

Health Research System In Nepal



Nepal Health Research Council
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC) is the national apical body for promoting health research in the country. NHRC was established in 1991 by an act of parliament and was given the responsibility to promote and coordinate health research for improvement of the health status of people of Nepal.

Since its inception NHRC has focussed its attention on (i) training on research methodology to develop a critical mass of people (ii) technical and ethical review of all proposals submitted to NHRC, by universities, NGO, INGO and national organizations (iii) promotion and coordination in health research.

Other organization and institutions involved in health research were Nepal Academy of Science & Technology (NAST), Research Division of Tribhuvan University, Institution of Medicine (IOM), B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (BPKIHS), Epidemiology Division of Department of Health Services, and private research organization, Center for Research on Environment Health and Population Activities (CREHPA), Vector Borne Disease Research & Training Center (VBDRTC), Infectious & Tropical Disease Research & Prevention Centre (ITDRC), New Era, Mothers and Infant Research Activities (MIRA), Nepal Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology (NESOG), Nepal Nutritional Intervention Project (NNIP) and many other organizations.

Thus, it can be said that the Nepal Health Research Council, the Universities and, schools of medicine, research institutions and individual scientists together constitute the National Health Research System (NHRS). NHRC continues to play a pivotal role in promoting coordination and networking in health research and development of NHRS.

There are many constraints in promoting health research but many **positive steps have already been taken in last five years to strengthen the system.** These include **(A) Mobilization of regular budget from the Government of Nepal, (B) Mobilization of Award from Rockefeller Foundation for "Capability Strengthening of Health Research Network in Nepal,"** and more activities in networking and collaboration. The activities that had been carried out through the award from Rockefeller Foundation included: (i) strengthening of core research support team at NHRC, (ii) strengthening of NHRC library and health research information system, (iii) continued focus on training in research methods, (iv) creation of regional directorate of Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) as focal points for promotion of health research in the regions, (v) development of partnership network, (vi) regular dissemination of research results and (vii) provision of grants for young research workers, **(C) Resources have also been mobilized from international non governmental organization – Mary-knoll Father and Brothers for research promotion.**

While positive steps have been taken, these needs to be strengthened further. Future plans for further strengthening of NHRS in Nepal include the following:

- a) To continue advocacy for health research promotion and mobilization of political support from the government.

- b) Encourage wider participation of stakeholders through more effective networking and creation of National Forum for Health Research (NFHR).
- c) Define role, responsibilities of stakeholders in research promotion.
- d) Disseminate knowledge as public good and create / promote demand for research from the public.
- e) Mobilize financial and human resources from development partners.
- f) Develop tools for assessing performance of NHRC and NHRS
- g) Develop capacity to undertake health policy analyses research and health economic research so as to provide feedback and advice to the government.
- h) Strengthen regional focal points and promote health research in the districts and community.
- i) Collaborate with international universities and research organization to enhance capacity.
- j) Facilitate strengthening of ethical review systems at institutions.
- k) Facilitate development of research environment and promote research culture.
- l) Promote equity in health research.

NHRC is committed to take up all the activities to promote health research in Nepal. NHRC wishes to continue to work with all stakeholders in a true spirit of partnership. The consultative meeting on networking and coordination organized by NHRC, 14-17 August 2001 recommended that NHRC continue to play a pivotal role in promotion of networking and coordination of health research.

The meeting on National Health Research System Development organized by NHRC February 2002 also made a recommendation on the architecture of national health research system and has defined goals, objective functions and strategies of national health research system development NHRC will take these as guideline and work together will all stakeholders to develop the National Health Research System.

All these activities require human and financial resources. NHRC will certainly try to mobilize external resources also, but that would not be enough. More financial resources are required for expanding the training program, to create permanent positions for scientists in NHRC for development a career structure, for promotion of coordination and networking, for improving research environment and for promotion of research culture. It is absolutely essential that Government of Nepal (GoN), MoHP allocate adequate funds for the activities aimed at health research promotion for health development. Investment in health research should be taken as investment in health and national development. NHRC has already made a request to MoHP to allocate at least **2 percent of the total national health budget for health research promotion** as recommended by Ministerial Summit on Health Research held in Mexico on 16-20 November 2004. It is absolutely essential that GoN should allocate this budget to sustain the National Health Research System. NHRC has defined its goals, objectives and strategies for strengthening NHRS. As NHRC has already developed the **National Health Research Policy**, it would need a lot of support from government, World Health Organization (WHO) and research institutions/organizations existed in Nepal and elsewhere. If the political and financial support from Government is forth coming, WHO continues to provide technical support and the partner institutions contribute their part, NHRC will definitely be able to contribute towards development of a sustainable NHRS and thereby, contribute towards betterment of health of the people of Nepal and facilitate national development.

