhkoshi Storage HEP (670 MW)
- Key Learnings

NEPAL



- Landlocked Himalayan Country
- Country of Mt. Everest (8,848 m), Birthplace of Lord Buddha
- Rich in Natural and Cultural Diversity
- Elevation range: 60 m – 8848 m (S-N distance: 150-250 km)
- A developing country with significant infrastructure development needs

HYDROPOWER IN NEPAL : KEY FACTS

- 97% of Nepal's total electricity generation from Hydropower
- Potential of 83,000 MW; Feasible 43,000 MW
- Current Generation: 4,300 MW
- Target of GoN: 28,500 MW by 2035
- Challenges: Difficult mountainous terrain, Huge investment, Land acquisition, Social/environmental issues, Environmental clearance

Why Community Engagement Matters?

Some of the social challenges faced by the projects in Nepal

- Spread of misinformation, disinformation
- Community dissatisfaction and protests
- Distrust of public toward project authorities
- High expectations from the project communities
- Grievances related to land acquisition, fair compensation and impacts

Trust Breakdown - Key Factors in Nepal

- Lack of transparent information disclosure
- Unfair and delayed compensation and rehabilitation
- Exclusion of affected people in decision making process
- Weak grievance handling mechanisms.
- Lack of clarity on benefit-sharing mechanism
- Lack of sense of ownership towards the project
- Other specific issues …

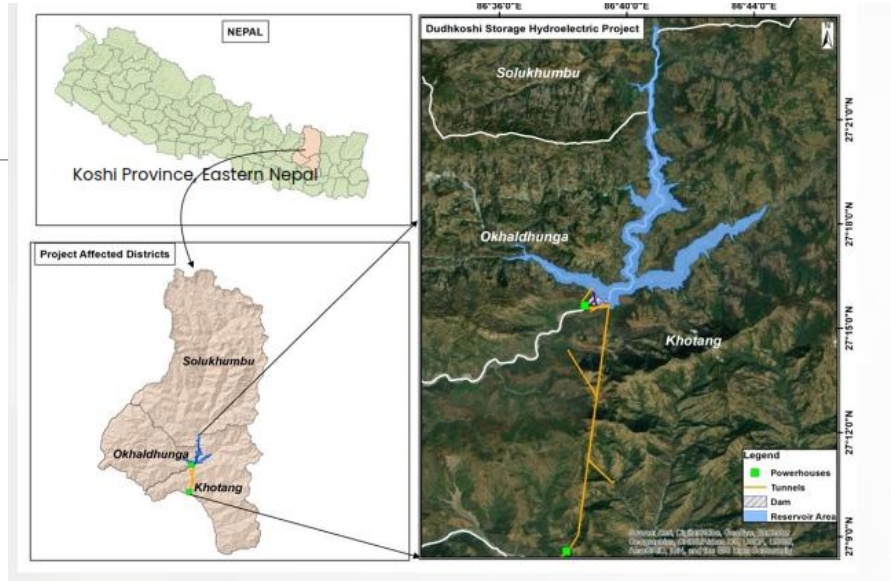
A Case of Community Engagement from the Dudhkoshi Storage Hydroelectric Project (DKSHEP)

