

Environmental and Social Screening Report of 100 kWp Kankasundari Solar Mini Grid Subproject, Jumla



Prepared by:

Environmental and Social Safeguard Team Mini Grid Energy Access Project Alternative Energy Promotion Centre Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Mid Baneshwor, Kathmandu

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Abbreviation

ESCOs Energy Service Companies

ESMF Environmental and Social Safeguard Management Framework

ESMP Environmental and Social Management Plan

ESS Environmental and Social Screening

E&S Environmental and Social GoN Government of Nepal

Km Kilometre

MGEAP Private Sector-Led Mini-Grid Energy Access Project
MoEWRI Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation

OPs Operational Policies
PBs Participating Banks

PV Photovoltaic

RAP Resettlement Action Plan

RM Rural Municipality

VCDP Vulnerable Community Development Plan

WB The World Bank

Executive Summary

Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC), the apex government body under the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation (MoEWRI), has been implementing the Private Sector-Led Mini-Grid Energy Access Project (MGEAP) since June 2019 with support from the World Bank. The objective of the MGEAP is to increase electricity access and delivery from renewable energy mini-grids (solar, hydro, wind, and hybrid) by mobilizing private Energy Service Companies (ESCOs).

Karnali Energy Pvt. Ltd, an ESCO for Kankasundari Solar Mini Grid Subproject has expressed an interest for the installation of solar mini grid of 100 kWp capacity in Kankasundari Rural Municipality of Jumla district to meet an energy demands of entrepreneurs and households of Ward No. 6 of the Rural Municipality. Therefore, Environmental and Social Safeguard team of the MGEAP has conducted Environmental and Social Screening (ESS) of the proposed subproject on November 10 and 11, 2021 as mandated by the Environmental and Social Safeguard Framework (ESMF) for MGEAP.

The main objective of the screening is to determine whether the proposed subproject is likely to have potential adverse environmental and social impacts. Other objectives are to establish the level of environmental/social assessment required, help ESCO to understand environmental and social issues related to the subproject before they are considered for implementation, and assist in the decision-making process.

The proposed land of approx. 1500 m² for the installation of solar modules and construction of powerhouse of subproject is located in the Birat Community Forest and is in the ownership of the User's Group. Though the land is the ownership of the community forest, it is left barren for a long time and has no significant use. Therefore, not any significant environmental and social issues have not been observed during the field observation of proposed solar PV modules installation site, powerhouse construction site, potential load centre and Transmission & Distribution route. However, some of the potential social impacts are, (i) there might be some disturbance to school due to construction activities; (ii) the sub-project might disrupt water supply into irrigation canals during the construction phase of the subproject as an irrigation canal exist adjacent to the site; (ii) the transmission and distribution lines will pass through the side of road and may use some private land, which might have a minimal impact.

Human resource required for the development of subproject will be confirmed after the completion of the DFS. The Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) system will be formulated during the Environmental and Social Assessment. However, the contact details of ESCO and ESS team of AEPC/MGEAP have been provided to the local community to address project-related concerns and complaints from local people and stakeholders. The ESCO will also provide priority for the local people in the employment opportunity generated during the development of subproject. During the consultation with local people it is revealed that there are the availability of unskilled as well as skilled work force in the subproject area. The ESCO has planned to provide orientation to workers about the national laws and project policies on GBV & sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEA/SH) and other transmission of communicable diseases etc. The ESCO shall also

arrange awareness raising sessions and trainings for their workers on workers GRM, code of conduct (CoC), labor & working conditions and other mitigation plans.

Consultation with community people, entrepreneurs and meeting with the representatives of local government revealed that the electricity demand is high in the proposed area. During the consultation, local people were enthusiastic to have the subproject in their area considering that the subproject will be curial to provide electricity to households as well as enterprises and opening new prospect of economic opportunity in their locality. Additionally, people have shown their commitment to support the subproject.

As the subproject proposed to lease the land in the ownership of the community forest and the area of land is less than 1 Ha, it is required to conduct Brief Environmental Study (BES) as mentioned in the Schedule 1 of the *Environmental Protection Rules 2020*. Considering the minimal environmental and social impact of the solar mini grid subproject, it is recommended to prepare Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). Moreover, a written consent letter from CFUG and District forest office (DFO) need to be obtained and DFO need to be consulted for this subproject.

TABLE OF CONTENT

1. BACKGROUND	1
2. KANKASUNDARI SOLAR MINI GRID SUBPROJECT	1
3. OBJECTIVE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SCREENING	1
4. METHODOLOGY	2
5. SCREENING FINDINGS	3
5.1 Environmental Issues:	3
6. SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT OF SUBPROJECT AREA	8
6.1.1 Demography	8
6.1.2 Literacy and Education	8
6.1.3 Economy, Livelihood Patterns and Practices	8
6.1.4 Caste and Ethnicity	8
6.1.5 Language, Cultural and Religious & Historical Sites of Subproject Area	8
6.1.6 Community Development & Local Infrastructure	9
6.1.7 Permits/Clearance Required:	9
6.1.8 Land Use and Land Ownership:	9
6.1.9 Accessibility to Subproject Area	10
6.1.10 Any sensitive area:	10
6.1.11 Need for VCDP:	10
7. NEED FOR RAP: THERE IS NO NEED TO PREPARE RAP	10
8. NEED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL ASSESSMENT:	10
9. NEED FOR ANY SPECIAL STUDY: NOT ANY	11
10. STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION	11
10.1 NOTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS DURING SCREENING	12
11. RISK CATEGORIZATION	12

12
13
15
2
4
5
6
7
and
10

1. Background

Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC) is the apex government body under the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation (MoEWRI), established to promote the use of alternative/renewable energy technology to meet the energy needs in Nepal. The Private Sector-Led Mini-Grid Energy Access Project, supported by the World Bank, has been implemented by AEPC from June 2019. The objective of the program is to increase electricity access and delivery from renewable energy mini-grids (solar, hydro, wind, and hybrid) by mobilizing private Energy Service Companies (ESCOs). The project will deliver financing support to ESCOs to facilitate financial closure and enhance financial viability of the subprojects, provided to ESCOs in the form of loans through participating Banks (PBs), ESCOs to facilitate financial closure and enhance financial viability of the subprojects.

Karnali Energy Pvt. Ltd, an ESCO for Kankasundari Solar Mini Grid Subproject has expressed an interest for the installation of solar mini grid of 100 kWp capacity in Kankasundari Rural Municipality, Jumla district to meet the energy demands of entrepreneurs/hotels and households of Ward No. 6 the Rural Municipality. Therefore, Environmental and Social Safeguard team of the MGEAP has conducted Environmental and Social Screening (ESS) of the proposed subproject on November 10 and 11, 2021 as mandated by the Environmental and Social Safeguard Framework (ESMF) for MGEAP. ESMF provides the guidance on the level of study required to address the potential environmental and social (E&S) risks and impact, and specifies the process for managing such risks and impacts based on regulatory framework of the Government of Nepal (GoN) and Operational Policies (OPs)¹ of the World Bank.

