

PROSPECTUS

Nepal Country Investment Roundtable

Venue: Marriott Hotel, Naagpokhari, Manakamana Marg, Kathmandu-44600

Date: 23 February, 2025

1. BACKGROUND:

The FAO regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO-RAP) is implementing a Technical Cooperation Programme in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association (APRACA) to facilitate the delivery of effective and inclusive rural financial services in selected five (5) countries in the Asia Pacific region¹. During the scoping study conducted in Nepal, it was observed that there is a gap in financing the rural and agricultural enterprises due to various factors. The other highlights of this landscape are limited financial infrastructure, a nascent digital finance landscape, and significant gaps in financial literacy and information asymmetry. However, the major issue flagged by the financial institutions that (a) the commodity value chains are not much discrete to intervene, (b) there is shortage of bankable projects, and the farmers/agribusiness companies (except few large companies) are not able to bring good and investible proposals and (c) there is a need to improve the policies for enabling more private sector participation in agribusiness development. To resolve this stalemate and disconnect, there is a need to demystify the bankability issues for the small/medium sized rural and agricultural projects which could be done through bringing all the actors in agricultural value chains to a common platform in the form of an investment roundtable to discuss the emerging issues and the way forwards. Keeping this in view, a country investment roundtable is being organized in Nepal to learn from both the sides on the issues and challenges to reduce the gaps in financing to rural and agricultural sector in the country.

2. OBJECTIVES:

The proposed investment forums will serve two purposes with a view to solicit investment and engagement with the private sector and international development partners. First, the forum will share salient features of country assessments for the development of an inclusive and effective rural finance; and second to bring both demand and supply side to understand the right examples of bankable agribusiness plans. The specific objectives of the country investment forum are to foster dialogue, identify challenges, and explore innovative solutions across key challenges of financing agribusiness, involving a wide range of stakeholders from financial institutions, government, private sector, development partners, farmer organizations and agribusiness SMEs.

3. SCOPE AND COVERAGE:

¹ Bangladesh, Bhutan, Laos, Nepal and Solomon Islands

The forums aim to address the critical findings from the Rural Finance Ecosystem Assessment, focusing on enhancing financial inclusion, product diversity, access to digital technologies and economic development in the countries where assessment was undertaken with reference to development of rural entrepreneurship. The key findings of the country assessment reports will be discussed with few strategic recommendations include policy reform to support financial sector development, investment in digital finance and infrastructure, and targeted initiatives for financial literacy and inclusion. The forums will cover the entire geographical span of the country where the forum is being organized, focusing on rural and agricultural finance, digital transformation, and inclusive finance strategies.

4. METHODOLOGY:

The investment round table is designed to address the multifaceted aspects of the rural and agricultural finance ecosystem in the countries, encouraging a holistic approach to improving financial inclusion, resilience, and economic development. The forum will host all the stakeholders active to support the enabling policies, inclusive financing, affordable technologies for all actors in agricultural value chains. The country investment forum will encourage the lead commentators to bring in issues, challenges and possible solution which will be followed by discussions by the expert panels from the industry. The forum will encourage the small and medium size agribusiness entities (SMAEs) to highlight the pain points to access finance to adopt innovations in extending their business and the startup ecosystem. There will be an interaction session to encourage Business to Business (B to B) conversation which will provide a roadmap for the future action to be taken by the financial institutions and donor agencies.

5. EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES:

It is expected that the investment forum will examination the roles of the financial services providers (FSPs), regulatory environments, and infrastructure to understand detailed landscape with potential for growth but currently hampered by various challenges. The investment forums would also provide a common platform for the stakeholders to address the identified challenges and connect them with the actionable strategies for improving access to finance with special reference to develop efficient value chains in agriculture to support local economy. An action-oriented plan outlines specific steps, responsible parties, and timelines for implementing the strategic recommendations, with a strong emphasis on monitoring and evaluation will also be addressed.