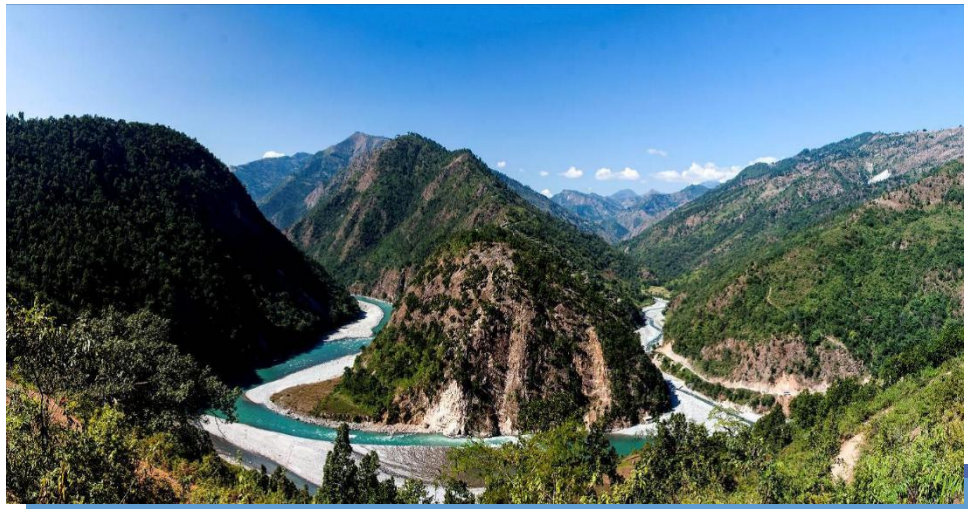
Nepal

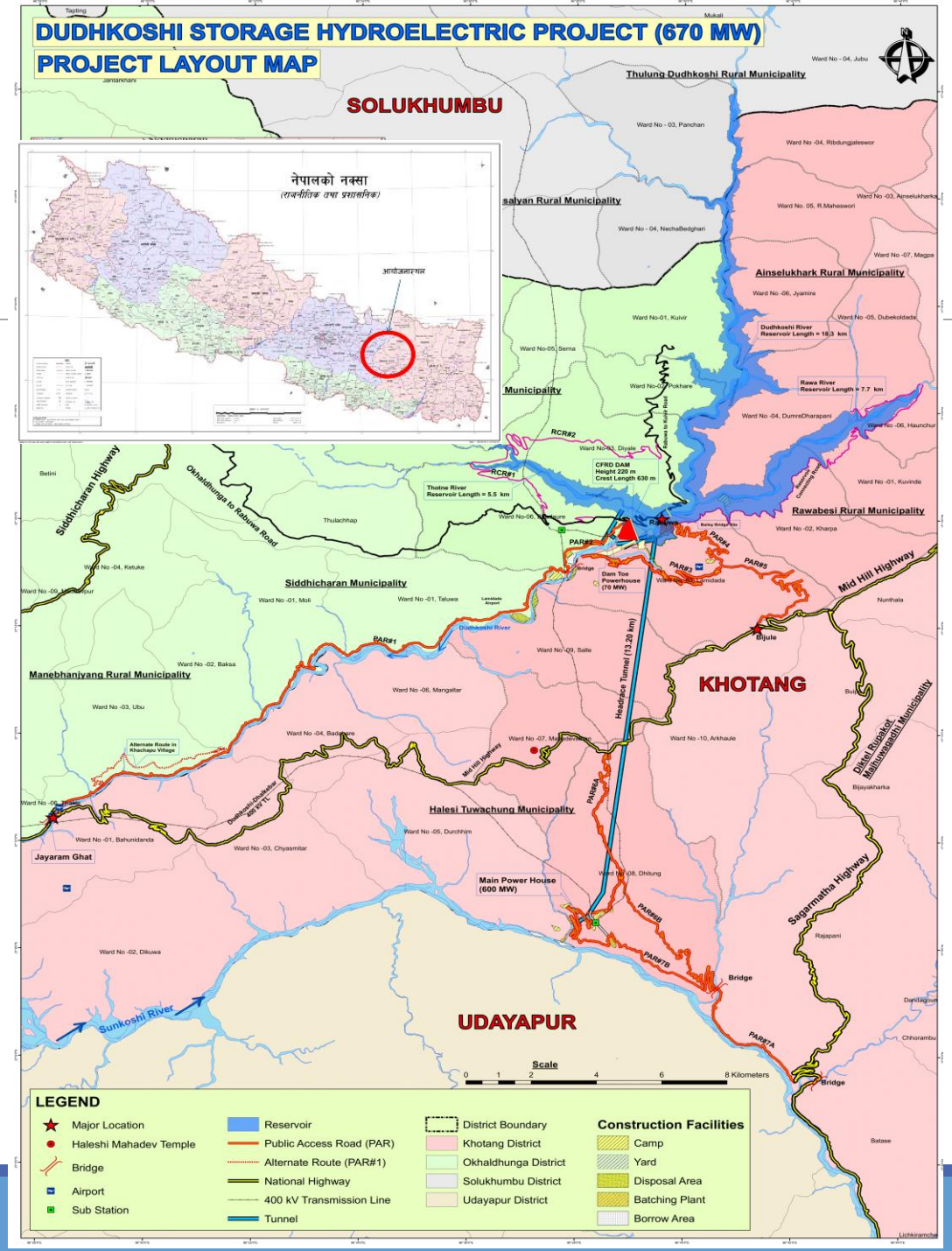
Dudhkoshi Storage Hydroelectric Project (DKSHEP)- Introduction

- National Priority Project of GoN
- 670 MW Installed Capacity
- The river originates from the glaciers and high-altitude areas near Mt. Everest
- 220 m. high CFRD (Concrete-faced rock-fill dam)
- 19.6 km2 reservoir area
- Design Discharge

  Main PH 224.4 m3/s, Dam Toe PH 40 m3/s
- Average Annual Energy 3,423 GWh
- Est. Cost: USD 2.47 billion