2. Kankasundari Solar Mini Grid Subproject

The proposed subproject of Kankasundari Solar Mini Grid is located in Kankasundari Rural Municipality-6 of Jumla district, Karnali Province which is approximately 55 km away north from the district headquarter Khalanga. It is located at latitude 29°24'16.53" N and longitude 81°59'58.45"E in east with 45° to 50° land facing towards west south sunshine. There are 8 wards in Kankasundari Rural Municipality and the subproject intends to electrify 280 households (HHs), 23 enterprises and 10 community facilities of Ward No. 6. As there is no national grid power supply, people are using solar home systems and other sources of electricity for lighting purpose. Community facilities such as government buildings, schools, health post as well as small scale enterprises such as saw mill, furniture factory, workshops, and community people are facing trouble due to shortage of reliable and affordable source of energy. The project will include installation of solar PV modules, T&D line (3km overhead line) and construction of powerhouse as well as ancillary facility of which details will be clarified as part of detailed design study. The access road will not be constructed as the existing road will be used.

3. Objective of Environmental and Social Screening

The ESMF of AEPC/MGEAP has provisioned to conduct Environmental and Social screening of

¹ This project was originally processed and approved under the World Bank's old safeguard policies, which therefore apply OPs rather than the ESF.

each subproject and categorize environmental and social risk of the subproject based on the screening. The objectives of Screenings are:

- To determine whether the proposed subprojects are likely to have potential adverse environmental and social impacts.
- To establish the level of environmental/social assessment required (such as preparation of safeguard document like ESIA, ESMP, RAP, VCDP etc.).
- To identify the need to obtain any regulatory clearances (such as approval for clearning trees).
- To assess if the proposed site and activities meet the eligibility criteria.
- To help ESCOs, PBs to understand environmental and social issues related to the subprojects before they are considered for implementation.
- To assist in the decision-making process.

4. Methodology

The ESMF screening checklist annexed in the ESMF, which was revised recently with the inputs of the Environmental Safeguard Specialist and Social Safeguard Specialist, was used for information collection. A community consultation was conducted in presence of the representatives of Chairpersons of Ward No. 6 of Kankasundari Rural Municipality and representatives of Birat Community Forest User's Group. Moreover, community people were informally talked to get their individual opinion and information on the proposed subproject.

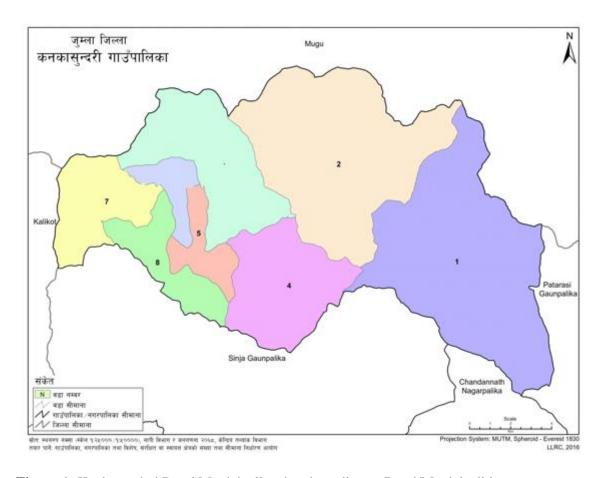


Figure 1: Kankasundari Rural Municipality showing adjacent Rural/Municipalities

5. Screening Findings

5.1 Environmental Issues:

Though the proposed land for the installation of solar modules and construction of powerhouse is located in forest land owned by Birat Community Forest, it has been left barren for a long time and has no productive use. There is the presence of irrigation canal nearby the proposed site, which will not be affected during the construction of the subproject. The nearest river is the Hima River which is located approximately 1km away from the proposed subproject site and the source of drinking water, Dhayam Khanepani, is approx. 4km away from the site. Community people informed that they are not aware of any flooding event in the river and the proposed site being in significant distant there will not have any impact of change in river environment. Not any sensitive issues are identified at the proposed site as well as immediate vicinity of the site. Residential area being in distance from the proposed site shall not have impact of noise and dust during construction phase. The nearest settlement from the proposed site is Goruchaur village, which is approximately 300m from PV array site. Not any significant flora and fauna are found in and around the subproject area.

The proposed solar mini grid subproject is located in the Kankasundari Rural Municipality, which is well known as the origin of Khas (Nepali) language and has historical/cultural importance. The popular Birat Palace, Paandav Gufa, Kanka Sundari temple are in the RM. The settlement of the RM is mixed with the presence of Dalits and Brahmin/Chhetri. Majority of the population follow Hindu religion and celebrates major Hindu festivals such as Dashain, Tihar, Janaipurnima, Maghe Sakranti. This RM is extended in 225.36 sq.km area and covers approx. 8.11% area of Jumla district. Approx. 55.36% of total land is covered with forest, 26.20% is covered with grass/grazing land and 15.13% land is used for agriculture.

The Kankasundari Rural municipality is rich in biodiversity with the availability of species found in high mountainous region. Arna, Thar, Kasturi, Gharal, Ghodal, Danphe, Kalij, Kandebhyakur are some of the animals and Pakhanbed, Satuwa, Panchaule, Guchichyau, Jatamasi, Silajit, Banlashun, Kurilo, Khiraulo, Tiplightchyau are some medicinal plants that are found in the area. However the proposed site does not contain any ecologically important flora/fauna species, thus the impact on biodiversity is not envisaged. Though the subproject area of influence includes aesthetically and archeologically as well as culturally and traditionally valuable assets, the subproject activities will not have any impact on them. The land acquisition for the installation of solar PV modules, T&D line and construction of powerhouse will not have any impact on livelihood of local people. The consultations with the representatives of Rural Municipality, Ward Offices, entrepreneurs and locals revealed the urgency of reliable source of electricity in the target area for the improvement of living standards of people and for enhancing economic activities.

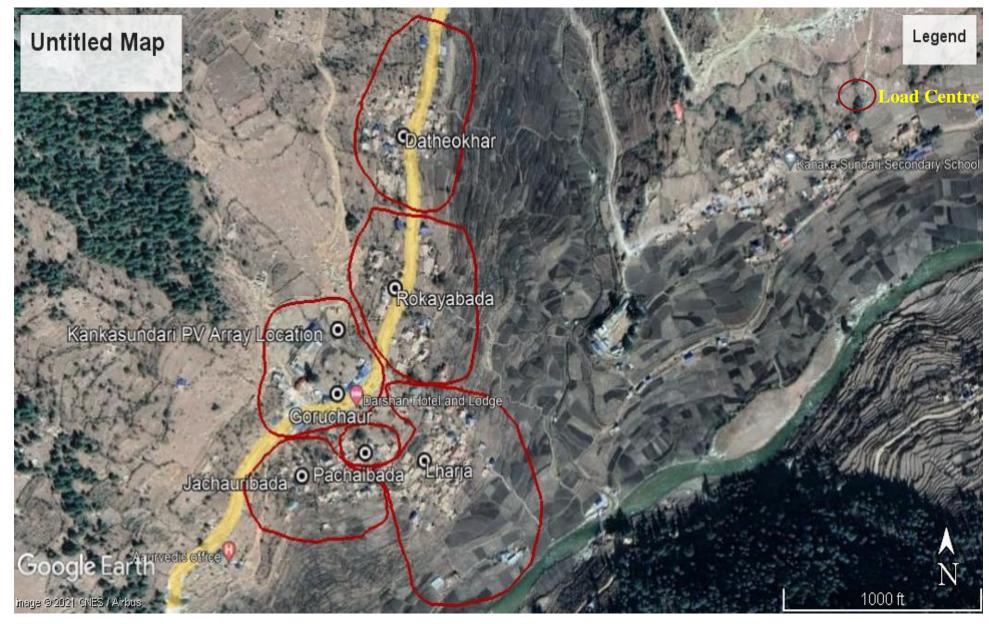


Figure 2: Google Map of the proposed subproject location (and load centres)