1. Introduction

The Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC) was developed as an example of commitment of the Government of Nepal to promote scientific study and quality research in health in Nepal. It started as Nepal Health Research Committee under the Ministry of Health, chaired by the Secretary of Health in 1982 AD (2039 BS). On 12 April 1991 (29 Chaitra 2047 BS), the committee was developed into the Nepal Health Research Council, a statutory and autonomous body as promulgated by the Nepal Health Research Council Act No. 29 of the year 1991 of HMG. With the consent of the Council of Ministers pursuant of Article 129 of the constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990 enacted the NHRC Act.

Since its inception, NHRC has focussed its attention on strengthening research capability through training of individual on research methods in order to develop a critical mass of people who can develop good quality research proposals. NHRC also serves as the main national institution responsible for technical and ethical review of all proposals submitted by individual health scientists, national authorities, NGO, INGO's and universities. After appropriate review, these proposals were cleared by NHRC. The aim of NHRC has been to maintain high levels of technical and ethical standards of research carried out in Nepal.

A large number of health research carried out in Nepal has been done by individual researchers in their areas of interest. The trend is gradually changing, and of late health research is being undertake through universities, institutions, medical schools, research institutes, NGO and INGO, the Government. World Health Organization, Bilateral and Multilateral agencies, INGO and foundations are providing financial and technical support for health research in the areas of interest of their organizations.

The other organization / Institutions involved in health research are Nepal Academy of Science & Technology (NAST), Research Division of Tribhuvan University, Institution of Medicine (IOM), B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (BPKIHS), Epidemiology Division of Department of Health Services, and private research organization, Center for Research on Environment Health and Population Activities (CREHPA), Vector Borne Disease Research & Training Center (VBDRTC), Infectious & Tropical Disease Research & Prevention Centre (ITDRC), New Era, Mothers and Infant Research Activities (MIRA), Nepal Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology (NESOG), Nepal Nutritional Intervention Project (NNIP) and many other organizations.

This clearly indicates increased interest and involvement of many institutions and organizations in health research. This is a positive development. National Health Research System thus can be said to consist of NHRC and all the organization involved in health research, with NHRC playing a pivotal role in promotion and coordination of health research and maintaining a high level of technical and ethical standards.

2. Goals of National Health Research System

The overall goal of the NHRS is to function as the “Brain” of the health system. It should aim to

- Generate new knowledge for improving health of the people and communicate it to policy and decision-makers, and thus enhance health development.
- Adapt and apply knowledge generated elsewhere for addressing the existing and emerging health problems in the country.
- Contribute to global knowledge base on issues relevant to the country.

3. Specific objectives of NHRS

1. To develop broad strategic vision of health research including short-term and long-term health research strategies for health development,
2. To update national health research policy, agenda and priorities,
3. To promote health research to generate scientific evidence and knowledge and apply it for health development,
4. To develop national health research capacity to address existing and emerging health problems through a program of human resource development in all branches of health research,
5. To promote research environment, research culture, and knowledge based decision-making at all levels,
6. To maintain technical, scientific and ethical standard in health research,
7. To promote coordination, collaboration, networking and partnership in health research with individual scientists, institutions, government, and international research organization,
8. To update the standard procedures and a mechanism to ensure ethics, equity, accountability and transparency in the health research system,
9. To provide consultation, assistance and advice to Government agencies in all matters related to medical research, health policy and health care, and
10. To mobilize national and global resources for health research.

4. Short and long term plan of NHRS

(a) Short Term Plan

1. Continue advocacy for the utilization of research findings.
2. Increase national capacity in health research by continuing the “training workshops in research methodology and proposal writing”.
3. Develop core research support team at NHRC to provide training and assistance in proposal development and implementation for the prospective research worker.
4. Strengthen NHRC library and research information system to provide facilities for literature search and information dissemination.
5. Develop standard procedures and mechanism to ensure scientific and ethical standards in health research.
6. Develop inventory of research scientists and research institutions/organizations.
7. Mobilize financial resources for research promotion.
8. Promote health research at the center, region, district and the community level in priority health problems.
9. Promote dissemination of research results regularly to scientific community and the public.

