



pal



---

# Orientation Brochure for District Stakeholders

---



## Rural Access Programme (RAP) Phase 3

---

April 2016

---

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this brochure is to provide an overview of the Rural Access Programme Phase 3 (RAP3). It describes the objective, core principles, programme areas, programme components and implementation arrangements. The target audience of the brochure are the stakeholders who are related with RAP3 implementation in general and the DDC and DTO officials in particular.

## **2. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE OF RAP3**

RAP has been implemented continuously since 2001 and is a bi-lateral programme between the Government of Nepal (GoN) and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK Government. The programme is being implemented with the grant assistance provided by UK Aid.

The implementation of the current phase of RAP3 started in 2013 and will last until March 2017. An extension of the programme to 2019 is planned.

The current phase of the Rural Access Programme (RAP3) builds on the processes of previous phases but with significant changes, including:

- Support focussed on the poorest districts in western Nepal
- Emphasis on sustainable asset management and community resilience
- Working closely to support central and district government organisations and build capacity
- A range of implementation modalities depending on intervention characteristics and management performances of the district.

The objective of RAP3 is to increase the economic opportunities available to the poorest and most vulnerable people in the remotest districts of Nepal. It does so by providing employment for the poor to maintain and upgrade existing roads, construct new rural roads and economic infrastructure where these are lacking. It also has a component to develop small businesses, primarily agro-based, to put in place the foundations for sustainable economic development in the districts supported by RAP road works.

## **3. CORE PRINCIPLES**

The core principles of the programme are:

- Working in Partnership - to provide appropriate technical, management and financial support and build good relationships
- Good Governance – ensuring all plans, priorities and delivery are evidence based, accountable and transparent
- Annual Support Plans – allowing a flexible, demand driven support programme to address the actual needs of the programme districts
- Annual Management Cycle – to ensure RAP3 support is linked to district sector and development planning processes

## 4. RAP3 DISTRICTS

RAP3 focuses its support in 8 core districts in western Nepal but with a further 6 pilot districts for developing and testing the new LRN Asset Management System. The map below shows the core districts with a red circle and the pilot districts with a green circle.



## 5. RAP3 COMPONENTS

RAP3 has 4 programme components.

Component1: Local Road Network (LRN) Asset Management

The implementation of the LRN component is guided by GoN/DOLIDAR LRN strategy which gives highest priority to maintaining existing roads before undertaking other road activities such as improvement/upgrading and new construction. The whole LRN implementation process is based on the 5 year District Transport Master plan (DTMP) and the Annual Road Asset Management Plan (ARAMP), which is prepared annually based on existing road conditions within the DTMP framework. RAP3 has been providing support to DOLIDAR/GoN to prepare/revise DTMPs since 2011. The DTMP identifies the District Roads Core Network (DRCN), the minimum number of roads required to link all VDC HQs to the DDC HQ, and produces a priority DRCN list with budget investment plans.

LRN has 3 major road-related activities.

### Maintenance

RAP3 carries out road maintenance across all trafficable ('maintainable') DRCNs in a district, totalling approximately 2,000 km across 10 Districts. The programme has piloted an 'Annual Road Asset Management Plan (ARAMP)' in all 14 RAP3 Districts to prioritise and allocate DDC's LRN funds on a 'maintenance-first' basis and in line with District Transport Master Plan (DTMPs).

RAP3 conducts routine and recurrent maintenance through 'Road Maintenance Groups' (RMGs). RMGs typically have 4-7 members in a group, a minimum of 33% women, all selected from poor communities along the DRCN. RAP3 is piloting a full 'performance based' RMG approach in selected districts and supporting the preparation of common DoLIDAR RMG Guidelines. RAP3 is working towards a phased handover of RMG funding and supervision to the DDCs.

In the past, RAP3 carried out specific & periodic maintenance through users' committees and contractors in all 10 maintenance districts but from 072/73 fiscal year, it is limited to only 4 core districts (Jumla, Doti, Dailekh, Achham). RAP3 is also piloting 'Special Maintenance Groups' (SMGs) as an alternative to standard User Committees in 3 districts (Doti, Dailekh, Achham).

### **Improvement**

RAP3 is not currently funding any improvement works. However it is providing technical assistance in the form of Construction Supervision for a GON funded programme covering 6 roads in 4 RAP districts (Morang, Jhapa, Parbat, Doti) amounting 22.34 km. The works involve road upgrading from gravel to bitumen in Jhapa and Morang and from earthen to gravel in Parbat. The works in Doti are spot improvements to two earthen roads. Construction is targeted to complete ahead of the 2016 monsoon.

### **New Construction**

Since early 2014, RAP3 has been constructing 7 new DRCN roads totalling 97.5 km in the 4 hilly/mountainous districts of Bajura, Kalikot, Mugu and Humla. The road construction approach is labour intensive, with mobilisation of local labour from amongst the poorest of the poor living within a 1.5 hours walking "zone of influence" from the proposed road alignment. Construction is phased over 3 to 4 years : phase-I (2.5 m wide track), phase-II (3.5 m width) and phase-III (full width 4.5 m).

Three Local Road Building Groups (RBGs) per kilometre are formed, each comprising 15 to 20 members, of whom 33% must be women. Special Building Groups (SBGs), either local or brought in from outside the district, are also mobilised for road sections where the volume of the works is beyond the capacity of regular RBGs or the terrain is technically difficult (e.g. steep rock cutting, high retaining walls). RBGs/SBGs use hand tools (shovel, pick, crowbar, chisel, hammer etc.) to build roads assisted by petrol-run hand rock drills to supplement manual breaking of hard rock sections. The construction approach is termed as environmentally friendly as it lays focus on preservation of delicate hill/mountain terrains by taking appropriate measures for cut and fill, spoil management, use of flexible structures (e.g. gabion walls), bio-engineering.