Figure 3: PV Array location showing the nearest settlement and Community facilities

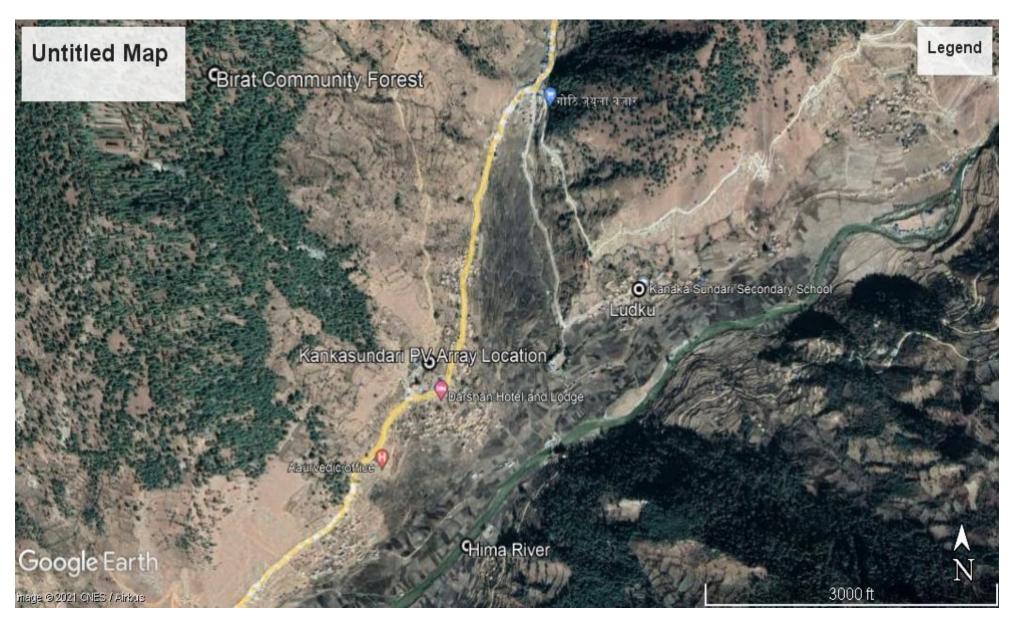


Figure 4: PV Array Location and Area of Influence

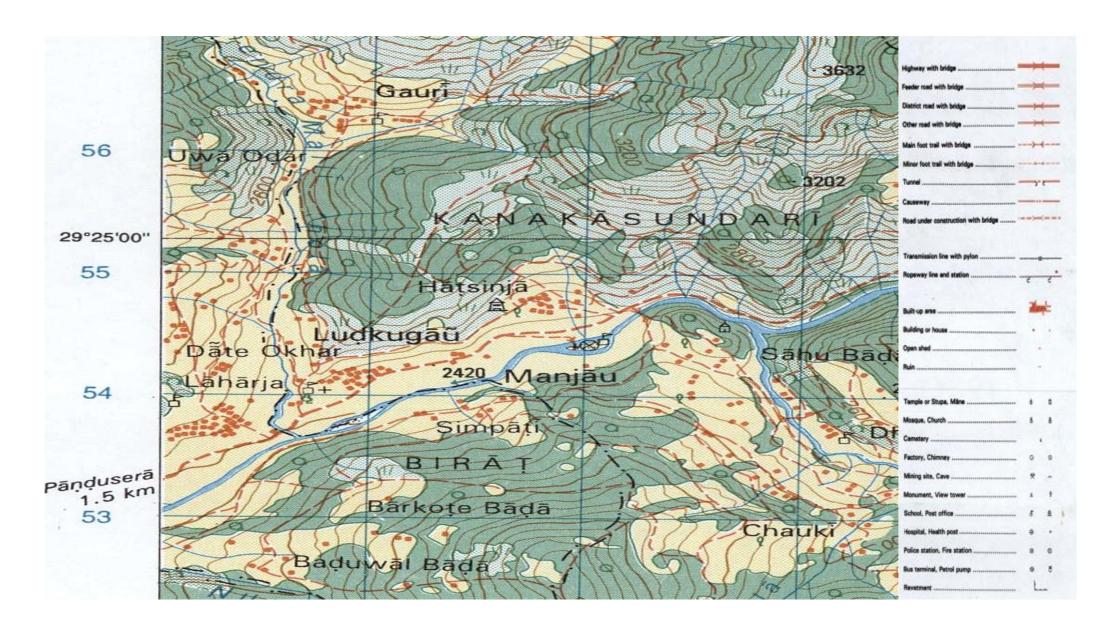


Figure 5: Topo Map of the Proposed Subproject Area

6. Socio-economic and cultural environment of subproject area

6.1.1 Demography

As per the 2011 population census, Kankasundari RM has a total of 13,216 populations with 6,590 males and 6,626 females. The ratio of male to female population is 0.99. There are 8 wards in Kankasundari Rural Municipality and 2,247 Households (HHs). The ESCO has planned to serve electricity generated from Kankasundari Solar Mini grid for the people, enterprises and community facilities of Ward No 6. The total population of Ward No 6 is 794 with 409 females and 385 males.

6.1.2 Literacy and Education

There is approximately 5,972 (52.13%) population of total are literate, who can read and write in Kankasundari Rural Municipality. Gender-wise, 3,829 (64.11%) are males and 2,143 (35.88%) are females of total literate population. Out of a total of 3,895 population between the age of 5 and 25 in the RM, a total of 2,073 males and 1,822 females are attending school, and 2,223 population of the same age group are not attending school (CBS, 2011 census).

6.1.3 Economy, Livelihood Patterns and Practices

According to 2018 Economic Census conducted by the Ministry of Finance, there are a total of 374 establishments in Kankasundari Rural Municipality that are involved in various economic activities. In those establishments, a total of 874 persons is engaged for the economic activities, as self-employed or an employee, with total male engagement of 524 and female engagement of 350 persons. In every business, there were an average of 2.34 people engaged with average males are 1.40 and females are 0.94. The ratio of male to female engagement in the establishments is 1.50, which means as many as 1.50 males are engagement in the economic activities per female. Majority of the establishments are Wholesale and Retail Trade (41.44%) followed by Accommodation and food (19.79%). However, majority of engagement are in Wholesale and Retail Trade (31.81%) followed by education (25.29%) and Accommodation and food (19.11%)². Only 4.58% of the total population is engaged in agriculture.

6.1.4 Caste and Ethnicity

Top five castes of people in Kankasundari Rural Municipality are Chhetri (8,370), Brahmin - Hill (1,682), Kami (965), Sarki (706) and Thakuri (600) in Kankasundari Rural Municipality. The people of different ethnicity and religious community such as Hindu reside in the subproject area. The nearest settlement from the subproject area is Laharja village, which is approximately 300 m away from the subproject. The majority of the beneficiaries are from Dalit and Brahmin/Chhetri communities.

6.1.5 Language, Cultural and Religious & Historical Sites of Subproject Area

² https://www.nepalarchives.com/content/kankasundari-rural-municipality-jumla-profile/

Kankasundari Rural Municipality is the origin place of "Khas" language. The majority of the people residing in the RM speak the Nepali language. The RM is known for its historical and cultural importance as the RM has many historical monuments such as Paandav Gufa, Birat palace, Jarj Gufa, Bulbule Patan etc and religious places such as Kankasundari temple³, Budhumasto, Chede Mahadev temple, Bishnudevi temple, Tilichaurmai etc.

