

Austrian Development Agency

Thematic Evaluation: The Relevance of Culture and Cultural Heritage in ADC

Field Report - Nepal

August 2007

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List of Abbreviations

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
ADC	Austrian Development Cooperation
ATS	Austrian Schilling
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDC	Community Development Committee
CDO	Chief District Office
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of OECD
DoA	Department of Archaeology
FY	Financial Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ICIMOD	The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
IDP	Internally displaced person
IFI	International Financing Institutions
IIZ	Institute of International Cooperation
INGO	International Non Governmental Organisation
LDC	Least developed country
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NGO	Non-government organisation
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NRs	Nepalese Rupees
O&M	Operation & Maintenance
SWC	Social Welfare Council
TDC	Tourism Development Committee
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Executive summary

This field report focused on the Patan Museum project as the key case project, but an assessment was also made of two reference projects: 1. Cultural Cooperation A and 2. Rolwaling Eco Tourism project - both projects implemented by Eco Himal. The field study was undertaken in November 2007.

Country context

With an average per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US\$260 (2004), Nepal is the poorest country in South Asia and ranks as the twelfth poorest country in the world. However, according to the World Bank, Nepal has made considerable progress in reducing poverty over the last decade. Headcount poverty rate declined from 42% to 31% between FY95/96 and FY03/04. Urban poverty declined from 22% to 10%. Rural poverty declined from 43% to 35% (although it remains higher than in urban areas).

The goals or the four pillars of the Government's poverty strategy are: (i) broad based growth, with special emphasis on agriculture; (ii) accelerating human development through renewed emphasis on effective delivery of basic social services and economic infrastructure; (iii) ensuring social and economic inclusion of the poor, marginalized groups and backward regions; and (iv) vigorously pursuing good governance as a means of delivering better development results and to ensure social and economic justice. Cultural cooperation/cultural heritage is not reflected in the priorities of the 10th Plan and previous five-year plans are also rather vague about the priority given to culture/cultural heritage. The focus on support to culture in a broader sense is however reflected in the objectives of the 10th Plan working with "targeted programs", that is, focusing on deprived groups, communities, and backward areas in the country. Support to these groups essentially also supports their culture and way of living.

In 1979, following an assessment process, seven monuments in the Kathmandu Valley (including Patan Durbar Square) were inscribed on UNESCO's List of World Heritage.

ADC projects in Nepal

In 1993 the Himalaya-HinduKush region was established as one of five geographical key regions for the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC).

ADC does not have its own coordination office in Nepal but is channelling its assistance through Austrian NGOs, Nepalese NGOs and private companies. While the Austrian INGO Eco Himal has been the primary partner for the Austrian Development Cooperation in Nepal over the past 10 years, the Institute of International Cooperation (IIZ) was responsible for the implementation of the Patan Museum project.

Based on preparatory work done by the UN system during the 1970s, the Austrian government decided to take the lead and contribute to the conservation and restoration of the most damaged part of the palace in Patan (the Keshav Narayan Chowk) which was at risk of collapsing. The restoration was not uncontroversial as it combined non-traditional materials and engineering techniques with traditional woodwork and construction. Initial project preparations started already in the early 1980s, but the full restoration project was only started in 1992 and finished in 1997. The total cost of the project was EUR 2,2 million (1982-1997).

Main findings

The main findings are structured after the five evaluation dimensions.

Relevance of overall approach and projects

- The Austrian three-year "Austrian Development Policy 2005-2007" provides no information on the collaboration with Nepal. However, a regional programme approach is being developed at the moment which is expected to outline coming project/programme priorities. It is however a concern that there has been no explicit formulation of the direction of the programme during the critical 10 years where the insurgency has dominated the situation in Nepal.
- The strategies of the Government of Nepal contained in the 10th Plan coincide with the overall objectives of ADC. Cultural cooperation and support to cultural heritage is however not directly relevant to the priorities of the 10th Plan. In fact, the Plan does not refer to culture and cultural heritage at all. Previous plans are also rather vague about culture/cultural heritage.
- Even if cultural heritage is not explicitly mentioned as a Government of Nepal priority area, there is a focus on support to culture in a broader sense reflected in the objectives of "targeted programs" which focus on deprived groups, communities and backward areas in the country. Support to these groups essentially also supports their culture and way of living.
- While the overall cooperation approach is based on NGOs and private companies, the most common form of collaboration is through Austrian and Nepalese NGOs. In this regard, the Austrian INGO Eco Himal has been playing a key role over the last decade. Further, Eco Himal implements most of its activities through Nepalese NGOs. As Eco Himal has a regional office in Kathmandu, it also serves as the de facto

representative of ADC. So far, the approach is based on individual project agreements but it is currently being considered to enter into a frame agreement with Eco Himal.

- The Patan Museum project was initiated during the fragile political situation in the beginning of the 1990s. As a response, it was decided to implement the project via a so-called “turn-key” approach. This approach is not well defined in the project documentation, but according to stakeholders it represents an implementation modality where all activities are planned, implemented and delivered by the donor as the key responsible entity. This approach should be seen in contrast to the norms of development assistance today as expressed in e.g. the Paris Declaration where focus is on the partnership approach, building on a high degree of local ownership, capacity development and following the priorities and guidelines of the partner country. As a result of the turn-key approach, the project was heavily dependent on Austrian and foreign experts - serving primarily as key experts and managers - but with significant involvement of Nepalese artisans, craftsmen and labourers. As foreign experts are expensive, a high degree of the project budget was used for such experts.

Relevance in relation to ADC policies

- The two important cultural heritage projects, which were implemented over the past 10 years, target primarily foreign tourists and are, at best, only indirectly focusing on poverty reduction. Likewise, the socio-cultural impact on the local community is insufficiently explored. The economic trickle-down effects is also assumed but not well documented.
- The focus on cultural cooperation and preservation of cultural heritage in the activities of Eco Himal is fully justified and in line with ADC focus on a broader understanding of poverty where culture plays an important role.

Relevance of the selected projects

- The Patan Museum Project was viewed upon as highly relevant by all the stakeholders that the evaluation team interacted with. Everybody agreed that the renovation works of what was previously a seriously damaged traditional Nepalese palace has highlighted the important architectural value of the building and its usage as a landmark museum. The project documentation also refers to the increase in tourism as a result of the museum, but few local stakeholders stressed this value of this point.
- With regard to the museum exhibitions, local groups and artists questioned the relevance of the way that the museum is being used. Instead of displaying mainly religious artefacts (bronze statuettes), which are already on display elsewhere in Nepal, they proposed widening the scope of the exhibition to display items pertaining to the history of the Newari people, which would enhance the relevance of the museum exhibition. This also reflects a limited influence and participation of local experts and stakeholders in the design phase of the museum and in the current decision making structures on what to exhibit. Likewise, the museum is not seen as an "educational platform" offering educational packages to students and

ordinary citizens in Nepal. The primary target group is foreign tourists and not Nepalese. The narrow focus on tourists is further stressed in the display boxes of the exhibition where most signs covering the history of the artefacts are only in English.

- The Austrian experts involved in the project were conceptually and technically proficient and were well acquainted with conservation issues in Nepal. However, the "turn-key" approach necessitated a high degree of reliance on Austrian and foreign experts. A representative from the Austrian project management stressed that there was no local project management or high-level technical capacity available for such a project when the project was initiated. At the same time, the project had no stated objective to develop such capacity over the five years of implementation.
- Eco Himal's "Cultural Cooperation A" is relevant in its focus on the "living culture" of Nepal through support to competent partners, which are good arts professionals and socially and politically active as agents of change. Several of the interventions also focus on empowerment of the target group with a gender perspective - something which is very relevant in the Nepali cultural context.
- The "Rolwaling Eco-Tourism Project" is highly relevant for the local population since poor soil fertility, difficult topography and poor accessibility provides few development opportunities in other sectors than tourism.

Effectiveness

- Narrowly defined, the level of fulfilment of the objectives of the Patan Museum project is high. The museum has served to reinforce cultural identity, develop capacity among local craftsmen, artisans, technicians and establish a semi-independent economic management. However, effectiveness is questioned by the following factors: i) the project was implemented with a very high degree of foreign experts hired under non-competitive conditions; ii) Museum infrastructure is inflexible and does not allow for changing exhibitions; iii) The museum restoration concept is questioned by some local architecture experts that would have preferred more a more consultative process in deciding on the restoration concept.
- The "Cultural Cooperation A" project has been effectively implemented by local NGOs. In contrast, the Rolwaling Eco Tourism has been implemented under difficult conditions during a protracted implementation period and some important project objectives have not been achieved yet. Likewise, the quality of some of the facilities is insufficient and the concept of maintenance has not been well developed.

Sustainability

- The Patan Museum has survived for almost 10 years and is likely to continue to do so for the years to come. Irrespective of the 15 museum staff still funded by the Department of Archaeology, the museum is to a large extent independent from government subsidies. Nevertheless, no

staffing plan indicating the number of core staff required to run the museum has been developed nor a staff capacity-building programme. In implementing the project too little attention was given to how to develop a professionally run museum organisation with sufficient management capacity to ensure a living, dynamic and visionary institution. The DoA has indicated their interest and willingness to do something now. In this regard, there may be ideas on how to run the museum better in the modality of the independent Tourism Board.

- In "Cultural Cooperation A" there has been a tendency to focus on the development of the product and less so on the replicability of the product. Some exhibitions only happened once or twice with too little concern for budgets of a size that ensures that the "message" is disseminate countrywide. However, the amount of press clippings and the coverage of the different activities indicate a professional handling of the press, which is a precondition to ensure that effects can be channelled to a broader group of stakeholders.
- Improvements in hygiene practices in the villages of the Rolwaling project have been observed and are likely to be sustained in the future. However, the sustainability of the established tourist infrastructure is at risk due to the following reasons: - low technical quality of the infrastructure facilities combined with lack of understanding of maintenance requirements; - lack of marketing strategy vis-à-vis tourists; no exit strategy; - insufficient anchored in existing institutional structures. However, an extension of the project for a limited period may improve the shortcomings.

Effects

- The Patan Museum Project has had several positive effects, including: rescuing an important historical building from collapse and raised public awareness of the importance of saving the cultural heritage; raised the pride and dignity of the population through the restoration works and through showing important artefacts in a modern, state-of-the-art museum; and developing the capacity of local craftsmen and artisans. Some local clubs are renting the museum courtyard as a venue for music and dance. However, the museum does not fully exploit its ability and potential to be an active player and innovator for cultural life in Patan. Likewise, the economic trickle-down effect on the local population is questionable.
- In "Cultural Cooperation A" many seemingly relevant activities have been supported but there is a tendency to spread resources too thinly on too many sectors. Effects could have been strengthened with support to fewer sectors and bigger projects. Longer-term partnerships with local organisations would enable the partners to come up with different types of activities e.g. a series of activities over more than one year would strengthen effects. Likewise, Eco Himal could also proactively announce a theme or two for which funds are available.
- The effects in terms of tourism development of the "Rolwaling Eco Tourism Project" have not yet materialised. The project has, however,

improved the living conditions of the population in the involved villages through the provision of social and physical infrastructure improvements such as household water supply and sanitation, which has led to improved environmental and domestic hygiene. The participatory approach of the project has fostered democratic decision making processes and nowadays, women are more involved in public life and local decision making than before project start.

