



नेपाल सरकार

भूमि व्यवस्था, सहकारी, सङ्घीय मामिला तथा सामान्य प्रशासन मन्त्रालय
(आन्तरिक व्यवस्थान शाखा)



पत्र संख्या.: २०८३/८४

च.नं. ३२८

मिति: २०८३/०४/२७

नेपाल सम्बत् १९४६

- श्री प्रधानमन्त्री तथा मन्त्रिपरिषद्को कार्यालय।
श्री अर्थ मन्त्रालय।
श्री परराष्ट्र मन्त्रालय।
श्री ऊर्जा, जलस्रोत तथा सिँचाई मन्त्रालय।
श्री गृह मन्त्रालय।
श्री पूर्वाधार विकास मन्त्रालय।
श्री कानून, न्याय तथा संसदीय मामिला मन्त्रालय।
श्री विज्ञान, प्रविधि तथा नवप्रवर्तन मन्त्रालय।
श्री महिला, बालबालिका, लैङ्गिक तथा यौनिक अल्पसङ्ख्यक र सामाजिक सुरक्षा मन्त्रालय।
श्री स्वास्थ्य तथा खाद्य स्वच्छता मन्त्रालय।
श्री शिक्षा तथा खेलकुद मन्त्रालय।
श्री संस्कृति, पर्यटन तथा नागरिक उड्डयन मन्त्रालय।
श्री सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय।
श्री कृषि, वन तथा पर्यावरण मन्त्रालय।
श्री उद्योग, वाणिज्य तथा आपूर्ति मन्त्रालय।
श्री युवा, श्रम तथा रोजगार मन्त्रालय।
श्री राष्ट्रिय प्राकृतिक श्रोत तथा वित्त आयोग।
श्री संघीय संसद सचिवालय।
श्री नेपाल कानून आयोग।
श्री निर्वाचन आयोग।

विषय: मनोनयन गरी पठाइदिने सम्बन्धमा ।

प्रस्तुत विषयमा प्रधानमन्त्री तथा मन्त्रिपरिषद्को कार्यालयको च.नं. प्र.शा./३९९/५९८ मिति २०८३/०४/२२ गतेको पत्रबाट Nepal Policy Institute र काठमाडौं विश्वविद्यालयको सहकार्यमा सञ्चालित 'नेपाल नीति नेतृत्व कार्यक्रम (NPLP) २०२६" का लागी कर्मचारी मनोनयन गर्ने सम्बन्धमा लेखी आएको हुँदा मनोनयन निर्देशिकामा उल्लेख भएबमोजिमको संख्यामा कर्मचारी मनोनयन गरी उक्त संस्थाको इमेल ठेगाना khagendra.d@nepalpolicyinstitute.org र director@nepalpolicyinstitute.org मा पठाई सो को जानकारी यस शाखामा समेत उपलब्ध गराउने व्यवस्था हुन आदेशानुसार अनुरोध छ। साथै प्रधानमन्त्री तथा मन्त्रिपरिषद्को कार्यालयको उक्त पत्र तथा मनोनयन निर्देशिका (Participant Nomination Guideline) यस मन्त्रालयको वेबसाइट (www.mofaga.gov.np) बाट डाउनलोड गर्न सकिने व्यहोरा समेत अनुरोध छ।

वोधार्थ :

- श्री नेपाल नीति संस्था, सहिद मार्ग, काठमाडौं।
श्री सूचना प्रविधि शाखा, यस मन्त्रालयको वेबसाइटमा अपलोड गरिदिनुहुन।

(दिपेन्द्र पाण्डे)

शाखा अधिकृत



नेपाल सरकार

प्रधानमन्त्री तथा मन्त्रिपरिषद्को कार्यालय (प्रशासन शाखा)



सिंहदरबार, काठमाडौं
नेपाल ।

२०८३/८४

पत्र संख्या:-

प्र.शा./३११/५९८

च.नं.:-

वि.सं. २०८३/४/२२

ने.सं. ११४६

श्री भूमि व्यवस्था, सहकारी, सङ्घीय मामिला तथा सामान्य प्रशासन मन्त्रालय,
श्री राष्ट्रिय योजना आयोग,
सिंहदरबार, काठमाडौं।

विषय: आवश्यक कार्यार्थ पठाइएको सम्बन्धमा।

Nepal Policy Institute (NPI) को मिति २०८३/४/२० (तदनुसार सन् २०२६, अगष्ट ५) को पत्रानुसार सो संस्था र काठमाडौं विश्वविद्यालयको सहकार्यमा सञ्चालित 'नेपाल नीति नेतृत्व कार्यक्रम (NPLP) २०२६' का लागि कर्मचारी मनोनयन गर्ने सम्बन्धमा लेखी आएको हुँदा उल्लिखित पत्र तथा मनोनयन निर्देशिका (Participant Nomination Guidelines) लगायतका कागजात यसै पत्रसहित संलग्न गरी आवश्यक कार्यार्थ पठाइएको व्यहोरा आदेशानुसार अनुरोध छ।

(बिनोद रेग्मी)

शाखा अधिकृत

August 5, 2026

Mr. Govinda Bahadur Karki

Chief Secretary, Government of Nepal
Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers
Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal

Subject: Request for OPMCM Coordination and Initiation of the NPLP 2026 Nomination Process

Respected Chief Secretary,

Please accept our warm congratulations on your appointment as Chief Secretary of the Government of Nepal. Following the recent transition in administrative leadership, Nepal Policy Institute (NPI) wishes to formally brief you and respectfully seek your guidance and renewed institutional coordination for the Nepal Policy Leadership Program (NPLP) 2026. Building on OPMCM's valued support and guidance since the inaugural cohort in 2024, NPI, in collaboration with Kathmandu University, submits the attached NPLP 2026 Program Booklet, NPLP Brief and Nomination Guidelines for the third cohort.

Since its establishment in 2018, NPI has grown into a global, diaspora-supported think tank registered in Nepal as a non-profit organization, with a community of more than 1,260 Nepali-origin scholars and practitioners and active collaboration with government agencies and universities. Its flagship Nepal Policy Leadership Program (NPLP) supports the Government of Nepal's priorities for good governance, administrative effectiveness, and transparent, timely, accountable, and citizen-centered public-service delivery by strengthening the accountable decision making, policy-analysis, implementation, and delivery capabilities of public officials. **NPLP is a practical model of diaspora knowledge and skills transfer**, with Nepali professionals abroad contributing financial resources and specialist expertise through NPI in partnership with Nepal-based institutions. NPLP equips government officials with practical tools in critical thinking, emotional intelligence, policy analysis tools, risk and impact assessment, evidence-informed decision-making, and responsible use of AI—capabilities essential for translating government priorities into effective implementation and measurable public outcomes amid uncertainty, misinformation, and disinformation. NPLP 2026 will serve up to 35 officers from federal ministries, central agencies, and constitutional bodies through online pre-residency sessions, a three-day residential program in Panauti, and a post-residency session. We respectfully request OPMCM's support in:

1. designating an appropriate OPMCM focal point to coordinate NPLP 2026 with NPI;
2. initiating the nomination process by circulating the attached guidelines to the listed ministries, agencies, and constitutional bodies; requesting each institution to nominate eligible officers by **20 August 2026**; and consolidating and forwarding the full list of nominees to NPI for final participation confirmation; and
3. advising on priority policy, governance, implementation, administrative-reform, or public-service-delivery themes that should be reflected in the 2026 cohort.

NPI, together with Kathmandu University, will manage program delivery, participant communication, final confirmation, learning-platform administration, and coordination with nominees. At this stage, OPMCM's support is requested for institutional coordination and nomination facilitation; no program financing is being sought from OPMCM. We would be grateful for your leadership and support in taking NPLP 2026 forward and would welcome an opportunity to provide a brief program presentation at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Khagendra Raj Dhakal, PhD

Chair, Board of Directors
Nepal Policy Institute

Contact Us

NEPAL POLICY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM (NPLP) 2026

Participant Nomination Guidelines

For Consultation with the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers (OPMCM)

Nepal Policy Institute | info@nepalpolicyinstitute.org | www.nepalpolicyinstitute.org

1. Programme Overview

The Nepal Policy Leadership Program (NPLP) is Nepal Policy Institute's flagship policy-capability and leadership-development initiative. NPLP is led and managed by Nepal Policy Institute (NPI), which is responsible for programme operations, participant coordination, learning-platform administration, and overall delivery. Kathmandu University serves as NPLP's knowledge partner, contributing academic engagement and expert input.

NPLP 2026 is designed to strengthen practical public-sector capabilities in critical thinking, emotional intelligence, policy analysis, risk assessment, impact evaluation, evidence-informed decision-making, and the responsible use of artificial intelligence in public policy. The programme creates a structured platform for government officers to engage with experienced national and international experts through applied learning, peer exchange, and real-world policy cases.

Building on lessons from the 2024 and 2025 cohorts, NPLP 2026 will accommodate up to 35 government officers from federal ministries, central agencies, constitutional bodies, and other public institutions. The expected active cohort will normally comprise approximately 30-35 participants.

All nominated participants are expected to commit to the full blended learning journey:

Programme Component	Tentative Date and Format
Pre-Residency Online Session 1	Saturday, 12 September 2026
Pre-Residency Online Session 2	Saturday, 26 September 2026
Pre-Residency Online Session 3	Saturday, 10 October 2026
Residential Component	Friday, 13 November to Sunday, 15 November 2026 Panauti, Nepal
Post-Residency Online Session	Saturday, 5 December 2026

The NPLP Canvas platform will be used to provide readings, learning resources, assignments, feedback, discussion forums, and programme communication throughout the learning journey.

2. Purpose of the Nomination Process

The nomination process aims to form a cohort that is:

- Diverse across policy, governance, economic, social, legal, and service-delivery institutions;
- Balanced across senior, mid-career, and emerging public-sector leaders;
- Relevant to the Government of Nepal's current policy, governance, implementation, and public-trust priorities;
- Inclusive in terms of gender, social background, institutional representation, and professional experience; and
- Capable of applying programme learning to real policy, implementation, coordination, or service-delivery challenges.

Nominations should not be based on rank alone. Priority should be given to officers who are well placed to apply NPLP learning within their institutions and contribute to cross-government policy capability.

3. Recommended Cohort Composition

NPLP 2026 will maintain a cross-generational and inclusive public-leadership cohort. While senior officers bring strategic perspective and institutional influence, the programme will place particular emphasis on mid-career and

emerging officers who are likely to remain actively engaged in policy, implementation, reform, and public-service delivery over the coming years. At least 50% of the confirmed cohort will be women.

