

THE ADAPTATION AT SCALE PRIZE: HELPING NEPALESE TO ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The Adaptation at Scale Prize (A@S) was a competition that ran in Nepal between 2016 and 2019. It aimed to encourage participating organisations to increase the impact of their interventions aimed at helping Nepalese communities to cope with climate change.

To this end, A@S contestants had to develop innovative ways to expand or 'scale out' their projects in the same area or to new ones to benefit more communities. Alternatively, they had to 'scale up' their activities, namely embedding them in the policies and programmes of national, provincial or local governments or other actors, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

THE CHALLENGE

Nepal is one of the world's most vulnerable countries to climate change. Interventions that help communities adapt to the effects of climate change are ongoing and the government is committed to supporting them. However, their full impact has not been realised and lessons have not been shared or applied to the extent that they should have.

A@S incentivised participants to increase the scale of their climate adaptation activities. Specifically, it aimed to:

- Reward and promote innovative ways to link communities with wider networks and expand the reach of local adaptation efforts.
- Develop contestants' ability to scale their projects in innovative ways to ensure that communities benefited from the projects delivered by A@S participants.
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IDEAS TO IMPACT

Ideas to Impact is an action-research programme funded by UK Aid delivered by the Department for International Development (DFID).

Ideas to Impact designs and runs innovation prizes to incentivise contestants to find solutions to challenges faced by the poor in low-income countries. These include access to clean energy, water and sanitation, transport and climate change adaptation, in Africa and South Asia.

The programme tests the value of prizes as a non-traditional mechanism to spur behaviour change and socioeconomic development. It has been delivered by an IMC Worldwide-led consortium and evaluated by Itad.

What happened, who benefitted?



38

applications received representing all 7 provinces in Nepal



≈ 40k

beneficiaries of participants' projects



≈ 1,600

people received adaptation training by participants



£500k

total in cash awards for 10 organisations



≈ 57%

of beneficiaries were female



48

partnerships established to deliver Adaptation at Scale projects



18

of 25 participants interviewed planned to continue implementing their initiative



5

organisations launched new projects and 17 added new components to existing projects



FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

Ten NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs) and private companies were awarded £500,000 in total for their projects, out of 27 that competed for the full duration of the prize. Initiatives ranged from raising communities' awareness of climate change adaptation and training them on how to improve their ability to adapt, through to innovative insurance schemes, income-generating activities and building solar-powered water pumps.

Most A@S participants either implemented new projects as a result of the prize or incorporated new activities in existing projects and expanded them to new areas to reach more people.

THE WINNERS

Award (GBP)	Organisation and Project	Description
Large organisations, including international NGOs, national NGOs and private sector organisations		
First place £100,000	Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB)	Their 'Ecosystem-based Commercial Agriculture' project promotes organic farming, drip irrigation and the development of a public-private community alliance to contribute to an ecosystem-based commercial agriculture approach, which is climate-smart, sustainable and innovative.
Second place £75,000	Ithaka Institute for Climate Farming Pvt Ltd	As part of their project, 'Building village economies through climate farming and forest gardening', they undertake activities that help farmers cope with extreme weather events, such as the construction of plastic ponds, payment for carbon capture and biochar-based organic farming.
Third place £50,000	Shikhar Insurance Company Ltd	They have introduced in Nepal a weather index insurance which reduces the risk of income loss for farmers and provides them with immediate relief, unlike the traditional crop-based insurance model.
Honorary Prize - Technology £12,500	Centre for Rural Technology Nepal (CRT/N)	As water sources are drying up, CRT/N supplies water through hydraulic ram pumps. All households are connected through the irrigation pipes and farmers are able to cultivate vegetables throughout the year.
Honorary Prize - Inclusion £12,500	Dalit Welfare Organisation	They work with landless Dalit people, who are considered untouchable in Nepal and are victims of discrimination, by employing them in riverbed farming, which improves their economic status.
Small organisations, including local NGOs, CBOs and small private sector organisations		
First place £100,000	Community Development and Advocacy Forum Nepal (CDAFN)	Their project, 'Water Resources Management for Disaster Risk Reduction and Livelihood improvement in Ratu River', aims to tackle food insecurity due to the desertification of water courses by developing multiple use water systems.
Second place £75,000	Partnership Aid Centre Nepal (PACE-Nepal)	Their disaster risk reduction initiatives aim to improve food security of remote communities through the construction of greenhouses, which allow seasonal and nonseasonal vegetable farming and irrigation canals, as well as increase their disaster preparedness through training.
Third place £50,000	Sundar Nepal Sanstha	They work to improve the economic, health, and nutrition status of households vulnerable to climate change through climate smart agriculture. This includes drip irrigation, integrated pest management and compost as well as the use of eco-friendly technology such as installation of solar-powered pumps to lift water.
Honorary Prize - Sustainability £12,500	Tinjure Raatpokhari Community Forest User Group	As part of their 'Own Effort Own Practice for Climate Change Adaptation' initiative, they work with local communities, by engaging them in forest management and water source protection.
Honorary Prize - Governance £12,500	Multipurpose Development Society (MPDS)	MPDS provides communities with access to water by building multiple use water systems, so they can irrigate and grow vegetables. They also train communities on smart agriculture techniques such as drip irrigation so they can sell surplus amount in the market and increase their income.