Responsiveness

- In the Patan Museum project, the "turn-key" approach did not allow for a "culture of collaboration" to develop during project implementation. Decision-making was fully in the hands of the foreign (mainly Austrian) experts and there was no focus on developing the capacity of the primary national counterpart, the Department of Archaeology, to eventually be able to carry out similar comprehensive and complex renovation projects on their own. Local cultural groups and city administration questions the narrow definition of the target group (foreign tourists), which affects the degree of ownership felt by the local population. The high daily charge levied on the users of the gallery result in that there are few organisations capable of financing the rental costs. To make the museum a dynamic actor on the Nepalese cultural scene, the museum's board would need to develop a strategic vision and an action plan showing how to get there.
- The local partner organisations in "Cultural Cooperation A" is given a high degree of autonomy and ownership when implementing and managing the activities. At the same time, a continuous process of critical sparring and support is provided by Eco Himal staff. However, ensuring that culture is taken into account requires clear guidelines with selection criteria that would have made addressing crosscutting issues more effective.
- The Rolwaling Eco Tourism project is based on a high degree of partnership and involvement of the local population and local experts. However, because of the political situation, many of the more dynamic members of the communities have left the area, affecting local ownership and empowerment, and resulting in Eco Himal taking on an implementing role. As the the involved staff are familiar with the local socio-cultural conditions and speak the local language, they are more likely to be culturally sensitive. The project has an explicit gender focus and has conducted many activities to address the problem of gender in-equality. In addition, there are several female employees among project staff. The Guide Book covering the project area, published by Eco Himal, discusses religion, ethnicity, and caste at length, but does not mention gender issues at all. Lastly, the needs of Porters and other trekking staff should be addressed more carefully as ethically acceptable eco-tourism should take the needs of trekking staff into consideration. Further, guidance on how to deal with porters and other trekking staff should be provided in the guide book.

1 Introduction

This Field Report is the third output under the "Thematic Evaluation: The Relevance of Culture and Cultural Heritage in Austrian Development Cooperation & Cooperation with Eastern Europe" carried out by COWI A/S on behalf of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA).

The Field Report is based on a desk analysis of relevant documentation received from ADA and data and information obtained during a field visit to Nepal from 6-13 November 2006.¹ During fieldwork, four team members focused on activities in the Kathmandu Valley area: meetings were held with relevant stakeholders and key informants, various project sites were visited, and project files were screened at the Eco Himal office in Kathmandu. Further, two team members, focusing on an Eco-Tourism project area located 150 km from Kathmandu, carried out a 5-day trek. Trekking through a part of the project area enabled the evaluation team to test some of the established facilities and interview project management, key stakeholders in the villages as well as some tourists. The programme of meetings and a list of persons met are included in Appendix 1.

This Field Report summarises preliminary observations and findings will be circulated to ADA staff and partners in Austria and in Nepal. The Field Report constitutes an important input to the overall evaluation report.

1.1 Objectives of the evaluation

The key objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Assess the relevance of culture and cultural heritage projects with the aim of developing lessons learned and recommendations, including:
 - Identification of synergy and the creative potential of cultural cooperation for the practical work of ADC in partner countries; and

¹ The evaluation team comprised Niels E. Olesen, Team Leader and Claudia Heim, Social Development Expert, COWI A/S; Morten Gøbel Poulsen, Culture and Development Expert, Danish Center for Culture and Development; Mohan Das Manandhar, National Development Expert and Kai P. Weise, Architecture and Conservation Expert, Nepal. Barbara Torggler of ADA Evaluation Section accompanied the mission.

- Identification of examples of good practice with regard to working with the cultural context and the process of intercultural communication in partner countries.

During the evaluation process, the evaluation team will also aim to:

- Contribute to increasing the sensitivity and understanding for the cultural dimension in development cooperation with the aim of improving strategies, programmes and management in ADC and increasing mutual respect and understanding;
- Contribute to the discussion of “culture and development” in ADC and through the evaluation report provide recommendations on positions and guidelines for this cross-cutting issue.

Further details concerning objective and scope of the evaluation are provided in the Terms of Reference and in the Inception Report.

1.2 Methodology

The evaluation methodology used to undertake the evaluation is based on the following key evaluation dimensions (see Appendix 2):

- **Relevance:** The extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor.
- **Effectiveness:** A measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives.
- **Sustainability:** Is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn.
- **Effects:** The positive and negative results (or outcome) of the intervention.
- **Responsiveness:** The extent to which the intervention has focused on ensuring participation and ownership, and resulting in empowerment of the target group.

The core cultural heritage project of the evaluation is the Patan Museum Project implemented by the Institute of International Cooperation in Vienna. This project was pre-selected by ADA prior to the start of the evaluation. The selection of the two reference projects was undertaken in close collaboration with ADA during the inception phase. These are Cultural Cooperation A and Rolwaling Eco Tourism Project - both implemented by the Austrian INGO, Eco Himal.

The purpose of the reference projects is to assess the degree of integration of culture as a cross-cutting issue, the responsiveness to the cultural context, as well as their relevance and sustainability.

The following key stakeholder groups were interviewed during the field work (see Appendix 1):

- Key national and local government officials
- Conservation and architecture experts
- NGOs and local culture groups
- Arts and culture representatives
- Tourism sector representatives
- Project managers and project staff

Apart from interviews with selected stakeholders, project documentation has been reviewed, including project documents, monitoring and evaluation reports as well as different background material.

1.2.1 Limitations

As the core project was implemented more than 10 years ago, access to monitoring and evaluation material has been very limited. The primary documentation has been the "Documentation of the Patan Museum Project" published in 1998 and a project evaluation conducted in 1998. The evaluation team met with several of the responsible officials from the Department of Archaeology, but it was only possible to organise one brief meeting with one of the involved foreign experts still residing in Nepal. Further, the long time lag since the project was completed has affected the ability of many of the stakeholders to recollect the project implementation process.

In order to assess the relevance of the Patan Museum interviews were held with representatives of local arts and culture groups. However, due to resource limitations no comprehensive survey was conducted among the local population.

2 Background

2.1 Country context

Socio-economic context

With an average per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of EUR 201 (2004), Nepal is the poorest country in South Asia and ranks as the twelfth poorest country in the world. However, according to the World Bank, Nepal has made considerable progress in reducing poverty over the last decade. Poverty rates declined across all of Nepal's development regions and ecological belts: Headcount poverty rate declined from 42% to 31% between FY95/96 and FY03/04. Urban poverty declined from 22% to 10%. Rural poverty declined from 43% to 35% (although it remains higher than in urban areas). In terms of differences between caste and ethnic groups, Hill and Terai Dalits represent the poorest segment of the population, despite a decline in poverty.

The standard of living improved between financial year (FY) 1995 and 1996 (and FY03/04) through increase in agricultural wages and consumption of 'luxury' foods. Nepal has also improved some of its human development indicators: infant and child mortality rate decreased, albeit with large regional variations. Child malnutrition and maternal mortality remain high. However, the decline in poverty has been accompanied by an increase in inequality illustrated in the Gini coefficient which increased from 34.2 to 41.1 over the same period.²

There are a number of explanations for Nepal's achievements in reducing poverty of which the most important are:

- Remittances, which rose significantly and increased consumption. The proportion of households receiving remittances increased to 32% in FY03/04 (equivalent to 12% of GDP) from only 24 percent in FY95/96. In 2004, about 1 million Nepalese worked abroad, primarily in India, the Gulf and East Asian countries;
- Agricultural wages which increased by about 25% in real terms over ten years; Increased demand, coupled with improved connectivity and better

²<http://www.worldbank.org.np/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/NEPALEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20094195~menuPK:286943~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:223555,00.html>

access to markets, stimulated entrepreneurial activities and allowed for non-agricultural wages and incomes to increase;

- Increased urbanization which moved workers from low productivity jobs in rural areas to higher productivity jobs in urban areas; Decline in fertility (starting in the 1980s) reduced the household size and the dependency ratio.

Despite this positive progress, Nepal remains very poor given that it started its development from a very low base and late. Likewise, Nepal is unlikely to achieve key millennium development goals related to universal primary education, child malnutrition, maternal mortality, and access to safe drinking water. More importantly, the differences in poverty and human development indicators across different regions have persisted, which gives rise to social stress and conflict. Reduced GDP growth in recent years may have reversed gains in poverty reduction made until 2001.

The goals or the four pillars of the Government's poverty strategy are: (i) broad based growth, with special emphasis on agriculture; (ii) accelerating human development through renewed emphasis on effective delivery of basic social services and economic infrastructure; (iii) ensuring social and economic inclusion of the poor, marginalized groups and backward regions; and (iv) vigorously pursuing good governance as a means of delivering better development results and to ensure social and economic justice. In addition, public investment will be focused on developing social and physical infrastructure.

NGOs and Self-Help Initiatives (SHI) play an important role in the practical realization of development goals as established in the 10th Plan.³ The Nepalese government's appreciation of this fact has led to considerable growth in the number of NGOs. The government of Nepal has created the Social Welfare Council (SWC) as a central coordinating agency for NGOs with the mission to mobilize and further the work of socially active organizations and to coordinate social services with the national development activities, while focusing on the improvement of economic and social conditions of the poor.

All newly created domestic NGOs are required to register with the appropriate government office (including the Chief District Office when relevant (CDO)). Of the more than 30,000 NGOs reported to exist in Nepal, 16,425 are registered with the SWC and about 15,000 with the appropriate local authorities, often the CDO. The focus of most of these organizations is community development, services to youth and women and environmental projects. At present there are 107 INGOs registered with SWC. INGO either place a representative on location or nominate a local Nepalese partner organization to serve as their contact.

³ The Tenth Plan is the third five-year plan after the restoration of democracy. The plan focus on poverty alleviation by giving priority to high economic growth, good governance, and social justice.

Multi-ethnicity, language and caste

Nepalese society is ethnically diverse and complex, ranging from Indian to Tibetan cultural influence. Except for the sizable population of those of Indian birth or ancestry concentrated in the Tarai region bordering India, the variation of ethnic groups has evolved into distinct patterns over time.

Generally, the Nepalese population is divided into three major ethnic groups in terms of their origin: Indo-Nepalese, Tibeto-Nepalese, and indigenous Nepalese. In the case of the first two groups, the direction of their migration and Nepal's landscapes appeared to have led to their vertical distribution; the ethnic groups are generally found at specific altitudes. The first group, comprising those of Indo-Nepalese origin, inhabits the more fertile lower hills, river valleys, and Tarai plains. The second major group consists of communities of Tibeto-Mongol origin occupying the higher hills from the west to the east. The third and much smaller group comprised a number of tribal communities.

Nepali, the national language of Nepal, is closely related to, but by no means identical with, Hindi. Even though Nepali is the national language and is the mother tongue of approximately 58 per cent of the population, most of the ethnic groups have their own languages and dialects.

One integral aspect of the Nepalese societies is the existence of the Hindu caste system, modelled after the ancient and orthodox Brahmanic system of the Indian plains. The caste system did not exist prior to the arrival of Indians. Its establishment became the basis of the emergence of the feudalistic economic structure of Nepal: the high-caste Hindus began to appropriate lands and introduced the system of individual ownership. Even though the cultural and religious rigidity of the caste system slowly has been eroding, its introduction into Nepal is one of the most significant influences stemming from the Indian subcontinent.

Gender

The Constitution of Nepal (1990) guarantees basic human rights and fundamental freedoms to every citizen. Likewise, Nepal has ratified the UN convention on Eliminating all Forms of Discriminations Against Women (CEDAW). Notwithstanding, Nepal is a society bound by a background of cultural practices and traditions that are substantially influenced by patriarchal norms and values. The conventional assumptions on women's role and position, which put women at an inferior level, have not changed very much in Nepal and the recent movement towards gender equality has not been able to substantially change women's status.

Women's representation in political and administrative offices is very poor. There is a strong tendency among political parties to confine themselves to the constitutional minimum (5 per cent) when it comes to fielding candidates in elections. The Public Service Commission has one female-member and the National Planning Commission (NPC) has never had a woman member. The most important step in creating opportunities for political participation of women has been the enactment of Local Self-Governance Act (1999), which

foresees at least 20 per cent representation of women in local bodies. Besides, in the 9th Development Plan a policy was adopted to increase the access of women to political institutions, including through appropriate legislation.

