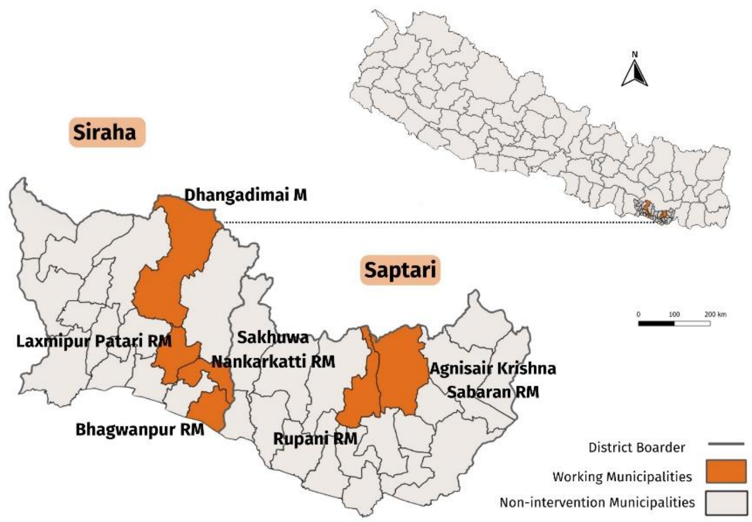
Term of Reference (ToR) for
Market Assessment for Key Agricultural Value Chains

1. Background and Project Overview



The Climate Smart Villages in Madhesh Province, Nepal (CSVN) project is being implemented in six rural/municipalities of Siraha and Saptari districts, Madhesh Province with an objective to contribute to promoting gender-responsive, climate resilient farming communities with low GHG emissions in Madhesh province of Nepal (climate smart villages) within the time frame of April 2024 - March 2028 with the funding support from BMK Austria.

The project seeks to integrate market system development approach to understand viable and climate smart value chain and market systems in agriculture to strengthen the ongoing and potential micro-enterprises. Using a Market Systems Development (MSD) approach, the project will examine the competitiveness, inclusiveness, and climate resilience of selected value chains within climate-smart agriculture. This will help identify market opportunities, constraints, and leverage points to strengthen existing women-led micro-enterprises, enhance access to inputs, services, finance, and markets, and promote sustainable income generation and economic empowerment.

So, the project team aims to conduct a market and value chain assessment which gives a clear direction/recommendations which will be beneficial for women economic empowerment.

Study area: The project is being implemented in six rural municipality of project working area

District	Palikas (Local Governments)
Siraha	Dhangadhimai Municipality
	Sakhuwanankarkatti Rural municipality
	Bhagwanpur Rural Municipality
	Laxmipur Patari Rural Municipality
Saptari	Agnisaira Krishnasavaran Rural Municipality
	Rupani Rural Municipality

2. Objectives of the Assignment

To identify and prioritize climate smart market systems and value chains with the highest potential for inclusive growth, market demand, profitability, and climate resilient livelihoods for marginalized women, through a gender-responsive market systems and value chain assessment. The assessment will generate evidence to inform program design, identify viable intervention and leverage points within market systems, and strengthen women's participation, competitiveness, and economic returns in both farm and off-farm enterprises.

The secondary objectives includes:

1. Map and assess potential value chains and market systems to identify commodities and enterprise opportunities with strong market demand, growth potential, scalability, and income-generating prospects for marginalized women.
2. Prioritize and shortlist commodities using LVCD principles and market systems analysis, considering factors such as producer capacity, existing livelihood practices, competitiveness, climate resilience, market demand, and opportunities for value addition and upgrading.
3. Analyze the performance and competitiveness of selected market systems, including core market functions, supporting services, and enabling environment factors that influence market access and growth.
4. Assess market demand, buyer requirements, and end-market opportunities to understand current and emerging trends, market segmentation, and opportunities for women-led enterprises to enter or expand within the market.
5. Identify systemic constraints and opportunities affecting producer participation and enterprise growth, including challenges related to inputs, finance, business services, infrastructure, aggregation, logistics, post-harvest management, and regulatory frameworks.
6. Examine value chain governance, pricing structures, value addition opportunities, and benefit distribution to identify where women can capture greater value and improve economic returns.
7. Identify high-potential intervention areas and leverage points within the market system where project investments can catalyze sustainable and inclusive market change and strengthen women-led micro and small enterprises.
8. Assess gender-based barriers and points of exclusion that limit women's participation, decision-making, access to resources, services, markets, and economic advancement across the selected value chains and market systems.
9. Analyze household, social, and market-level norms and constraints shaping women's economic participation and benefits, drawing perspectives from women, men, community actors, private sector actors, cooperatives, and other market stakeholders.