(b) Long Term Plan

1. Continue advocacy for Health Research Promotion.
2. Mobilize resource for health research.
3. Increase National Capacity for health at higher level by training / recruiting trained scientists in epidemiology, bio-statistics, biotechnology, genetics, Immunology, behavioral science, research informatics, health economics and health policy research.
4. Promote biomedical, clinical and public health research and health system research.
5. Promote research culture by working with University Medical Schools and schools of allied profession to make research and scientific publication a prerequisite for career promotion; work with Government and ministries to promote knowledge based decision making at all levels.
6. Promote /facilitate research environment at university, and schools of health profession.
7. Develop a mechanism for supervision and monitoring of health research.
8. Promote / facilitate dissemination of research findings and utilization of research result in policy and health development.
9. Promote good ethical practice in health research.
10. Promote equity in health research.
11. Develop international linkage and collaboration in multi-centric research.

5. Architecture of National Health Research System

The basic architecture of health research is the Nepal Health Research Council established in 1991 by an act of parliament. NHRC is the national apical body entrusted with the responsibility of promoting health research in the country in order to promote health development.

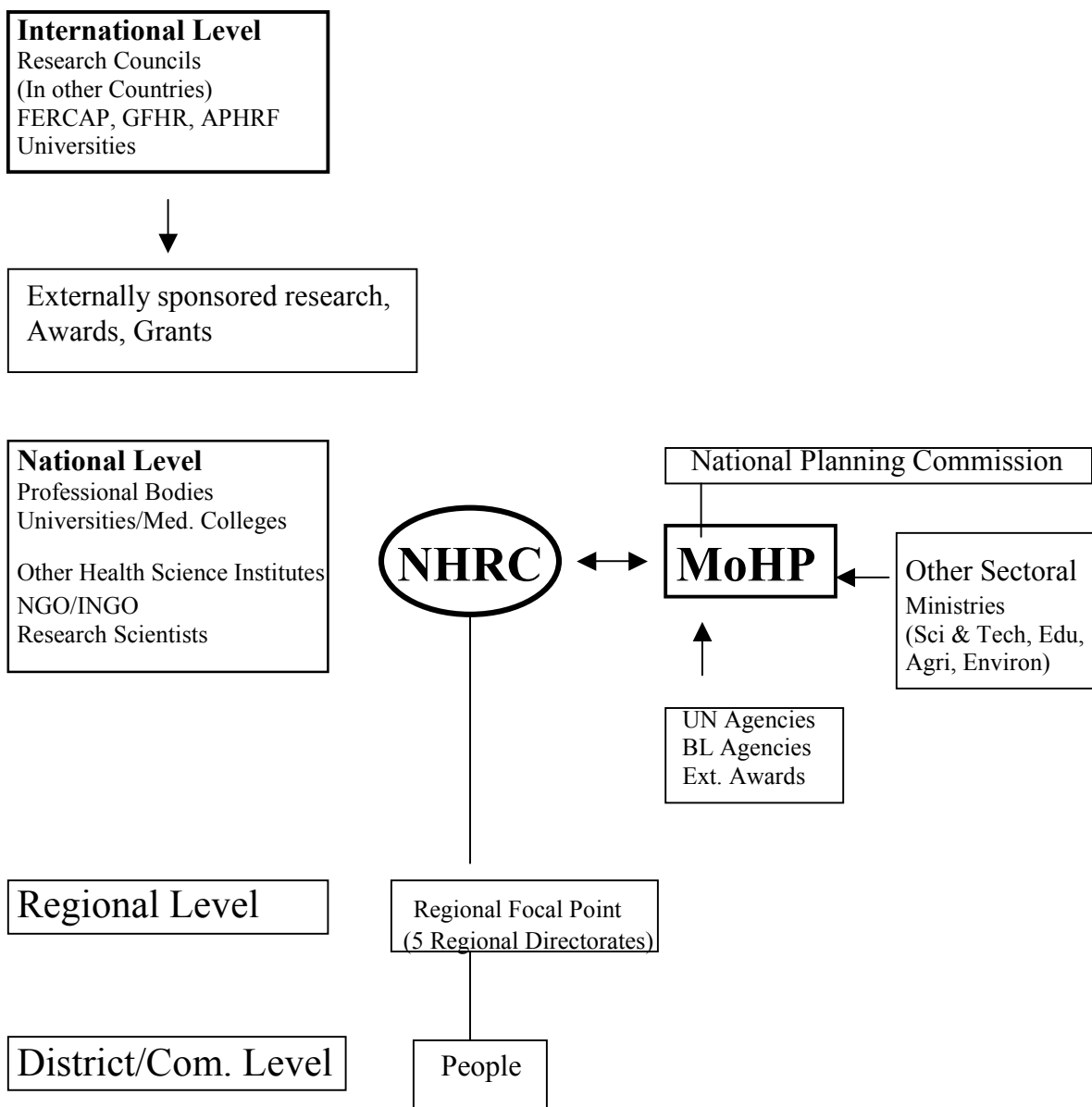
The activities of NHRC are guided by NHRC executive board, which has a very broad inter-sectoral representation. The board consists of chairperson, senior level representatives from National Planning Commission, Ministry of Health and Population, Ministry of Finance, Institute of Medicine and Nepal Medical Council along with eight senior level scientists from health and related field and a member secretary. The NHRC Board meets periodically and provides scientific and policy guidelines. Day to day activities is managed by the member secretary with advice from the Chairman of NHRC and assistance from technical and administrative support staffs of NHRC (Annex – I).