Recently, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Nepal has raised its concern over the draft of the Citizenship Bill saying it is discriminatory against women and, therefore, contradicts the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). It is said that the current bill could result in discrimination against displaced persons and members of marginalised groups. Hence, the restored democracy faces a number of key challenges in creating a non-discriminatory society that provides equal opportunities for women and men.

Insurgency and peace

Nepal is currently going through the biggest political transition since democracy was introduced in 1991. Since 1996, a protracted war between the army-backed monarch, King Gyanendra, and Maoist rebels has undermined the political system, severely damaged the economy, terrorised vast parts of the civilian population and affected relations with India and the West. Since late 2005 it became a two-way fight between the monarch and his supporters and an emerging alliance of the seven main political parties and the Maoists. The violent insurgency led by the Maoist rebels first emerged in 1996 and over 13,000 lives have been lost.

Faced with perpetual instability, the king suspended Nepal's normal democratic procedures and began appointing prime ministers by royal decree in 2002. Going one step further in what was widely referred to as a "royal coup", on 1 February 2005 the king dismissed the prime minister and government, placed leading politicians under house arrest and declared a state of emergency. Since then, King Gyanendra ruled directly as chairman of a council of ministers, appointed directly by him.

In 2006 unrest and general strikes began to dominate the political scene with the mainstream political parties joining hands with the Maoists to oust the king. Thousands of people took to the streets and Nepalese security forces killed several protesters - particularly in the weeks of April where severe riots culminated in the King giving in to the pressure. On 18 May the House of Representatives unanimously passed a historic declaration announcing itself as the sovereign body of the nation, substituting 'His Majesty's Government' with 'Nepal Government' and declaring the country a secular state. The nine-point declaration also curtailed the King's powers. By the end of November 2006, the Maoist signed a peace agreement with the country's government representing the formal end to the insurgency. The agreement will confine the Maoists to UN-monitored camps in the run-up to elections for an assembly that will draft a new constitution and decide the monarchy's future. It also clears the way for the Maoists to join an interim government that will oversee the elections, and will allow them to take seats in an interim parliament.

2.2 Austria's cooperation with Nepal

2.2.1 History of Austrian Support

From the 1960s, Austrian architects have been involved in working with the preservation of the cultural heritage of Nepal. The Austrian architect, Mr. Carl Pruscha, who for 10 years acted as UNDP physical planning advisor to Nepal, compiled and published the first comprehensive inventory of the monuments of the Kathmandu Valley in the beginning of 1970s.⁴

In 1977, UNESCO sent a mission to Nepal, headed by the Austrian architectural historian Eduard Sekler of Harvard University, who drew up a conservation master plan for the valley and proposed its chief historical monuments as UNESCO World Heritage Sites.⁵ It does not mention inscription of the Kathmandu Valley on the World Heritage list, but recommends that the Nepalese Government ratify the World Heritage Convention "The Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage" (1972). The Kathmandu Valley, which is comprised of a serial nomination of seven monument-zones, was inscribed on the UNESCO List of World Heritage in 1979.⁶ This laid the basis for the long-term co-operation between the Austria's Institute of International Cooperation (IIZ) and the Department of Archaeology of Nepal. Being the chief author of the "Proposal for the Urbanistic Conservation of Patan (Lalitpur) Durbar Square as a monument Zone" (1980) Sekler was instrumental in convincing the Austrian government to make the first direct contribution towards the repair of the north wing of the royal palace at Patan Durbar Square. As an outcome of the Austrian support to the renovation of one of the key palaces at the Patan Durbar Square, the Patan Museum, was established in 1997.

In 1993 the Himalaya-Hindu Kush region was established as one of five geographical key regions for the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC). ADC does not have its own coordination office in Nepal but is channelling its assistance through Austrian NGOs, Nepalese NGOs and private companies.

As a part of the overall ODA for Nepal, the Austrian share during the 1990s ranged from 0,3 % to 0,5 %. As illustrated below, disbursements have decreased in recent years.

⁴ The two volumes, entitled "Kathmandu Valley: Preservation of the Physical Environment and Cultural Heritage, a Protective Inventory" were published with Austrian financial support in 1975.

⁵ "Master Plan for the Conservation of the Cultural Heritage in the Kathmandu Valley".

⁶ Kathmandu Durbar Square, Patan Durbar Square, Bhaktapur Durbar Square, Pashupati, Baudhdhanatha, Swayambhu and Changu Narayan.

Table 2-1 ADC disbursements to Nepal (2003-2005)

	2003		2004		2005	
	€ mill.	% of ODA	€ mill.	% of ODA	€ mill.	% of ODA
Nepal	1.82	2.64	1.07	1.45	1.61	1.90

Source: "Distribution of Bilateral ADC Funds by Region 2005", ADC Statistics.

2.2.2 Current country programme and project portfolio

The Austrian INGO Eco Himal has been the primary partner for the Austrian Development Cooperation in Nepal over the past 15 years. However, Eco Himal has not been the only partner. A few other co-financed NGO projects have been implemented by Horizont3000, Care, Jugend Eine Welt. In addition, the Institute of International Cooperation (IIZ) was responsible for the implementation of the Patan Museum project.

The close cooperation with one INGO in a particular country was modelled on the basis of what the Swiss Development Cooperation has done in Bhutan, where the Swiss NGO Helvetas is the key implementing agency for the Swiss Development Cooperation.

Based in Salzburg, ECO Himal is represented in Kathmandu by a regional office, which de facto has served as a representative office of the Austrian Development Cooperation to Nepal. However, the day-to-day contact with ADA is handled by Eco Himal's Head Office in Salzburg. On several occasions, the regional office has been used by the Austrian Embassy in New Delhi for organisation of meetings and for logistical arrangements when official Austrian visitors came to Nepal.

Over the past years, Eco Himal has focused on the following sectors and projects:

1. Small-scale hydropower and solar energy

- "Small Hydro-power Station Thame - Namche Bazar/Sagarmatha National Park"

2. Poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation

- "Village development Thame valley" (1999-2002)
- "Rural development Arun valley"
- "Rural development Solu Khumbu"

3. Sustainable tourism

- "Rolwaling eco-tourism project" (1996-2006)
- "Thame mountaineering school"
- "Tourism management training"

4. Cultural cooperation and preservation of the cultural heritage

- "Keshar Mahal Garden"
- "Cultural Cooperation A and B" (2003-2005)

Cultural Cooperation A started already in 1999. The evaluation assesses the most recent contract period from 2003-2005.

So far, no new project activities have been initiated in Nepal since ADA was created in 2004. All activities were committed on a mid-term basis i.e. 6-8 years divided into 3-year contracts.

Consultations between ADA and Eco Himal take place during two fixed annual meetings with the desk officer as well as on an ad hoc basis in relation to new project phases, reports, evaluation, mid-term reviews and monitoring visits. Recently, Eco Himal has submitted a concept for a framework agreement, which is currently being discussed with ADA. At the same time, ADA is in the process of developing a regional programme approach and thereby also defining the role of Nepal and any future assistance to Nepal.

2.3 Overview of cultural heritage and reference projects

This section provides an overview of the Patan Museum project, ECO Himal's "Cultural Cooperation A" and the Rolwaling Eco Tourism project.

2.3.1 Patan Museum Project

As mentioned previously, the 1975 "Master Plan for the Conservation of the Cultural Heritage in the Kathmandu Valley" is still a blueprint for the government's efforts in heritage conservation. As a part of the Master Plan process, seven historical sites of the Kathmandu Valley was nominated to UNESCO's World Heritage List - among them the Patan Durbar Square. Based on this, the Austrian government decided to take the lead and contribute to the conservation and restoration of the most damaged part of the palace in Patan (the Keshav Narayan Chowk) which was at risk of collapsing.⁷

⁷ As mentioned previously, the Kathmandu Valley (including Patan Durbar Square) was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in 1979 by the World Heritage Committee. As the Kathmandu Valley developed further during the 1980s and 1990s, the World Heritage Committee increasingly voiced its concern for the proper protection of the Kathmandu Valley's seven monument-zones. The key issue was not the monuments themselves, of which most had been restored, but that "the immediate surrounding areas in the monuments zones had to face enormous challenges of uncontrollable urban development compounded with ex-panding tourism related activities" (UNESCO, 2004). In 2003 the World Heritage Committee decided to place the Kathmandu Valley on the "List of World Heritage in Danger" due to "the traditional vernacular heritage of six of the seven Monument Zones had been partially or significantly lost since the time of inscription, resulting in a general loss of authenticity and integrity of the property as a whole" and that "the threat of uncontrolled development has persisted, which continuously decreases the urban landscape and architectural fabric of the property". UNESCO is currently assisting the government in implementing a long-term management mechanism that is supposed to result in the site being taken off the List of World Heritage in Danger.

From the beginning of the project in 1982 till its completion in 1997, close cooperation was maintained between the Department of Archaeology (DoA) and the Austria's Institute of International Cooperation (IIZ). Throughout the 15 years, the project coordinator acted as conservation advisor to the Government of Nepal and was instrumental in widening the scope of the project early on – from the mere renovation of the palace to its conversion into a museum.



Picture 2-1 Patan Museum (Keshav Narayan Chowk)

Due to the fragile political situation in the beginning of the 1990s when democracy was introduced in Nepal, it was decided to change the project definition from the previous bilateral mode of funding and implementation to a so-called “turn-key” approach.

The concept of “turn-key” is not particularly well defined in the project documentation but it seems to represent an implementation modality where everything is planned, implemented, and delivered by the donor as the key responsible entity. In this way, it resembles the delivery of large-scale technical development projects in the 1970s and 80s, e.g. a cement factory, fully delivered by a private contractor and in the end the “key” is handed over the government. This approach should be seen in contrast to the norms of development assistance today as expressed in e.g. the Paris declaration where focus is on the partnership approach, building on a high degree of local ownership, capacity development and following the priorities and guidelines of the partner country.

As a result of this approach, Austria - during the seven years of implementation - supplied the entire budget, management, and technical assistance, while DoA retained the formal legal authority of the object to be conserved.

The conservation effort of the palace compound had four aims:

- Repair all damage
- Preserving the building from the future hazards of decay and destruction
- Restore its historic design as far as possible
- Keep to a minimum all the changes and additions which were necessary for the building's new function as a museum.

Since the palace's outward appearance had undergone considerable visual changes in recent times, one of the project's aims was to restore the principal elevation and the main courtyard to their original and historic design of 1734. Restoration proved difficult in the case of the four facades of the main courtyard because no drawings or photographs existed.

While manpower was provided from the local resource base of Nepalese craftsmen and consultants, several additional foreign experts were brought in. For example, an Austrian expert, Mr. Thomas Schrom, joined the project early on as the full-time manager, construction supervisor, and visual design specialist. Several other Austrian and American short-term consultants served as experts in the implementation of the project.

The Patan Museum was finally inaugurated on October 28, 1997 by His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev in the presence of Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the Austrian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

2.3.2 Cultural Cooperation A

The project "Cultural Cooperation A" was developed by Eco Himal as an umbrella project to support a wide range of small-scale interventions by community based organisations by providing seed funding for bigger cultural events. The project was implemented from the beginning of 2003 until the end of 2005.

In accordance with Eco Himal's project application, the justification of the project was the following:

Faced with enormous pressures of modernisation, existing societies in the Himalayas are undergoing rapid culture change. Cooperative projects for the promotion and preservation of culture...can make an invaluable contribution towards ensuring the continuation of traditional cultures, whether folk/popular culture or so-called 'High Culture', including such arts as architecture, so that the now-endangered cultural heritage can be passed on to future generations and filled with new life.