6. TARGET AUDIENCES:

To ensure engagement with all section of the stakeholders responsible to develop agricultural value chains at the country level are crucial to ensure a comprehensive representation of interests, expertise, and influence across the financial ecosystem. The country investment forum shall attract participation from the policy making institutions, public/private banks, microfinance institutions, civil society organizations, farmer groups, local agribusiness entrepreneurs, Fintech/Digitech companies, international

(bilateral/multilateral) agencies and other relevant organizations. The session plan is designed to address the multifaceted aspects of the rural finance ecosystem in the country, encouraging a holistic approach to improving financial inclusion, resilience, and economic development in rural areas. The forum also aims to foster dialogue, identify challenges, and explore innovative solutions across these key areas, involving a wide range of stakeholders from government, private sector, development partners, and the community.

7. LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS:

The **Nepal Country Investment Roundtable (NCIR)** is being jointly hosted by Nepal Rastra Bank and FAO Nepal country office in collaboration with the FAO-RAP and APRACA on **23 February 2025** at the **Bagmati Ballroom 2** of **Marriot Hotel, Kahmandu**. The NCIR will be followed by the Training of Trainers (ToT) on rural and agriculture finance to be held during 24-28 February 2025 at the Hotel Ambassador, Laizmpat Road, Kathmandu-44600. **We encourage the institutions to nominate their senior management representatives to join the Nepal Country Investment Roundtable.**

8. LANGUAGE:

The investment forum will be conducted in English language.

9. PROGRAMME DETAILS *(as of 4 February 2025)*

Date: 23 February 2025	
Schedule	Detailed programme
08.30 – 09.00	Registration by the delegates
09.00 -10.00	Session 1: Setting the Tone 1.1 Welcome address : Mr. Ken Shimizu , FAO Country Representative-Nepal. 1.2 Keynote Address: Hon. Mr. Mahaprasad Adhikari , Governor, Nepal Rastra Bank (TBC). 1.3 Special Address: Mr. Dirgha Raj Mainali , Joint Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Govt. of Nepal (TBC). 1.4 Briefing the objectives of the roundtable: Mr. Aziz R Arya , Policy Officer, FAO-Regional Office, Bangkok 1.5 Vote of Thanks: Dr. Prasun Kumar Das , Secretary General, APRACA.
10.00 - 11.00	Session 2: Enabling policies and institutional arrangements to support public and private investments in rural and agricultural development: Highlighting some key experiences. Session Moderator: Mr. Aziz R Arya , Policy Officer, FAO Regional Office, Bangkok, Thailand 2.1 Keynote address: Dr. Hari Bahadru, KC , Joint Secretary, Planning and Development Coopeartion coordination Division, Ministry of Agriculture and Liovestock Development, Govt. of Nepal (TBC)

	<p>Topic: <i>'Policy interventions to support rural and agricultural finance and Steps taken for deepening of Financial Structure in Nepal'</i>.</p> <p>2.2 Rural Finance Assessment Report of Nepal: Dr. Manab Chakraborty, APRACA.</p> <p>Topic: <i>'Salient features of Nepal's rural finance assessments to address supply side gaps.'</i></p> <p>2.3 Digital Finance Assessment Report of Nepal: Mr. Raju Sherstha, APRACA</p> <p>Topic: <i>Current status of digital finance to support rural finance in Nepal.</i></p> <p>2.4 Experience sharing from Thailand: Mr. Suthee Visitwarakorn, Sr. Vice President, BAAC, Thailand.</p> <p>Topic: <i>'Highlight of rural finance governance: Experiences from Thailand'.</i></p>
11.00 – 11.30	Tea/Coffee Break
11.30 -12.30	<p>Session 3: Support initiatives of the International/Multilateral Agencies to facilitate Rural and Agriculture Finance</p> <p>Topic: <i>'Rural and Agricultural Finance projects implemented in Nepal'</i></p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Prasun Kumar Das, APRACA</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>3.1 Mr. Pranjit, Regional Director; Heifer International, Nepal.</p> <p>3.2 Mr. Roshan Cooke, IFAD Country Director for Nepal and Bhutan (TBC)</p> <p>3.3 Mr. Arnaud Cauchois, Country Director, ADB Nepal Resident Mission, (TBC)</p> <p>3.4 Mr. Pramesh Pokharel, Deputy Director, Micro-Finance Institutions Supervision Department, Nepal Rastra Bank.</p>
12.30 – 13.00	<p>Session 4: Proposed country project proposals to supplement and support the Hand-In-Hand initiative of FAO</p> <p>Topic: <i>'Rural and Agricultural Finance project proposals relevant to Nepal'</i></p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Manab Chakraborty, APRACA</p> <p>Speakers (Joint presentation):</p> <p>4.1 Mr.Nabin Timilsina, Microfinance Institutions Supervision Department, Nepal Rastra Bank, Nepal.</p> <p>4.2 Mr.Suresh Shiwakoti, Monetary Management Department, Nepal Rastra Bank, Nepal.</p> <p>4.3 Ms. Mandipa Dahal, Sana Kisan Bikas Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha Ltd. (SKBBL), Nepal.</p>
13.00 -14.15	Lunch Break
14.15 - 14.45	<p>Session 5: Business Case on Successful examples of addressing key supply and support side issues</p> <p>Moderator: Mr. Raju Shrestha, Consultant, APRACA</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>5.1 Dr. Gunakar Bhatta, Executive Director, Economic Research Department, Nepal Rastra Bank (TBC)</p>

