

Endline Evaluation of the JOAC Samrakshyan Project

1. Background

CARE Nepal, with financial support from the Jersey Overseas Aid (JOA) and in partnership with National Farmer Group Federation (NFGF) Nepal and Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN), has since 2023, been implementing the JOAC Samrakshyan Project in the Mutanikhola Watershed of Lahan Municipality, Siraha District, Madhesh Province, Nepal.

The project seeks to strengthen locally led, inclusive and sustainable watershed management, while improving biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable livelihoods of communities dependent on natural resources. The project works with 32 farmer groups and 9 community forest user groups, with particular attention to women, marginalized households and other vulnerable groups. The project has promoted Conservation Field Schools (CFS), climate-smart agriculture, conservation agriculture, agroforestry, enterprise development, savings and credit, biodiversity conservation, forest-fire management, water conservation and institutional strengthening. The project has also supported strengthening watershed-level coordination mechanisms, CFUGs and collaboration with local government and other stakeholders, with the intention of institutionalizing successful practices and strengthening local ownership.

As the project approaches completion, CARE Nepal intends to undertake an endline evaluation to determine the extent to which the project has contributed to intended outcomes and changes in the lives, livelihoods, institutions and natural resource systems of targeted communities. The assessment will generate evidence for accountability, learning, sustainability, transition and future programming, including potential replication and scale-up of successful watershed conservation and conservation-friendly livelihood models.

2. Objectives

The overall objective of the assignment is to assess and document the changes, outcomes, and emerging impacts generated by the project among target households, farmer groups, CFUGs, other institutions, and the wider watershed ecosystem. The specific objectives of the assignment are as below:

- To assess the extent to which the project was successful in achieving its impacts and outcomes were achieved.
- To conduct the cost benefit analysis of the livelihood support in conservation practices
- To assess gender, equity and social inclusion changes in gender and social norms
- To assess watershed governance including local ownership, institutionalization, and continuation of project interventions after project closure.
- To provide specific recommendations on conservation practices for future programming.

3. Scope of the Evaluation

The endline evaluation will cover project intervention areas within the Mutanikhola Watershed. The selected consultancy firm will be responsible for developing the evaluation tools and methods including sampling strategy, design and pre-testing data collection tools; applying appropriate quantitative and qualitative data collection methods; ensuring data quality, ethical

compliance and quality assurance; analyzing and triangulating findings; and preparing a comprehensive endline assessment report with evidence-based conclusions and recommendations.

CARE Nepal will provide overall technical oversight and supervision, facilitate access to relevant project documents and existing tools, and provide necessary guidance throughout the assessment process. The consultancy firm will retain responsibility for the methodological rigor, data collection, analysis, and quality of the final deliverables.

Guiding Questions for Proposal:

- To what extent has the project achieved its revised log frame targets, intended outcomes and contractual commitments, and what factors explain areas of achievement, overachievement or underachievement?
- How relevant and appropriate were the project's design, targeting and integrated conservation-livelihood approach to the priorities and circumstances of participating communities and local institutions, and how coherently did the project's interventions, consortium partners and external stakeholders work together?
- How efficiently were financial, human, technical and partnership resources converted into outputs and outcomes, and which delivery approaches demonstrated the strongest or weakest value for money?
- Which project-supported livelihood activities have developed into commercially viable enterprises, and which remain dependent on project-funded inputs, technical assistance, subsidized services or facilitated access to finance and markets?
- What proportion of supported enterprises are generating a positive net profit after accounting for key operating costs, and what credible estimate can be made of the average income increase among supported households reporting increased income?
- Drawing on the separate impact assessment and any necessary supplementary evidence, how equitably project resources and benefits were distributed, and how do enterprise viability, profitability and income outcomes for Dalits, landless households and persons with disabilities compare with overall project results?
- Which project outcomes, institutions, services and enterprise models are most likely to continue after project closure, what dependencies or risks remain,
- What lessons should inform future conservation-livelihood programming and potential replication or scaling?
- Have excluded groups experienced improved access to project services, natural resources, water, livelihood support, finance, markets, and capacity-development opportunities?
- Have women's leadership, representation, voice, and influence in household and community-level decisions improved?
- Have the project interventions reduced barriers to participation, discrimination, or unequal access to benefits?
- Which groups have benefited most or least, and what factors explain these differences?
- What evidence supports the project's contribution to these changes, including any unintended positive or negative effects?