The task of the project was to focus on the promotion and preservation of living culture and thereby contribute towards ensuring the continuation of traditional cultures. The project focused both on cultural and inter-cultural cooperation as means to promoting cultural encounters and exchanges among people of different ethnic groups, different generations and social backgrounds, as well as

between Austria and Nepal. The project implementation modality was based on collaboration with a wide range of local community-based organisations (CBOs) and NGOs as well as inter-cultural contacts, scholarly and scientific monitoring of project work, and information dissemination for Austrian users.

Textbox 2-1 ECO Himal Project partners

- Himal Association (media/publishing NGO; also runs the Centre for Investigative Journalism)
- Tibetan Culture Society in Nepal
- Environment Matters – Women NGO based in Kathmandu
- Salzburg University – Department of Communication (Audiovisual Division, international and Intercultural Division)
- University of Vienna – Department of Anthropology
- Centre for Social Research and Development (Nepalese NGO)
- Nepalese Photographic Society (NGO)
- The Kathmandu University Department of Music in Bhaktapur (Ethno-musicology)
- SNV – Dutch Development Cooperation
- The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)
- CNAS-Centre for Nepalese and Asian Studies/Tribhuvan University
- Sony Austria
- Urban Pixa
- Single Women's Entrepreneurship group (WHR)
- Centre for Women's upliftment and awareness (EWUA)
- Association of Administrative Assistants
- Creative Statement
- Women's wing, Union of Journalists

The project included the following activities during the project period, which have been assessed (2003-2005):

- **Book Production:** 3 books (In the Land of Heart's Desire (experiences of an expatriate female volunteer in Nepal); Tamang culture; Mothers and Daughters)
- **CD Production:** Tibetan Workers Songs and Reetu Ranga meaning "Seasonal Colours"
- **Theatre:** Gurukul School of Theatre. The project is to develop two plays (one per year) with conflict resolution as its central theme.
- **Film:** Support for the third Mountain Film Festival in Kathmandu with Himal Association and ICIMOD (Eco Himal has been co-sponsor of the film festival since its beginning in 2002); Travelling South Asia – Support for the worldwide distribution of a selection of the awarded documentary films of South Asian Film Festival; Support for a Austrian-Nepalese co-production "The Culture of Tamangs"; Study on "Modernisation and Cultural Changes through Cinema"

- **Painting:** two workshops for school children by a famous painter Hari Prasad Sharma. Travelling Thangka Show – the objective is to bring a good selection of famous Buddhist paintings to Austria and present them to the Austrian audience (including workshop).
- **Photo & Exhibition:** A booklet and an exhibition on "Shaping the Sherpa World"; "Mothers & Daughters" - a study focused on the successes and differences in two generations of Nepali women; "Alps yesterday – Himalaya today" is a documentation of two mountainous regions.
- **Media education:** Communication with the youth in an attempt to provide the young with a readable, enjoyable page or two in their popular magazines that educates and provokes creative thinking. Bulletin of articles on the four sectors of ADC in Nepal in total 17 volumes (2 issues per year).
- **Conference:** "Income generating activities in rural areas" together with local NGOs and SNV/Dutch Development Cooperation (postponed from 2002).
- **Research and investigation:** "Mapping Kathmandu Valley for Environmental Improvement and Cultural Heritage Preservation" - an attempt to identify open space for Parks/Gardens; "Rural and Minorities Support Project" - a study of dying languages, endangered indigenous knowledge and skills. Additionally, a number of doctoral and master theses have been supervised by Eco Himal's chairman and project managers. A seminar group from the Department of Sociology of the University of Vienna visited the region for 24 days, undertook research on a range of topics and filmed a 20-minute documentary which has been screened at a documentary film festival in Austria.

The project budget amounts to €192,225.

2.3.3 Rolwaling Eco-Tourism Development Project

Since 1996, Eco Himal has supported the Rolwaling Eco Tourism Development Project. The project is part of a broader tourism development and training effort comprising two more projects: the Thame Mountaineering School and the training programme for Nepalese tourism management personnel – which are not directly linked to the eco-tourism project and operate in other parts of Nepal.

The Rolwaling Eco-Tourism Development Project seeks to promote sustainable and community-based tourism that is appropriate to the needs of the local population, visitors and the fragile natural environment. Austria supports the building of the physical infrastructure and provides funding, technical and logistical know-how, training and overall coordination. Since the project's initial focus has been on providing basic social infrastructure and community capacity building to improve the living conditions of the local population as a precondition for tourism development, the project in effect combines eco-

tourism development with integrated rural development. Tourism development is seen as a supplement to agricultural production but not as an alternative. The project is envisaged as a demonstration project that through a number of positive examples would trigger similar development on a wider scale in the area.

The Rolwaling tourism development project has the following objectives:

- Improvement of the standard of living of the local population through improved basic infrastructure (drinking water, sanitation, trails, bridges);
- Improvement of the tourism infrastructure: restoration and adaptation of existing accommodation; construction of model eco-lodges and campsites;
- Training of tourism industry staff/managers with the long-term aim of establishing tourism as a locally run, sustainable sector of the regional economy.

The project is expected to have the following effects:

- Employment for the local population: lodge staff, porters, guides, construction workers;
- Indirect employment for suppliers such as local farmers and craftsmen;
- Availability of accommodation to meet the standards of western tourists;
- Provision of drinking water and sanitation along the trekking routes;
- Increased ecological awareness among the local population;
- Improved management capability of the community development committees, which should ultimately take full responsibility for the implementation of all measures;
- Improved language skills.

The project area is constituted of the wards traversed by the two main trekking routes in the Gauri Shankar trekking area. The area is situated roughly 150 km from Kathmandu and extends approximately 20 km north-south between the Tibetan border and the Lamosangu-Jiri highway, and some 50 km east-west parallel to the Tibetan border from the Sun Koshi River near Barhabise via the Thingsang La pass and the Rolwaling valley to the Tashi Lapsa pass and the Sagarmantha National Park and Khumbu district.



Picture 2-2 Map of the Rolwaling project area and the locations visited during the field trek (marked)

An estimated 100,000 people of various ethnic-religious groups (Buddhist and animist) and Hindu castes populate the area. The trekking area is basically without road access and is considered a fairly untouched and unspoiled region with only some 1000 to 2000 tourists per year. Whatever their ethnic affiliation and faith, most people are subsistence farmers living in small scattered settlements. Due to the limited economic development options, there has been a considerable migration from rural to urban areas. Development in the area as well as the progress of the project has been hampered by the Maoist insurgency, which turned several locations along the trekking routes into rebel strongholds.

The project has gone through the following phases since its start-up in 1996.

1996-1997	Feasibility studies by Eco Himal of an ecologically, culturally and socially acceptable model for tourism
1998-2001 (Phase I)	Provision of basic infrastructure, formation of CDCs (now called TDCs) and "development" training
2002-2005 (Phase II)	Implementation of tourism project - provision of tourism infrastructure, training etc.
2006 to 2007 (Phase III)	Completion of tourism infrastructure and full management transfer

Effects

During Phase I, 22 community development committees (CDCs, now called tourism development committees, TDCs) were formed, registered and trained

and the affected wards along the trekking route were supplied with basic infrastructure such as water supply, drainage and latrines. Some material was provided by the project whereas the beneficiaries provided voluntary labour as well as local materials. Before the project such infrastructure hardly existed but by the end of 2006 approximately 90 km of water pipes have been laid; water supply in the form of shared taps has been provided to about 2000 households; 1300 household and 20 school toilets have been built as well as 210 household bathrooms.

Phase II and the beginning of phase III focused on the provision of tourism infrastructure and tourism related training. This included about 58 km trail repair and improvement; upgrading or construction of 28 new truss, suspension and wooden bridges; construction and equipment of 10 lodges (7 are completed, 3 are still under construction) and 14 campsites. The work was seriously hampered by the Maoist insurgency which spread fear among the population, evicted local leaders - who were trained under the project - and necessitated several rounds of retraining, and prevented the community development committees from functioning effectively. The Maoists also misused the developing lodges for their own purposes.

The ongoing phase III is to ensure completion of physical activities and proper handing over of the management responsibility to the tourism development committees and appropriate management training. This also includes rehabilitation of trails after monsoon landslides and repair of lodges after occupation by Maoist rebels.

Intensive training, awareness raising, and marketing activities were cutting across the three phases, conducted either by Eco Himal staff or in collaboration with local NGOs. Details of the training provided in phase I to III are provided in Appendix 6. Some of these training activities remain to be completed, in particular management, operation & maintenance sensitisation and marketing.

The yearly budget during the duration of the project has been about EUR 260.000 on average.

Table 2-2 Costs of the Rolwaling Eco Tourism Project

Years	Costs
1998	not available
1999	227,000
2000	250,000
2001	254,000
2002	230,000
2003/04	532,000
2005	235,000
2006/07	343,000

Total	2,071,000
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3 Assessment of culture in Austria's cooperation with Nepal

This chapter provides an assessment of the relevance of the ADC policies, strategies, and guidelines relevant for Nepal followed by a brief assessment of the ADC project portfolio in Nepal. The main part of the chapter assesses the relevance, sustainability and effects of the Patan Museum Project as well as the cultural sensitivity, relevance and sustainability of Eco Himal's Cultural Cooperation A and the Rolwaling Eco Tourism project - both of which are reference projects.

3.1 Relevance of project portfolio

In this section, the overall relevance of the Austrian portfolio in Nepal is assessed in relation to both Austria's development co-operation priorities and Nepal's development plan.

The overall framework for the current country portfolio is comprised of the Austrian policies, strategies and sector and thematic guidelines for Development Cooperation. Appendix 3 provides an overview of the importance of culture in these policies, strategies, and guidelines.

The three-year programme "**Austrian Development Policy 2005-2007**" provides no additional information on the collaboration with Nepal except that it is stressed that the distinction between cooperation and priority countries is likely to disappear with the further geographical concentration of ADA's programme. As mentioned previously, a forthcoming regional programme approach is expected to outline future priorities.

The strategies of the Government of Nepal contained in the 10th Plan is to reduce the overall level of poverty through the following priority objectives: 1) High, sustainable and broad based economic growth; 2) Social sector and infrastructure development; 3) Targeted programs for Dalits and indigenous people; 4) Good governance. To a large extent, these priority areas coincide with the overall objectives of ADC.

As mentioned previously, as the main channel of Austrian Development Cooperation, Eco Himal has focused on four priority sectors (1. Small-scale hydropower and solar energy; 2. Poverty alleviation and biodiversity

conservation; 3. Sustainable tourism; 4. Cultural cooperation and preservation of the cultural heritage). In relation to the priorities of the 10th Plan, all of the sectors except for cultural development and preservation of cultural heritage, are largely within and supportive of the broad aims of the 10th Plan.

The focus on cultural cooperation/cultural heritage is not directly relevant to the priorities of the 10th Plan. In fact, the Plan does not refer to culture at all. Previous plans are also rather vague about culture/cultural heritage. In the 8th Plan which covers the period 1992-1997 culture/cultural heritage is referred to in the context of developing new cultural tourism products with few or no references the aspect of preservation of culture or the cultural heritage of Nepal.

However, even if cultural heritage is not explicitly mentioned as a government priority area, the focus on support to culture in a broader sense is reflected in the objectives of "targeted programs" which focus on deprived groups, communities, and backward areas in the country. Support to these groups essentially also supports their culture and way of living.

3.1.1 Relevance of other Austrian culture efforts in Nepal

While this evaluation particularly focuses on assessing the Patan Museum Project and Cultural Cooperation A, Eco Himal has also provided support for a few other projects under the cultural /cultural heritage sector, which will be briefly mentioned here.

In the project "Cultural Cooperation B" support is being provided to Nepal's first community-based, non-governmental, broadcasting radio - Radio Sargamatha - which focuses on community development through involvement of local people in and around the Kathmandu Valley area. The radio started in 1997 with a focus on environmental issues, but today the agenda has broadened to include democratisation, human rights, good governance (anti-corruption), public health, culture, heritage conservation, etc.