### **Component2: Socio Economic Development (SED)**

SED aims to assist the project area population, and especially its poorest inhabitants, to capitalise on new opportunities created by improved road access, and thereby to accelerate and increase economic development and to ensure a more equitable distribution of sustainable development benefits. During the first two years of RAP3, the SED component was implemented using a participatory market chain approach. Under this approach, corridor platforms were established, identified market chain bottlenecks were managed by representatives from producers, input suppliers, traders, government agencies and processors to coordinate value-chain action. It was implemented in all 8 core districts.

Following the recommendations of SED Fundamental Review of 2015, the SED component is being redesigned. SED interventions aim to have an accelerator effect for poor farmers in those RAP3 districts with completed roads, leveraging their improved access to markets. SED is necessary to change the way in which the poor participate within the market system, going beyond access to identifying and removing constraints to meaningful participation. SED aims to open up lucrative opportunities to farmers by removing key systemic and physical constraints in a sustainable manner that goes beyond the period of SED intervention.

As the main aim of SED is to stimulate increased income generation through market system development, it follows that SED activities should be focused on the RAP3 Maintenance Districts, as only these have the completed road networks required for markets to flourish. The exception to this is Bajura district, which has an existing SRN road network and good links to markets, despite being a RAP3 New Build District.

### Component3: Capacity Building and Policy Harmonisation (CB/PH)

The CB/PH strategy supports Government of Nepal's ambitions for an RTI Sector Wide Approach (RTI SWAp) through promotion of harmonisation of donor and GoN activities, adopting a single GoN led RTI policy and approaches, improving RTI governance and capacity and performance of engineering sector. With this in view, RAP3 focuses on building capacity in the LRN sector among key stakeholders. These include district level public sector institutions (DDC, DTO), central public sector institutions (MOFALD, DOLIDAR) and private sector institutions involved in LRN project implementation, specifically consultants, contractors, user groups and RMG/RBG.

Implementation of CB/PH is based on Annual Support Plans (ASPs). The ASP defines a calendar of events that include key activities, milestones and targets for the year and the associated checklist of evidence required for milestone payments to be made. The ASP is prepared by RAP3 in consultation with the DDC/DTO at the district level and DOLIDAR/PC at the central level. RAP3 Teams work along with DDC/DTO at the district level and DOLIDAR at the central level to implement capacity and policy harmonisation plans. These include capacity building and training to RBG/RMG, user committees, contractors, DDC/DTO staff, and provide minimum necessary resources to enable DDC/DTO to carry out the relevant activities in order to meet the targets.

Further, support is provided to DOLIDAR and MOFALD to develop, revise and review government policies, strategies and guidelines necessary for LRN sectors. These include revision of norms and specification, rural road standards, preparation of new DTMPs and ARAMPs, preparation of RMG Guidelines, and publication of rural roads statistics by DOLIDAR.

In addition to monitoring of ASP implementation at the district level and central level, RAP3 uses Continual Improvement Matrices (CIM) based on the ISO 9004, to measure the capacity of central and district level organisations at the end of each fiscal year.

### Component4: Programme Monitoring and Verification (PMV)

The primary purpose of Performance Management and Verification is to provide an opportunity for open communication about performance expectations, feedback on performance and verification of results to

- Supervise, monitor and verify works of all types;
- Measure actual performance against expected performance;
- Ensure accuracy of actual performance through an internal audit system;
- Provide an opportunity for the employees and supervisors to exchange ideas and feelings; about job performance, including continual professional development; and
- Report and disseminate actual performance to stakeholders.

The major sub-components of PMV include the following:

- Programme management
- Quality management (based on ISO9001)
- Financial Management
- Risk Management
- Monitoring and evaluation , and
- Documentation and reporting

RAP3 performance measurements are carried out through direct observation, supervision and monitoring, reports and records, beneficiary level feedback and comments, which are verified by conducting internal audits on a sample basis. Performance measures address any of a number of specific performance issues or criteria, such as economy, efficiency, effectiveness and customer satisfaction.

## **6. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

### **6.1 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK**

The GoN Executing Agency for RAP3 is the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD). The Department of Local Infrastructure and Agriculture Roads (DOLIDAR) and District Development Committee (DDC) are the GoN implementing partners at the centre and district level respectively. Further, RAP3 directly supports the development and roll out the GoN RTI Sector wide Programme (RTI SWAp).

### **6.2 IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES**

RAP3 uses a direct funding for new road construction but funds maintenance through GON systems including the DDF to support GON's SWAp programme. This flexibility means the modality adopted depends on:

- The nature of the intervention being supported
- The suitability of existing systems with respect to quality control, transparency and accountability
- The existing capacity of the district to adhere to such systems and manage payments in a timely manner
- The cooperation and performance of the district in implementing RAP3 interventions.

### **6.3 EMBEDDING RAP3 IN GON OFFICES**

RAP3 district teams are led by a District Team Leader (DTL). The DTL acts as the main interface between RAP3 and the District Authorities (mainly DDC/DTO). Additional technical and support staff are provided by RAP3 as needed to deliver the annual support plans. Previous experiences

of Rural Transport Infrastructure (RTI) Maintenance Pilot demonstrated the importance of a close working relationship with the district level government through daily interaction. RAP3 District Teams are therefore embedded in the offices of District Development Committee/or District Technical Office. Before last year's earthquake similar arrangements were in place in DOLIDAR in Lalitpur.