Participant Category	Recommended Number	Women Target	Inclusion Focus
Joint Secretaries or equivalent senior policy leaders	5	At least 2 women	Actively seek qualified women and officers from Dalit and Adivasi Janajati communities.
Under Secretaries, Directors, or equivalent mid-career policy and delivery officers	17	At least 9 women	Prioritise women and proactively identify qualified Dalit and Adivasi Janajati officers.
Section Officers and emerging policy leaders	13	At least 7 women	Build a diverse future policy-leadership pipeline, including women and qualified Dalit and Adivasi Janajati officers.
Total Cohort Capacity	35	At least 18 women	Meaningful representation of qualified Dalit and Adivasi Janajati officers across the cohort.

Section Officers and emerging policy leaders should be selected on the basis of demonstrated involvement in policy, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, digital governance, innovation, public-service delivery, or reform work. They should not be nominated merely to fill a junior-officer quota.

4. Institution-by-Institution Nomination Allocation

The table below is designed for direct circulation by OPMCM to individual ministries, central agencies, constitutional bodies, and public institutions. It provides a clear quota, gender expectation, and indicative rank mix for each nominating institution, enabling timely coordination, follow-up, and replacement where necessary.

The current portfolio names below reflect the official OPMCM list as at 5 July 2026. For circulation purposes, OPMCM may direct the request to the relevant administrative office or secretariat and may adjust individual quotas in light of current government priorities.

#	Nominating Institution / Current Portfolio	Quota	Gender Nomination Expectation	Indicative Rank Mix
1	Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers (OPMCM)	3	At least 1 woman; 2 preferred	1 Joint Secretary; 1 Under Secretary/Director; 1 Section Officer
2	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2	At least 1 woman	1 Joint Secretary; 1 Section Officer
3	National Natural Resources and Fiscal Commission	1	Priority to a qualified woman nominee	1 Under Secretary/Director
4	National Planning Commission	2	At least 1 woman	1 Joint Secretary; 1 Under Secretary/Director
5	Federal Parliament Secretariat	1	Priority to a qualified woman nominee	1 Under Secretary/Director
6	Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives, Federal Affairs and General Administration	3	At least 1 woman; 2 preferred	1 Joint Secretary; 1 Under Secretary/Director; 1 Section Officer
7	Ministry of Home Affairs	2	At least 1 woman	1 Under Secretary/Director; 1 Section Officer
8	Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	1	Priority to a qualified woman nominee	1 Under Secretary/Director
9	Nepal Law Commission	1	Priority to a qualified woman nominee	1 Under Secretary/Director
10	Election Commission, Nepal	1	Priority to a qualified woman nominee	1 Under Secretary/Director
11	Ministry of Finance	2	At least 1 woman	1 Joint Secretary; 1 Section Officer
12	Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies	1	Priority to a qualified woman nominee	1 Under Secretary/Director
13	Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Environment	2	At least 1 woman	1 Under Secretary/Director; 1 Section Officer
14	Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation	1	Priority to a qualified woman nominee	1 Under Secretary/Director

#	Nominating Institution / Current Portfolio	Quota	Gender Nomination Expectation	Indicative Rank Mix
15	Ministry of Infrastructure Development	2	At least 1 woman	1 Under Secretary/Director; 1 Section Officer
16	Ministry of Education and Sports	2	At least 1 woman	1 Under Secretary/Director; 1 Section Officer
17	Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation	1	Priority to a qualified woman nominee	1 Under Secretary/Director
18	Ministry of Health and Food Sanitation	2	At least 1 woman	1 Under Secretary/Director; 1 Section Officer
19	Ministry of Youth, Labour and Employment	2	At least 1 woman	1 Under Secretary/Director; 1 Section Officer
20	Ministry of Women, Children, Gender and Sexual Minorities and Social Security	1	Priority to a qualified woman nominee	1 Section Officer or equivalent emerging policy leader
21	Ministry of Information and Communication	1	Priority to a qualified woman nominee	1 Section Officer or equivalent emerging policy leader
22	Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation	1	Priority to a qualified woman nominee	1 Section Officer or equivalent emerging policy leader
	Total	35	At least 18 women	5 Joint Secretaries; 17 Under Secretaries/Directors; 13 Section Officers/emerging policy leaders

NPLP 2026 is principally intended for career public officers and officers of public institutions who hold substantive responsibilities in policy, planning, implementation, monitoring, reform, coordination, or public-service delivery.

Social Inclusion and Diversity

In addition to achieving at least 50% women participation, nominating institutions are strongly encouraged to proactively identify and nominate qualified Dalit and Adivasi Janajati (Indigenous Nationalities) officers across all participant categories. The programme will also seek representation from Madhesi, Tharu, Muslim, persons with disabilities, geographically under-represented areas, and officers with provincial, district, local-government, or frontline service-delivery experience.

NPI and OPMCM will review the overall nomination list before final confirmation to ensure meaningful gender, social, institutional, and geographic diversity. Information related to social identity will be used only for aggregate inclusion planning, will be treated confidentially, and will not replace the programme's policy-relevance and participation requirements.

5. Inclusive Nomination Metrics

Metric	Guidance
Policy and Role Relevance	Nominees should be actively engaged in policymaking, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, public-sector reform, service delivery, or cross-ministry coordination.
Live Policy or Implementation Challenge	Each nominee should identify one practical policy, governance, implementation, coordination, or service-delivery issue that they can bring to the programme for analysis and applied learning.
Leadership and Collaboration Potential	Preference should be given to officers who have led, supported, or contributed to reform initiatives, strategic assignments, inter-agency coordination, task forces, or institutional innovation.
Gender, Social Inclusion and Diversity	At least 50% of the confirmed NPLP 2026 cohort will be women. For a full cohort of 35, this means a minimum of 18 women participants. Nominating institutions are also strongly encouraged to proactively identify qualified Dalit and Adivasi Janajati officers, alongside officers from other under-represented communities, regions, and public-service contexts.
Rank Balance	Nominations should support the intended cohort composition: 5 Joint Secretaries or equivalent senior policy leaders, 17 Under Secretaries/Directors or equivalent officers, and 13 Section Officers or emerging policy leaders.
Implementation and Field Exposure	Experience in provincial, district, local-government, frontline service-delivery, or field-implementation roles is desirable.
Digital, Data and AI Relevance	Consideration may be given to officers whose work involves digital governance, data use, monitoring, citizen engagement, innovation, communication, or responsible adoption of AI-enabled tools.

Metric	Guidance
Institutional Support	The nominating institution should ensure that the nominee is released to attend all programme components and supported to apply learning after the programme.
Continuity of Service	Nominees should normally be expected to remain in active government service for at least 24 months after completion of NPLP 2026. Officers with confirmed retirement, transfer, secondment, or extended leave within the following 12 months should normally not be nominated.
Previous Participation	Officers who participated in NPLP 2024 or NPLP 2025 should normally not be re-nominated, except where OPMCM identifies a compelling institutional reason.

6. General Eligibility Conditions

1. Full Participation Requirement: Nominees must commit to attending and actively engaging in all pre-residency, residential, and post-residency components.
2. Learning and Application Commitment: Nominees should be prepared to complete short preparatory tasks, participate in group work, and reflect on how policy tools can be applied to their professional context.
3. Institutional Endorsement: Each nominee must be formally endorsed by the relevant ministry, agency, commission, or secretariat.
4. Active Policy or Delivery Role: Nominees should be working in a role with a meaningful connection to policy, planning, programme management, implementation, monitoring, reform, public administration, or service delivery.
5. Continuity and Institutional Benefit: Nominations should prioritise officers likely to remain in active service long enough to apply and share programme learning within their institutions.
6. Alternate Nominee: Where feasible, each institution should identify one eligible alternate nominee for its allocated quota. The alternate will be contacted by NPI only if a primary nominee withdraws or is unable to participate before the first pre-residency session.

7. Nomination Documentation

To simplify the process while ensuring meaningful selection, each nominating institution should submit:

1. An official nomination letter signed by the authorised official of the institution, indicating the allocated primary nominee(s) and, where feasible, one alternate nominee;
2. A completed NPLP 2026 Nominee Information Form for each primary nominee;
3. A brief description, of approximately 100-150 words, of one current policy, implementation, governance, or service-delivery issue the nominee wishes to explore during NPLP; and
4. Confirmation that each nominee will be available for all programme components.

A separate generic motivation letter is not required. NPI will request additional information from an alternate nominee only if the alternate is activated.

8. Nomination, Confirmation and Replacement Process

Step	Indicative Timeline
OPMCM circulates the official nomination request to the listed institutions	By Wednesday, 15 July 2026, or as soon as the OPMCM focal point is designated
Institutions submit allocated primary nominees and, where feasible, alternate nominee details	By Thursday, 30 July 2026
NPI communicates directly with nominees, confirms attendance commitment, and checks nominations	3-14 August 2026
NPI and OPMCM focal point coordinate any necessary replacements from named alternates or the relevant institution	17-28 August 2026
Final cohort confirmation, participant orientation, and Canvas access	By Friday, 4 September 2026
First pre-residency online session	Saturday, 12 September 2026

The earlier nomination deadline is intended to provide adequate time for OPMCM coordination, institutional clearances, direct communication with nominees, and timely replacement of officers who are transferred, unavailable, or unable to commit to the full programme. NPI will confirm final participation based on nominees' commitment to attend and actively engage in all programme components.

9. Programme Governance and Coordination

NPLP 2026 will be led and managed by Nepal Policy Institute. NPI will be responsible for programme coordination, participant communication, operational planning, learning-platform administration, programme materials, logistics, and overall delivery.

Kathmandu University will serve as NPLP's knowledge partner and contribute academic engagement, expert input, and other forms of knowledge support as appropriate.

OPMCM's designated focal office or focal person will be requested to provide guidance on institutional coordination, participant nomination, government priority themes, and the selection of relevant policy cases.

10. Closing Statement

NPLP 2026 seeks to build a diverse, cross-generational cohort of public officers who can apply practical policy decision skills and tools to current governance, implementation, coordination, and public-trust challenges.

The programme will provide an opportunity for officers to strengthen their policy capability, engage with experienced national and international experts, learn from peers across institutions, and develop more evidence-informed, context-sensitive, and implementable approaches to public-policy work.



NEPAL POLICY INSTITUTE



KATHMANDU UNIVERSITY

Nepal Policy Leadership Program

*A flagship program
of*

Nepal Policy Institute

*In collaboration with
Kathmandu University, Nepal*

2026 Offer

“Policy Analysis and Tools: Skills Development & Experiential Learning”

Pre-Residential (online live): Sept. 12, Sept. 26, Oct. 10

Residential: 13-15 Nov. 2026, Panauti, Nepal

Post-Residential (online live): Dec. 5, 2026

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
(Draft)**

4 July 2026

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ANZSOG	Australia-New Zealand School of Government
CT	critical thinking
EI	emotional intelligence
GAI	general artificial intelligence
KU	Kathmandu University
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NGO	non-government organization
NPI	Nepal Policy Institute
NPLP	Nepal Policy Leadership Program
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
Q&A	questions and answers
SWOT	strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats

1. Introduction

1. Good governance goes hand in hand with proper framing of public policies along with rigorous policy analysis and effective implementation. This latter attribute is often not at the core of the practice of public management in developing countries.¹ Rapid technological advancements, socio-political shifts, along with environmental and economic factors have made policy work increasingly complex. As such, it is important to engage with the highest levels of the bureaucracy in the country, both at the national and sub-national levels, to emphasize policy analysis with the help of a critical thinking approach, and also train officials in relevant public policy tools.