NHRC from its early days has been collaborating with Nepal Academy of Science & Technology, Research Division of Tribhubhan University, Institute of Medicine and B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences and facilitated development of research committee/institutional ethical review committees at these institutions.

In order to expand further collaboration, coordination and networking with other research institutions, NGO and INGO involved in health research, NHRC has designated a number of institution and organization as health research networking partner institutions, and is working closely with them to promote health research. The organization included Center for Research on Environment Health and Population Activities (CREHPA), Vector Borne Disease Research & Training Center (VBDRTC), Infectious & Tropical Disease Research & Prevention Centre

(ITDRC), New Era, Mothers and Infant Research Activities (MIRA), Nepal Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology (NESOG), Nepal Nutritional Intervention Project (NNIP) and many other organizations.

Architecture of National Health Research System (NHRS)



6. Key functions of NHRS

- (a) To advocate for and mobilize political support for research development,
- (b) To develop a strategic vision for health research development including medium and long term strategies,
- (c) To strengthen national health research capacity through training of appropriate human resources and a core research support team at NHRC,
- (d) To align research to national and local priority health problems,
- (e) To promote research culture and knowledge based decision making at all levels,
- (f) To develop standard procedures and mechanism to ensure quality, accountability and transparency in health research,
- (g) To strengthen national health research information system,
- (h) To promote good ethical practice in health research,
- (i) To generate knowledge for improvement of health, disseminate it and facilitate utilization of research results for health development,
- (j) To provide assistance to scientists, institutions and agencies for undertaking research,
- (k) To mobilize resources from the Government, NGO / INGO and international sources, and
- (l) To create synergy in health research by promoting coordination collaboration and networking among all stakeholders.

7. Key Challenges of NHRS

Nepal is facing many challenges in NHRS development. These are as follows:

- a) **Insufficient number of technical officers at NHRC:** There are at present eight technical officers (three permanent and five non permanent) in NHRC – one chief research officer, two research officers, one bio-statistician, one publication officer, one monitoring & evaluation officer, one research consultant, and one information officer. The number of technical officers is not enough to take up all the activities. There is a need to recruit some more technical officers. The office space is not enough and needs to be expanded.
- b) **Inadequate financial resources:** Inadequate financial resource for research is one of the major constraints in overall health research development. Government of Nepal provides some financial support to NHRC which is just enough for the salary of staff, basic office supplies, some research project work and training. It is still inadequate for the development of health research in the country.
- c) **Inadequate trained human resource for health research:** Shortage of appropriately trained human resource in the country is another critical area to be addressed. Career opportunity in health research and poor incentive has lead to this situation. Capacity development includes area of technical skills in research process, research management skills and competencies in values in research like ethics and equity. A critical mass of scientists in these areas is a must for research development.

