

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT FOR WATER GOVERNANCE IN NEPAL



OXFAM

The need for political discourse and collective action on watershed management

Globally, Geographical vulnerabilities & Climatic conditions, Population Density & Urbanization, Water Scarcity & Security, Agriculture and Economic demands, Environmental protection, and Sustainability are major drivers for countries to adopt water resource management.

WHY DOES NEPAL NEED A WIDER POLITICAL DISCOURSE ON WATERSHED MANAGEMENT?

Water Resource Management based on political boundaries creates an unfair distribution of resources, even more so in a country facing blaring consequences of climate change, whereas management of water resources based on a natural boundary like a watershed helps create equitable access to water for all.



Current political discourse on disaster is mostly on preparedness and response. This approach of always only “preparing to respond” for an impending disaster without a system to mitigate the root cause is increasing yearly death tolls due to floods and landslides.



There is a need for an inclusive water governance structure at the watershed level that can coordinate with the three tiers of the government as well as across multi-sector to help reduce disaster, manage conflicts, and contribute to data for equitable sharing of water.

WHAT HAS BEEN ALREADY DONE IN WATERSHED MANAGEMENT IN NEPAL?

Watershed Management began in the 1960s in Nepal when UNDP, FAO, and the Government of Nepal started a project in Trishuli Watershed. In 1986, ICIMOD started working on Integrated Watershed Management for landslip and stream bank stabilization. ICIMOD implemented the Participatory Watershed Management by FAO in 1998, which later developed into participatory Integrated watershed management.

The Integrated water resources management (IWRM) approach was implemented with the formulation of the Water Resource Strategy 2002, National Water Plan 2005, and later the River Basin Approach. The Water Resource Strategy 2020 and Water Resource Response Strategy 2024 have highlighted the need for a watershed approach.

WHAT IS OXFAM DOING IN THE SPHERE?

Oxfam and Wageningen University conducted research in the Rangoon Watershed in 2022 that showed the need for Landscape/watershed-level intervention for equitable water distribution to all. The assessment identified three key areas addressing the Watershed Management challenges in Nepal.

AREA 1

The administrative boundaries in a watershed are drawn for governance purposes which fragments a watershed. The assessment identified the need for more knowledge about mechanisms for access and benefit-sharing, upstream-downstream linkage, and the relationship between different ecosystem components.



For Oxfam, efficient Water Resource Management is the result of a clear understanding of who gets what water, when and how, and who has the right to water and its related services. This is only possible when there is an inclusive watershed-level water governance structure with authorities that make data-driven decisions and have a mechanism to resolve water-related conflicts. Oxfam is working with the Water and Energy Commission Secretariat (WECS) on three key areas.

- Establishing watershed-level water governance structure in Rangoon Watershed that communicates across administrative boundaries.
- Supporting the generation and compilation of water resource-related data in the national platform to facilitate collective decision-making at watershed and basin levels using water management tools.
- Demonstrating conflict resolution mechanism trial and scale up if successful.

AREA 2

The assessment identified the need to extend support to the three tiers of the government to prepare evidence-based watershed management by helping them generate, manage, analyze, and decide based on climate data.

AREA 3

Sectoral issues do not satisfactorily address the multifaceted and interrelated issues concerning water governance. The assessment identified a need to work through an integrated approach like the watershed approach with water an entry point in scenarios of changing climate and navigating through the fragmented Ministries that are associated with the watershed.

OXFAM'S CURRENT STATUS ON WATERSHED MANAGEMENT



For More Information on Oxfam in Nepal's work on Water Resource Management, you can contact:

Programs Manager, River Basins, Rajan Subedi : RaSubedi@oxfam.org.uk

If you have any concerns or queries regarding safeguarding, please contact the following number 16600150076 or send an email at speak-up@oxfam.org.uk For feedback and complains related to programme, please contact the following numbers:

NTC: 9851179358; Ncell: 9801571204