2. Well-analyzed policy advice is the foundation of effective government decision making, and there is a general appreciation in relevant circles in the federal and sub-national governments in Nepal that there is currently a felt need for relevant skills among public sector officials to be able to more rigorously analyze policy issues and render more robust policy advice. In the current complex policy landscape in Nepal, the emergence of generative artificial intelligence and rapidly shifting socio-political dynamics have made policy analysis more intricate than ever.

3. The evaluation of policy issues now requires a more rigorous approach to the traditional analytical frameworks. Critical thinking skills have become essential at the micro level of the analytical framework for assessing information, perspectives, arguments, data, reasoning, and contexts to ensure informed policy decisions. Emotional intelligence is also now recognized as a critical element of public policy leadership as there is increasing demand for policy leaders to demonstrate their ability to remain grounded and able to clearly see through the ‘noise’ that so often characterizes public policy processes.

4. To address these gaps in the practice of public policy in the country, Nepal Policy Institute (NPI) and Kathmandu University (KU) have teamed up to jointly offer the annual flagship Nepal Policy Leadership Program (NPLP) (see **Box 1**).² The 2026 offer continues in that vein. The NPLP is uniquely designed to focus not only on enhancing critical thinking skills in the broad areas of policy analysis but also to serve as a platform for senior government officials as well as those outside the public sector to discuss issues of note in public policies, governance, and public sector management.

5. The NPLP’s core is the skills enhancement component as well as a knowledge management platform where different dimensions of specific policies that are current in the country are highlighted. As with the previous two programs, this year too, the participants of the Program will be from among senior and mid-level government officials from federal agencies in Kathmandu.

6. Critical thinking is a cross-cutting capability that enables sound decision-making in policy analysis and policy leadership throughout the NPLP. It equips participants to frame policy problems carefully; assess evidence, arguments, data, assumptions, and competing perspectives; reason under conditions of uncertainty; weigh risks and trade-offs; and justify context-sensitive policy recommendations. These capabilities are relevant not only to formal policy works, but also to routine public administration, programme implementation, inter-agency coordination, public

¹ See, for example, Bhatta, G. 2020. *“... Those that fix the lights”*: The Practice of Public Sector Management in Developing Asia. ADB, ADBI, and Routledge.

² The inaugural NPLP in 2024 was very well received both by the Program attendees as well as the senior bureaucratic leadership in government. The 2025 Program was also much appreciated by the attendees; however, the in-country residential component in November 2025 had to be truncated following the disruptions resulting from the ‘Gen Z’-led September protests (which necessitated a truncated 3 half-day sessions in the premises of Singh Durbar as opposed to an off-site location in Panauti, as in 2024).

2. Objectives of the Program

7. The objectives of the NPLP, in general, include:

- a. **Help enhance the skill sets of government officials and others on public policy analysis** using a critical thinking approach (including in design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation), and with emphasis on emotional intelligence and critical thinking.
- b. **Share views and ideas on the public policy space** in the public sector in Nepal, and how that can be enhanced.
- c. **Help build a vibrant public policy ecosystem in Nepal** by providing a platform for policy makers, implementers, and researchers from both the federal and sub-national levels.
- d. **Provide opportunities to policy researchers** to interact with experienced individuals and benefit from experiential learning.

Box 1. Forces Behind NPLP

Nepal Policy Institute (NPI) (www.nepalpolicyinstitute.org) is a Nepali diaspora-powered international think-tank and a knowledge platform dedicated to the people-centered and sustainable development of Nepal and Nepali people, including diaspora Nepali. The NPI Global Expert community has over 1,250 Nepal-origin public policy scholars, researchers, practitioners, experts, and consultants across many countries. It is registered as a not-for-profit think-tank in Nepal and The Hague, and operates as a non-party political, non-religious, and non-governmental organization.

Kathmandu University (KU) (www.ku.edu.np) is an autonomous, not-for-profit, self-funding public institution. KU's vision is "to become a world-class university devoted to bringing knowledge and technology to the service of mankind". It aspires to serve the nation by fulfilling the needs of the society through the motto of taking knowledge and skills "from the campus to the community. Kathmandu University School of Management (KUSOM) is the focal point for NPLP on behalf of Kathmandu University since its inaugural cohort in 2024.

8. The Program will ultimately help yield greater knowledge of the context of public policy analysis as well as a deeper understanding of specific public policies that are current in Nepal in any given year.

3. Program Methodology

9. As with the previous two programs, this year too the Program is predominantly based on interactions among public policy experts and government officials as well as others over a period of time. The Program can be divided into three phases:

- a. **Phase 1 (pre-residency component):** Three online sessions will be held in August, September, and October 2026 (all on a Saturday); the first online session will be on September 12, the second two weeks later on September 26, and the third on October 10) (at 9 am Nepal time on all occasions) to go over the introductory, administrative, pre-Program elements, as well as basic concepts and issues in the Program. These sessions will enable the maximum amount of time to be spent during the in-person component (i.e., phase 2) of the Program to be devoted to hands-on and peer learning

opportunities. The pre-residency component also includes a session with a top expert on policy analysis from New Zealand.³

- b. **Phase 2 (residency component):** An in-person, three- day session, in residential mode in Panauti (Bagmati Province, Nepal) from 13-15 November 2026 will be the core of the Program. Phase 2 comprises sessions in the afternoon and evening of the first day (i.e., November 13, 2025), followed by two whole days (i.e., November 14 and 15) on hands-on policy analysis work.
- c. **Phase 3 (post-residency component):** One post-residency Program online session will be offered on December 5, 2026 at which time the participants will be able to share their experiences in applying the knowledge and skills gained during the Residency Program.

10. To make the learning effective, Canvas, a learning management system, will be used to facilitate learning activities, resources, feedback, and discussions throughout the NPLP program, from the pre-residency to post-residency sessions. Access to the NPLP Canvas will be provided one week before the pre-residency phase and will remain available for three months after program completion. Program schedule, reading materials, including international journal articles, books, and case studies relevant to specific modules and sessions will be exclusively available to NPLP participants.

11. All participants will also be requested to join an informal NPLP Alumni network of cohort members who will carry on the learning journey into their regular professions, and will continue to share knowledge solutions related to policy analysis work. Membership to the network is voluntary; evidence has shown that such a network helps embed the learning gained during in the in-person session.

12. One particular methodological feature of the Program will be a key focus on real-world conditions,⁴ i.e., concentrating on tools and methods that work in practice on the ground, and not necessarily those that are only sound in theory. This focus on real-world conditions will be in evidence through the use of policy cases that continue to occupy the minds of public policy officials in the country (e.g., on issues related to overseas labour migration, or on voting rights of Nepali migrants).

13. A particularly critical aspect of learning from real-world conditions is the focus on good practices (as opposed to 'best practices'); and indeed, the angle this Program takes on the subject of learning from others and applying to local conditions is 'good practice, best fit'. The Program methodology also places emphasis on co-creation and self-learning as a critical part of the learning journey for participants. The co-creation will be in evidence in inputs to the design of successive offers of NPLP as well as in reformulations of the 2027 offer itself, as may be needed.

14. Finally, the methodology of the Program also focuses on a more holistic view of public policy analysis, including expanding on the term 'policy' to incorporate the relevant action(s) (broadly defined as a 'project'), and also seeks to bring in external ideas and perspectives on the subject matter. In that sense, the structure of the Program will enable substantial learning from peers.

³ See **Appendix 1** for a profile of Ms. Sally Washington, Practice Fellow (Policy Capability and Public Management) at the Australia and New Zealand School of Government; as well as of the resource persons for the Program.

⁴ This focus on real-world conditions in the domain of public policy and governance is brought out in, eg, M. Hallsworth, S. Parker, and J. Rutter. 2011. *Policy Making in the Real World: Evidence and Analysis*. Institute for Government, London, UK.

4. Broad Areas of Coverage in the Program

15. The Program focuses on the following broad areas of coverage⁵ related to the issue of public policy analysis and policy leadership:

- a. Global and strategic perspective on policy analysis and policy capability from a subject expert from New Zealand.
- b. Critical thinking and emotional intelligence for policy leadership in the Artificial Intelligence era, and how their role can be used to direct action when it comes to policy advice.
- c. Contextual realities of policy formulation and implementation in the context of Nepal.
- d. Understanding of monitoring and evaluation issues in the realm of policy analysis from subject and practice experts at Asian Development Bank, Manila; and NITI Aayog, India.⁶
- e. Understanding the application of specific policy analysis tools, including: political economy analysis, problem tree analysis, risks analysis, and SWOT analysis (and derived strategies).

5. Ground Rules of the Program

16. These are the ground rules that all participants and facilitators will abide by during the NPLP:

- a. **Showing respect to each other**, including through listening to different viewpoints without interrupting, and not disturbing the sessions with phone calls or messages.
- b. **Adhering to Chatham House rules**, i.e., not sharing what gets discussed in the sessions with others outside, so that free and frank discussions can take place in a safe environment.
- c. **Ensuring active participation in group discussions** since the most effective learning takes place when everyone is comfortable with sharing own ideas and views.
- d. **Ensuring that all expected work is done prior to the sessions**; this ensures that members of the groups will be able to contribute meaningfully to group discussions. This also includes being active in the online sessions that are offered pre-program.⁷
- e. **Keeping to time**, which enables the sessions to commence at the right time, and it also shows respect to colleagues who are already in attendance.
- f. **Communicating in either Nepali and/or English** for ideas and views to be effectively shared.

6. Brief Introduction of Program Resource Persons and Featured Experts

Resource Persons

Dr. Gambhir Bhatta (Auckland, New Zealand)

Dr. Bhatta, the lead designer of the NPLP, has more than 35 years of experience in governance, public policy, and public sector management spread over different parts of the world. He currently consults extensively with the Asian Development Bank (recent assignments have been in Azerbaijan, Sri Lanka, India, Viet Nam, and Nepal in areas of governance and public policy analysis, evaluation capacity and validation, and strategic knowledge management). He is also a Professor of Practice at the Doctor of

⁵ Please note that some of the materials presented in the Program are taken from reports that have been made public but may have copyright provisions. They are used here purely for educational purposes, and wherever possible, acknowledgement of the appropriate source(s) is made in this workbook.