6.1.6 Community Development & Local Infrastructure

The presence of local infrastructures like irrigation canals, roads, communication, schools, temples, and health post are found in the nearest settlements of the subproject area. In the field visit it is found that people of local community are found happy with the proposed Kankasundari Solar Mini Grid in the hope that the electricity generated from Mini Grid will support the community to participate in economic activities, especially to run hotels and retail shops as the subproject area is located on the way to the popular touristic destination of the country, Rara Lake. People have plans to establish businesses such as fruit processing factories, furniture, grinding mills, hotels etc.

6.1.7 Permits/Clearance Required:

As the subproject proposed to lease the land in the ownership of the community forest and the area of land is less than 1 Ha, it is required to conduct a Brief Environmental Study (BES) as mentioned in Schedule 1 of the *Environmental Protection Rules 2020*. Considering the minimal environmental and social impact of the solar mini grid subproject, it is recommended to prepare an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) as per WB OP 4.01. Moreover, a written consent letter from CFUG and District forest office (DFO) need to be obtained and DFO need to be consulted for this subproject.

6.1.8 Land Use and Land Ownership:

The proposed land to install solar PV modules and construct powerhouse is barren and is in the name of Birat Community Forest. The community forest User's Group agreed to provide land on lease for the purpose of energy generation by the Solar Mini grid, Annex I. The proposed land is not used as a way to access commoner property. For the transmission and distribution line road side land will be used. Approval shall be taken from the local government to use the land for T&D. However, the ESCO needs to conduct a Brief Environmental Study as per the requirement of the GoN and process to lease land from the User's Group. As the land is left barren for a long time and has no use, the proposed land to be used by the subproject will not have any significant impact.

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³ The RM was named after Kankasundari temple



Figure 6: Proposed Land for Solar PV Array Installation and Powerhouse Construction, and Alternate Land

6.1.9 Accessibility to Subproject Area

The ESCO will use the existing road to reach the proposed site. There is a motorable earthen road of two lanes up to the subproject site, Goruchaur. Construction materials and electromechanical equipment shall be transported from Surkhet to Nagma and subproject site via Manma through road, which is approx. 240km.

6.1.10 Any sensitive area:

The proposed solar mini grid subproject is located in the Kankasundari Rural Municipality, which has its own historical and cultural importance. However there are not any historical sites such as Paandav Gufa and Birat Palace and the cultural sites such as Kankasundari Temple are located nearby the proposed subproject area, the impact on these features is not envisaged. The land acquisition for the installation of solar PV modules, T&D line and construction of powerhouse will not have any impact on the immediate environment as well as the livelihood of the community people.

6.1.11 Need for VCDP:

From the screening and community consultations it has came to know that 80% of the beneficiaries' households are Dalits and 20% belong to Brahmin/Chhetri. Not any direct adverse impacts on vulnerable groups were foreseen. If ESMP identifies any risks to vulnerable groups then VCDP will be prepared and implemented.

7. **Need for RAP:** There is no need to prepare RAP.

8. Need for Environmental and Social Assessment:

As the subproject proposed to lease the land in the ownership of the community forest and the area of land is less than 1 Ha, it is required to conduct a Brief Environmental Study (BES) as mentioned in the Schedule 1 of the *Environmental Protection Rules 2020*. Considering the minimal environmental and social impact of the solar mini grid subproject, it is recommended to prepare an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). The ESMP shall be subject to consultation with local communities and their feedback shall be incorporated into the final ESMP. The ESMP along with social and environmental requirements to be included in the contract documents.

9. Need for any special study: Not Any

10. Stakeholder Identification

The major stakeholder met and discussed during the screening are Local Representatives of Kankasundari Rural Municipality, representatives of Borat Community Forest User's group, entrepreneurs and community people.

There were two consultations conducted to get the perception of local representatives and people around the subproject area regarding the development of solar mini grid. Among the 156 participants in consultations, 28.2% were women and 71.8% were men. Similarly, 79% of the participants in the consultation were from Dalit community and 21% represention from Bhramin/Chhetri.

The consultations with the following stakeholders were carried out during the E&S Screening visit of the subproject.

- Meeting with the Chairperson of Ward No. 6 of Kankasundari Rural Municipality and Members of RM on November 10, 2021
- Meeting with Chairperson of Birat Community Forest and members on November 11, 2021
- Meeting with Entrepreneurs an other representatives of community on November 11, 2021



Figure 7: Community Consultation on November 11, 2021

10.1 Major takeaways of Stakeholders during Screening

- Chairperson of Ward No. 6 and other representatives of local government Representatives
 of Kankasundari Rural Municipality were very positive for the subproject and showed their
 commitment to facilitate the ESCO for any needful.
- Members of the local community were optimistic about the subproject, which will support
 to provide a reliable source of energy, and will open new prospect of economic opportunity
 in their locality.
- The Birat Community Forest User's Group committed to providing land in the lease for the subproject.
- The RM is committed to supporting for necessary approval/permission that needs to be taken before the commencement of subproject development activities.
- Local people have requested ESCO to commence the subproject implementation activities at the earliest possible. They have also expressed their commitment to provide the necessary support for the subproject implementation.

11. Risk Categorization

The environmental and social impact envisaged from the construction activity of solar mini grid in the proposed subproject area is minimal and no significant adverse impact is foreseen. The subproject is classified as *Low Risk*, as not any significant environmental and social impact is envisaged. However the subproject has proposed to utilize the forest land, it is required to conduct a Brief Environmental study (GoN requirement) and ESMP (WB requirement).

Category - Low Risk Subproject

- Prepare Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) as provisioned in the Project's Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), including the following Plans.
 - o Occupational Health and Safety Plan
 - o Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan
 - o Battery Management Plan
 - o Waste Packaging Materials Management Plan
 - o Spoil Management Plan
 - o Labour Management Plan
 - o Traffic Management Plan
 - Vulnerable Community Development Plan

12. Recommendation

- Conduct consultation with the nearby community, relevant stakeholders during the detailed feasibility study (DFS) stage and ESMP.
- As the proposed land for the installation of solar modules/powerhouse is in the name of Community forest, ESCO needs to get approval from the relevant GoN authorities.

Prepared by: Dr. Anusuya Joshi Senior Environmental Safeguard Expert

Mr. Shiva Hari Budhathoki Social Safeguard Expert Date:

Ms. Sunita Khatiwoda
Environmental Safeguard Expert
Date:....

Checked by Mr. Santosh Rai Senior Officer Project Manager, MGEAP

Approved by Ms. Parbata Bhatt Asst. Director Head, ESS Section

13. Annexes

Annex-I

Pictorial Highlights



P:1 Load centre, DatheOkhar



P:2 Load centre, Laharja





P:3 Proposed land, Goruchaur

P:4 Irrigation canal near to proposed subproject site



P5: Jharo: People use this piece of wood as the source of light, which is one of the major sources of air pollution and pose fire hazard.