Recommend priority market systems and value chains that offer the greatest potential for growth, profitability, resilience, and employment generation for poor and marginalized women, while identifying practical strategies to enhance their inclusion and economic empowerment.

The analysis will culminate in:

- Prioritization of commodities and enterprise opportunities based on market demand, growth potential, competitiveness, profitability, climate resilience, and suitability for marginalized women and vulnerable households.

- Selection and justification of priority market systems, subsectors, and value chains that demonstrate the greatest potential for inclusive economic growth, sustainable income generation, climate adaptation, and scalable market engagement.

- Identification of systemic constraints, opportunities, and leverage points within each selected market system, including those related to climate risks, environmental sustainability, access to climate-smart technologies, and resilience-building services.

- Assessment of the climate resilience and sustainability of shortlisted value chains, including their exposure and adaptability to climate-related shocks and stresses, and the opportunities for integrating climate-smart agricultural and enterprise practices.

- Development of market system and value chain development strategies that promote competitiveness, inclusion, climate resilience, and sustainable growth, accompanied by practical and actionable recommendations for implementation.

- Identification of intervention areas and entry points where the project can catalyze systemic change, strengthen market functions and supporting services, improve women's economic participation, and increase resilience to climate and market shocks.

- A clear intervention framework that outlines which subsectors, value chains, and market system interventions are most appropriate for different beneficiary groups, including the expected pathways for improved incomes, resilience, productivity, and women's economic empowerment.

- A roadmap for women's economic inclusion and climate resilience, highlighting opportunities to overcome systemic barriers, increase access to productive resources, climate-smart technologies, finance, information, and markets, and enhance women's ability to participate in and benefit from growing market opportunities.

- Recommendations for strategic project investments and partnerships focused on high-potential, climate-resilient value chains and market systems that can generate sustainable economic returns, strengthen household resilience, and contribute to long-term livelihood security for marginalized women and their families.

3. Scope of the Assessment

1. Assess and prioritize commodities at the Palika and district levels based on comparative advantage, market competitiveness, livelihood opportunities for landless farmers (based on agriculture value chains), growth potential, climate-smart suitability, and opportunities for value addition, aggregation, and integration into high-potential value chains and market systems for the most vulnerable populations

2. Conduct a value chain analysis for each shortlisted commodity. The assessment should include the agronomic production issues and profiles (production zones, seasonality of importance of the product to income, rural livelihoods, and economic growth, production and marketing constraints limiting the sub sector, medium and long term market outlooks across the sub sector for local, national, and regional, and export trade, value chain mapping (key stakeholders, flow of supplies and products, flow of funds, and information etc.)

3. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of demand and market conditions within the selected value chains, analyzing both input and output markets, end-market demand, market structure, competitiveness, and relationships among market actors. The assessment should examine procurement and distribution systems, quality and certification standards, market governance, pricing mechanisms, and barriers to entry. Particular attention should be given to identifying and assessing the role of private sector actors including lead firms, processors, aggregators, traders, buyers, financial service providers, and input suppliers as potential market actors. The analysis should identify opportunities, constraints, market concentration or monopolistic practices, and potential leverage points for strengthening market linkages, private sector engagement, value chain upgrading, and sustainable market participation of women-led enterprises and vulnerable producers.

4. Provide an economic analysis of selected value chains to identify opportunities for value addition, upgrading, and increased returns. Assess the enabling environment, including policy, regulatory, institutional, and private sector conditions necessary for sustainable market development. For each shortlisted commodity, conduct a climate risk and resilience assessment to identify vulnerabilities, adaptation opportunities, and climate-smart strategies that can strengthen competitiveness, productivity, and long-term viability.

5. Develop a clear “producer business case” for each selected value chain, outlining the pathway through which target producers particularly women and vulnerable households—can benefit from participating in the value chain. This should include expected income opportunities, investment requirements, productivity gains, value addition prospects, market access opportunities, risk considerations, climate resilience benefits, and potential returns at different stages of engagement. The analysis should demonstrate why the value chain is attractive and commercially viable for producers and what incentives exist for their sustained participation.