⁶ Dr. Garrett Kilroy (Principal Evaluation Specialist, ADB) and Dr. Abinash Dash (Director, Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office, NITI Aayog, New Delhi) will share their experiences on the subject of M&E for public policy analysis.

⁷ A considerable amount of background information and knowledge on the various subject matters will have been covered in the online sessions. This way, the substantive group discussion and co-learning opportunities will be maximized during the face-to-face interactions in November.

Business Administration Program at GGU Worldwide, California. From April 2017 to December 2025, he held several Adjunct faculty appointments (including that of Adjunct Professor) at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Singapore. Prior to his early retirement in 2021 he had been associated with ADB for more than 15 years, including as the Chief of the Bank's Governance Thematic Group. From 2001 to 2005, he was a Senior Advisor in the New Zealand State Services Commission, Wellington. He is the author of several books, including *'...Those that fix the lights' – The Practice of Public Sector Management in Developing Asia* (Routledge, ADB, and ADB Institute, 2020). He has a PhD in Public and International Affairs (with a focus on Applied Policy Analysis) from the University of Pittsburgh, USA.

Dr. Khagendra Dhakal (Bangkok, Thailand)

Dr. Khagendra Raj Dhakal is a Specialist Lecturer at King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok (KMUTNB), where he has served for more than 15 years. He is also the Founder and Chair of the Nepal Policy Institute (NPI), a diaspora-powered global think tank based in The Hague and Kathmandu. He holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics from KMUTT, with expertise in critical-thinking assessment, evidence evaluation, and judgement in real-world decision-making. He also holds an Executive Certificate in Public Policy from Harvard Kennedy School and was a Fellow of the prestigious Asia Pacific Leadership Program at the East-West Center, Honolulu, in 2023. Dr. Dhakal has delivered numerous keynote addresses, invited talks, and workshops across the Asia-Pacific, Europe, and North America on critical thinking, decision-making, AI-era judgement, and evidence-informed policy leadership.

Mr. Gopi Mainali (Kathmandu, Nepal)

Mr. Mainali served with the Government of Nepal as a civil servant for 35 years. Before retiring in 2021, he served as Secretary for five years at various ministries. He also served for one year as the Financial Comptroller General of the Government of Nepal, and for more than eight years as Joint Secretary (and Head of the Infrastructure Development Division) at the National Planning Commission. His other experiences include Local Development Officer in various districts and executive secretary/officer of various municipalities. He has Master's degrees in three subjects (Economics, Development Administration, and Taxation & Budgeting). Mr. Mainali is currently engaged with Nepal Policy Institute as an Executive Board Member.

Dr. Pramila Thapa (Kathmandu, Nepal)

Dr. Thapa is the Founder of the Life skills Education Institute in Nepal, and since January 2022 has been an Associate Professor at the Institute. From 2016 to 2021, she was the Secretary of the Senate at Purbaanchal University, Nepal. She is also the Founder Principal of the Medical and Allied Health Sciences Faculty of the University and served three years as the Deputy Dean at the Faculty as well. Dr. Thapa has a PhD in Emotional Intelligence (EI), received from the ITM University, Gwalior, India; and a MSc degree in Nursing from the Tamilnadu Dr. MGR Medical University, Chennai, India. She is a seasoned professional whose expertise spans policy-making and implementation, decision-making, and academic leadership.

Ms. Sharu Joshi Shrestha (Kathmandu, Nepal)

Ms. Shrestha has been working in the field of Gender and Development (as well as overseas labour migration) for over two decades, particularly with the Government of Nepal and UN agencies. She is a working member in various programs, including the Task Force for Reforms on Foreign Labour Migration, Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Social Security, 2018. Ms. Shrestha has been serving in the Executive Board of Nepal Policy Institute since its inception. She holds a Master's in Political Science from Tribhuvan University, and another Master's in Women and Development from the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague.

Featured Global & National Experts

Ms. Sally Washington (Wellington, New Zealand)

Ms. Sally Washington was for several years a Practice Fellow (Policy Capability and Public Management) at the Australia and New Zealand School of Government. She has worked in senior roles in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally. She was inaugural director of the New Zealand Policy Project, based in the New Zealand Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, where she designed and led a program to improve the quality of policy advice across government.

Ms. Washington is an influencer on the subject of public policy; her work has been applied across the public sectors in the world. In 2024, Apolitical (<https://apolitical.co/home/>), a not-for-profit community of practice for over a quarter of a million public servants across more than 160 countries, placed two of her articles in the list of top 10 policy articles from thought leaders around the world.⁸ Her article on “How to deliver excellent policy advice” was ranked first. The one on “Skills for Policy” was ninth.

Prof. Dr. Achyut Prasad Wagle (Kathmandu, Nepal)

Prof. Wagle is the former Vice-Chancellor of Kathmandu University and the Professor at the Kathmandu University School of Management (KUSOM). Earlier, he was the Head of the Management Science Department at the School of Management. He holds a PhD in Economics from the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, an MSc in Economics from the University of Birmingham, UK, and an MA from Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

Prof. Wagle has held several important public positions in the country in the past, including as Advisor to the Prime Minister of Nepal and as Advisor to the Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank. He is a seasoned columnist for The Kathmandu Post and Kantipur. He teaches Econometrics and other core courses on economics and research. His research interests include business environment, regional economy, fiscal federalism, and entrepreneurship.

7. Pre-Residency Component

Session 1

Saturday, September 12, 2026 (online), 9 am Nepal time (60 minutes)

Confirmed NPLP participants will receive Canvas access before the pre-residency program begins. Zoom links for this session will be updated on Canvas and participants will also receive email reminders on the same.

The first session (online) of the Program will cover:

1. Introductions of the participants and facilitators, including names, organizational affiliation, and very brief background of professional career to date
2. Introduction of Nepal Policy Institute, and Kathmandu University
3. Contextual basis of policymaking in Nepal
4. Brief review of the design of the program:
 - a. Genesis of the Program

⁸ See <https://apolitical.co/solution-articles/en/top-10-policy-reads-that-defined-2024>.

- b. Main features – skills-based; real-world application; case study based; group learning; co-creation; hybrid offer; and focus on policy leadership
 - c. What participants can expect: background analysis, experts’ briefs, group discussion exercises, presentations to the plenary.
- 5. Structure of the second online session on September 26, 2026
- 6. Information on identification of one key public policy issue each participant would like to bring to the Residency program
- 7. Responses to any queries from the participants on the Program itself, as well as the upcoming Residency component at Panauti, Nepal.

(Participants will be requested to reflect their expectations of NPLP 2026 on Canvas at the conclusion of Session 1; these will be picked up for discussion during Session 3)

Session 2

Saturday, September 26, 2026 (online), 9 am Nepal time (90 minutes)

Confirmed NPLP participants will already have had access to Canvas before the pre-residency program begins. Zoom links for this session will be updated on Canvas and participants will also receive email reminders on the same.

The second session (online) of the Program will cover:

1. Presentation on global perspectives on **“The Policy Infrastructure: Building Capability for Better Government Decision-Making”**,⁹ by Ms. Sally Washington (New Zealand)
2. Ms. Washington’s presentation will be followed by a Q&A session.
3. Open discussions on the scope of applications of New Zealand’s experiences in Nepal’s context.
4. Brief overview of the main case study (on overseas labour migration); Ms. Sharu Shrestha will provide the macro context of the importance of the subject matter.

Session 3

Saturday, October 10, 2026 (online), 9 am Nepal time (60 minutes)

Confirmed NPLP participants will already have had access to Canvas before the pre-residency program begins. Zoom links for this session will be updated on Canvas and participants will also receive email reminders of the same.

The third session (online) of the Program will cover:

1. Brief overview of the main case study (on overseas labour migration) as well as one on external voting in Nepal.
2. Information on group structure for case study work during the residency program in November:
 - a. group composition and set-ups: participants would have already been divided into five groups of 6 individuals each. The grouping will have been done with an eye on balance with respect to types of work context, gender, sectoral coverage, etc.
 - b. self-learning exercise on application of tools to participants’ own policy issue that will have been identified by this date.

⁹ See **Appendix 2** for a brief description of the presentation to be provided by Ms. Washington.

3. Discussions on the expectations of the participants with respect to the Program (ie, *ex-ante* observations, to be used as comparators for purposes of learning outcomes). (Please note that participants' expectations of NPLP 2026 will already have been canvassed after Session 1)

Box 1. Self-Learning Exercise 1

Review the case study presented in **Appendix 3**, then note down your thoughts on:

What do you think are the main policy issues for the Government of Nepal to keep in mind on the subject of overseas migration? What is the main policy problem in your opinion?

We will cover this and other issues on the case study as well as those cases identified by each participant during the residency component of the Program.

4. Q&A session

It should be noted that the overseas migration case study already identified will be used to drill down into these two policy analytical skills in particular: (a) Problem analysis, taking into account political economy considerations; and (b) SWOT analysis (and deriving strategies from the same). While this case will continue to be referred throughout the Residency Program, the intent is to bring to the table others that the participants will have identified prior to this third pre-Residency session so that other analytical tools can be applied on these cases.

8. Program for Residency Component

13-15 November 2026

Venue: Diamond Hill Resort, Panauti, Nepal

Day 1: Friday, 13 November 2026

Time	Program Details
12:00 – 12:30	Hotel Check-in and Program Registration
13:30 – 13:45	Introductions, and welcome session (MC: Dr. Thapa) Introductory welcome remarks from: (1) Chair of the Board of Directors of NPI, Dr. Khagendra Dhakal (2) Prof. Dr. Achyut Wagle, Vice Chancellor, Kathmandu University Group Photo
14:00 – 14:30	Session 1. Critical Thinking Skills, and Their Application, in Public Policy (Dr. Dhakal) (a) Conceptualizing Critical Thinking in evidence-based policy making (b) Introduction of key Critical Thinking skills relevant to policy tasks
14:30 – 15:30	Session 2. Critical Thinking Skills (continued) (Dr. Dhakal) Case based group exercises in implementing Critical Thinking skills (including across the policy design, implementation, and evaluation phases)
15:30 – 16:00	Tea Break

16:00 – 17:15	Session 3. Challenges in Economic Governance and Policy Making in Nepal (Prof. Dr. Wagle)
17:30 – 18:45	Dinner
19:00 – 20:00	Session 4. Emotional Intelligence for Policy Leadership Roles (Dr. Thapa) Group interactions on team building with empathy in policy making contexts