Austrian Development Cooperation has supported Radio Sargamatha for several years and in the most recent three-year project period, the focus was on i.a. training within news production, training of other journalists involved in not-for-profit radio production and development of new programmes focusing on documenting indigenous knowledge, skills and practices in relation to the environment, agriculture, biodiversity and medical plants and healing. Radio Sargamatha involves some of the same local partner organisations as those involved in Cultural Cooperation A (see below) and has thus created a good synergy to a parallel project. The importance and relevance of the radio is also indicated by the broad range of donors that supports the radio station. The support for Radio Sargamatha clearly falls in line with support to good governance and as well as in the targeting of special initiatives for Dalits and indigenous groups which is also a priority for Radio Sargamatha.

In addition and after the implementation of the Patan Museum Project, ADC has supported the restoration of the "Keshar Mahal Garden" - also called

"Garden of Dreams" - located in the centre of Kathmandu. Eco Himal has supported the complete renovation of the garden, which was once overgrown and is now a restored and well-maintained neo-classical garden. There is an entrance fee to the garden, and it is now being used as a recreational area with a garden restaurant. Though the garden is not located with any of the World Heritage monuments zones, it represents an architectural example of Nepal's Rana period.

When assessing the relevance of the garden against national priorities, it can be argued that creating another tourist product will attract more predominantly foreign tourists and that the garden, once fully operational, will generate employment for more than 50 persons. On the other hand the evaluation team questions the clear and direct linkage to poverty reduction, which should be the primary aim of ADC activities. Although there will most likely be an employment effect of the garden, interviews with local stakeholders confirm that the target group is not ordinary Nepalese but rather foreign tourists and well-off Nepalese. In this connection, it is relevant to refer to the Mid-term Review, which raised relevant concerns how best to ensure access by less well-off Nepalese and representation of their interests, i.e. how can the garden have positive socio-economic impacts on poorer people in the future beyond the employment effect? Discussions with local stakeholders confirm that there is an unrealised potential in using the garden as something more than merely a tourist attraction. Clearly, the using of "open days" (similar to the opening day of the garden) and using the garden space for free cultural performances, etc. needs to be developed.

Another area where culture plays an important role is within the sector of "sustainable tourism", where three projects have been supported (including the Rolwaling Eco Tourism Project - see below). In all three projects, culture is an integrated and a crosscutting issue.⁸

In summary, culture has been and still is supported both in relation to cultural and arts activities and cultural heritage projects (culture as a sector) and as a crosscutting issue in, for example, the tourism sector.

3.2 Assessment of the support to Patan Museum

3.2.1 Relevance

Relevance for cooperation country and population

As indicated previously, culture and cultural heritage support is not an explicit priority of the Government of Nepal in the 10th Plan and also in the 8th Plan (which represented government priorities during project implementation). As a result, the relevance is low vis-à-vis national priorities.

⁸ See "Ecotourism and Village Development: the Eco Himal Strategy for Sustainable Tourism", http://www.ecohimal.org/pdf/Sustainability_in_Mount_Tourism.pdf.

The Patan Museum Project was viewed upon as highly relevant by all the stakeholders that the evaluation team interacted with. Everybody agreed that the renovation works of what was previously a seriously damaged traditional Nepalese palace has highlighted the important architectural value of the building and its usage as a landmark museum.

One of the general findings throughout interviews with stakeholders was the importance of restoring such buildings and thereby highlighting the richness of Nepali culture to tourists and other visitors. A restored palace such as the Patan Museum serves to build-up pride and self-esteem/dignity of the local people as it is a symbol of the richness of the Nepali culture.

Several stakeholders also found that in a rapidly changing society, cultural monuments are important to preserve as pressure from western culture and modernization is very strong and will not automatically contribute to sustaining the cultural artefacts of the past. Restoring this palace has emphasised the value and beauty of the buildings of the past and has provided a state-of-the-art example of how to carry out such renovation works.

Another factor, which is mentioned as an important reason to undertake the restoration work, is the potential that such restoration serves to increase the number of tourists to Patan. In the Project Documentation, under project goals, it is stressed that "Nepal's tourism sector has received a new cultural venue to offer in its international marketing efforts" (p. 11).⁹

With regard to the museum exhibitions, local groups and artists questioned the relevance of the way that the museum is being used. Instead of displaying mainly religious artefacts (bronze statuettes), which are already on display in many of the surrounding temples and elsewhere in Nepal, they propose widening the scope of the exhibition to display items pertaining to the history of the Newari people. For instance there is an old tradition of metal work in Patan. According to this group of stakeholders, the relevance of the museum exhibit could be enhanced if the history of the metal work craftsmen and artisans were on display. The fact that this issue was raised with the evaluation team, reflects a limited influence and participation of local experts and stakeholders in the design phase of the museum and in the current decision making structures on what to exhibit.

Relevance of Austrian knowledge and expertise

The Austrian experts involved in the project, some of whom were residing in Nepal, was conceptually and technically proficient. Some had previous experience from their involvement in other cultural heritage conservation projects and were well acquainted with conservation issues in Nepal.

However, the proposed "turn-key" project approach necessitated a high degree of dependence on Austrian and foreign experts. While local craftsmen were brought in from different parts of the Kathmandu Valley to work on the

⁹ See: Institute of International Cooperation (IIZ), "Patan Museum Documentation", Vienna, 1998.

restoration, they were not a part of the project management structure. From the project management side it is stressed that there was no local project management capacity available for such a project when the project was initiated. At the same time, the project had no stated objective to develop such capacity over the five years of implementation.

According to the Project Documentation, the Patan Museum Project not only focused on restoring an important monument but also aimed at "resource mobilisation, sustainability, capacity building, and the reinforcement of cultural identity....as important development objectives". However, according to the former and current museum management, the museum is not regarded as an "educational platform" wishing to offer educational packages to students and ordinary citizens in Nepal. Thus, few, if any, outreach activities have been carried out vis-à-vis students in public/private schools; little or no advertisements done on the existence of the museum in relevant publications;¹⁰ students have no period/day with free entrance (like in many other museums); and there is no personal (or audio) guide service offered at the museum.

According to the museum management, the primary target group is indeed foreign tourists and not Nepalese. In fact, it was mentioned that the reason for not focusing on students as a target group is that they may disturb the tourists while watching the exhibition. This narrow focus on tourists is further stressed in the display boxes of the exhibition where most signs covering the history of the artefacts are only in English.

3.2.2 Effectiveness

Achievement of objectives

Restoration

If the project is narrowly defined as aiming at the complete restoration of an important palace building, then the degree of fulfilment of this objective is high. Even 10 years after the completion of the works, the building represents an illustrative example of how a traditional building can be restored in combination with modern building techniques and materials.

Museum

All of the stakeholders interviewed (such as DoA, UNESCO and local community groups) agreed that the museum and the exhibition was very well done - a state of the art example of displaying the artefacts which cannot be found in any other museum in Nepal. However, it was also mentioned that the infrastructure was rather inflexible and did not allow for changing exhibitions. For example, the display cases were inflexible, as they could not easily be changed to display a bigger or smaller artefact.

¹⁰ There was no reference to the existence of the museum in the official brochure received from Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City when paying the entrance fee of NPR 200 as a foreign tourist.

As regards the fulfilment of the broader objectives, the following is mentioned in the project documentation:

- **Reinforcement of cultural identity:** As referred to above, stakeholders refer to the important reinforcement of cultural identity or dignity, which the project has contributed to. However, the project has not devised a proper indicator to measure the degree to which this objective has been realised.
- **Capacity building:** Training of local craftsmen, artisans, and technicians was undertaken during renovation works. At times more than 150 local people were working on the project. During the five years of implementation, project management was primarily done by foreign experts. After completion a Museum Board was established. A museum management was also established with tasks related to proper maintenance of the buildings, garden, and the museum installations.
- **Economic independence:** a model of economic independence was developed based on the museum entrance fee and the leasing out the museum cafe, the shops, and the gallery.

Project management

According to the project documentation and the 1998 evaluation of the project, the project was implemented with extensive use of foreign experts (in the project documentation 17 foreign experts are mentioned being involved from 1990 to 1997). The evaluation team has not received any information that questions the effectiveness of the foreign experts. The project documentation states that of the total project expenditures (1982-1997) of EUR 2,2 million, short- and long-term foreign consultants consumed 49% of the costs.

Clearly, the foreign expert component in the budget is high. These costs could most likely have been lower with the gradual involvement of fewer foreign experts and with more use of local or regional experts (e.g. from India or Thailand) – including project management tasks – as the project moved along.

Another related issue is that of the efficiency of a project with no competitive bidding process. While it may be argued that it follows from the concept of a "turn-key" project that, for example, technical assistance is already agreed upon before the project is initiated, it clearly raises the issue of cost-efficiency and whether costs could have been lower if a competitive bidding process had been followed.

Likewise, the procedures for hiring foreign experts followed internal project procedures - i.e. decided by the project management - rather than, for example, through government procedure. Hence, from a Nepalese perspective foreign experts were "provided" to the project rather than "selected" by the government among qualified candidates as is the norm within development work.

Technical aspects

The majority of the restoration work is supported by conservators, architects, and archaeologists in Nepal. The Patan Museum has created a standard of conservation work serving a clear and useful purpose. Opinions are however split in respect to the decisions taken for the reconstruction of the east wing of the palace. As it was destroyed by earthquake in 1934 there are no records of its original appearance. Thus, a key element of the restoration work was the inclusion of new features in the design of the east wing. Examples of the new features include:

- From the outside visible steel beams
- Physical changes inside the historical building in order to adapt it to its new function as a museum.
- Changing and adding staircases resulting in a more efficient circulation of visitors
- Non load-bearing partition walls were removed
- Traditional mud floors were replaced with handmade terracotta tiles
- Lime plaster used on the walls instead of the old mud plaster
- Steel beams to carry the roof construction instead of traditional wood construction

Both this evaluation and the evaluation carried out in 1998 found local specialists that disagree with the solutions adopted, including in the DoA. They would have preferred a more traditional way of construction. Without going into an academic discussion concerning which conservation approach is correct and which is not, the evaluation did not find evidence to support that consultation processes were undertaken in order to reach an approach that local specialists could accept. This falls much in line with the general implementation modality – the "turnkey" approach, which did not build on a close cooperation with the local counterparts on the implementation of the project and the selection of restoration approach. However, this issue has been a key point of several of the discussions with local stakeholders and remains a point of contention.

3.2.3 Sustainability

Financial sustainability

Since the project was finished in 1997 it has been a self-sustainable entity. The museum primary depends on two sources of income: 1) Entrance fee, which in 1997 was NRs 10 for local visitors, NRs 30 for tourists from SAARC countries and NRs 120 for other visitors. Today, the rates have increased (NRs 10/50/250 respectively); and, 2) Income from lease agreement for the courtyard café, the gift shop and occasional exhibitions in the gallery and in the open arcades

(mostly on daily fee basis). Two guest studios were also constructed on the top floor overlooking the garden, but due to security problems, they have never been used for the intended purpose. In addition, the main courtyard is sometimes used for cultural performances by local groups based on a daily fee. Over the past 10 years the museum has saved NRs 500,000-600,000 annually, amounting to total savings of approx. NRs. 4-5 million. These funds are accumulated for i.a. larger maintenance costs. However, it also indicates that the museum is to a large extent independent from government subsidies.

The museum employs 25 staff, 15 of which are public employees that receive their salary from the Department of Archaeology. The 15 staff members were previously employed at the Bronze Collection Museum, which Patan Museum took over.¹¹ The other nine staff members are employed directly by the Patan Museum. In the process of establishing greater independence for the museum funding all required staff directly from the museum budget is being considered. This will result in increased staff costs of approximately 10% and but will allegedly not jeopardise the current financial standing of the museum.¹² However, it could have been expected that this issue would have been solved long ago as part of focusing on the management side of the project. Nevertheless, no staffing plan was ever developed indicating the required core staff needed to run the museum.