P6: Consultation with Birat Community Forest User's Group to discuss the land use



Annex-II Screening Checklist

14. Environmental and Social Screening Checklist

Solar, Wind and Solar/Wind Hybrid Mini Grid

Screening Team			
Date: Novembe	r 10 to November 11, 2021		
Name of the Team Leader	Mr. Dipesh Shrestha, RE (Solar/Wind) Expert		
Name of Senior Environmental Expert	Dr. Anusuya Joshi		
Name of the Social Safeguard Expert	Mr. Shivahari Budhathoki		
Names of other team members (please specify)	Mr. Prakash Shahi, Representative of ESCO Karnali Energy Pvt. Ltd.		
1 1	checklist is to identify potential environment and social issues related to subproject development, construction		

The purpose of this checklist is to identify potential environment and social issues related to subproject development, construction and operation.

(A) Subproject Background

1.	Name of proposed subproject	Kankasundari Solar Mini Grid Subproject, Jumla		
2.	Location (please attach location map and photo)	Province: Karnali District: Jumla District headquarter: Khalanga Rural Municipality/Municipality: Kankasunda Rural Municipality Ward No. 6 Local name of the place: Lharja		
3.	Geographical coordinates	29°24'16.53"N & 81°59'58.45"E		
4.	Altitude	2460 masl		
5.	Environmental setting of the sub-project (surrounding environment, land cover/use, important environmental/ecological features at the site etc.)	Alternative 1 Barren Land in the name of Birat Community Forest, Land is only covered with few bushes, not any environmentally and ecologically significant features found in the surrounding area Alternative 2 Barren Land in the name of Birat Community Forest, Land is only covered with few bushes, not any environmentally and ecologically significant features found in the surrounding area		
6.	Name of ecological habitat nearby including national parks/protected areas and its distance	Rara National Park – approx.16km from the proposed subproject site		
7.	Subproject objectives	Electricity generation from solar mini grid and supply to meet electricity demand of households and enterprizes in Ward 6 of Kankasundari Rural Municipality.		
8.	Subproject activities (including design phase, construction phase and O&M phase)	Subproject Planning phase E&S Screening		
9.	Name and address of subproject developer	Karnali Energy Pvt. Ltd., Kathmandu		
10.	Name of communities near the subproject site and distance from the subproject site	Lharja Pachaibada – 295 HHs Datheokhar Tole: 65HHs (Dalit: 62HHs) Rokayabada: 35HHs		

		Pachaibada: 17HHs
		Jachauribada: 55HHs
		Lharja Tole: 108HHs (Dalit: 80HHs)
		Goruchaur: 15HHs
11.	Number of beneficiary households of the subproject	295 Households
12.	Number of households in the project area (Host community)	The proposed subproject has planned to electrify 295 households of Ward No. 6 of Kankasundari RM
13.	Capacity (kWp) of the subproject	The proposed capacity is 100 kWp, however the DFS will analyse the load demand and finalise the capacity of the subproject
14.	Powerhouse area, m ²	1500 m ²
15.	Length of Transmission and Distribution line (meter)	Approximately 3 km of overhead line Land acquisition is not required
16.	Relevant national requirements (assessment, threshold limits and relevant clause/rule of the EPA/EPR etc.)	The proposed land for the subproject is located in the community forest and the required land is less than 1 Ha. Therefore, according to the <i>Environment Protection Rule 2020</i> it is required to conduct Brief Environmental Study (BES) as per the GoN requirements.
17.	Project safeguard requirements	OP/BP 4.01 – Environmental Assessment
	(Mention which OPs are triggered)	OP/BP 4.04 - Natural Habitats
		Needs to conduct ESMP
		(Though the proposed land of the subproject is located in the forest area, the land is left barren for a long time and the forest user's group have no plan for using the land for othr purpose. Moreover, not any ecologically sensitive features are present in the propose land and surrounding area).
18.	Project implementation schedule	NA

(B) Subproject selection criteria

S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments/Justification (provide detailed information on your selection)
1.	Is there indication of: a. Significant adverse impacts on ecologically sensitive areas ⁴		1	Though the proposed land is located in the forest area, installation of solar PV modules, T&D line and construction of powerhouse will not have any significant impact on the forest itself. Moreover, the proposed site do not contain any ecologically important flora/fauna species.
	b. Large-scale resettlement ⁵		✓	There will not be any resettlement for the subproject activities
	c. Significant adverse impacts on cultural heritage		✓	As the temple is located approx. 200 m away from the proposed site, such impacts are not envisaged
	d. Subproject in disputed area or territory ⁶		✓	It is not located at disputed territory.
2.	If yes, can these impacts be eliminated or reduced to acceptable levels through adequate application of mitigation measures?			

(C) Environmental and Social Screening

S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments/Justification (provide detailed information on your selection)
Subp	project's site			
1.	Define subproject's boundaries(direction, East, West , North & South) and area of influence on the map			Area of Influence Ludku (Ward No. 5) - East Haatsija (Ward No. 5) Baduwal bada (") - West Birat Community Forest –

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⁴Significant adverse impacts on ecologically sensitive areas will be determined using international best practice and tools, as well as based on the outcomes of relevant studies within the ESIA.

⁵ Large-scale resettlement is defined as physical displacement of 100 or more number of people. Physical displacement would mean relocation/ loss of shelter and assets resulting from the acquisition of land that requires the affected people to move to another location.

⁶ Disputed Territory is a disagreement over the possession/control over natural resources such as land, rivers between two or more individuals, communities, RM/Municipalities, Provinces and Nations.

S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments/Justification (provide detailed information on your selection)
				North Hima River/Sipati Community Forest - South
2.	Is the subproject site adjacent to or within any of the following sensitive receptors?			
	i. Natural habitats and/ or legally protected areas (wetlands, forests, estuary, buffer zones, nature reserves); if yes, is there possibility of a critical habitat present ⁷ ? What are the ranges of endangered or threatened animals/birds/plant species (if known at time of screening)?	✓		Proposed land is located in the community forest area. Land is barren and not any significant flora/fauna is found in the land.
	ii. Cultural heritage site (e.g. temple, monastery, mosque)?		✓	Temple (Budhumasto) is approx. 200 m away in west from the proposed site
	iii. Is the site located on Aesthetically Important Viewpoints ⁸ ?		√	The Sinja valley is popular for its aesthetic beauty. However, it is not touristic destination though the valley is located on the way to popular touristic destination Rara Lake.
	iv. Is the site located near main settlement and trade centres? Description (approximate distance, no. of HH and population, nature and special feature /importance / significance)		✓	The nearest settlement from the subproject site is Laharja Village and is approximately 100 m away east from the site. It has 90 households.
	v. Fragmentation of habitat of flora and fauna (Avifauna and mammalian fauna)?		√	The proposed site do not contain any ecologically important flora/fauna species and route to the migratory birds, the impact on habitat of

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⁷ Critical habitat is defined based on global good practice as a subset of both natural and modified habitat that deserves particular attention. Critical habitat includes areas with high biodiversity value that meet the criteria of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) classification, including habitats of significant importance for required for critically endangered or endangered species as defined by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species; habitats of significant importance for endemic or restricted-range species; habitats supporting globally significant concentrations of migratory species and /or congregatory species; areas with unique assemblages of species or which are associated with key evolutionary processes. Primary Forests or forests of High Conservation Value shall be considered Critical Habitats. This includes HCV forests. HCV areas do not directly correspond with definitions for modified, natural, and critical habitat. The HCV Resource Network, an internationally recognized group, provides information and support on the evolving usage of HCV to ensure a consistent approach. https://www.hcvnetwork.org/.

⁸Aesthetically Important Viewpoints are the places with natural beauty and well known for touristic destination.