Day 2: Saturday, 14 November 2026

Time	Program Details
08:30 – 08:35	Recap of Day 1 (Dr. Bhatta)
08:35 – 09:30	Session 5. Discussions on the Nature of Case Studies from Participants (Dr. Bhatta)
09:30 – 10:00	Session 6. Problem Analysis (Dr Bhatta) (a) Real-world context of policy analysis in government (b) Political economy considerations (c) Problem analysis
10:00 – 10:30	Tea/Coffee break
10:30 – 11:30	Group work on political economy and problem analysis
11:30 – 12:15	Group presentations, and discussions, on joint analyses carried out
12:15 – 13:30	Lunch + Networking
13:30 – 14:00	Session 7. SWOT Analysis, and SWOT-Derived Strategies (Dr. Bhatta)
14:00 – 15:00	Group work on SWOT analysis and derived strategies for the case study
15:00 – 15:45	Group presentations, and discussions, on joint analyses carried out
15:45 – 16:15	Tea/Coffee break
16:15 – 16:45	Session 8. Results Chain and Design & Monitoring Framework (DMF) (Dr. Bhatta) (including Q&A session)
16:45 – 17:45	Group work on results chain
17:45 – 18:20	Group presentations, and discussions, on joint analyses carried out
18:20 – 18:30	Review of self-learning exercise on application of tools to own policy issue

Day 3: Sunday, 15 November 2026

Time	Program Details
08:30 – 09:30	Outdoor excursion (group activity)
09:30 – 10:00	Tea/Coffee break
10:00 – 10:45	Session 9. Carrying out Risk Analysis (Dr. Bhatta)
10:45 – 11:30	Group work on risk analysis for the case study
11:30 – 12:15	Group presentations, and discussions, on joint analysis carried out
	Lunch + Networking

12:15 – 13:30	
13:30 – 14:00	Session 10. ‘Good practice, best fit’ component of policy learning (Dr. Bhatta)
14:00 – 15:15	Session 11. From ‘ad hoc’ to ‘deep-time’ policy leadership in the age of AI (Dr. Dhakal) With focus on: (a) Navigating the Shift from Ad Hoc to Deep-Time Thinking; (b) Strategic Foresight Tools Enhanced by AI; and (c) Responsible Use of AI in Policy Work Q&A session
15:15 – 15:45	Tea/Coffee break
15:45 – 16:00	Session 12. Self-learning exercise on application of tools to one’s own policy issue <i>Dr. Bhatta & Dr. Dhakal</i>
16:00 – 17:00	Session 13. Concluding Session (Dr Bhatta & Dr Dhakal) 1. Mapping of Participants’ Expectations with Perceived Results 2. Open discussions on 2026 Program 3. Updates on post-residency engagement, including focus on application of tools 4. Co-design of the 2026 program, and 5. Formal evaluation exercise
	End of the residential segment of the NPLP 2026

(Note: Participants are encouraged to interact frequently with one another both within and outside the framework of the Program, and as a way of building a knowledge network and organically formed learning community of practice. The facilitators are happy to help in that endeavour)

9. Post-Residency Component

A loose NPLP Alumni Network will be formed which will be managed as a WhatsApp group which will allow participants to interact with each other as well as others outside the network in order to share knowledge, expertise, and experiences on policy analysis work on an ongoing basis.

Post-Residency Session

(Date: December 5, 2026, online), 90 minutes

Confirmed NPLP participants will already have had access to Canvas before the pre-residency program begins. Zoom links for this session will be updated on Canvas and participants will also receive email reminders on the same.

This post-Residency component of the NPLP will be devoted to hearing from the participants about:

- Their learning journey on policy analysis work and policy leadership for each participant, including constraints faced, lessons learned, and the degree of applicability of policy tools covered in the Program.
- Peer learning opportunities on how specific policy analysis tools may have been successfully applied in various settings.
- Responding to any queries on subject matters covered in the Program.

Appendix 1. Biographies of Resource Persons and Others for All Program Components

Dr. Gambhir Bhatta

Dr. Gambhir Bhatta has 35 years of strategic as well as operational level experience in governance, public policy, public sector management and knowledge management in countries across four continents. He is the lead designer of NPI's Nepal Policy Leadership Program.

Dr. Bhatta took early retirement from ADB in January 2021, where, among other roles, he was the Chief of the Bank's Governance Thematic Group, as well as of its Knowledge Advisory Services Center, in which role he also concurrently served as an Advisor in ADB's Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department. At ADB, he led various teams to design development projects and programs in Asia, and contributed directly to a portfolio of more than two billion dollars in programming in the broad areas of governance, including public policy, public financial management, anticorruption, and SOE reforms. He led ADB teams to engage in policy dialogue with government agencies in various countries in Asia-Pacific, and provided policy advice on governance and public policy and administration reforms to governments in South Asia.

Prior to joining ADB in 2005, Dr. Bhatta was a Senior Advisor in the New Zealand State Services Commission for more than four years. Previous experiences to that include teaching at the National University of Singapore and Singapore Institute of Management, as well as working with the United Nations in Africa, and at local government level in the United States. Dr. Bhatta has designed and run numerous training courses over the years, including a 2-day course at the Civil Service College in Singapore on Public Sector Risk Management to mid-level Civil Service staff members in Singapore. He has also designed, developed, and run training programs in partnership with agencies such as the ADB Institute (Tokyo), and the Korean Development Institute (Seoul).

He is the author of several books, including '*...Those that fix the lights' – The Practice of Public Sector Management in Developing Asia* (Routledge, ADB, and ADB Institute, 2020); and *International Dictionary of Public Management and Governance* (M. E. Sharpe, New York, 2006). He has a Dual Masters Degree in Economics and Political Science from Bowling Green State University (USA); and a PhD in Public and International Affairs as well as Certificates of Advanced Study in Applied Policy Analysis, Urban and Regional Development, and Asian Studies, all from the University of Pittsburgh (USA).

Since his retirement from ADB, Dr. Bhatta has provided consulting services to organizations such as the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP (New York); ADB; Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Singapore (where he had an Adjunct Faculty appointment from April 2017 to December 2025); and G2G Pvt Ltd, a public company established by the NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and NZ Trade & Enterprise, Wellington. Dr. Bhatta is a citizen of New Zealand, and lives in Auckland.



Dr. Khagendra Dhakal



Dr. Khagendra Raj Dhakal is a Specialist Lecturer at King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok (KMUTNB), Thailand, with over 15 years of university teaching experience. He previously served as Assistant Dean for International Affairs and works at the intersection of critical thinking, judgment and decision-making, AI, education, and public policy.

He earned a PhD in Applied Linguistics from King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT), Thailand, with a focus on critical-thinking assessment in authentic digital-media contexts. He is the developer of the

Multi-Purpose Assessment of Critical Thinking (MPACT), with related research published in *Educational Research and Evaluation*. He has also earned an Executive Certificate in Public Policy from Harvard Kennedy School after completing three executive education programmes, strengthening his expertise in public leadership, behavioural decision-making, evidence-informed policymaking, and programme effectiveness.

In 2023, Dr. Dhakal was an Asia-Pacific Leadership Fellow at the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, where he undertook interdisciplinary regional analysis, experiential leadership learning, and policy dialogue with emerging leaders from across the Asia-Pacific.

Dr. Dhakal is the Founder and Chair of the Nepal Policy Institute (NPI), a global diaspora-powered think tank registered in Nepal and The Hague. Under his leadership, NPI's studies and policy engagement on external voting for Nepali citizens abroad have contributed to national policy debate and dialogue among government institutions, political stakeholders, diaspora communities, and civil society. His broader work focuses on diaspora knowledge engagement, evidence-informed policymaking, and public-sector leadership for Nepal's national transformation.

Dr. Dhakal is based in Bangkok, Thailand.

Mr. Gopi Nath Mainali

Mr. Mainali served with the Government of Nepal as a civil servant for 35 years. Before retiring in 2021, he served as Secretary for five years at various ministries. He also served for one year as the Financial Comptroller General of the Government of Nepal, and for more than eight years as Joint Secretary (and Head of the Infrastructure Development Division) at the National Planning Commission. His other experiences include Local Development Officer in various districts and executive secretary/officer of various municipalities.



Mr. Mainali has authored 12 books as well as several professional articles in journals and leading magazines. He now engages as a freelance policy analyst, delivering motivational talks to students and public servants. He has Master's degrees in three subjects (Economics, Development Administration, and Taxation & Budgeting). Mr. Mainali is currently engaged with Nepal Policy Institute as an Executive Board Member.

Mr. Gopi Mainali is based in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Dr. Pramila Thapa



Dr. Thapa is the Founder of the Life skills Education Institute in Nepal, and since January 2022 has been an Associate Professor at the Institute. From 2016 to 2021, she was the Secretary of the Senate at Purbaanchal University, Nepal. She is also the Founder Principal of the Medical and Allied Health Sciences Faculty of the University and served three years as the Deputy Dean at the Faculty as well.

Other previous appointments and roles Dr Thapa has had include: (i) Executive Board Member of Nepal Nursing Council; (ii) Founder Member, and Member of the Board of Directors of Greencity Hospital, Kathmandu; (iii) Founder Principal, and Member of the Board of Directors of Yeti Health Science Academy; and (iv) Principal, and Program Coordinator at Hope International College, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Dr. Thapa has a PhD in Emotional Intelligence (EI), received from the ITM University, Gwalior, India; and a MSc degree in Nursing from the Tamilnadu Dr. MGR Medical University, Chennai, India. There is a strong focus on

community health nursing and nursing education in her academic background which enables her to bring a unique dimension to her specialized field of expertise on EI. She is a seasoned professional whose expertise spans policy, decision-making, and academic leadership. She has also spoken on the subject of EI at, among others, Nepal Army War College, Staff College, and elsewhere.

Her approach to situating EI in the public policy sphere is anchored on the belief that developing EI and leadership abilities is critical for success in any field and in all aspects of life.

Dr. Thapa is based in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Ms. Sharu Joshi Shrestha



Ms. Sharu Joshi Shrestha holds a Master's in Political Science from Tribhuvan University, and another Master's in Women and Development from the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague. She is a working member in various programs, including the Task Force for Reforms on Foreign Labour Migration, Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Social Security, 2018.

Ms. Shrestha is the recipient of the International AFFUND Prize for Pioneering Development Project 2003 for the leading the program "The Asia Pacific and Arab State Regional Program on Empowerment of Women Migrant Workers" in Nepal (including Jordan and Indonesia). She served in the Social Welfare Council for many years, and also led several UN programs on women empowerment. She has published more than 50 articles in various newspapers, journals, and magazines. Ms. Shrestha has been serving in the Executive Board of Nepal Policy Institute since its inception.

Ms. Sharu Joshi Shrestha is based in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Featured Speaker at the Pre-Residency Program, August 2025 (Ms. Sally Washington)

Ms. Sally Washington is a Practice Fellow (Policy Capability and Public Management) at the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG). She has worked in senior roles in Aotearoa and internationally.

Ms. Washington is an influencer on the subject of public policy; her work has been applied across the public sectors in the world. In 2024, Apolitical (<https://apolitical.co/home/>), a not-for-profit community of practice for over a quarter of a million public servants across more than 160 countries, placed two of her articles in the list of top 10 policy articles from thought leaders around the world (<https://apolitical.co/solution-articles/en/top-10-policy-reads-that-defined-2024>). Her article on "How to deliver excellent policy advice" was ranked first. The one on "Skills for Policy" was ninth.