- d) **Research culture:** Because of a short history of medical/health education in the country, the concept of research culture is still to be developed. Promotion of the research culture is an important challenge. Research culture should begin at the level of high school education, which is not in place in the country. At the next level it should be taken up with appropriate plan and strategy.
- e) **Inadequate use of the research based information:** The government, bilateral and multilateral agencies, NGOs, UN agencies, and foundations are funding many health research projects in Nepal. The impact of the health research on overall health care delivery and health promotion has not been assessed. The general impression is that the results of health research have been less likely to utilize by decision makers while formulating policy and programs in health services. The decision maker's point of view stated that the research under taken by health research scientists or donor agencies and NGOs were limited to their own interest areas rather than on national health priorities causing difficulty in utilization of research findings.
- f) **How to develop sustainable health research system:** Sustainability of national health research system in the country remains the key challenge. Frequent change of health administrators in key position in various levels, inadequate financial support from the government, and lack of career opportunity with adequate incentives for the scientist/researcher is becoming another challenge, and thereby evolving the situation of brain drain not only from one institution to another but also from the country itself. So, there is urgent need of concrete mechanism to solve these kinds of problems.
- g) **How to implement the research based recommendations:** There were several research-based recommendations documented in the several meetings, seminars, and conferences, but the most challenging part is to implement these recommendations. In what way, the research organization / agency / institute etc. will have to plead for such recommendations and how. Therefore, there is a need of effective planning to mechanize such recommendations into action.
- h) **Lack of research environment:** Research can flourish only in a good research environment with (i) adequate laboratories set up, (ii) adequate library and health research information resource center and (iii) encouragement and guidance from senior colleagues. Due to inadequate funds, research environment is lacking in many institution although some efforts are being made in some institutions.

8. National strategies for health research system development

1. Advocate for health research promotion at all levels: political leaders, the government scientists, research institutions and the public. Promote continued dialogue with the policy and decision makers from planning stage of research to utilization.
2. Mobilize financial resources from the government, INGO and international sources, develop capacity to manage resources.
3. Promote networking and collaboration with all stakeholders within the country and with international network and research organization /institutions.

4. Strengthen national research capacity by (a) training a larger number of scientists in advanced research methodology and proposal writing, (b) selected groups on qualitative methods, leadership skills, and networking and negotiation skills, (c) A core group in research management, research informatics, health policy and health economics research, and (d) in new frontiers of science like bio-technology and genetics.
5. Generate, validate and manage knowledge as public good. Promote sharing dissemination and utilization of knowledge through electronic and other means.
6. Define tools, methods and guidelines for health research.
7. Set standards, procedures and mechanism to ensure quality, accountability and transparency in health research. Promote good ethical practice in health research.
8. Facilitate promotion of research environment.
9. Promote research culture.
10. Promote good ethical practice.

9. Role of National Health Research System in Health System Development

National health research system, by aligning research to priority health problems seeks to find solution to the major health problems. Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC) has developed research priority areas and is promoting research in priority areas. A study on complementariness between national health research policy and health research project carried out in Nepal in 2000 (Acharya G.P.) has shown a high degree of complementariness. NHRC also aims to promote essential national health research through Essential National Health Research (ENHR) network. NHRC has designated five regional health directorates of MoHP as regional focal points for health research with the main aim of promoting health research in the districts and community. NHRC is also promoting dissemination of research results through the Journal of NHRC, and dissemination seminars in order to facilitate utilization of research results. NHRC is encouraging and supporting research by providing grants and technical assistance including research training to researchers and institution in priority areas.

10. National Health Research Policy

- A. National Health Research Policy as envisaged in National Health Policy of 1991 states "Research in health sector will be encouraged. The outcome of research will be applied in decision making for better management of health services."
- B. **National Planning Commission Directive on Health Research:** The ninth five year plan document (1997-2002) of National Planning Commission also lays emphasis on development of priority list and promotion of quality of research. The statement on health research reads as follows". The research priority list for health research will be prepared for quality research. Such research projects will focus on objectives of poverty alleviation by solving main health problems of majority of people."
- C. **Second long term health plan (1997-2017):** Second long term health plan (1997-2017) of ministry of health & population has clearly identified the goal and objectives of health research, which is stated as follows :

- i. Efforts will be undertaken to promote a health research culture within health and health related sectors, education and training institutions. The health research culture will emphasize the uses of Essential National Health Research (ENHR) for informed decision-making.
- ii. Research priorities and a national research agenda will be developed. The research agenda will serve as the basis for the allocation for resources for health research by the government, private and NGO sectors and Nepal Government's development partners.
- iii. The private and NGO sectors and Nepal Government's development partners will be encouraged to assist Government of Nepal in supporting: (a) institutional strengthening and the development of a critical mass of individuals able to undertake ENHR at different levels of the health care system; and (b) networking arrangements to promote dissemination and exchange of information on ENHR concept/methods, research \ methodologies etc.