S. N		Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments/Justification (provide detailed information on your selection) flora/fauna is not envisaged
	vi.	Are there any flood prone / river cutting / low lying / areas near or within site? What are challenges and opportunities associated flood/river cutting/low lying areas (if any)?		√	There is Hima River passing through the village, however the proposed site is approx. 1km away. According to locals, not any flood has been recorded
	vii.	Are canals and irrigation systems present in direct proximity to subproject site?	✓		Irrigation canal exists nearby the proposed site. It is approx 50m away from the site.
	viii.	Are there any water sources or springs near or within site?	✓		Dhayam Khanepani – Spring water source (4 km) Tap water (supply for 3 hrs every morning and evening)
	ix.	Is the proposed site located on agricultural land? Is there any possibility of crops and vegetation due subproject development activities?		✓	The proposed site is left barren. There is no infrastructure in the land.
	X.	Is subproject site accessible round the year or only in dry season? Description of condition of road/track (black top, fair weather etc.) or need to construct new road, total length, nearest road head etc.	•		The subproject site is 55km away from Khalanga, district headquarter of Jumla district. Two laned earthen road connects the proposed site from Nagma (35km) and Manma through Karnali highway (54km). ESCO will use the same road to transport the construction materials needed for the subproject.
	xi.	Is the proposed site located on area used by Indigenous people		✓	The proposed site is in the name of Birat Community Forest, and is not used by Indigenous people
	xii.	Is the subproject area important for indigenous people from the point of view of communal right and customary practices & beliefs?		✓	The subproject area is not important for indigenous people from the point of view of communal right and customary practices & beliefs
	xiii.	Does the proposed site host vulnerable and marginalized people such as Dalits and religious minorities?		√	The subproject area hosts the mixed settlement of Dalits and Brahmin/Chhetri.

				Comments/Justification
S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	(provide detailed information on your selection)
	xiv. Is there any expectation of vulnerable or indigenous people from subproject?	√		The subproject area is resided by Dalits. During the consultation, the participants expressed their expectation for electricity at the earliest possible.
Poter	ntial Environmental Impacts			
3.	Impacts on natural resources that constitute livelihoods of community (e.g. water resources, fishing, grazing or hunting grounds)?		✓	During site visit for screening such impacts were not observed. Not any source of water is found nearby the proposed site and the proposed land is not used for grazing or any other use.
4.	Disfiguration of landscape?		✓	The subproject development activities will be carried out in barren land. There will not be disfiguration of landscape.
5.	Is there potential for landslide and soil erosion impacts? If yes, please provide following information: - Past and present conditions and values (including tentative area to be affected, risky areas) What are challenges and opportunities associated with landslides and erosion (if any)		✓	The proposed site is flat and not located in landslide and soil erosion prone area. However, the proposed site is with the medium seismic hazard ⁹ .
6.	Will the subproject cause increase in waste generation? Describe types and expected amount of waste.		✓	Spoil generated from excavation will be used in backfilling. Waste Management Plan will be prepared for packaging waste.
7.	Will there be forest loss in terms of area (if yes, type of forest)? Will it lead to loss of forest species (provide details of the loss of listed species according to national and international — specifically IUCN - classifications)?		√	There is no vegetation though the proposed land is in the forest area. Therefore, there will not be forest loss in the subproject site and T&D line route.
8.	Is loss of non-forest species possible? If so,		✓	There will not be any loss of

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https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Probabilistic-Seismic-Hazard-Map-of-Nepal-showing-PGA-values-with-10-probability-of_fig1_322539935

S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments/Justification (provide detailed information on your selection)
	are these listed species (as above)?			non-forest species.
9.	Is the subproject site a habitat of flora/fauna species of ecological importance including migratory birds?		✓	The subproject site is not a habitat of flora/fauna species of ecological importance including migratory birds.
10.	Will the subproject have potential impacts on the flora/fauna species with ecological importance?		✓	Not envisaged as the subproject area do not bear flora/fauna species with ecological importance
11.	Creation of barrier for migratory land animal		✓	Land animal do not use the proposed land
12.	Construction of permanent access road near or through forest?		✓	Road already exist in the subproject site. therefore, there is no need to construct access road.
13.	Other potential biodiversity impacts (specify)?		✓	Not envisaged
14.	Loss or destruction of unique or aesthetically valuable land		✓	The settlement of the subproject site is compact. Therefore, the infrastructures of the subproject will not have any impact on the aesthetic value of the village.
15.	Disturbance of large areas due to material quarrying		✓	Only small scale quarrying is required for the installation of solar PV module and poles
16.	Availability of local construction materials a) Stone b) Sand c) Wood (For door, window and roofing etc.) d) Wood for Pole 	√		Sand, stone, wood
17.	Potential noise/vibration impacts in the nearby communities		✓	The scale of construction work will not have such impacts in the nearby communities
18.	Potential visual impacts as the result of consultation of solar/wind power development		✓	Not envisaged
19.	Potential impacts due to glaring of solar panels		✓	The proposed site is approx. 300 m away from the settlement and not in the route

S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments/Justification (provide detailed information on your selection)
				of traffic. Therefore, such impact is not anticipated.
Labo	our and working conditions			
20.	Is there any estimate of the number of workers to be involved in the sub-project during construction? (If "Yes", provide the total number (skilled, semiskilled and unskilled) and number of women worker)		✓	Technical human resources may need to hire from outside from community. The details of workers will be confirmed after DFS
21.	Is there availability of labor force (skill & unskilled) in local level for the construction of subproject?	✓		There is availability of labor force in subproject area. For the employment local people will be given priority as per their skill.
22.	Will there be migrant workers from within the country?	✓		Technical human resources basically skilled may need to hire from outside from community.
23.	Will there be any foreign workers?		✓	There won't be any foreign worker
24.	Does the subproject plan to provide residential facilities to the workers? (If "yes", does it plan to construct a labor camp or manage their residency in the host community)	✓		Subproject plan to provide residential facilities to the workers if needed to hire outside from the community
25.	Does the subproject have plans to provide orientation to migrant workers about national laws, local tradition, culture, costumes, norms, and values?	✓		The labor force is responsible to adhere social, cultural, political and economic norms and values community near and around the subproject. Labor management plan will be developed and implemented. The migrant labors will be oriented national laws, local tradition, culture, costumes, norms, and values
26.	Does the subproject plan to provide orientation to workers about the national laws and project policies on GBV & SEA/SH?	✓		The AEPC has formulated the procedure on SEA/SH prepared based on the National regulation. Moreover, the project is in the process to prepare Action Plan on SEA/SH. Thus, the

S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments/Justification (provide detailed information on your selection)
				subproject will provide orientation to workers about the national laws and project policies on GBV & SEA/SH.
27.	Does the subproject plan to provide orientation to workers about the risks of communicable diseases such as STDs and the protocols on COVID-19?	✓		Subproject specific Labour Management Plan and Standard Operating Procedure on COVID-19 pandemic will be developed and implemented. The subproject will provide orientation to workers about the risks of communicable diseases such as STDs and the protocols on COVID-19.
28.	Is there any possibility of conflicts between migrant workers and the local community?		✓	Skilled human resources which is not locally available will be hired only for a short period
29.	Is there any history of conflict between the migrant workers and the local community in project area or in the district?		✓	During the consultation meeting with local government and community people, such incidents were not reported.
Poter	ntial Community and Occupational Health ar	ıd Safe	ety Impa	acts
30.	Are there community health and safety risks due to the transport, storage, and use and/or disposal of materials likely to create physical, chemical and biological hazards?		✓	Not envisaged for the solar subproject
31.	Will the construction works disturb other commercial/community/residential activities?		✓	Construction zone is isolated from the settlement so it won't disturb. Transmission and distribution activity may create some disturbance in the community but not commercial.
32.	Will the subproject create major noise/vibration beyond the level permitted by the law?		✓	Minor noise generated during construction will not have any impact as the site is in isolated area.
33.	Will it create dust problem around the sites?		✓	Construction activity do not involve major excavation that generates dust. However, if