The assessment will cover, but not be limited to, the following priority value chains and market systems: Local Seed Systems (cooperative-led), Vegetables (PGS), Crop Residue Management, Dairy, Fishery, and Mango. It will analyze the market potential, value chain competitiveness, climate resilience, and opportunities for women's economic participation within each subsector. The assessment will also examine the adoption, commercial viability, and scaling potential of climate-smart technologies and practices, including improved cooking stoves and other innovations that enhance productivity, resilience, and environmental sustainability.

4. Methodology

The market assessment will be designed based on clear inception plan. It will involve a combination of secondary and primary data collection, including survey, Focused Group Discussions (FGDs), Key

Informant Interview (KII). In order to understand the specific needs of the vulnerable groups, FGDs will be disaggregated accordingly in relation to the selected sub sectors VCs and if relevant geographical areas.

The research will primarily use qualitative methodology, however as required researchers are encouraged to consider quantitative approaches as a part of the methodology. The consultant will be responsible to develop research tools according to the objective of the research which will be presented and agreed with CARE Nepal before conducting the research.

Some of the recommended tools are as follows

Sub-sector/Value Chain Selection & Prioritization

- Sub-sector Selection Matrix : should include climate resilience aspects/ green value chains
- Value Chain Prioritization Criteria Matrix

Value Chain & Market Structure Analysis

- Market Map (M4P Framework) – extending the basic VC map to show core market functions, supporting functions (finance, infrastructure, info), and the rules/norms/regulations shaping the system
- Constraints Analysis Matrix
- Business Service and BDS Mapping

Cost-Benefit Analysis along the VC

- Stakeholder & Institutional Analysis
- Venn Diagram
- Stakeholder Influence-Interest Matrix
- Institutional/Organizational Mapping

Context & Risk Analysis

- PESTLE
- SWOT Analysis
- Seasonal Calendar
- Climate/Disaster Risk & Resilience Assessment tools

Market Demand & Behavior

- Willingness-to-Pay and Market Demand Assessment
- Trend & Historical Analysis

4.1 Desk Review

- Review of existing literature, project documents, baseline data, and secondary market data
- Analysis of national agricultural statistics, trade data, and sector reports

- Review of relevant policies, regulations, and standards for each value chain

4.2 Primary Data Collection

The consultant will be responsible for conducting primary data collection, including a quantitative household/producer survey covering the project's 10,737 group members. The consultant needs to propose a sample size for this.

- Structured household and producer surveys across project districts
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with traders, processors, aggregators, cooperative leaders, and government officials
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with producer groups, women farmers, and youth entrepreneurs
- Market observation and transect walks in key market centers

Buyer assessments with retailers, wholesalers, exporters, and institutional buyers

4.3 Value Chain Analysis

- Map the selected value chains, identifying core market actors, supporting service providers, private sector firms, market relationships, governance structures, and the flow of products, information, services, and finance.
- Assess the commercial performance and incentives of market actors through gross margin, profitability, and value capture analysis to understand competitiveness and opportunities for upgrading and increased returns.
- Identify systemic constraints, market failures, and leverage points across the market system, including constraints related to access to inputs, finance, technology, business development services, market information, climate-smart solutions, and market linkages.

Analyze the roles of supporting functions and the enabling environment, including policies, institutions, social norms, and private sector engagement, to identify opportunities for sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient market system development.

4.4 Market Systems Analysis

- **Assess the performance of supporting functions** within the selected market systems, including access to finance, inputs, extension and business development services, technology, market information, climate information services, aggregation, and logistics.
- **Analyse the formal and informal rules of the market system**, including policies, regulations, quality standards, certification requirements, and social and gender norms that influence market participation, competitiveness, and access to opportunities.
- **Undertake a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) analysis** to identify barriers, opportunities, and points of exclusion that affect women's and vulnerable groups' participation, decision-making, access to resources, and ability to benefit from market opportunities.

- **Identify systemic constraints, opportunities, and leverage points** that can improve inclusiveness, competitiveness, climate resilience, and sustainable growth within the selected market systems and value chains.

The following respondents should be part of this study,

1. Private sector enterprises, networks and associations at national, province and local level.
2. Input suppliers, wholesalers, lead firms, buyers, traders, wholesalers, retailers, and aggregators
3. Farmers, producer groups, cooperatives, and other producers
4. Women entrepreneurs and women led enterprises
5. Project team and relevant experts
6. Financing institutions (Micro-financial institutes including Banks, Cooperatives)
7. Business development and technical service providers
8. Market centres, collection centres,intermediaries and Haat Bazar operators
9. Online market platforms and digital commerce actors
10. Local and provincial government agencies and line departments
11. Relevant project staff and implementing partners
12. Other key market actors influencing the selected value chains and market systems.