D. The Vision, Mission, Goal, Statement, Strategies and Aims of National Health Research Policy:

Vision: The achievement of better health for all through health research focusing on equity and social justice.

Mission: To promote health research in order to contribute towards the improvement of health for all in Nepal.

Goal: To facilitate health research for overall health development.

Statement: The National Health Research Policy for Nepal strives for the achievement of better health for all through health research with an emphasis on equity, social justice and ethics. The policy aims to establish linkages between health research and the National Health Policy of His Majesty's Government. The policy promotes health research in all aspects. The policy seeks to ensure availability of human and financial resources required for health research. This policy seeks to collaborate and network with all major stakeholders involved in health research, while at the same time, endeavoring to promote inter-sectoral participation and international linkages.

Strategies: The National Health Research Policy is functioning in collaboration with the National Health Policy of the MoHP and the Ministry of Science and Technology. The short term and long term plan for the National Health Research Policy was prepared and the mechanism for monitoring and evaluation was initiated.

The health research capacity for Nepal is continually being developed and maintained to provide better health for all with judicious utilization of available resources. The mechanism to further strengthen the health research process with an emphasis on good ethical practice, evidence based research, research management, dissemination and the utilization of research findings was initiated.

The health research database will be improved by networking and collaborating with all the stakeholders involved in health research. Evidence based health research findings will be utilized by policy makers. Linkages will be strengthened among all the sectors, institutions, disciplines, and communities. Financial resources from GoN, INGO's, NGO's, donor agencies and other sectors will be mobilized for health research promotion.

Aims:

1. To emphasize ethical practice in all health research to achieve equity and social justice,
2. To augment health researches in the priority areas set by the National Health Policy and to provide advice based on evidence to Government of Nepal for formulating appropriate health policies,
3. To promote health research in all aspects.
4. To facilitate collaboration and networking with all major stakeholders involved in health research at the national level,
5. To enable, support and sustain human, financial, technical and other resources required for health research,
6. To promote inter/intra-sectoral participation in health research,
7. To secure international linkages and collaboration for health research, and
8. To establish a National Health Research System.

11. Initiation of South Asian Forum for Health Research by NHRC

During the Consultative Meeting for the Development of Health Research Agenda for South Asia sponsored by Rockefeller Foundation, New York, USA held on June 4-5, 2003 in Kathmandu, Nepal, intensive discussion made with all the health research councils of the South Asian countries, and the participants unanimously endorsed the resolution to form "South Asian Forum for Health Research (SAFHR)". The host country's Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC) was given mandate to Chair the forum for two years on rotation basis.

The vision of SAFHR was Achievement of Better Health for South Asian People, and the mission was to facilitate regional collaboration among the South Asian countries addressing common health problems towards sustainable solutions. The agenda of SAFHR for 2003-2008 (five years) were (i) Development/strengthening of health research system, (ii) Assessment / Mapping of health research resources and facilities, Health research priority setting, (iii) Ethical review guidelines, (iv) Collaboration, Cooperation, Communication, Information sharing, Alliances, Networking, (v) Program for capacity building, (vi) Identification and mobilization of financial resources, and (vii) Establish/strengthen library/information.

Immediate past Chairman of NHRC Dr. Sachey Kumar Pahari presented the paper entitled South Asian Forum for Health Research (SAFHR) - Vision, Mission, Agenda and Objectives at the Forum 7 meeting organized by Global Forum for Health Research held in Geneva, Switzerland in the year 2003. During the meeting it was formally decided to include SAFHR as a south Asian chapter of Asia Pacific Health Research Forum. Logo design process and preparation of SAFHR pad was initiated. After this there was no activity followed as planned due to severe political conflict and financial crises happened in Nepal. Moreover, there was no one in the executive

board of NHRC for several months. Recently government of Nepal has nominated full executive board members (Annex – II) and the first meeting was held on 17 November 2006.

12. Success Stories

- 1. Regular Budget for NHRC:** In the past, Government used to allocate funds to NHRC as a grant on an ad-hoc basis, with the result that it used to fluctuate very much each year, and also the budget allocation used to be released in the later part of the year causing difficulty in timely implementation of activities. With continued dialogue with Ministry of Health and Population, National Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance, NHRC has been successful in getting a regular budget directly from Ministry of Finance from the year 2000. This will definitely contribute towards sustainability of NHRC. Funds have also been mobilized through WHO and Maryknoll Father and Brother for research promotion activities of NHRC. WHO has supported NHRC mainly to conduct programs under health systems research, research policy co-operation and environment health programs.
- 2. International Award from Rockefeller Foundation for Capacity Strengthening:** Nepal Health Research council received the International Award for the research proposal "Capability strengthening of health research network in Nepal," developed by NHRC. Various activities were carried out through this award that included (a) strengthening of networking and coordination of health research (b) strengthening core research support team at NHRC, (c) strengthening of NHRC library and information system, (d) promotion of good ethical practice in health research and development of national ethical guidelines, (e) promotion of health research culture, and (f) promotion of enabling research environment.