Institutional sustainability

Directors of the museum have over the past almost 10 years been appointed by the DoA in line with regular civil service appointments, in many instances for only a one or two year appointment. The directors have not had previous experience in management or in running a museum.

The museum is supervised by a museum board, which is currently led by the Joint Secretary and Chief of Culture Preservation and Promotion Division in the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation. The mode of operation of the Board is not based on regular business plans or a medium and long-term strategies or forecasts of income. Once a year, a one-page budget is presented with various budget lines and three columns for "Approved budget", "Actual expenditures" and "Proposed budget for next year". The evaluation team was not presented with any documents concerning future plans for developing the museum further as an important cultural institution in the local environment. Likewise, there was no evidence of cultural cooperation between the museum and relevant Austrian institutions.

In summary, in implementing the project it is clear that too little attention was given to how to develop a professionally run museum with sufficient

¹¹ The Bronze Collection was previously located in the Keshav Narayan Chowk. The artefacts are now displayed in the Patan Museum.

¹² In this context it is worth noting that the number of visitors has decreased with the worsened political situation in Nepal. In 2004, the total number of visitors was 43,329 out of which the number of foreign visitors was 13,716. This is equal to roughly 5% of the tourists visiting the Kathmandu Valley. According to the museum management, the percentage is similar for 2005

management capacity to ensure a living, dynamic and visionary institution. Since the DoA agrees with the need to do something now, there may be ideas on to run the museum better in the modality of the independent Tourism Board.

3.2.4 Effects

Effects on human, social and economic development

As the Patan Museum Project has been finished for almost 10 years, it can be expected that there are concrete effects of the project. The most important effects can be summarised as follows:

- The project saved an important historical building from collapse. Today the building stands, perhaps stronger than ever, and serves as an illustration of how to carry out a high-quality and high cost restoration project.
- A modern, state-of-the-art museum has been established and informs primarily tourists but also Nepalese visitors about some aspects of Nepali history;
- Skills of local craftsmen and artisans have been further developed through being a part of the project;
- Sound technical solutions of the restoration works have been replicated by other buildings in the Kathmandu valley;
- Some local clubs (music, dances) use the museum courtyard as a venue based on a rental agreement (5000 NRs per day + electricity). A few Newari festivals are even free of the rental charge; and
- The restoration works of the palace have raised public awareness of the importance of protecting the cultural heritage in Nepal.

The evaluation team has also assessed the degree to which the museum fully exploits its ability and potential to be a cultural meeting place for the local community. Most of the stakeholders confirm that this was not the case. As one of the stakeholders emphasised, "The museum is run just like a government office, showing little initiative, innovation and entrepreneurship".

Another issue that should be questioned is the economic trickle-down effect on the local population. The main attractions on the Patan Durbar Square are the many monuments and, to a lesser extent, the museum. Based on interviews with local shopkeepers it was not confirmed that a trickle-down effect is happening even 10 years after the opening of the museum.

3.2.5 Responsiveness

Participation, ownership, empowerment

While it should be emphasised that the project responded to an urgent need for saving an important cultural heritage from collapse, Patan Museum was a predominantly technically-oriented task where the contribution to development has never been clearly spelled out. The technical results achieved are generally recognised as work of high quality and an example for future museums in South Asia.

On the other hand, several stakeholders confirm that the "turn-key" concept did not allow for a "culture of collaboration" to develop during project implementation. Decision-making was fully in the hands of the foreign experts and there was no focus on developing the capacity of the primary national counterpart, the Department of Archaeology, to eventually be able to handle similar comprehensive and complex renovation projects on their own.

After 10 years of existence, the museum stands more or less as it was left after completion. While it is in accordance with the stated objective of the project to cater primarily towards tourists, the evaluation has found enough evidence from discussions with local cultural groups and city administration to question such a narrow definition of the target group. The museum has clearly not developed much further as an institution, which clearly represents a missed opportunity to also play the role of a "cultural and educational institution". To this effect, many of the local stakeholders did not feel any ownership towards the museum as they were not invited in to become a part of the institution.

As mentioned previously, the museum has a fixed exhibition and one gallery reserved for changing exhibitions. However, a fairly high daily charged is levied on the users of the gallery - similarly to a private gallery - with the result that there are few organisations that can finance the rental costs.

Overall, the museum is clearly conceived mainly from a technical and economic/financial self-sustainability perspective with a narrow focus on attracting foreign tourists - and not local Nepalese - perhaps most clearly signalled via the display signs, which are posted only in English. The project has missed the opportunity of developing the institutional capacity of the museum and enhancing its relevance within the wider Nepalese society by for instance, becoming an active and innovative partner in the socio-cultural environment; constituting an attraction for local cultural and arts community; acting as an educational institution for Nepalese children and adults alike; providing free physical space and a meeting point for arts groups; etc.

To make the museum a dynamic actor on the Nepalese cultural scene, the museum's board would need to develop a strategic vision and an action plan indicating how to realise this, which may in turn require capacity-building of the board related to the task of strategic planning and the roles and possibilities of a proactively engaged museum.

3.3 Assessment of reference projects

3.3.1 Eco-Himal: Cultural Cooperation A

Relevance

The initiation of this broad umbrella project is to some extent relevant to the priorities of the 10th Plan of the Government of Nepal where support to "targeted programs" is one of four key priorities. Hence, the project's focus on the culture of minority groups and the impact of modernity can be justified in relation to government priorities. As regards the ADC focus on poverty reduction, the project can be justified as it focuses on the broader aspects of poverty where support to the culture of groups and communities is seen as important.

The focus on small-scale interventions in the field of "living culture" that supports the further development of important cultural events and cultural products is a field where there are opportunities to provide important support to key cultural activities and events. Eco Himal is also working with competent partners, which are both good arts professionals but also socially and politically active as agents of change. Eco Himal also works proactively in the field of focusing on identifying relevant partners in the arts environment. Once a partner has been identified Eco Himal provides support as necessary but is also ready to let the organisation work independently if it has the capacity to do so.

A key theme that runs through many of the supported activities is the focus on the impact of the arrival of modernity in Nepal. Examples span from CD productions of vanishing folk music, documentary film production, exhibitions, and research.

In some of the activities there is also a focus on giving visibility to Austria through e.g. a photo exhibition (Alps yesterday - Himalaya today) documenting similarities in lifestyles, labour and hardship in current Nepal with Austria 50 years ago.

Further, the focus on gender issues highlights an important facet of Nepalese society, where NGO action is highly relevant. Many of the interventions focus on empowerment of the target groups through stimulating reflection on identity and stimulation of creativity with a gender perspective in focus.

The interventions also fulfil most of the other principles in the Federal Act on Development Cooperation (i.e. local ownership, consideration of cultural aspects, gender equality; and needs of children and disabled persons). These dimensions are directly or indirectly reflected in the interventions. For example, there is an indirect focus on children through the support for the single women group, Women for Human Rights, which enables the involved mothers to send their kids to school.

During the full project period (1999-2005), 18 publications have been supported. The amount of support for each publication is modest (about EUR160- 1050) but the total support makes it an important intervention area

under component A. It is outside the scope of the present evaluation to go into an evaluation of the content of each of these publications, but the process of selection of books for support, publishing, marketing and distribution/sale needs a critical review from the Eco-Himal side. The problem is that Eco-Himal in some cases establishes a “closed supply system” in which books are written by their own staff members or associates, approved by the organisation itself and distributed to shops without a close monitoring of their sale and demand. There is no solid documentation and justification for each production, outlining a needs analysis, aims, and specific objectives of the respective publication. Thereby, in some cases it remains unclear if the subsidized book production mainly represents the interest of the authors from Eco-Himal and the organisation itself - or if there is a real demand among the target groups in the Nepali society. The criteria for supporting the respective books are not clear. This is not to conclude that these books are not relevant - as this would require an extended survey including interviews with external specialists in the respective field as well as sales statistics, but it is to highlight the need for a more transparent and demand-driven approach. In this respect, it would be relevant to base book production on external applications combined with a needs analysis, as in the case of support to other component A projects, as well as to follow-up through the distributor on the number of books sold. One way of designing a more transparent system would also be to involve a few external “experts” to get their perspective on the relevance of coming publications.

Another issue is the public relation material that Eco Himal has published. The evaluation team has seen examples of brochures and leaflets, which are supposed to promote cultural events but also contain rather lengthy descriptions of Eco-Himal and its projects. This makes reading cumbersome and the reader is left with an impression that promotion of Eco Himal is equally as important as the substantive issues, which are also presented. Thereby, it becomes unclear to the outside world, if it is an NGO-project that is being presented or if it is a professional piece of art and the cultural event as such that is the focus. This is not to question the need for Eco-Himal to market the organisation, but the purposes should be clear and kept separately. Thus, marketing may take the form of “pure Eco-Himal information material”, which may be covered by Eco-Himal own funds. Alternatively, marketing may simply be a logo and a reference to the ECO-Himal home page in public relation material, which is covered by ADA project funds.

Sustainability

In some of the assessed activities, which Eco Himal has supported there is a tendency to focus on the development of the product and less so on the replicability of the product. For example, some of the exhibitions only happened once or twice. Eco Himal acknowledges that replicability is essential in order to ensure impact in such a dispersed country and there is an effort to repeat some of the activities also outside the Kathmandu Valley. The explanation why this does not occur in all activities is that the budgets are minimal. However, activities need to be thought through in order to ensure that the messages can be delivered widely in the country.

A positive element is that capacity building is a focus area in several of the interventions and is being supported through the professional guidance and monitoring of Eco Himal. However, capacity building could be further strengthened by focusing on capacity building not only as a management aspect of the partner organisations but also in the development of the actual events. There should be more focus on working with networks and using peer review (etc.) as through this broadening the scope of the activities and generating synergy with other connected activities.

The evaluation has reviewed several press clippings during the period of implementation covering the many different activities. The amount of press clippings and the coverage of the different activities indicate a professional handling of the press, which is an important element in ensuring that effects can be channelled to a broader group of stakeholders.

Effects

What may run counter to supporting many seemingly relevant activities is the tendency to spread resources too thinly on too many sectors. In this regard, the project has supported activities in many sectors; in fact, so many that it seems likely that effects could have been strengthened with support to fewer sectors and bigger projects.

In order to ensure more lasting effects and impact in the future, it is necessary to consider the short-term character of the co-financing modality and its influence on the impact. Clearly, framework agreements or longer-term partnership will be required in order to strengthen the effects of the projects as well as the capacity of the partner organisations. A longer-term partnership with local organisations would also enable the partners to come up with different types of activities e.g. plan a series of activities over more than one year. This would probably also lead to fewer and bigger projects. Likewise, Eco Himal could also proactively announce a theme or two for which funds were available.

Integration of culture as a cross-cutting issue

The supported activities are generally implemented by community-based organisations and NGOs. It is the impression of the evaluation team that local partners have a high degree of autonomy and ownership when implementing and managing the activities. However, at the same time there appears to be a continuous process of critical sparring and support by Eco Himal's project management to ensure smooth implementation of the activities. Both of these factors support the process of including culture as and when relevant.

However, on the other hand, ensuring that culture is taken into account as a crosscutting issue is not evident. A clear guideline/checklist with project selection criteria should be developed, which effectively addresses crosscutting issues in new project activities.

3.3.2 Rolwaling Eco-Tourism Project

Relevance

The project is highly relevant for the local population since poor soil fertility, difficult topography and poor accessibility provides few development opportunities in other sectors than tourism. Due to the attractiveness of the nature, eco-tourism is one of the few options for poverty reduction. Beneficiaries confirmed the relevance of the project for improving their livelihood, especially as the project applies a double strategy of community based eco-tourism and integrated rural development. This is seen as particularly advantageous under the current situation of the insurgency during which tourism has decreased. Even if the tourism development does not unfold as envisaged, the involved communities still benefit from social and physical infrastructure improvements – in particular improved environmental and domestic hygiene and the fostering of democratic decision-making processes.