				Comments/Justification
S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	(provide detailed information on your selection)
				some dust generates during construction it will not have any impact as the site is in isolated area. Workers will be encouraged to use proper PPE.
34.	Will it impact on the water supply and sanitation system?		✓	There will not be any impact on the water supply and sanitation system
35.	Any potential impacts to public health via potential water logging and degradation of land and water quality		✓	The solar subproject involves only limited activities of civil works. Therefore, such impact is not envisaged
36.	Will subproject's construction cause disturbance to the transportation in the subproject's site?		✓	Subproject site is in not in the transportation route. Thus, the construction activities will not disturb transportation.
37.	Are there any risks of accidents and natural hazards during to the community during construction and operation?		✓	Such risks are not anticipated as the subproject activities will be carried out only under the supervision of experts.
38.	Will batteries be removed/disposed (lead-acid or nickel-cadmium batteries from emergency lights and other battery-powered or battery-backup items?	√		Battery backup items will have guarantee of 10 years. Moreover, Battery Management Plan will be developed based on the type of the battery to be used and will be managed accordingly.
39.	Will there be any solid waste generated by subproject that needs to be transported offsite for reuse, recycle or disposal of?		✓	The construction activity will not use such liquid.
40.	Will any explosive and hazardous chemicals be used within the project?		✓	The subproject activity will not use any explosive and hazardous chemicals
41.	Will the project use materials coated with lead-based paint or equipment containing mercury, asbestos, lead, silver, or chrome?		✓	Such material is not present at the site
42.	Will an emergency generator set or other aboveground storage tank (AST) be installed or removed?		✓	Generator can be used during the installation of solar mini grid
43.	Will there be provision to control trespassing of non-project staff on the project site during construction and operation?	✓		The subproject area will be fenced for control trespassing of non-project staff

S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments/Justification (provide detailed information on your selection)
44.	Does the sub-project plan to provide orientation to surrounding communities about the risks of communicable diseases and COVID-19?	✓		It is planned to provide orientation to surrounding communities about the risks of communicable diseases and COVID-19
Pote	ntial Social Impacts			
45.	Does the project need permanent land acquisition		✓	The land used for the subproject is in the name of Birat Community Forest, which will be leased for 25 years. Thus the subproject does not need permanent acquisition.
46.	If "Yes", what kind of land the project needs? Private land Public/forest land Government land Leasehold land			
47.	Does the project plan to acquire private land? If "Yes", how it is planning to acquire private land Through voluntary donation Though involuntary acquisition Through negotiation (Willing buyer & willing seller)		√	The subproject will use the land of the community forest in long term lease. ESCO is responsible to lease the land required for the subproject for minimum 25 years.
48.	Does the project plan to take land on lease? If "Yes", what kind of land it plans to take on lease Private land Forest land Government land	✓		The land used for the subproject is in the name of Birat Community forest, which will be leased for 25 years. Forest land
49.	Will there be any physical/economic displacement and impact on livelihoods due to private land acquisition? If "Yes", please provide information on How many people/families will be displaced? What will be the scale of economic		✓	The subproject activities will not involve in economic displacement. It is observed that it will open new prospect of livelihood/economic opportunities after intervention of subproject

S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments/Justification (provide detailed information on your selection)
	displacement?			
	What will be the scale of impact on			
	livelihoods of impacted people/families			
	How does the project plans to help the impacted people/families restore their livelihoods?			
50.	Will there be permanent land acquisitions or restrictive use of land to evacuate the power (transmission line) in the sub-project?		✓	For the transmission and distribution line road side land will be used. Approval shall be taken from the local government to use the land for T&D.
51.	Will there be loss of productive land		✓	During the screening visit such impacts were not observed.
52.	Involuntary land taking resulting in loss of income, livelihood, sources of livelihood, loss of access to common property resources and/or private residential and/or property resources		✓	The subproject will not involve any Involuntary land taking.
53.	Adverse impact on non-title holders including loss of shelter and livelihood		✓	Such impacts were not observed during field visit.
54.	Will subproject activities have adverse impact on school, drinking water supply system, and other facilities?		✓	As the subproject activities will be carried out in isolated area impacts on community/social infrastructures are not observed. However there is school and irrigation canal system nearby the subproject site, development activities need to be carried out without impacting on canal and disturbing the environment of the school.
55.	Will subproject need to use existing or open new access roads? What will be the impacts of increased traffic on communities?		√	The subproject area can be reached via two laned earthen road. The transportation of construction material to the subproject site is possible through using vehicle throughout the year. Thus, the subproject do not have to

S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments/Justification (provide detailed information on your selection)
				construct new access road. Transportation of construction materials will be limited, so there won't be any major increase in traffic.
56.	Will subproject's construction cause any damage to the existing local roads system?		✓	The construction activities will not cause any damage to the existing local roads system.
57.	Adverse impact to women including economic and safety concerns		✓	It is envisaged that clean energy from the proposed solar mini grid will help to reduce drudgery of women and open the new prospects of economic activities
58.	Possible conflicts with and/or disruption to local communities		✓	From the consultation, such conflicts are not anticipated
59.	Any adverse impacts on community infrastructures?		√	As the subproject activities will be carried out in isolated area impacts on community/social infrastructures are not envisaged.
Indig	genous and vulnerable People		•	
60.	Are there any indigenous people among the identified project-affected people? If "Yes", please mention the type of project-related impact to the indigenous people.		✓	The subporject site is the mixed community of Dalits and Brahmin/Chhetri. There will not be any project related impact to them.
61.	Is there any displacement of indigenous people due land acquisition for the project? If "Yes", please mention The caste of the indigenous people: Language they use:		✓	Subproject will not acquire any land that will displace indigenous people and others.
62.	Are there any other vulnerable people, such as Dalits, religious minorities, landless and people with disabilities/chronic disease?		√	People of subproject area follow the Hindu religion. Dalits are present in the subproject area. The subproject will not acquire any private land for T&D line.
Cult	ural Heritage	ı	ı	
63.	Does the proposed site or surrounding area host any cultural and religious		✓	The people who resides in the subproject area follow the

