

Management response to the midterm evaluation recommendations

ICIMOD commissioned an independent midterm evaluation of their Building Capabilities for Green, Climate-Resilient and Inclusive Development in the Lower Koshi River Basin (HI-GRID) in late 2025. Following the receipt of the final evaluation report by February 2026, the following management responses have been agreed between ICIMOD and DFAT for implementation as response to the evaluation recommendations.

Relevance

Recommendations: For the remainder of the project, continue focusing on addressing the needs and priorities of targeted communities and municipalities (unreached till date). Also, update or revise the project's results framework to reflect recommended changes in project design (for e.g. changes recommended in the value chain work area).

Priority: High

Responsibility: Project team

Management response: Agree

Justification on the response, and actions planned:

Actions Planned

1. As done earlier, ICIMOD and its partners will regularly engage with local government bodies and communities for all outcomes to ensure better uptake of activities. This also aligns with activity delivery.
2. Yearly workshops with project partners to better understand and align to local priorities, to be continued.
3. Engaging with various key Nepali government stakeholders like the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA), Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM), Department of Forests and Soil Conservation (DoFSC), and the President Chure-Tarai Madhesh Conservation Development Board (PCTMCDB) to ensure visibility and priorities from the national level.
4. Also, agree to revisit and change as necessary, the results chain and the framework with support from the Strategic Results, Partnerships and Business Development unit of ICIMOD.

Timelines:

- Until April 2027 for actions related to engaging with local bodies
- Revisit the results chain by April 2026

Effectiveness

Recommendations: A special focus on prioritizing value chain work will be needed such as early scheduling of relevant training for stakeholders; establishing ward-level* hubs with demonstration plots and aggregation centres. Furthermore, incentivizing Krishidoots (agriculture ambassadors) for continuous mentoring of farmers and designing tailored modules for marketing and promotion of art

products (branding, packaging); and linking farmers and artisans to buyers through contracts and exhibitions is also to be carried out.

Priority: High

Responsibility: Project team

Management response: Agree

Justification on the response, and actions planned: We agree on the recommendations. Tailored branding and packaging modules will be developed for agricultural and cultural products, and formal buyer–seller linkages will be established to improve market assurance.

Timelines: Q1 2026 – Q4 2026

Efficiency

Recommendations: Allocate the resources more efficiently based on the ground realities with flexibility to transfer among Intermediate Outcomes in the project, as needed.

Priority: Moderate

Responsibility: Project team

Management response: Partially agree

Justification on the response, and actions planned: We agree that greater flexibility in resource allocation will enhance efficiency during the remaining project period. While overall financial management remains aligned with approved workplans, HI-GRID will introduce periodic internal reviews to assess ground realities and reallocate resources across Intermediate Outcomes where necessary. Priority will be given to consolidating scalable interventions, reducing duplication, and focusing investments on high-impact and institutionalised components. This approach will ensure adaptive management while remaining within approved budget frameworks and donor compliance requirements.

Timelines: Annual review cycle 2026–2027

Coherence

Recommendations: Improve and initiate communication with other program stakeholders (e.g. People in Need, DHM) who have launched similar interventions in HI-GRID study area. Also, strengthen municipal coordination and joint monitoring for value-chain activities.

Priority: Moderate

Responsibility: Project team

Management response: Partially agree

Justification on the response, and actions planned: The project has been in coordination with relevant stakeholders through national consultations to guide project implementation in areas where shared interests lie at the national level including initiatives like Early Warnings for All. The project has also

noted that these regular engagements have strengthened other like-minded organisations' efforts especially in site selection for sensor installations of early warning systems. However, the project notes that collaboration can be further improved with municipal authorities and will be a key benchmark in reducing duplication of efforts in 2026-27.

Timelines: Throughout project period

Sustainability and impact

Recommendations: Focus more on value chain components for achieving high sustainability and impact so that HI-GRID's performance will be improved over all components. Also, continue involving municipalities in contributing to operation and maintenance fund for sustaining DRR solutions introduced under HI-GRID.