The project is in line with ADA's overall poverty reduction objective and is relevant from the point of view of ADA's comparative advantage of experience within tourism development in mountainous areas. Working through Eco Himal adds to the relevance as the organisation has long-term experience in mountain tourism development and the Himalaya region and is firmly rooted in the local population through its staff recruited from the project area.

Sustainability

The evaluation of the first phase conducted in 2000 already highlighted the improvements of hygiene conditions and environmental sanitation as a result of the project. The evaluation team also got the impression of a fairly clean environment. According to project staff this is in sharp contrast to the situation before project start when "it was a challenge to walk through the villages" because of garbage dumps and indiscriminate defecation. This indicates some positive changes in attitudes and behaviour among the population in the project area, which are likely to persist in the future.

It also appears that the CDCs/TDCs – which are registered cooperative organisations will continue to function in the future. According to the former project coordinator, CDCs/TDCs were formed deliberately because there were no existing community-based organisations that could be used as the organisational mechanism of the project. The existing Village Development Committees, which are the lowest level of the political-administrative system, were, at the time of project start-up, found unsuitable because they did not reflect the interests of the communities as a whole. During the insurgency, the Village Development Committees were suspended whereas the Community Development Committees (CDC) could continue operating to a certain degree.

As far as the social and tourism infrastructure facilities are concerned, there is some indication of a slowly evolving preparedness to pay for the services and to engage in routine maintenance. For example, in one of the villages, people pay a monthly fee for the water supply and there is a plumber who takes care of the system. In general, the impression was rather that sustainability of the established infrastructure is at risk for a variety of reasons:

- The technical quality of some of the facilities described below renders maintenance difficult and likewise, the concept of maintenance and its financial implications are not widely understood. Taking into consideration that the concept of maintenance is almost absent from Nepali culture and mentality, the project should have given sensitisation and training in this regard more importance than reflected in Appendix 7.
- The project/Eco Himal has been networking with a number of tour operators and travel agencies and published a cultural tour book. According to project staff, however, neither marketing material (e.g. a folder with description of the project area and detailed maps) nor a marketing strategy vis-à-vis the primary target group (i.e. tourists) has been developed.
- So far, the CDCs/TDCs have not been properly prepared for taking on management responsibilities and there is no proper exit strategy. While a number of management training sessions were conducted, due to the Maoist insurgency educated and trained people had to leave the region for political reasons. New CDC members were re-trained, but the management capacity is still weak. As reflected in appendix 7, training has focused on other than management and maintenance issues. The timeframe before closing of the project next year is too narrow to rectify this situation since it will take considerable time to provide on the job training and follow up for committees and staff in tourism management. Taking into consideration the recently signed peace agreement between the Maoists and the Nepalese government, it would be worthwhile for ADA to consider extending the project with a suitable amount of time to boost the management capacity.

Operation, maintenance, and technical quality of infrastructure facilities

During the trekking tour a few social infrastructure facilities as well as the tourism infrastructure could be observed. Although according to Eco Himal, the installations are in accordance with local standards, the evaluation team considers the technical quality and the current level of maintenance to be generally poor. This makes future up keeping, in particular of joint facilities that are used by many people, uncertain.

Among the observed social infrastructure, typical deficiencies were: unauthorised WSS connections, leaking taps, missing toilet doors, toilets constructed in such a way that they are difficult to keep clean.

As far as tourism infrastructure is concerned, the evaluation team found several of the lodges and their equipment unfinished or in bad condition (although responsibility for the lodges etc. was handed over to the CDCs by February 2006) and several sections of the trekking trail were difficult to access (for more detailed information see Appendix 6).

Adding to these deficiencies is the fact that the concept of operation and maintenance (O&M) and appropriate awareness is not very widespread among TDC members.

When asked about provision for maintenance in the TDC budget, one member responded that education, health, and loans for members have highest priority. Maintenance was not yet considered a priority. This is partly due to the fact that culturally these are new ideas which will take time to be absorbed fully. This is also due to the Maoist insurgency which has evicted office holders, literates and the most talented and trained (by Eco Himal) members of the community.

Integration of culture as cross-cutting issue

Participation, empowerment, local ownership

Eco Himal is committed to the partnership approach with maximum involvement of the local population and local experts. These principles were fully applied by the project. The beneficiaries participated in several ways: They contributed with their labour to all infrastructure development and shared the costs of some of the structures; they formed and participated in community development committees and made decision concerning pace and direction of their own development. With the words of one of the project staff "Ten years ago there was nothing. All what you see has been done by the local population".

However, because of the political situation, many of the more dynamic members of the communities have left the area and therefore local ownership and empowerment have not materialised to the extent that could be expected under different circumstances. As a result it seems that Eco Himal has assumed the role of implementer rather than of facilitator. To the question: what will happen after closing of the project? A female member of one of the TDC executive committee responded: "There will be many conflicts because Eco Himal has been doing everything here. The infrastructure facilities have to be maintained but the communities have no money".

Ethnicity

The project area is characterised by a complex socio-cultural situation where social differentiation goes hand in hand with ethnic-religious affiliations. The classical Hindu castes and sub-castes are represented as well as a multitude of Buddhist and animist ethnic groups. It appears that in the selected wards the project has made an effort to involve all these groupings as decision makers and beneficiaries. The 2000 evaluation found that "work is considerably more easy and relatively homogenous villages whose inhabitants belong to the same ethnic groups or caste". Together with the remoteness of the project area, low levels of education, and high levels of migration and absenteeism, this socio-cultural complexity has made the project's participatory approach a cumbersome and time consuming challenge. The Project staff has been

recruited from within the project area and this has made this challenge manageable. As staff are familiar with the local socio-cultural conditions and speak the local language, they are more likely to be culturally sensitive.

Gender

The situation of women in the project area is precarious. Especially among Hindu castes, women are considered inferior whereas they enjoy higher levels of equality and freedom in the Buddhist and animist ethnic groups. One female interviewee characterised the situation of women as follows: "women have low status and they are the most backward". Most women are illiterate and they do generally not engage in public meetings and raise their voice.

The Rolwaling eco-tourism project has an explicit gender focus and has conducted many activities to address the problem of gender in-equality. Some of the training courses have targeted women as a separate group, and women's groups were formed to receive literacy and English courses, "women development courses", income generating activities etc. To encourage women to participate in the CDCs, it was decided that each household should be represented by two persons. Likewise, female membership in the executive committees has been encouraged and the evaluation team has met quite a few self-conscious and outspoken members. There are also several female employees among project staff.

According to people who know the project area from before the Rolwaling eco-tourism project, over the last ten years the situation of women has improved considerable and women are more actively taking part in community matters and local decision making.

For the project, Eco Himal has published a tourist guide "The Gauri Shankar Trekking Area" which among other things introduces the reader to the socio-cultural and religious context of the project area. While religion, ethnicity and caste are discussed at length, apart from mentioning that "like other ethnically Tibetan peoples, the Sherpa are known for their relative gender equality" the guidebook does not address gender issues.

Porters and Other Trekking Staff

Trekking tourism in Nepal has traditionally not necessarily catered for porters' and other trekking staff's welfare in the form of access to appropriate accommodation, suitable equipment and sources of food supply and they are generally not met with sufficient respect. Unless carefully planned for, it may be difficult for trekking staff to fulfil their needs for shelter and food in remote areas as they depend on the good will of private families who may or may not be able to provide such services.

Ethically acceptable eco-tourism therefore should take the needs of trekking staff into consideration. The lodges all include accommodation for a limited number of porters and in some lodges small shops will be established. If porters are recruited from the project area they have friends or relatives along the trekking route and generally prefer to stay overnight with them. However, with increasing tourism in the future trekking staff's needs may exceed local

capacity. Therefore, similar to gender inequality, it would appear as a must to provide some guidance on how to deal with porters and other trekking staff in the above-mentioned cultural tour book - which is not the case.

Culture of cooperation and intercultural communication

Apart from the Austrian project coordinator during 10 years and occasional visits by the chairman of Eco Himal the project worked primarily with local staff from the project area and was grounded locally and enjoyed large autonomy. Intercultural communication was therefore limited and was primarily promoted through the tourism project, i.e. the meeting between the visitors and the local population which was generally considered to be positive.¹³

The long term involvement of the Austrian project coordinator secured continuity and stability on the one hand but has also created a sense of dependency on the other hand, especially on the part of the beneficiaries. As phrased by one interviewee "I am sorry that the project coordinator has left. He always showed us the way and now we do not know where to go. We still need him".

¹³ Ten journalists and three film teams from Germany, India and Austria visited the project area and during the insurgency a few hundred tourists per year were registered.

Appendix 1: Programme and Persons Met

Date	Program	Persons Met
Monday, 6.11.06		
13.30	Arrival	
15-18	Introductory briefings	Eco Himal Team: Ms. Renchin Yonzon Ms. Susan Höivik Mr. Phinjo Sherpa Himal Association: Mr. Basanta Thapa
Tuesday, 7.11.06		
7:00	Two team members depart for Rolwaling	
10-11	Interview with Patan Durbar (Palace) Maintenance Official	Ms. Sarswati Singh, Chief, Palace(Durbar) Maintenance Office
11-13	Visit to the Patan Museum and discussion with officials	Mr. Devendra Tiwari, Director/Patan Durbar Museum Mr. Bishnu Pathan, Museum Guide Mr. Suresh Shrestha Gallery In charge/ Patan Durbar Museum
13:15-13:45	Interview with School Master of public school next to the Museum	Mr. Hari Raj Shrestha, Principal
14:15-16:00	Interview with the Department of Archaeology	Mr. Bhim Nepal (Former Director of Patan Darbar Museum) / Presently chief archeologist in the Department of Archaeology
Wednesday, 8.11.06		
9:30-10:30	Interview with UNESCO	Ms Koto Kanno, Head Ms. Elke Selter, International consultant, Culture Section
11:00-12:00	Interaction with Key Informant	Dr. Satya Mohan Joshi Cultural Expert
12:15-13:00	Interaction with Key Informant	Mr. Hari Man Shrestha Chairman/ Kartike Dance Management Committee
1:30-14:00	Visit and interaction at Gurukul (local cultural theater) ,	Mr. Yubraj Ghimire Coordinator

14:30-15:00	Interview with Urban Development through Local Effort (UDLE)/GTZ (German Technical Cooperation)	Mr. Rajendra Pradhanga/ Technical Advisor
15:30-16:30	Interview with Patan Nagar Palika (Municipality) official	Mr. Prem Raj Joshi/ Executive Officer
16:45-17:45	Interview with Key Informant	Dr. Rohit Ranjitkar /Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust
Thursday, 9.11.06		
10:00-10:45	Meeting with Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation	Mr. Jal Krishna Shrestha Joint Secretary, Chief of Culture preservation and promotion division
11:00-12:00	Meeting with Department of Archeology official	Mr. Kosh Pd. Acharya Director General
12:30-13:30	Meeting with Nepal Association for Tour and Travel Agent (NATTA) official	Dr. Hari Sharma CEO
13:45-14:30	Meeting with Lalit Kala Campus official	Mr. Govinda L Singh Dangol Campus chief
15:00-16:00	Meeting with Patan Tourism Board Official	Mr. Gun Kaji Shakya President
16:00-17:00	Interaction with Local Groups and clubs: Jyapu Samaj (Local Group) <i>murdha ghuthi</i> (local group involved in local cultural function – ' <i>Ghode Jatra</i> ' (festival of horse) and performing dead ritual of the locals of patan) Three Star Club (local club involved in organizing functions in the Patan durbar square premises)	Mr Arjun Maharjan/ Secretary Mr. Lalit Krishna Shrestha
Friday, 10.11.06		
09:30-14:00	Eco Himal Partners meeting	
14:00-15:00	Visit and interaction at Single Women Group (working for women and Human right)	Ms. Lily Thapa, Chairperson
15:00-17:00	Visit and interaction at Studio 9 (Painting gallery and Photographers association)	Mr. Sudarshan Karki, Photographer
Saturday, 11.11.06		