Ms. Washington was inaugural director of the New Zealand Policy Project, based in the NZ Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, where she designed and led a program to improve the quality of policy advice across government. This involved collaboration across the senior policy community to share and build overall system capability, and leading the design of three key frameworks (launched by the NZ Prime Minister in 2016) to improve policy quality and capability (on organisational capability, on skills required of policy practitioners, and on the quality of policy advice itself). More information on the Policy Project and access to the policy improvement frameworks and tools can be found at: <http://www.dpmc.govt.nz/policyproject>.

Ms Washington has advised a range of organizations and jurisdictions seeking to improve their policy capability (including the UK Head of the Policy Profession, OECD, States of Jersey, South Australian Department for Education Monash University, Ireland, and others). She spent seven years at the OECD where she managed

a network of Heads of Prime Ministers/Presidents Offices from OECD countries and has consulted to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the OECD.

From 2012 to 2014, Ms. Washington worked in the (now disbanded) Performance Hub (a joint policy unit of the State Services Commission, the Treasury, and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet) in New Zealand. The Hub was charged with improving the overall performance of New Zealand's public management system. She was responsible for leading the corporate centre support for Functional leadership teams to develop an overall operating model including the design of a capability maturity model and dashboard to report benefits and progress (savings and capability) to Ministers. As part of the Better Public Services joint venture she led work on innovation capability in the public service, including research on the innovations following the Canterbury earthquakes, and the production of a diagnostic tool for assessing organisational innovation capability.

Ms. Washington has also worked as an adviser to a New Zealand Cabinet Minister (Minister for Women) and Prime Minister in policy roles, and in joint central agency teams leading public sector reform programs. Her work as Executive Director of ANZSOG Aotearoa-New Zealand sees her contributing across ANZSOG offerings including teaching, thought-leadership, and advisory work.

She holds a Master of Arts (first class honours) in Political Science from the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. She has a body of publications on a range of topics including public sector innovation, public sector management, policy capability, and foresight and futures in government, key among them:

1. "Guiding the provision of quality policy advice: the 5D model." *Policy Design and Practice*, April 2025 (with Chris Walker).
2. "Hindsight, Insight, Foresight: Three Lenses for Better Policy-Making." *International Review of Public Administration*, March 2023.
3. "An Infrastructure for Building Policy Capability: Lessons from Practice." *Policy Design and Practice*, November 2022.
4. "Strengthening Policy Capability: New Zealand's Policy Project." *Policy Design and Practice*, March 2018 (with Michael Mintrom).
5. "'Hands Up': Mentoring in the New Zealand Public Service." *Public Personnel Management*, Summer 2003 (with Gambhir Bhatta).

Ms. Washington is a citizen of New Zealand, and lives in Wellington, New Zealand.

Featured Speaker at the Residency Program, November 2025 (Prof. Dr. Achyut Prasad Wagle)



Prof. Achyut Wagle is currently Vice Chancellor of Kathmandu University. A distinguished economist and academician, he holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, India. His academic journey includes earning an MSc in Economics from the University of Birmingham, UK, and an MA in Development Studies from Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

Throughout his career, Prof. Wagle has made significant contributions to the field of economics and academia. He served as a faculty member at the South Asian Institute of Management in Kathmandu, and his passion for economics led him to take on the role of an editor at *Arthik Abhiyan* National Daily. He has been a key figure in advising and shaping economic policies at the national level. Notably, he served as an adviser to the Prime Minister of Nepal, providing valuable insights and expertise to guide the country's economic direction. His influence extended to the financial sector, where he served as an adviser to Nepal Rastra Bank, contributing to the formulation of monetary policies and economic strategies, and an adviser to the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA).

In addition to his advisory roles, he has played a pivotal role in academia, serving as a Professor of Economics and Associate Dean of Kathmandu University School of Management. His leadership and academic prowess

were further recognized when he was appointed in the role of the Registrar of Kathmandu University, before his appointment in 2025 as the Vice Chancellor of the University.

Prof. Wagle's areas of expertise and interest span a wide range of economic subjects, including Industrial Economics, Business Environment Analysis, Political Economy, Fiscal Federalism, Development Finance, Financial Education, Entrepreneurship, Quantitative Techniques, and Game Theory. His multidisciplinary approach to economics reflects a holistic understanding of the various factors influencing economic systems. His work reflects a deep commitment to advancing knowledge and addressing real-world economic challenges, including in the public policy domain.

Prof. Wagle is based in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Dr. Garrett Kilroy



Dr. Kilroy has served in ADB's Independent Evaluation Department since 2015, leading evaluations in climate change, environment, agriculture, water, and urban development.

Based in Asia since 2008, he has worked with several development organizations. Prior to that, he was with the Irish Environmental Protection Agency. He holds an honors degree in environmental sciences and a PhD in hydrogeology from Trinity College Dublin.

Dr. Kilroy is based in Manila, Philippines.

Dr. Abinash Dash

Director, Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office
NITI Aayog of Government of India

Professional Experience:

- Possessing over 15 years of experience in economic research and development within the government sector, along with more than seven years of specialized experience in Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (MERL),
- Actively engaged in policy formulation, development of national-level policy documents, and evidence generation to support informed decision-making.
- In the current role as Director (Evaluation) at DMEO, NITI Aayog, has led and successfully completed over 25 evaluation studies in the past five years.
- Also played a key role in strengthening the capacity of state-level evaluation agencies through structured training and continuous mentoring.
- Conducting large household survey-based flagship evaluations of schemes of Government of India.



Dr. Dash Holds PhD in Development Economics from National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies. Tokyo, Japan.

Appendix 2. Brief Information on the Featured Talk on Policy Infrastructure

The policy infrastructure: building capability for better government decision-making

Presentation to be featured at the 2nd Online Session at the Nepal Policy Leadership Program

Many organisations and governments are working to improve their policy advisory systems. This challenge can be framed as building an 'infrastructure' to support good policy advice and good government decision making. This framing broadens the improvement process from a narrow focus on people and skills ("we just need to train people better") to a systemic approach that includes the range of systems, processes, capabilities, and leadership to enable and support good policy. What does a good policy advisory system look like? What skills and capabilities are required to design and deliver good policy advice?

Optional pre-reading:

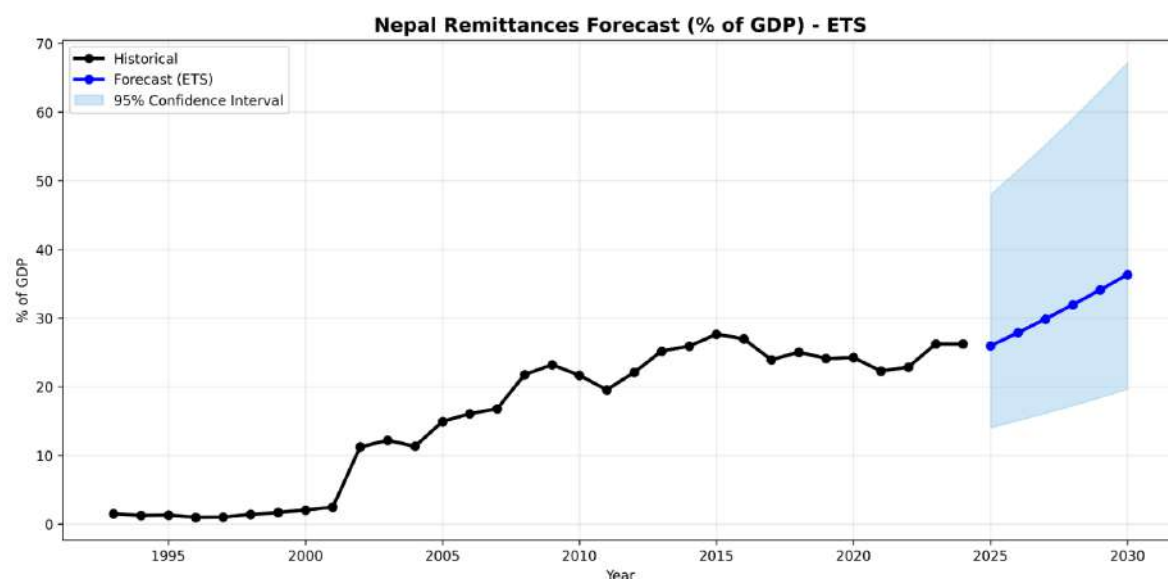
- Sally Washington (2023) [Full article: An infrastructure for building policy capability – lessons from practice \(tandfonline.com\)](#)
- Sally Washington and Michael Mintrom (2018) [Full article: Strengthening policy capability: New Zealand's Policy Project \(tandfonline.com\)](#)

Appendix 3. Primary Case Study for the Program – Overseas Migrant Workers (Nepal)

A. Introduction

1. The case study to be used in the NPLP offer for 2026 deals with a very critical issue in current day Nepal – that of hundreds of thousands of young Nepalis going abroad for employment, and remitting billions of dollars in hard-earned money that more or less sustains the economy (see **Figure 1**). Indeed, it is reported that, as of 2025, almost a quarter of the country's gross domestic product is contributed by remittances from labour migrating overseas (by the year 2031 this could well be almost 40% of GDP).

Figure 1. Level of Remittances to Nepal from Overseas Migrant Labourers (as % of GDP)



Source: S. Malla. 2026. "External Demand, Domestic Monetary Conditions, and Remittance Dynamics in Nepal." <https://arxiv.org/html/2605.19401v1>; accessed: 8 June 2026

2. Over the years, there have been several policy issues that have been raised with respect to this phenomenon, and it has become relevant for these issues to be analyzed rigorously. Information for this case study provision has been taken from the National Labor Migration Report for 2024 (the latest official report of the Government of Nepal through the Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Social Security).

3. In the next several pages, a synopsis of the Executive Summary of the 2024 report from the Ministry (on *Nepal Labor Migration Report 2024*. Kathmandu) is presented. Participants are encouraged to review this, and also skim over the key points in the main report (available at: <https://ceslam.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Nepal-Labour-Migration-Report-2024.pdf>

4. Relevant sections of the report to review include: Chapter 3 (on Status of Labour Migration in Nepal), and Chapter 4 (on Thematic Exploration). Our group exercises will use some of the data/evidence that is presented in the status report of the Ministry.

B. Synopsis of the Executive Summary of The Nepal Labour Migration Report, 2024

5. The report provides an overview of Nepali workers' participation in foreign employment with a focus on the fiscal years 2022/23 and 2023/24.