Consultant will customize and design other research tools to best contribute to the objectives of this research. Consultant is expected to propose the sample size, respondents to be covered and sample size detail in the technical proposal.

Locations : Siraha and Saptari

Target Market Locations to be considered: Siraha, Saptari major market hubs including, Golbzazar, Janakpur, Kathmandu

5. Key Deliverables

SN	Deliverables	Date
1	Inception Report including Methodology, work plan, data collection tools	September 7
2	Specific Market Assessment Reports: Individual reports for each value chain area	October 5
3	Draft Consolidated Market Assessment Report	October 15
4	Dissemination Workshop – Presentation of findings to CSVN project team and key stakeholders	October 22
5	Final Revised Report incorporating all feedback from dissemination and review	October 31

All reports shall be submitted in Microsoft Word and PDF formats.

6. Reporting Line

The study team will report to Market Systems Development Specialist , Care Nepal while the day-to-day coordination with CSA Specialist of the same theme for technical guidance, monitoring and timely follow up.

7. Required Qualifications and Experience

7.1 For Individual Consultant (Team Leader)

- Advanced degree (Master's or above) in Agricultural Economics, Development Economics, Business Administration, or related field
- Minimum 10 years of professional experience in market systems analysis, value chain development, or agricultural market research
- Demonstrated experience conducting market assessments for at least three of the six product areas covered in this TOR
- Strong understanding of smallholder farming systems, cooperative models, and inclusive market development
- Experience with gender-sensitive research methodologies
- Excellent written and spoken communication skills in English; proficiency in local language an asset

7.2 For Consulting Firm / Team

- The firm shall field a multidisciplinary team with expertise covering all six value chain areas
- Team Leader: as per individual consultant qualifications above
- Value Chain Specialists (2–3): Subject matter experts for seed systems/agronomy, dairy/fisheries, and post-harvest/horticulture
- Market Research Analyst: Expertise in quantitative survey design and analysis
- Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist: Minimum 5 years relevant experience
- Local Research Associates: Fluency in local dialects; experience in rural data collection

7. Submission of Proposals

Please send a brief four-to-five-page proposal detailing the understanding of ToR, methodology and your firm's relevant experience, workplan, timeline, and daily rate(s) to **npl.carenepal@care.org** no later than **31 Aug 2026.** Please also include resumes or CV for key consultants included in the proposal.

8. Budget and Terms of payment:

40% will be released upon receiving the inception report that includes tools, methodology and the remaining 60% after submission of the final report.

The consultant shall submit the report and all required deliverables within the timeline specified above. Payment will be released upon satisfactory completion of the assignment, acceptance of all deliverables, and submission of all required financial documents. Applicable taxes will be deducted from the total contract value in accordance with the prevailing laws and regulations of the Government of Nepal prior to payment.

9. Submission Guidelines and Required Guideline

Interested applicants should submit:

- **Separate** Technical (approach, methodology and risk mitigation plan) and financial proposals in pdf format with signature and stamp along with the date.
- CVs of key personnel.
- Sample report of similar assignment completed previously.
- Company VAT registration and company registration documents as mandated by Nepal government regulations, along with the latest tax clearance certificate.

Note: The project will likely require ground level information; therefore, the consultant/consultancy will have to manage all transportation/accommodation is required. So, this detail to be submitted with a financial proposal. CARE Nepal will not providing overhead cost therefore requested to submit the proposal excluding this one.

CARE will not have any liabilities on any unanticipated incident (accident, injury, natural disaster, etc.) to the consultant.

10. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation will be conducted in four stages, with a total score of 100 marks as follows:

Stage 1: Technical Evaluation **- 70 Marks**

- Assessment of methodology
- Team composition and expertise
- Demonstrated understanding of the assignment
- Workplan
- Organizational experience and relevant past work

Stage 2: In Person Meeting and Discussion — **10 Marks**

- Formal meeting with the top three (3) shortlisted consultancy firms
- Presentation of approach and clarifications on proposed methodology

Stage 3: Financial Evaluation — **20 Marks**

- 5 marks – Legal compliance
- 15 marks – Quality, clarity and rational of the financial proposal

Stage 4: Consolidation of Scores and Final Ranking

- Combined scoring from all stages
- Ranking of consultancy firms

- Recommendation for award of contract

Note: A consultancy firm must obtain a minimum of 80% of the total technical evaluation score to be considered eligible for the further interview stage.