	<p>Topic: Policies of NRB targeting support to develop agricultural value chain finance in Nepal.</p> <p>5.2 Mr. Suthee Visitwarakorn, Senior Vice President, Risk Management Department, The Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC), Thailand.:</p> <p>Topic: Agri-SME finance triggers value chain development: Examples from Thailand.</p> <p>5.3 Mr. Ashok Sherchan, Chief Executive Officer, Prabhu Bank Ltd., Nepal (TBC)</p> <p>Topic: Successful projects undertaken by Prabhu Bank, Nepal to support agriculture value chain development</p>
14.45 – 15.30	<p>Session 6: Business Cases from Development Financial Institutions (DFIs) and Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) in Nepal</p> <p>Topic: Successful examples from the DFIs/MFIs to address financing to agri-food sector and rural development.</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Prasun Kumar Das, APRACA</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>6.1 Dr. Shiv Ram Prasad Koirala, Chief Executive Officer, Sana Kisan Bikas Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha Ltd. (SKBBL), Nepal</p> <p>6.2 Mr. Deepak Nidhi Tiwari, Chief Executive Officer, Chimek Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha Ltd. (CLBSL) Nepal</p> <p>6.3 Mr. Ram Bahadur Yadav, President, Nepal Microfinance Bankers' Association (NMBA)</p>
15.30 – 15.45	Tea Break
15.45 – 16.30	<p>Session 7: Demand side perspectives: Are they ready to demand support</p> <p>Topic: Access to financial support by the demand side with special reference to farmer organizations and Agribusiness companies</p> <p>Moderator: Mr. Wichai Paksa, BAAC</p> <p>7.1 Mr. Chandra Prasad Dhakal, President, Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FNCCI) (TBC)</p> <p>7.2 Mr. Khem Bd Pathak, Nepal Agricultural Cooperative Central Federation Ltd. (NACCFL)</p>
16.30 -17.00	Strategic Road maps and vote of Thanks (FAO & APRACA)
17.00	Closure of the Day

10. CONTACT PERSONS:

Organization	Contact Details
APRACA Secretariat,	<p>1. Mr. Kittisak Mom-Moh, Administrative and Programme Coordinating Officer, APRACA: E-mail: kittisak@apraca.org</p> <p>2. Dr. Prasun Kumar Das, Secretary General. E-mail: prasun@apraca.org</p>
Nepal Rastra Bank	<p>1. Mr. Laxmi Tamrakar, Dy. Director, BTC, Email: laxmitamrakar@nrb.org.np</p> <p>2. Mr. Saourav Pokhrai, Dy. Director, HRMD, NRB; Email: hrmt@nrb.org.np</p>

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