6. **Institutional Structure.** The core institutional structure of the labour migration sector in Nepal is as follows:

- a. Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Social Security – lead agency at the federal level designing appropriate policies and programs to make labour migration safe, dignified, and systematic.
- b. Foreign Employment Board – an autonomous body, provides welfare and reintegration support to migrant workers and their families.
- c. Department of Foreign Employment – responsible for overseeing and regulating labour migration.
- d. Foreign Employment Tribunal – adjudicates legal cases related to labour migration.
- e. National Academy of Vocational Training – delivers technical and vocational training to Nepali migrant workers.
- f. Provincial and local governments – also provide supportive functions to the labour migration sector. Labour and Employment Offices in all the provinces facilitate labour approvals
- g. Migrant Resource Centres – operate within the premises of the District Administration Offices to provide counselling services and case registration assistance to migrant workers.
- h. Employment Service Centres – are established in all 753 local government levels, and support labour approval applications and re-registration programmes.

7. **Labour Approval Levels.** A total of 954,319 new labour approvals and 558,297 renewed labour approvals were issued in 2022/23 and 2023/24. Most of the labour approvals, both new and renewed, were issued to men. The share of labour approvals issued to women has consistently increased, reaching a peak of 12.9 per cent in 2023/24. In 2022/23 and 2023/24, a total of 152,305 new and renewed labour approvals were issued to female migrant workers.

8. **Age Group.** Young Nepali workers, especially those between the ages of 18 and 44, continue to make up the majority of migrant workers. Nearly half of the total migrant workforce fell within the 25–34 age group in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

9. **Diversification of Labour Destinations.** Recent trends in labour approvals show increasing diversification in labour destinations. While countries in the Gulf and Malaysia are still the top destinations – accounting for 81.3% of total new approvals – tens of thousands of Nepali workers are now employed in Central and Eastern European countries such as Albania, Croatia, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, and Serbia as well as Cyprus and Turkey in West Asia, signalling a broader shift in foreign employment patterns.

10. **Areas of Migrant Origin.** In terms of migrant workers' province of origin, Koshi and Madhesh account for the largest share of labour approvals while Karnali and Sudurpaschim rank at the bottom. In labour approvals for women, Bagmati led the table and Karnali featured at the bottom. In 2022/23, Jhapa, Dhanusha, Morang, Sarlahi, and Mahottari were the top five origin districts of Nepali migrant workers, with Siraha replacing Sarlahi in 2023/24. These five districts accounted for 18 and 20 per cent of all the migrant workers in the respective years.

11. **For female migrant workers.** Jhapa and Morang were the leading districts in this category, followed by Makwanpur, Sindhupalchok, and Kavrepalanchok. These five districts accounted for a quarter of all women migrant workers in both years.

12. **Recruitment Mode.** While most new labour approvals are processed through private recruitment agencies, there has been a significant growth in individually applied labour approvals, which were 26,740 and 95,038, respectively, in 2022/23 and 2023/24. The number of individual labour approvals is particularly high for emerging countries of destination such as Romania, Malta, Croatia, and the Maldives.

13. **Areas of Work.** Currently, Nepal issues labour approvals on a G2G basis for South Korea, Israel, and the UK in the areas of caregiving work, nursing, and for elementary occupations, primarily to work as labourers for men, while in the case of female migrants a higher proportion are for cleaning and laundry work.

14. **Primary Destinations.** Destination-wise disaggregation of the occupational profile of workers shows a higher share of Nepalis going to South Korea, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait for elementary occupation. In contrast, those going to Malaysia were primarily concentrated in the manufacturing sector. Similarly, a higher proportion of workers in Romania, Croatia, Malta, and Japan were engaged in elementary occupations followed by the sales and service sectors.

15. **Financial Assistance to Migrants.** The Government of Nepal (GoN) provides financial assistance to the migrant workers and their families through Foreign Employment Welfare Fund at the FEB in case of workers' injuries, illness, and deaths. Accordingly, the FEB disbursed USD 729,000 to 369 injured workers and USD 4.8 million to the families of 1,208 deceased migrant workers in 2022/23. Likewise, in 2023/24, the disbursements amounted to USD 1.4 million to 653 injured workers and USD 5.1 million to the families of 1,346 deceased migrant workers. Most of the deaths of migrant workers were certified as having occurred due to 'natural causes' by the destination countries. The countries with the highest number of migrants' deaths were Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Kuwait.

16. **Remittance Levels.** With the increase in the number of migrant workers and also of their average incomes along with a gradual shift in migration to higher income destinations, the remittances received in Nepal have consistently increased. While remittances of less than NPR 100 billion was transferred to Nepal in the early 2000s, the amount steadily increased over the next two decades to cross half a trillion in 2014 and reach a record NPR 1.4 trillion in 2024. In 2023, over one-third (35.6%) of Nepali households received remittance from abroad, with an average amount of NPR 185,852 per remitter. However, a significant disparity is observed across provinces in terms of the size of remittances transferred. While households in Koshi, Gandaki, and Bagmati received the largest amount per remitter, over NPR 240,000 on average, those in Sudurpaschim, Karnali, and Madhesh received significantly lower amounts, between NPR 80,000 and NPR 135,000.

17. **Way forward.** Nepal has institutionalised various legal and policy frameworks to make foreign employment safe and beneficial while rendering the reintegration of returnee migrants effective and sustainable. Safe migration followed by sustainable reintegration, however, requires consistent effort and the design and implementation of suitable programs. Improvements are also necessary in migration governance to address some pressing issues of migrant workers and their families. MoLESS will adopt a '**whole-of-society and whole-of-government' approach** and strengthen inter- and intra-governmental coordination and collaboration processes to address outstanding issues related to labour migration. It will adopt gender-responsive migration policies and continue its collaboration with diverse stakeholders such as organisations of migrants and returnees, trade unions, civil society, the Nepali diaspora, and the private sector.

C. Relevant Policy Issues

18. While there are many issues inherent in the Report that the Government is considering working on for the immediate future, and brought out in the Executive Summary, for our purposes here, these five are put forward for use during the Program (one of them, on voting rights, is not covered in the Report, but is included in this Program given its relevance as well as criticality):

- a) **Policy Issue 1.** There are **institutional weaknesses** to manage labor migration effectively.
- b) **Policy Issue 2.** Government has serious concern about the **safety and security of potential women migrants** going to specific countries and regions.

- c) **Policy Issue 3.** Despite the Supreme Court order to give **voting rights to labour migrants**, Government has not been able to give effect to the order.
 - d) **Policy Issue 4.** **Safety and security considerations of labor migrants as a whole** in various countries have worsened, evidence by the rising number of deaths among migrants over the years.
 - e) **Policy Issue 5.** **New labour markets** are opening up for unskilled, semi-skilled, and skilled labourers from Nepal; Government wishes to maximize these opportunities.
19. Further details on these policy issues are provided in the succeeding pages.
- D. Work for the Groups**
20. Each issue will be tackled by one group, whereby the participants in that group will subject the policy issue to the following analytical coverage:
- a) Problem analysis, taking into account political economy considerations.
 - b) SWOT analysis (and deriving strategies from the same).
21. Each group will then share their analysis in plenary for feedback.

For Group 1 – Policy Issue 1. There are **institutional weaknesses** to manage labor migration effectively.

‘Institutional weaknesses’ includes issues of organizational capabilities, legal and policy lapses, information gaps, coordination issues, etc. The following points are relevant:

1. Migrant workers being subjected to an exploitative recruitment process, employment contract fraud, and abuse by employers.
2. Lack of awareness among migrant workers and their families about the online platforms and services as well relevant information on, e.g., their rights, compensation, and grievance-registration mechanisms.
3. Issues around coordination with subnational governments and other agencies to decentralize various labour migration-related services such as pre-departure orientation training centres; health check-ups, insurance claims, etc.
4. Gaps in access to justice, e.g., legal support services to migrant workers.
5. Gaps in organizing occupational safety and health training for migrant workers prior to and after their arrival in the countries of destination.
6. Lapses in enhancing social protection for migrants, particularly in the informal sector.
7. Issue of strengthening provisions for returns, and reintegration of migrants in the society and economy (eg, labor markets), as well as skilling, skills recognition, and certification.

Members of the Group:

Independent assessments by organizations like ILO and International Organization for Migration highlight that the core institutional weaknesses in Nepal's domestic worker migration policy span structural, legislative, and operational failures:

Structural: The most visible structural weakness is the flip-flop on migration bans, age ceilings, and country-specific restrictions targeting female domestic workers. Instead of protecting women, these restrictions push them to bypass formal institutional checks. Many travel via unauthorized channels (e.g., land borders through India), leaving them entirely undocumented. By migrating informally, workers cannot access institutional mechanisms like pre-departure training, subsidized insurance, or the Foreign Employment Welfare Fund, making them more vulnerable to human trafficking and exploitation.

Legislative: Nepal's domestic legal frameworks have not fully aligned with modern, rights-based international standards for informal and domestic labor. Nepal has not ratified critical international standards that address the unique vulnerability of domestic labor, such as ILO Convention 189 (Domestic Workers) and ILO Convention 190 (Violence and Harassment). In May 2026, ILO and Nepal's Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security conducted a comprehensive legal gap analysis to identify necessary legislative amendments to eventually align national laws with these conventions.

Operational: The government suffers from a significant data vacuum concerning domestic workers thus making it difficult for Nepalese foreign missions and embassies to track missing citizens, or provide efficient rescue and repatriation services in times of distress. Also, the formal administrative structure for foreign employment frequently fails to account for the societal stigma attached to female migration. Administrative officials occasionally display paternalistic biases, which further discourage women from attempting to utilize formal, legal channels.

In summary, Nepal's policy framework treats domestic worker migration primarily as a border control and safety risk to be curbed through restriction, rather than an economic reality requiring rights-based, cross-border institutional governance.

Source: Notes generated by: Google. 2026. *Gemini* (Large language model). <https://gemini.google.com> (prompt: “Institutional weakness of domestic worker migration policy in Nepal”), 8 June 2026.

For Group 2 – Policy Issue 2. Government has serious concern about the **safety and security of potential women migrants** going to specific countries and regions.

The 2024 Nepal Labour Migration Report (p. 80) highlights that:

“Nepal’s census data on the outflow of nationals for employment shows a noticeable increase in the proportion of women migrating for work-related reasons over the last decade, from 6.9% in 2011 to 11% in 2021. A similar upward trend is also evident in the number of labour approvals issued to women migrant workers; while women represented 3.9% of the total approvals issued in 2008/09, the figure was 12.9% in 2023/24.

The number of women migrant workers is believed to be higher as those using ‘irregular’ pathways to go abroad are excluded from the official data. Nevertheless, the migration landscape in Nepal is changing in line with the global trend of the ‘feminization of migration’, a shift towards young women especially.

Migration of Nepali women is propelled by the same drivers as that of men such as poverty and lack of employment opportunities at home. However, it is also fuelled by patriarchal social norms, gender inequality, stigma surrounding women’s work and mobility, and escape from violence, including sexual and gender-based violence from husbands and others in the family. A significant number of Nepali women migrate as domestic workers, particularly to the Gulf countries. In 2022, 4% of the female domestic workers in Kuwait were from Nepal.