Priority: High

Responsibility: Project team

Management response: Agree

Justification on the response, and actions planned: HI-GRID will consolidate value chain interventions under integrated ward-level hubs, strengthen production-to-market linkages, formalize buyer agreements, and embed Krishidoot and GeoKrishi* service models within municipal agriculture.

In parallel, municipal co-financing mechanisms will be strengthened to sustain DRR solutions like CBFWS and NbS introduced under HI-GRID.

*GeoKrishi is a private company that helps smallholder farmers adapt to climate stressors and adopt climate-smart agriculture practices

Timelines: Q2 2026 – April 2026

GEDSI Integration

Recommendations: The project must shift focus from creating plans and training officials to enforcing implementation, ensuring inclusive participation (especially of persons with disabilities), and establishing a strong monitoring mechanism that triggers mandatory follow-up actions when GEDSI gaps are identified.

Priority: High

Responsibility: PMR and project team

Management response: Agree

Justification on the response, and actions planned: HI-GRID agrees to strengthen follow-up mechanisms within existing municipal platforms to ensure that GEDSI commitments are reflected into budgeted items.

Timelines: Q2 2026 – Project closure

Safeguarding and Risk Management

Improving safeguarding

Recommendations: : It is recommended that safeguarding principles be systematically mainstreamed into all project training modules and communication materials.

Priority: High

Responsibility: Project team or GESI lead

Management response: Agree

Justification on the response, and actions planned:

Actions Planned

1. Integrate safeguarding in all our training modules for training to be conducted in 2026 and providing training accordingly along with trainer orientation.
2. Update communication materials to include safeguarding messages.
3. Local DRR plans will have a dedicated section on addressing protection of vulnerable groups alongside inclusion of disability rights.
4. As has been followed until now, and given the remaining timeframe of the project, safeguarding will be mainstreamed through practical measures rather than being redesigned. All ongoing and upcoming training modules will include a standard safeguarding slide and facilitator briefing on correct safeguarding practices.

Timelines: Immediate, implementation is ongoing

Risk management

Recommendations: A robust well-functioning risk management framework for HI-GRID Project in general was observed, and it is recommended to continue the ongoing efforts in the remaining period of the project as well.

Priority: Moderate

Responsibility: Project team and PMR

Management response: Agree

Justification on the response, and actions planned: The project agrees to continue with the existing framework.

Timelines: Ongoing through project period

Theory of change

Recommendations: Update the project theory of change. Major assumptions related to uniformity and commitment across municipality, training and policy adoption leading to budgeting and implementation and piloting leading to organic scaling need to be revised and updated according to the suggestions given in the report under findings.

Priority: High

Responsibility: DFAT, project team and PMR

Management response: Partially agree

Justification on the response, and actions planned: With the time remaining, the Theory of Change (ToC) will be revisited and refined to better reflect on-ground municipal capacity and identify how it can achieve impact on its trainings in various governance related activities including ward-level budgeting processes.

Assumptions related to uniform uptake and organic scaling will be adjusted to reflect contextual variability and co-financing conditions. The updated ToC will focus on consolidation, institutional embedding, and sustainability rather than expansion.

Timelines: Updated Theory of Change by early Q2 2026

Results framework and Monitoring Evaluation and Learning(MEL) plan

Recommendations: Revision of results framework. The revised Framework should incorporate suggested outcome, output and process level indicators and MEL Plan and review processes should be updated accordingly. (pls see the detailed recommendations in the report).

Priority: Moderate

Responsibility: Project team or PMR

Management response: Partially agree

Justification on the response, and actions planned: The Results Framework and MEL Plan will be streamlined to prioritise measurable implementation outcomes within the remaining 14 months. Emphasis will be placed on tracking: (i) budget allocations and implementation of GEDSI commitments, (ii) operationalisation of O&M mechanisms, and (iii) income and/or production gains from value chains. Introduction of complex new indicators will be avoided, while existing monitoring tools will be refined to ensure timely reporting, corrective action, and documentation of sustainability achievements before project closure.

Timelines: Revised framework by early Q2 2026; implementation through project closure