4. Methodology

The evaluation will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to measure project performance against the baseline, results framework, and intended outcomes, where comparable data are available. However, an appropriate methodology is to be provided by the consulting firm as per the ToR requirement. Findings will be triangulated across data sources, methods and stakeholder perspectives to enhance the validity, reliability, and credibility of the assessment.

The consultancy firm is expected to undertake the following methodological steps:

- **Document Review:** The consultancy firm will review relevant project documents, including the project proposal, theory of change or results framework, log frame, baseline report, monitoring data, progress reports, etc.
- **Development of the Endline Assessment Framework and Tools:** The firm will prepare a detailed methodology, sampling strategy, stakeholder consultation plan, work plan, and timeline. The sampling design should ensure adequate representation of relevant project beneficiaries, intervention groups, and stakeholder categories.
- **Field Data Collection and Quality Assurance:** The firm will conduct field data collection using appropriate quantitative and qualitative methods, including household surveys, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and direct observations, as relevant to the assessment questions.
- **Study Area and Stakeholder Coverage:** The assessment will be conducted in the Mutanikhola Watershed, Lahan Municipality, Siraha District, Nepal and the data collection will cover selected project intervention areas and relevant stakeholder groups, including beneficiary households, CFUGs, farmer groups, watershed-level institutions, local government representatives and other relevant project stakeholders.
- **Data Analysis and Triangulation:** The firm will analyze quantitative data using appropriate descriptive and comparative statistical methods, including comparison with baseline values and project targets where data are available and sufficiently comparable, and enterprise level cost-benefit analysis. Analyze qualitative information thematically and triangulate findings across methods and sources. The firm should clearly document data limitations, inconsistencies, and attribution constraints.
- **Outcome Harvesting and Most Significant Change:** The consultancy firm is encouraged to apply Outcome Harvesting and/or the Most Significant Change (MSC) approach, where appropriate, to identify, document and substantiate significant intended and unintended changes, cost benefits analysis associated with project interventions.

5. Key Deliverables

The endline report should be very precise (not exceeding 25 to 30 pages excluding annexes and case stories) and summary of the finding to use as knowledge product. At the minimum, the assessment team should include the following deliverables:

- Inception report with clear tools and methods for consultation, data collection, analysis and interpretation
- Final endline evaluation report written in English language that meets the requirements mentioned in ToR.
- Final research brief setting out the key findings, conclusions and recommendations.
- All the collected databases, case stories, short video graphs, and photographs.

6. Reporting Line

The assessment team should directly report to Program Quality Impact department of Care Nepal with proper support from the program team of Care Nepal and partners in the field.

7. Time Frame for the Assessment

The assessment should complete within one month time effective from the agreement made. The time includes the preparation of inception report including assessment tools, methodology, piloting of the tools and consultation in the field, report preparation and submission of the final report incorporating the feedback and inputs from Care Nepal.

8. Submission Guidelines

Interested applicants should submit the following requirements for further selection process:

- Technical proposal
- Financial proposal
- CVs of key personnel
- Examples of similar works
- Company registration documents along with the latest tax clearance certificate

9. Education, and Qualification of Assessment Team

The assessment team should meet the below mentioned criteria regarding education, experience and qualification.

- The Team Leader should have at least a Master's Degree in relevant discipline, more specifically in Forestry, Watershed Management, Biodiversity Conservation, Agriculture, Livelihoods, Climate Change, Agrobusiness, Agroforestry or relevant subject with a minimum of 10 years of work experience with similar assignments in project evaluation.
- A team member with expertise in quantitative evaluation methods, with a particular focus on livelihoods, enterprise and market access.
- The team members should have technical expertise in specific areas, knowledge of the local context, familiarity with crosscutting issues, and language skills.
- The team members should have demonstrated analytical, communication and report writing skills
- Example of at least two similar completed assignments and outputs shall be shared during the discussion meeting
- Added advantage for the team who have done similar study in the past.

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

- Methodology (Impact, Business and System)
- Team composition and expertise
- Demonstrated understanding of the assignment
- Clear workplan with Timeline
- Organizational experiences and demonstration of any relevant prior works if any

Stage 2: Meeting for presentation 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 and clarity 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

11. Recommended Title

Technical proposal for Endline Evaluation of the JOAC Samrakshyan Project, Mutanikhola Watershed, Siraha, Nepal