VALUE FOR MONEY

To understand A@S's value for money, Itad evaluators compared it against its expectations, which it exceeded. A@S was implemented to budget and resulted in more applications, partnerships and projects worthy of winning a prize than originally planned, awarding 10 winners instead of eight. It benefited nearly 40,000 people, compared to the 15,000 anticipated, of whom most were women and marginalised groups.

Itad also assessed A@S against a grant-funded project with similar aims, the Scaling-up Climate Smart Agriculture in Nepal (CSA), funded by the Climate Development Knowledge Network. A@S and CSA achieved similar results in terms of value for money. A@S costs were higher than the CSA, but the prize benefited more people and stimulated new projects, technologies and partnerships, while CSA trialed existing practices with a small group of new users. CSA's objectives were less ambitious, so were easier to achieve. More generally, prizes are less prescriptive than grants, which reduces control over outcomes but provides more room for innovation. Unlike grants, prizes also result in multiple solutions to a problem.

Most participants were already working on climate adaptation before A@S, which raises the question of what achievements can be attributed to the prize. On the other hand, 23 organisations reported internal and external investments of £1,331,781 to deliver their projects, almost three times the cash awarded.

Plans to continue implementing initiatives are realistic. Eight organisations intend to finance their projects with the cash they have won, even though this is not a prize condition. The recognition they have received and the opportunity to showcase their initiatives has boosted their motivation and bodes well for future scaling.

IMPACT

A@S raised awareness of the concepts of climate change adaptation and scaling among local governments, project partners and communities. It also showcased best adaptation practice and encouraged the establishment of 48 partnerships.

Twenty participants engaged local governments to fund and implement their projects, which helped them influence plans and policies. Some collaborated with CBOs and NGOs, worked with communities and linked them up with others, and even established new community groups. Meanwhile, activities organised by the prize, such as the award ceremony, built political capital by engaging the national government.

Communities participated in project activities and invested their own resources. Meanwhile, the projects delivered by A@S participants increased their ability to adapt to climate change by improving their knowledge, skills, income and health. The evidence suggests that these benefits outweighed the potentially negative impact of their investment.

A@S also achieved some effects that were not explicitly targeted, such as open innovation, by engaging actors that had not worked in climate adaptation before.

The prize also maximised participation towards the sponsor's aims by engaging 27 different organisations to implement adaptation projects.

Summary of Ideas to Impact prize effects

<p>RAISE AWARENESS</p> <p>Bring awareness and knowledge of an issue to people's attention.</p> 	<p>PROMOTE BEST PRACTICE</p> <p>Identify best practice in a certain field and encourage adoption.</p> 	<p>FACILITATE PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS</p> <p>Raise visibility and bring together people working towards a common goal.</p> 
<p>OPEN INNOVATION</p> <p>Enable new solvers to enter the field of endeavour.</p> 	<p>COMMUNITY ACTION</p> <p>Incentivise communities to take action towards a problem and solution.</p> 	<p>POINT SOLUTION</p> <p>Find a solution to a highly specified problem.</p> 
<p>MAXIMISE PARTICIPATION TOWARDS SPONSOR'S AIMS</p> <p>Benefits are provided by all effective participants, not only winners.</p> 	<p>MARKET STIMULATION</p> <p>Increase or start new economic activity for a particular good or service.</p> 	<p>ALTER THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>Influence policy change in reaction to the other prize effects.</p> 

Expected evidence found in A@S

Unexpected evidence found in A@S

No evidence

THREE KEY LESSONS

1

Small organisations with scarce resources need help to counterbalance the upfront investment to participate in a prize, without the guarantee of winning. Through workshops, visits and communication, the A@S teams helped participants to understand the problem the prize aimed to address and ensure they stay engaged, but barriers around funding, staffing and time constraints remained.

2

Ensuring a fair process is key when organisations of different type and size compete in a prize. The team provided additional training to participants not involved in A@S first stage, which recognised best existing adaptation practice in Nepal and encouraged ideas on scaling them. To level the playing field, they also judged winners according to different categories.

3

Consideration should be made from the start on how to ensure sustainability and scale beyond the duration of the prize, particularly when addressing issues such as climate change adaptation, which require long-term processes.

'HAD THE ORGANIC FARMING NOT BEEN ESTABLISHED HERE, I MIGHT HAVE FLED AWAY FOR FOREIGN EMPLOYMENT. NOW THAT I LEARN FARMING TECHNIQUES BY WORKING HERE, I CAN ADOPT THE SIMILAR METHODS FOR MY FARM WHERE I WORK MORNINGS AND EVENINGS. I AIM TO ESTABLISH A BUSINESS LIKE THIS ORGANIC FARM.'

- Beneficiary of one of the A@S projects

'EVEN IF OUR PROJECT HAS ENDED, THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE WORKING ON THEIR OWN AT PRESENT. THIS IS ONE OF THE GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS.'

- A@S participant

ideas to impact.

Find the full evaluation report at www.ideastoimpact.net

A@S was delivered by IMC Worldwide, with a consortium consisting of the Institute of Development Studies Nepal, Centre for Green Economy Development and Southasia Institute of Advanced Studies as the local implementing agents. The prize was designed by IMC Worldwide, Blue Globe and the Institute of Development Studies



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