				Comments/Justification
S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	(provide detailed information on your selection)
	heritages/temples/structures? If "Yes", explain briefly			Hindu Religion and celebrates major Hindu festivals such as Dashain, Tihar, Janaipurnima, Maghe Sakranti. The Kankasundari RM is well known as the origin of Khas (Nepali) language and has historical/cultural importance. The popular Birat Palace, Paandav Gufa, Kanka Sundari temple are in the RM.
64.	Will the subproject cause encroachment on historical/cultural/religious areas?		✓	Subproject development activities will not encroach any of the historical/cultural/religious areas
65.	Will there be any adverse impacts on cultural heritage due to subproject activities?		✓	Such impacts are not envisaged
66.	Does the proposed site provide access to any cultural/ religious heritages or temples or sites?		✓	Subproject area is in isolated area from settlement and away from cultural/ religious heritages or temples or sites.
Stake	eholder engagement			
67.	Have the stakeholders of the subproject been identified?	✓		Rural Municipality, Ward Offices, Forest Users Group, Women's group — in each tole, School, and health post are some the stakeholders identified and consulted.
68.	Have the stakeholders been categorized in terms of gender, age, and ethnicity?	√		Among the 156 participants in consultations 28.2% were women and 71.8% were men. Moreover, 24.36% participants in consultation were Dalits and 75.64% representation from Bhramin/Chhetri.
69.	What are the main sources of information for the stakeholders? [Hint: radio, TV, newspapers]			Radio and TV are the main sources of information for the stakeholders. Internet service is not available to the subproject site.
70.	Is there social institution/practice for			There are woman groups and

G				Comments/Justification
S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	(provide detailed information on your selection)
	community consultation on common issues in the area?			clubs where community people will have meeting on issues related to their community.
71.	Is there any social/religious/cultural institution or practices for local dispute settlements?			
72.	Are there any major issues raised by the stakeholders during the initial consultation?		✓	 Households as well as commercial entities such as workshop, furniture demanded for reliable source of electricity. Requested to commence the installation of solar mini grid at the earliest
				possible and community people were found very positive toward the subproject.
73.	What is the nature of crime in the project area? [Hint: Source of information local police]		✓	Not reported
74.	What is the level of GBV recorded in the project area? [Hint: Source of information local police]		✓	Not reported
75.	Please provide the overview (including date, venue, stakeholders invited, consultation program, key issues discussed) of the stakeholder consultation and attach the record of consultation meetings including feedback received and response.	*		Consultation with the representatives of Ward No. 6 was conducted on 10 November 2021. Consultation with the representatives of local government, members of Birat Community Forest, entrepreneurs and local community was conducted on 11 November 2021. Land required for the subproject, load centre, load demand and environmental and social aspects of the subproject were some of the issues discussed. Minute of the meetings are provided in Annex-III and Annex IV
Clim	ate Benefits	•	•	

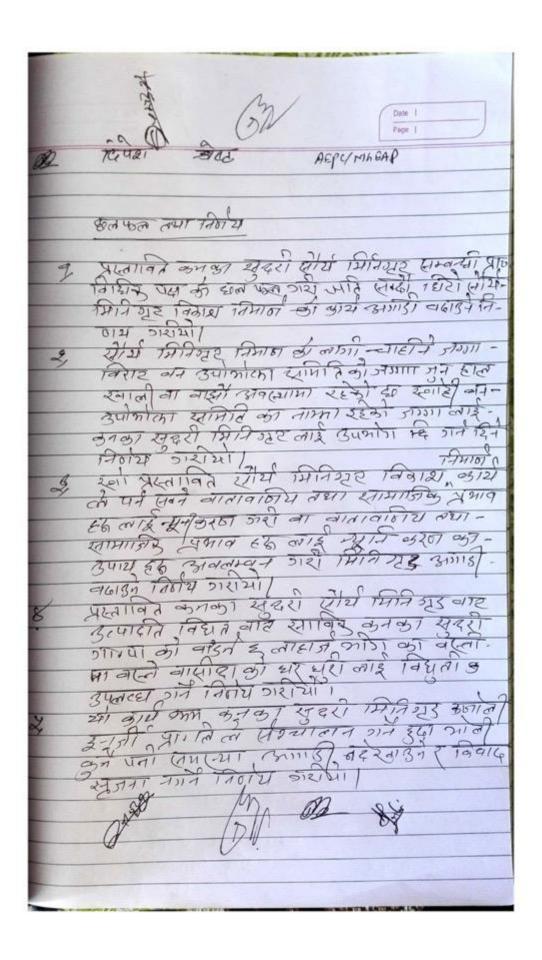
S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments/Justification (provide detailed information on your selection)
76.	Will subproject activities contribute in the reduction of GHG emissions? Description on the activities that contributes for the reduction of GHG emission	✓		Substitution of firewood used for cooking and heating Substitution of Jharo used for lightning
77.	Is there any other development sectors (NGO/INGO/CBO) working on environment/climate action related activities	✓		Plan International, PACE Nepal

(D) Conclusion E&S Risk Category of the Subproject Select one of the following based on the guidance (High, Medium, Low): provided below. () High-risk: Subprojects that is likely to have significant adverse environmental and/or social impacts that are sensitive, diverse, or unprecedented. These impacts may affect an area broader than the sites or facilities subject to physical works. Any subproject that needs an EIA according to GoN regulations shall be classified as high risk. () **Medium Risk**: Subprojects that involve potential adverse environmental or social impacts on human populations or environmentally important areasincluding wetlands, forests, grasslands and other natural habitats-are less adverse than those of high risk projects. These impacts are site-specific, reversible; and in most cases mitigation measures can be designed more readily than for high risk projects. Moreover, a proposed subproject is classified as medium risk that displaces less than 50 families in the mountain region, less than 75 families in the hills, and less than 100 families in the Terai plains due to involuntary land acquisition (unless such impacts are, in the judgement of AEPC, are exacerbated by other contributing factors). A project can be classified as medium risk regardless of whether it needs IEE as per GoN regulations. (X) Low Risk: Subprojects that likely to have minimal or no adverse environmental and social impacts. Moreover, a proposed subproject does not displace any family and none of affected person loses more than 10% of their productive assets. Main reasons/justification for the selection Subprojects will have minimal or no adverse

of E&S risk category above	environmental and social impacts. Further, the proposed subproject does not displace any family and
	none of affected person loses their productive assets.
E&S Instruments to be prepared for the	Recommended to carry out ESMP
Subproject (ESIA, ESMP, RAP,	
Biodiversity Management Plan, OHS plan,	
Cultural Heritage Management Plan etc)	
Recommendations to the Design Engineer	It is highly recommended to liaison with Rural
regarding E&S risk mitigation measures	Municipality during the design phase regarding
	Transmission and Distribution route. Moreover, T&D
	line should be designed in a way so that the aesthetic
	value of the village shall not be diminished.
	Design Engineer should consult with the Solar/Wind
	Expert of AEPC/MGEAP
Beneficial impacts and augmentation	Reduce dependency on traditional energy
opportunities for any issues? Etc.	sources
	Enterprises development for economic
	upliftment of the area
The outcome of screening summarizing	The proposed solar mini grid subproject is located in
entire table's information with assessor's	the Kankasundari Rural Municipality, which has its
candid opinion on way forward and future	own historical and cultural importance. However not
actions limiting in one paragraph.	any historical site such as Paandav Gufa and Birat
	Palace and cultural site such as Kankasundari Temple
	are located nearby the proposed subproject area, the
	impact on these features is not envisaged. The land
	acquisition for the installation of solar PV modules,
	T&D line and construction of powerhouse will not
	have any impact on livelihood of local people. The
	consultations with Birat Community Forest User's
	Group, Kankasundari Rural Municipality, Ward
	Offices, representatives of the community and
	enterprises revealed the urgency of reliable source of
	electricity in the target area for the improvement of
	living standards of people and for enhancing
	economic activities.
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Annex-IIIMinute of the Community Consultation

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Annex-IVMinutes of the meeting conducted with Birat Community Forest User's Group

