

Feasibility Studies Prove Chhipaharmai Rural Municipality As Potential Pilot Site

As the country slowly opened up after a disturbing second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, IWMI conducted a survey at two sites in Nepal Tarai to assess the feasibility of installing a micro grid-connected solar irrigation pump (SIP) pilot as part of the ongoing SoLAR project in Nepal. The site at the Chhipaharmai Rural Municipality in Parsa was found to be a potential site for the pilot project post the feasibility study.

IWMI's team comprising Shisher Shrestha (National Researcher) and Nabin Baral (Consultant - Videographer) visited Chhipaharmai Rural Municipality (RM) from 13-14 September 2021. The main objectives of the visit were:

- To brief the local government about the findings from the feasibility survey and bring them on board for the pilot project, and
- To interview the local government, farmers, and stakeholders for a short video documentary.

After sharing the survey findings, the local government officials and the Chairperson took a keen interest in the proposed project. They acknowledged that the farmers did not need irrigation water at all times, and most of the energy generated from the solar panels was wasted. Instead, connecting these SIPs to form a micro-grid will help earn an additional income for the farmer and the rural municipality. Likewise, the fund could be used for covering the maintenance costs of SIPs. The micro grid-connected SIP will also improve the reliability of the SIP as the farmers could access irrigation water even on non-sunny days.

The team interviewed Mr Manoj Gupta, Chhipaharmai Rural Municipality Chair and Mr Devnath Shah, Chief Administrative Officer. They highlighted the work conducted by the Rural Municipality in implementing solar energy projects such as solar-powered irrigation, solar streetlights, etc. Other than the subsidized systems provided by AEPC, the rural municipality has implemented projects using their funds. The rural municipality committed some budget as a local contribution for the project.

Two junior technical assistants (JTA) facilitated the field visits, and it was learnt that they provided technical support to the farmers in the agricultural sector. The JTAs facilitated meetings with the local

farmers, and Nabin Baral interviewed two farmers. The farmers seemed enthusiastic about the proposed pilot once they learned about access to irrigation water, even during non-sunny days.

Photos from the field



*Nabin Baral interviewing Mr Bhulan Kumar Shah (JTA, Chhipaharmai RM) and Mr Zariff Hussein (former AEPC Official).
Photo: Shisher Shrestha/IWMI*



*Setting the stage for a video interview with Mr Manoj Gupta (centre), Chair, Chhipaharmai RM.
Photo: Shisher Shrestha/IWMI*