To achieve the above objectives NHRC was collaborating with a number of partner institutions. The partner institution includes IOM, NNIP, MIRA, NESOG and CREHPA. All of these activities have already been implemented and completed. These included development of national ethical guideline, strengthening of core research support team at NHRC by appointing a full-time Bio-statistician and one Information Officer, updating the facilities of NHRC library with full internet access and web page development, and award of various research grants for research proposals submitted from different regions of the country.

- 3. National Ethical Guidelines:** National ethical guidelines for health research has been developed through a consultative meeting on 12-15 November 2000 involving all stakeholders including policy and decision makers research scientists, and senior level representation from MoHP, universities, NGO/INGO's and research institutions.

The national ethical guideline was firstly published in the year 2001 and circulated widely to research scientists, many national institutions, organizations and international organizations. The national ethical guideline functioned as a guidebook for all those involved and interested in promoting good ethical practice in Nepal. NHRC will continue to work with these organizations to promote good ethical practice in health research.

Several other ethical guidelines were also published in the year 2005 through a series of consultative meetings. They were (i) Ethical Guideline for the Use of Animals in Health Research in Nepal, (ii) National Guideline on Clinical Trial with the Use of Pharmaceutical Products, and (iii) Development of Guidelines for Institutional Review Committees for Health Research in Nepal.

4. Networking in Health Research:

Networking in health research is being promoted at different levels.

- a) NHRC Ethical Board – The inter-sectoral nature of the board with representative from National Planning Commission, Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP), Ministry of Finance, Nepal Medical Council and Tribhubhan University, Institute of Medicine in addition to many health scientists, provides a forum for contribution to implement the national health research policy and coordination of health research in the country.
- b) NHRC has facilitated and approved some ethical review committees existed in the country such as Institute of Medicine, B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences etc.
- c) NHRC was strengthening collaboration with partner institution under Rockefeller Foundation award. The partner institutions included were (i) Nepal Nutrition Intervention Project (NNIP), (ii) Mother Infant Research Activity (MIRA), (iii) Institute of Medicine (IOM), Mary-knoll Fathers and Brothers, (iv) Nepal Society of Obstetricians and Gynecology (NESOG) and (v) Center for Research Environmental Health and Population Activities (CREHPA).
- d) NHRC was a national focal point for Essential National Health Research (ENHR) and was networking with other institutions through national ENHR network.
- e) To promote linkage with MOHP and promote research at the regional level, NHRC has designated five regional health directorates of MOHP located in Dhankuta, Hetauda, Kaski, Surkhet and Dipayal as regional focal points for promotion of health research. These focal points are being encouraged to promote research within the region and coordinate with NHRC.
- f) NHRC organized some consultative meetings in coordination and networking in health research and brought together all stakeholders to deliberate on the important issue of how to promote collaboration, coordination and networking in health research. The consultative meeting recommended that the NHRC should continue to function as a central coordinating body and play a pivotal and catalytic role in coordination, collaboration and networking with other research institutions/organizations in Nepal.

5. Promotion of Research Environment:

Attempts were being made to create enabling environment for research promotion by (a) strengthening NHRC library as a health research information research center with full

internet access and a web page, (b) Creating a core research support team at NHRC consisting of technical officers from various disciplines and bio-statistician who will function as guide to prospective researchers in proposal development and as a faculty in research methodology training workshop, (c) Continuing dialogue with other institutions to promote research environment in their respective institutions, and (d) Conducting various kinds of training of trainers (TOT) workshops such as (i) TOT on research management, (ii) TOT on research report writing and publication in journal, (iii) TOT on analytical research design and analysis, (iv) TOT on qualitative data analysis, (v) TOT on advanced statistical measures in epidemiological research designs, (vi) TOT on data management and analysis, (vii) TOT on research project planning, fund raising and research project evaluation process, and (viii) TOT on Research Ethics.