Despite their growing presence, Nepali women domestic workers face significant human rights challenges across the migration cycle—pre-departure, transit, employment, and return. Live-in women domestic workers are particularly susceptible to passport confiscation, gender-based violence, mobility restrictions, and unsafe living conditions.

Although statistics are scarce, many Nepali migrant domestic workers are presumed to be undocumented, primarily due to existing strict pre-conditions on their migration. There is an ongoing debate about the impact of these pre-conditions on the mobility of migrant domestic workers which predominantly consists of women migrants.

As the feminisation of migration continues to unfold in Nepal, it becomes imperative to revisit these pre-conditions through a gender-responsive lens and examine the unintended consequences of the protective policies while working towards safer, regulated, and rights-based alternatives.”

The 2017 ILO Report on Migrant Women Workers (https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_554814.pdf; see also attached) is very relevant reading. See Box 1 for some context.

Box 1. Issues on Female Migrant Domestic Workers and Government Policies

There are various reports of verbal, physical and sexual abuse of female migrant domestic workers (MDWs). Cases have included mental health issues, suicide cases, forced pregnancy and returnees with a child born in the destination country. This has led at times to Government-initiated restrictions of the movement of would be MDWs (e.g., banning workers under 30 years of age from working in Gulf countries). Whilst such bans have been implemented with a view to protecting female MDWs, they undermine a central provision in the Foreign Employment Act 2007 to end discrimination between men and women in the context of searching for, engaging in, and returning from foreign employment. An ILO/WIF study in 2015 found that bans prompted more circuitous and costly routes as women from Nepal travel to India to circumvent the ban.

Source: ILO, 2017. *Migrant Women Workers and Overt Migration Policies in Nepal: A Law and Policy Baseline Study*. Geneva, p. 9

Members of the Group:

For Group 3 – Policy Issue 3. Despite the Supreme Court order to give **voting rights to labour migrants**, Government has not been able to give effect to the order.

The Supreme Court of Nepal in March 2018 issued a directive order in the name of Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers and other ministries concerned, including Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Election Commission, regarding the external voting rights of Nepali migrant workers.¹⁰ To date, there has been no progress on this issue. (Review also the NPI Policy Briefs on i-Voting and international experiences on external voting. [All documents attached])

Members of the Group

Over four million Nepali voters are said to be living abroad in 110 different countries. The exponential rise in foreign labour migration has produced a snowball effect on the economy, but successive governments have largely failed to follow up on the implementation of their own laws and policies.

Most countries, including Nepal, have been unable to formulate plans and policies to make external voting facilities available because of various administrative and financial limitations.

“There are a lot of limitations when it comes to ensuring Nepal’s out-of-country population gets voting rights... Our inconsistent government leadership is the biggest hindrance, of course,” said former chief election commissioner Bhoj Raj Pokharel. “Countries around the world carry out out-of-country voting through the post or by installing voting booths at embassies, but neither of these options is feasible for Nepal. This is because we have a dismal postal service and our population is so scattered that placing voting booths at embassies across the world will be very expensive and laborious.”

The NPI policy brief (mentioned above) states: “For the government the primary reasons for not being able to demonstrate progress on this matter has to do with the administrative issues on ballot secrecy and transparency and the logistic issue of conducting elections in territories where they lack jurisdictional capacity.” According to NPI, the only way to ensure migrant workers, and the rest of the Nepali voting diaspora, their voting right is through internet voting, which is currently being practiced by eight countries in the world, including Estonia and France.

“I-Voting [internet-based voting] can be an efficient, legally hassle-free, trustworthy and economical method. Every one of us has a smartphone connected to the internet in our hands, why can’t we embrace the technology that we already have?” NPI’s Khagendra Dhakal has said.

Having said that, complications could arise with i-voting as well.

“A lot of migrant workers could be taken advantage of by political parties by influencing their decision making or the whole voting process could be hacked and rigged,” said Pokharel. “Unless the people trust technology and the political parties, and the parties trust each other, this system will remain a sweet, distant dream.”

Dhakal is more optimistic, saying it is doable as long as there is political will. And, with a new government committed to take strong action there is hope that i-voting will be a reality soon.

¹⁰ See, for example: <https://thehimalayantimes.com/kathmandu/supreme-court-issues-directive-order-to-ensure-voting-rights-of-nepali-migrant-workers> (accessed: 10 June 2024).

For Group 4 – Policy Issue 4. Safety and security considerations of labor migrants as a whole in various countries have worsened, evidence by the rising number of deaths among migrants over the years.

Consider the data in **Figure 2** below. The 2024 Nepal Labour Migration Report (pp. 62-63) summarizes the situation as follows in the report (excerpts):

“Many workers in foreign employment face multiple risks to their safety and wellbeing at the workplace. These include issues of physical and psychosocial health arising from poor working and living conditions, lack of access to healthcare services, ... forced overtime labour, absence of rest days, especially in the case of domestic work, heat stress, dehydration, workplace accidents, and lack of personal protective equipment.

Workers in the Gulf countries are particularly at risk of extreme heat and humidity. Agriculture and construction workers are among the worst affected by heat stress. Similarly, kidney disease has become a growing health concern among Nepali migrant workers. Studies show that chronic kidney disease can be caused by prolonged or recurrent exposure to heat stress combined with hard labour and dehydration.

Nepali women migrant workers, particularly in domestic work and agriculture, face additional health risks due to the nature of their work. Irregular and undocumented migrant workers face higher health risks because they are not covered by the health services and social security in the country of destination and are also afraid to seek health care and legal redress from their employers for fear of losing their jobs. According to the Foreign Employment Board, on average more than 600 Nepali migrant workers have lost their lives every year since 2011/12, with over 1,200 deaths reported in both 2022/23 and 2023/24 (see Figure below). Most deaths have been categorized as death from ‘natural causes’, with no elaboration”

Members of the Group:

Figure 2. Number of Migrant Worker Deaths, 2008/09–2023/24



Source: FEWIMS, 2024.

Note: The data is based on the financial assistance provided to the deceased migrant workers' families by Foreign Employment Board. The data from 2008/09 to 2018/19 is based on the date of application for financial assistance made by migrant workers' families while the data for 2019/20 to 2023/24 is based on the date of decision made by the FEB on the application for assistance.

As for causes of death among overseas migrant workers, the latest available data from the government shows a distressing trend as well (see **Table A3.1**).

**Table 1. Causes of Deaths Among Overseas Migrant Workers
(2008-09 – 2023-24)¹¹**

Fiscal Year	Cardiac Arrest	Heart Attack	Natural Causes	Traffic Accident	Suicide	Workplace Accident	COVID-19	Other Causes
2008/09	26	2	24	8	9	6	-	15
2009/10	106	10	118	67	25	44	-	48
2010/11	100	48	118	60	62	61	-	100
2011/12	134	37	102	101	66	41	-	165
2012/13	116	32	106	104	81	27	-	261
2013/14	190	79	138	112	96	79	-	194
2014/15	268	90	247	121	113	113	-	54
2015/16	148	94	246	103	109	81	-	32
2016/17	64	64	252	122	89	61	-	103
2017/18	72	114	126	127	132	67	-	184
2018/19	86	33	136	115	111	62	-	210
2019/20	66	37	87	76	66	41	-	285
2020/21	65	36	162	114	130	21	-	618
2021/22	33	57	215	129	98	50	207	606
2022/23	61	39	276	142	139	24	-	530
2023/24	78	111	210	135	183	48	-	581
Total	1,613	883	2,563	1,636	1,509	826	207	3,986

Source: FEWIMS, 2024.

For further data and analysis, see the 2024 Nepal Labour Migration Report (pp. 62-64).

Policy Issue 5. New labour markets are opening up for unskilled, semi-skilled, and skilled labourers from Nepal; there are opportunities to maximize these opportunities. (*Review the Nepal Labour Migration Report, 2024*); the table and text below are from the 2024 report, p. 33.

“... the foreign employment sector is changing rapidly. Shifting global economies, the ongoing recovery from the pandemic, the rise of new job markets, and the emerging risks all mean that we need to adapt our policies and strategies”. *Nepal Labor Migration Report, 2024*, p. 4

Members of the Group:

¹¹ The figures above are from the official government report (*Nepal Labor Migration Report, 2024*).

Table 2. New Labour Approvals Issued (by Emerging Countries of Destination)

Country	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Romania	316	1,178	1,930	1,954	6,418	13,137	12,700
Croatia	5	7	645	1,087	5,206	7,186	14,240
Cyprus	1,574	1,730	1,458	1,012	3,222	4,275	5,930
Maldives	1,789	1,974	886	1,007	2,735	3,993	5,958
United Kingdom	65	60	38	315	2,808	2,248	2,469
Poland	3,621	1,108	184	453	1,502	4,915	1,649
Malta	600	1,717	1,668	64	1,268	5,603	4,766
Turkey	1,815	1,581	1,000	710	852	115	275
Seychelles	31	9	273	50	594	304	401
Albania	–	–	2	18	199	435	304
Jordan	1,944	1,458	2,374	930	927	621	1,976
Bulgaria	–	–	–	2	44	152	1,677
North Macedonia	–	1	–	–	9	7	468
Serbia	–	–	–	–	96	962	1,915
Slovakia	–	–	22	–	5	14	389

Source: Data for 2017/18 and 2018/19 from MoLESS, *Nepal Labour Migration Report 2020*, pp. 124–31; Data for 2019/20 to 2023/24 from FEIMS.

In recent years, foreign employment has diversified, with an increasing movement of Nepali workers heading to Central and Eastern European countries such as Albania, Croatia, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, and Serbia as well as Cyprus and Turkey in West Asia. These emerging destinations signal a broader shift in foreign employment patterns as evident in the Table above. For instance, there were no approvals issued for Bulgaria and Serbia in 2017/18. In 2023/24, however, there were 1,677 and 1,915 approvals issued, respectively, for those two countries.

The rising interest in European destination is driven by labour shortages and expanding economies there—particularly in the case of Serbia. Furthermore, Nepal's policy reforms, with initiatives such as the Directive on Individual Labour Permit Approval Process 2012 have also eased the process of obtaining labour approvals on an individual basis.

Sex-disaggregated data on the outflow of Nepali nationals for employment show variation in the pattern of migration for men and women based on destination country. The UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar in the GCC countries hosted most of the Nepali women migrant workers while Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar did likewise in the case of men migrant workers in 2022/23 and 2023/24. Additionally, Cyprus, Romania, Croatia, and Malta were more prominent destinations for women with a higher proportion of them going there.

Source: Nepal Labor Migration Report, 2024, p. 33.

Appendix 4. List of Participants at NPLP 2026

To come