DUDHKOSHI STORAGE HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT (670 MW)
PROJECT LAYOUT MAP
SOLUKHUMBU
KHOTANG
UDAYAPUR
नेपालको नक्सा
(राजनीतिक तथा प्रशासनिक)
आगोजनास्थान
Thulung Dudhkoshi Rural Municipality
Ainselukhark Rural Municipality
Rawabesi Rural Municipality
Siddhicharan Municipality
Manebhanjyang Rural Municipality
Halesi Tuwachung Municipality
Dudhkoshi River
Sunkoshi River
Rawa River Reservoir Length = 7.7 km
Thotne River Reservoir Length = 5.5 km
CFRD DAM Height 220 m Crest Length 630 m
Dam Toe Powerhouse (70 MW)
Headrace Tunnel (13.20 km)
Main Power House (600 MW)
Jayaram Ghat
Siddhicharan Highway
Okhaldhunga to Rabuwa Road
Mid Hill Highway
Sagarmatha Highway
Scale
0 1 2 4 6 8 Kilometers
LEGEND
Major Location
Haleshi Mahadev Temple
Bridge
Airport
Sub Station
Reservoir
Public Access Road (PAR)
Alternate Route (PAR#1)
National Highway
400 kV Transmission Line
Tunnel
District Boundary
Khotang District
Okhaldhunga District
Solukhumbu District
Udayapur District
Construction Facilities
Camp
Yard
Disposal Area
Batching Plant
Borrow Area

The Trust Challenges in DKSHEP

- ⚠️ **Project delay**
- ⚠️ **Land acquisition notices published in the year 2021 and 2022**
- ⚠️ **Land freeze → No sale, No mortgage**
- ⚠️ **Compensation not yet determined and disbursed - but in the process**
- ⚠️ **Inadequate budget allocation from the Government of Nepal for the project work**
- ⚠️ **Infrastructure development has been withheld in the inundation area, upstream of the dam**

Yet… continue support from the communities to the project

DKSHEP Approach

- Early, consistent, meaningful engagement
- Inclusive participation strengthening project acceptance
- Enhancing community trust and ownership
- Assurance of benefit sharing
- Timely redressal of the grievances

Key Stakeholder Engagement Activities in DKSHEP

- Consultation Meetings
- Focus Group Discussions
- Public Awareness Programs
- Day-to-day Informal Talks
- Open discussion on delays, land freeze, e-flow, forest issues and other issues
- Grievances collection & handling
- Discussion on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) from Indigenous Communities - Recently obtained
- Close Coordination with the Local Government Authorities
- Capacity Development Programs
- Support for Infrastructure Development and Rural Road Improvement


स्वागतम
लामिडाडा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नेपाल विद्युत प्राधिकरण
वन व्यवस्थापन सचेतना कार्यक्रम

How Was it Done?

1. **Directly through the Project (2022–2026)**
   - ✓ With the establishment of **Environment and Social Management Unit (ESMU)** at the Project Site

     (326 consultations engaging 5,586 participants)

2. **Through other teams (Consultant) mobilized for specialized E&S related assignment (2018-2026)**
   - ❖ EA of the project & its components (100 consultations with 1,098 participants)
   - ❖ FPIC/IPP- >150 consultations with 3698 IPs
   - ❖ CIA Study (13 consultations with 128 participants)
   - ❖ LAP, Assessment of LFL option, E-Flow assessment and others…

Community Engagement through ESMU (2022–2026)

Type	Number	Participants
Consultation Meetings	**172**	**2,749**
Focus Group Discussions (FGD)	**116**	**1,326**
Public Awareness Programs	**38**	**1,511**
Total	**326**	**5,586**

- **75% Male | 25% Female**
- **57% Indigenous Peoples (IPs)** – 3,192 participants
- **9% Dalit** – 509 participants (marginalized caste groups)
- Inclusive, gender-responsive, IP-focused

Key Concerns from the Communities

Concerns	% of Sessions
Delays in compensation disbursement and project commencement	63%
Benefit sharing/ livelihood assurance	57%
Land freeze hardship	36%
Forest concerns	14%
Downstream e-flow concerns	9%

Trust Indicators

- Continued support from the communities, local government and other stakeholders
- Active participation in the project activities
- Obtained consent from the IPs (FPIC) for the project work
- No opposition to the project
- Demand for early project commencement with compensation disbursement

Key Learnings from DKSHEP Case of Nepal

- Community engagement is a key factor in building trust
- The misinformation and disinformation widespread in the community can be eliminated through meaningful engagement
- Early stakeholder engagement helps in managing the potential conflicts
- Trust can be maintained even during challenging phases
- Inclusive participation strengthens project acceptance
- Community engagement is essential for developing the sense of ownership towards the project

Let’s continue the conversation!

Message me your questions or comments in the IAIA26 app.

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