6. Promotion of Research Culture:

In order to promote research culture in Nepal, NHRC has been supporting and encouraging researchers and students in conducting health research by providing several grants under various title. Regional research grants were specifically focused to encourage and support researchers of the five regions of the country who intend to conduct research on the regional health research priority areas. Experienced research grants were provided to the skilled researchers of the country. Undergraduate and postgraduate research grants were provided to activate the students in health research field to promote research culture. Similarly, the NHRC provided health systems research and young research grants to various researchers.

NHRC also provided several travel grants to Nepali researchers to present their research papers in the international congress, conference and workshop. NHRC is also initiating dialogue with the authorities in medical schools to formulate a policy that requires research and scientific publication as a prerequisite for career promotion in universities and schools of medicine and allied profession.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation of Research:

NHRC has initiated on site supervision and monitoring of research approved by NHRC. Technical officers from NHRC visited the research site, observed the process and documentation, study the ethical aspect and ascertain whether the research was being carried out as per the standard mentioned in research proposal when approval was given.

8. Development of National Health Research Policy:

National Health Research Policy (NHRP) was developed for giving a definite direction for the promotion, implementation, management and utilization of all aspects of health research in Nepal. The role of the policy is to provide health information to government of Nepal for evidence based health policy formulation. The policy promotes health research activities in its broader dimensions with inter-sectoral and multi-disciplinary participation. The policy assures networking and collaborating among all the stakeholders in health research as well as the utilization of health research findings. The National Health Research Policy institutes the National Health Research System (NHRS).

13. Conclusion

The present situation analysis demonstrates that NHRC as the apical national institution has been playing a catalytic role in promotion of health research in Nepal. It is trying to forge linkage with other research institutions and organizations in a spirit of partnership to promote health research in Nepal and establish the National Health Research System (NHRS). NHRC faces many constraints, but has been trying to address these issues by developing short term and long term plans and developing strategies to implement them. NHRC has initiated many activities over the last five years and made significant progress towards developing a sustainable NHRS but still a lot needs to be done. NHRC would need a lot of support from the government, WHO and other national and international research institution and organization to achieve the goals.

14. Annexes

Annex – I

Technical and Administrative Support Staffs of Nepal Health Research Council

Technical Support Staffs

Dr. Rajendra Kumar BC*	Chief Research Officer, Health Research Section
Mrs. Pearl Banmali*	Research Officer, Health Research Section
Mr. Meghnath Dhimal*	Research Officer (Environmental Health), Health Research Section
Mr. Purusottam Dhakal [#]	Bio-statistician, Health Research Section
Ms. Shailee Singh Rathour [#]	Publication Officer, Health Research Section
Mr. Bijay Kumar Jha [#]	Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, Health Research Section
Mr. Gopal Krishna Prajapati [#]	Research Consultant, Health Research Section
Mr. Chandra Bhusan Yadav [#]	Information Officer, Library and Documentation Section
Mr. Min Bahadur Ghising*	Computer Assistant, Health Research Section

(Note: * permanent staffs and # non permanent staffs)

Administrative Support Staffs

Mr. Nirbhaya Kumar Sharma*	Administrative Officer, Administrative Section
Mr. Subodh Kumar Karna*	Account Officer, Account Section
Mr. Sarswati Prasad Bhattarai*	Storekeeper, Account Section
Mr. Ajay Lala Karna [#]	Research Consultant, Administrative Section
Ms. Bina Sitoula*	Kharidar/Receptionist, Administrative Section
Mr. Puka Lal Ghishing*	Assistant Account, Account Section
Mr. Bir Bahadur Ghising*	Driver, Administrative Section
Mr. Lal Bahadur Ghising*	Driver, Administrative Section
Mr. Lok Bikram Chauhan*	Peon, Administrative Section
Mr. Ram Prasad Pokharel*	Peon, Administrative Section
Mr. Budhiman Limbu*	Watchman, Administrative Section
Mr. Maheshwor Chaudhary*	Watchman, Administrative Section
Mrs. Kamala Pode*	Sweeper, Administrative Section

(Note: * permanent staffs and # non permanent staffs)

**Nepal Health Research Council
Executive Board**

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Dr. Mahesh Kumar Maskey

Vice-Chairman

Dr. Buddha Basnyat

Member-Secretary

Dr. Sharad Raj Onta

Members

Dr. Rishi Ram Koirala

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Ministry of Finance

Ministry of Health and Population

National Planning Commission

Chief, Research Committee, Institute of Medicine

Chairman, Nepal Medical Council