9:30-11:30	Focus group discussion - Nepal Heritage Society - Society of Nepalese Architect - Lalitpur Heritage Group (Ngo involved in conservation of Patan Krishna Temple)	Mr. Bishwa Kanta Mainali/President Mr. Gayendra Raj Devkota/General Secretary Mr. Sagar SJB Rana/President and Mr. Prayag Raj Joshi
Afternoon	Visit to Keshar Mahal (Garden of Dreams) Visit to Banepa	
Sunday, 12.11.06		
9:30-10:30	Meeting with Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) official	Mr. Tek Bahadur Dagi, Chief Executive
11:00-15:00	Team meeting prior to debriefing with key stakeholders	
16:00-18:00	Debriefing meeting with Eco Himal	Ms. RENCHIN YONZON Mr. PHINJO SHERPA
16:00-17:30	Debriefing meeting concerning Patan Museum	Mr. Jal Krishna Shrestha, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation official and Mr. Devendra Tiwari, Director/Patan Durbar Museum

Field trek: Rolwaling Eco Tourism Development Project

Date	Program	Persons Met
7-11-06	Travel Kathmandu to Singati Stopover in Charikot/EcoHimal Office Overnight in EcoHimal Field Office in Singati	Mr. Govinda Upadaya, field coordinator Mr. Jaganath Pandee, mobiliser Mr. Rameshwar Khadka, field coordinator Ms. Yangti Sherpa, health worker and mobiliser Mr. Chiring Tamang, technician Mr. Jagat Jirel, office assistant Ms. Devi Shiwakati, Health worker and mobiliser
8-11-06	Trek Singati to Laduk Overnight in community lodge Meet TDC	Mr. Mahesh Malla, TDC chairman Members of TDC Community members
9-11-06	Trek Laduk to Loting Overnight in community lodge Meet TDC	Ms. Dev Kumari Khadka, member of TDC executive committee

		Mr. Bhairab Bahadur Toshi, TDC treasurer Next morning: community meeting incl. TDC chairman
10-11-06	Trek Loting to Bigu Gompa Overnight in monastery Meet monastery representatives Meet TDC chairman, a male member and two female members Visit community lodge Meet one tourist from Belgium	Ms. Digi Sotin, abbess of the monastery Mr. Sange Ngawang, TDC chairman Mr. Ngima Doje, TDC member Ms. Ngima Lamu Sister of Ngima Lamu
11-11-06	Trek Bigu Gompa to Dolangsa Overnight in TDC chairman's house Meet TDC Visit community lodge and meet tourists Meet trekking group (tourists from Austria) in Dolangsa	Mr. Pema Sherpa, TDC secretary Mr. Kami Sherpa, TDC treasurer Ms. Kanchai Sherpa, TDC secretary's mother
12-11-06	Trek Dolangsa to Barhabise Travel to Kathmandu	

Appendix 2: Evaluation Guide for Field Studies

Relevance

Overall strategy and approach:

Role of culture, cultural sensitivity and cultural cooperation in country programming/Local programme/projects; aid effectiveness agenda (donor harmonisation and alignment with partner countries' priorities)

Cultural heritage/cooperation) in partner countries:

Connection with the goals of ADA (poverty reduction); What role do the cultural heritage monuments play for the country (economic, social, cultural/symbolic) and the target population? Political/ideological/economic/ commercial role of monuments? Empowerment role? Conflict preventing/settling role? Identification of target population and their participation in the selection process? Consideration for local traditions for decision making? Identification of needs/priorities for cultural heritage projects; government responsibilities to protect cultural heritage? Visibility of ADC (linkage between projects and the perception/visibility of ADC); Usage of Austrian knowledge and expertise - comparative advantage?

The role of culture in non-cultural projects:

Role of cross-cutting?; Cultural activities as a tool for edu. /awareness raising or as a platform for e.g. reflection on identity, stimulation of creativity, etc.

Effectiveness

Achievement of objectives:

Degree of achievement? Additionality of the assistance? Effects of being culturally sensitive in the activities?

Project management, Coherence/Co-ordination/Collaboration:

Management of interventions cost-efficiently (incl. back-stopping)? Effective usage of human resources? Qualification of ADA staff (intercultural understanding and communication)? Coordination of programmes and structures with other partners and donors? Usage of **M&E routines** to improve projects/programmes (e.g. M&E of cross cutting issues, **indicators**)? Are results being publicized? Status of "Atmosphere" of collaboration? Is information about the project transparent and communicated to the stakeholders? Is ADA responsive to stakeholder inquiries?

Culture as cross-cutting issue:

Inclusion of ethnicity, religion, gender, social values, traditions and structures, local knowledge? Usage of local and traditional know-how and capacity? "traditional vs. modern" experts, artists, scientists, universities, etc. To what extent do Austrian actors integrate the cultural dimension/cross cultural communication in their activities? Have cross-cutting issues such as gender, environment, conflict/peace, human rights, democracy been taken into account?

Sustainability

Institutional / financial arrangements:

Sustainability of institutional structures? Public access and use of facilities? Management arrangements? Maintenance cost? Sources of self-financing, subsidies, user-fees, etc.? What measures to build and preserve local personal / institutional knowledge (archives?); Training of local staff to take over responsibilities?

Technology:

Appropriateness for local needs and circumstances (socially and culturally)? Have stakeholders/beneficiaries participated/been consulted in the choice of technology? Town and area planning? Quality of physical work/craftsmanship? Compliance with agreed quality standards?

Socio-cultural aspects:

Socially and culturally appropriate (e.g. influence on educational institutions)? Links to Austria (networks, cultural exchange)?

Effects

Cultural sensitivity/cross-cutting issues:

Good practices and bad practices (causality, effects)? Usage of ethnicity, religion, gender, social values, traditions, and structures and local knowledge? Poverty reduction: evidence of resources being strengthened (human, social/political and/or material) and of empowerment?

Cultural heritage. Effects on:

Local/target population? Poverty reduction/material and non material resources?

Knowledge, creativity, social debate, social capital, participation, income, employment, tourism, small/micro enterprises, creative industry? Capacity development (planning, management, organisation and physical maintenance)?

Boosting of local cultural practitioners (exhibition halls, performing arts venues, places to exercise literary tradition or enhancing local craftsmanship)? Government fulfilment of obligation to protect World Cultural Heritage (Nepal) and Immaterial Cultural Heritage (Guatemala)? What about Bhutan?

Cultural heritage >> Human development: Stimulation of creativity and psychologically well-being (identity, self-esteem, dignity, self-confidence)?

Contribution to CB (planning, management, organisation and physical maintenance)? Historical sites as learning sites (visits for school children)? >>

Social development: Development of group identity, coherence, common symbols and sense of community/solidarity? Development of social networks?

Reconciliation or peace-building? >> Economic development: Income generation and job-creation for the local community (tourism)? Venue for visual, performing, and/or literary arts or by employing local artisans/craftsmen? >> Democratic

development: Protection of physical and intangible heritage, promotion freedom of expression and the right to cultural diversity? Indigenous peoples and claiming/fulfilment of rights? Discussion among cultural grassroots and CBO?

Organisation of groups and networks at CS level? Increased public understanding and recognition of NGOs and their culture heritage work in terms of role, legitimacy and mandate? Raised public awareness of the importance of preservation and conservation? Usage of historical sites for learning (e.g. visits for school children)?

Unintentional side-effects:

Groups suffered? Or taken advantages from unintentional side-effects?

Commercial use of cultural heritage >> expropriation of the original owners?

Responsiveness

Participation, Ownership, Empowerment:

Role of partners, target groups and key stakeholders in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project? ADA's responsiveness to their priorities and demands? - Is project info transparent and substantial in terms of advances, strategic considerations, and immediate goals and work plans (etc.) and how is the ADA feedback to stakeholder inquiries? Degree of autonomy for the local partners in the implementation and daily management of the project? Involvement in overall decisions? Role of knowledge, experience and skills of local partners and key stakeholders in the preparation and implementation of core activities?

Intercultural understanding and collaboration:

To which degree do the projects make use of intercultural communication/ networking / exchange of culture and knowledge? If so, how? (within the partner country, South and South /region, North and South)?

Appendix 3: ADC Policies and Guidelines

Summary of policy and strategic framework for Austrian Cooperation and relevant regional, sector and thematic guidelines and country programme

Federal Act on Development Cooperation (Federal Government of Austria)

Objectives: Poverty reduction; peace and security; promotion of democracy, and rule of law; human rights and good governance.

Four principles: local ownership; consideration of cultural aspects; gender equality; needs of children and disabled persons.

Role of culture and cultural cooperation: Within the broad poverty perception that is applied in the Act, development and poverty reduction are seen as the result of a combination of economic as well structural, institutional, and social change. This cross-dimensional understanding of poverty serves as the basis for the integration of the cultural dimensions of development into ADC. In accordance with the guiding principles, cultural aspects should be taken into consideration in all ADC activities, but the concept of culture is not defined in more detail and it has not been operationalised in strategies, programmes, and guidelines.

Appendix 4: List of References

ADA files - Detailbestimmungen, Zwischenberichte und Jahresberichte

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Appendix 5: Assessment of the facilities in the visited lodges

<i>Village</i>	<i>Bedrooms</i>	<i>Kitchen</i>	<i>Sanitation facilities</i>	<i>Hot water solar panel</i>	<i>Solar panel for lightning</i>	<i>Camp site and facilities</i>	<i>Trail condition</i>
Laduk	Beds available; mattresses missing	Not completed	Three toilets and one bathroom function	Not yet available	Light available in all rooms	Good condition	Good
Loting	Beds available; mattresses missing	Not completed	Three toilets and one bathroom function, but need to be cleaned	Available, one tank dripping and no drainage at tap	Light available in one room only	Could not be inspected but looks alright	Some landslides not removed; walk through terraces not user friendly
Bigu Gompa*	Beds available; mattresses missing; generally very bad condition	Very bad condition	Very bad condition	Not yet available	Not yet available	Very bad condition, complaints received from tourists	Some landslides not removed;
Dolangsa	Not yet furnished	Not yet equipped	Three toilets and one bathroom function, but need to be cleaned	Not yet available	Not yet	Not yet	Good; apart from lots of litter towards Barhabise
Karthali	New lodge under construction; progress: foundation in process						

* The lodge in Bigu Gompa was used by Maoist cadres for a 2-month training camp. They damaged not only the electrical system but destroyed some other facilities. For several months, lodge and campsite were used as the area headquarters of the rebels.

Appendix 6: Overview of Training Courses

<i>Number</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Details</i>
120	English teacher's training	6 times x 20 groups
100	Community leadership training	5 times x 20 CDCs
85	Community management training	5 times x 17 CDCs
3	Cooperative management training	n.a.
3	Community lodge management training	n.a.
28	Community campsite management training	2 times x 14 groups
108	Basic English language training	6 times x 18 groups
40	School health & sanitation awareness training (in cooperation with UNICEF)	2 times x 20 schools
7	First Aid Training	n.a.
6	Family planning awareness training	3 times x 2 camps
50	Sanitation and health awareness training (in cooperation with health posts)	n.a.
80	Non-formal education training (adults) Basic, medium and advance level	4 times x 20 Groups
2	Plumbing training	n.a.
21	Kitchen garden training	n.a.
2	Infrastructure management training	n.a.
2	Improved cooking stove installation training	n.a.
14	CDC financial management training	2 times x 7 groups
1	Tourism management training for CDC and staff members	n.a.