

Terms of Reference (TOR)

To document evidence on the impact, effectiveness and learning of gender and social inclusion (GESI) interventions implemented under the SAMUNNATI project

Re -Circulation Date: 17th July 2024

Closing Date: 23rd July 2024

Duration of the work: 1st August 2024 – 30th October 2024

Practical Action

House No. 1114, Panipokhari, Lazimpat

P.O. Box 15135, Kathmandu, Nepal

Phone: +977-1-4523639/640

E-mail: proposals@practicalaction.org.np

July 2024

1. Background

Practical Action is a global change-making group that consists of a UK registered charity with community projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America, an independent publishing company and a technical consulting service. It combines these specialisms to multiply its impact and help shape a world that works better for everyone. In Nepal, Practical Action is focused on putting ingenious ideas into work to contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable wellbeing through working in three expertise change areas: **Farming that works; Energy that transforms and Resilience that protects.**

Under Farming that works programme, Practical Action in partnership with DECOS has been implementing a 3-year project titled “SAMUNNATI: Building climate adaptive farming opportunities and improved livelihoods for women and marginalised groups in Nepal” in eight Rural/Municipalities of three districts; Dang (Dangisaran and Shantinagar), Rolpa (Runtigadi, Triveni, Thawang and Pariwartan) and Rukum East (Bhume and Puthauttarganga) of Lumbini Province since January 2022. The project is supported by UK Aid.

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to Nepal Government's SDG 1 target of reducing extreme poverty to less than five per cent by 2030 whereas the specific objective of the project is to improve economic and social resilience from market-oriented agriculture production (focused value chains are vegetable, dairy, goat, walnut and mandarin) and off-farm employment of 6,000 women, men from marginalised groups and people living with disability in province 5 in Dang, Rolpa and Rukum East Districts in Nepal. The project works directly with farmers' groups, farmers' cooperatives, civil society organizations, women networks, agro-vets, business service providers, insurance companies, financial institutions, development partners and local government.

The project is expected to achieve following five broad expected results.

1. Increased agriculture production and climate resilience
2. Improved market linkages
3. Increased entrepreneurial capacity.
4. Increased access to affordable credit and finance
5. Reduced drudgery and increased empowerment

2. Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) approach

The project is implementing various intervention aiming to women empowerment in the project. These interventions focused on the WEAI approach that includes 5 domains of empowerment such as decision and autonomy in production, access and control over resources, control over the use of income, engagement in group membership, leadership in management positions, increased confidence in public speaking and reduced workload and increased leisure time by using their 12 component indicators. These components include: 1. autonomy in income /production, 2. inputs in livelihood /productive decisions, 3. ownership of land and other assets, 4. self-efficacy, 5. access to and decisions on financial services, 6. visiting important locations (freedom of movement), 7. control over use of income, 8. work balance/drudgery, 9. collective agencies, 10. membership in influential groups/network/government, 11. attitudes about intimate partner violence (IPV) against women, 12. respect among household members and help each other.

Based on WEAI approach, the project has given priority on gender equality, disability, and social inclusion during project implementation. Initially, we conducted a 3-day GESI training for the staff, and the training enhanced staff's confidence in using GESI tools. An action plan for GESI developed to guide the staff and to implement accordingly. Further, we ensured that GESI integration in the project intervention in every aspect of the project cycle (beneficiary selection, planning, implementation, and monitoring). Hence, the project team ensured and facilitated for developing action plans tailored to their needs and priorities. Dedicated GESI officers of the project ensured inclusive engagement as anticipated. one of the outcomes of the project is

reducing drudgery, particularly for women, aiming to alleviate the burden of labor-intensive tasks. So, we supported 663 no of different labor-saving devices in 176 climate field schools. Labor-saving devices has played crucial role to reduce drudgery, save time and contributed for women empowerment. This has increased the time for women to engage in profitable livelihoods (IG activities with farm and off-farm intervention), increased their involvement in key leadership positions in the user committees, group meetings, engaged on policy formulation, planning and implementation of respective rural municipality, and advocacy with the local government to demand women-focused program.

Additionally, we have conducted awareness and sensitization events to challenge discriminatory social norms and values, in 195 groups based on the WEAI approach. Moreover, the gender analysis was also conducted during the awareness event, applying four tools: 24-hour responsibility of men and women, access and control on income, time calendar, and gender needs. Hence, these awareness events contributed women's empowerment and transforming gender roles started in the village such as work sharing by both men and women, reducing gender-based violence, women agency building, women's leadership development, and participation of women on the events outside their home among others. Similarly, we have conducted 12 peer-to-peer support events and four exposure visits. During the event, the participants gained knowledge on improved technology and best practices in agriculture and enterprise development and are replicating in their respective communities. Likewise, we have conducted 16 events of interaction meetings in eight rural municipalities among local elected leaders, civil servants, and special interest groups. In the meeting, the local government committed to support and addressing women's issues, such as increasing women's participation in local government policy formulation, planning, implementation, monitoring, and accessing services. Additionally, we are supporting the preparation of the GESI policy in Thawang and Tribeni rural municipalities, including a gender audit in Thawang Pariwartan and Tribeni rural municipalities. Our aim is to strengthen the ecosystem by ensuring GESI is central to decision-making processes and resource allocation. Similarly, we have facilitated to form informal agriculture labor groups, one each in eight project rural municipalities. These informal agriculture labor groups collectivize their voices and interact with local governments for inclusive planning, programming, and resource allocation.

The project has given attention to unique needs faced by marginalised communities and has made a more inclusive space. We have onboarded the Disable Empowerment and Communication Centre Nepal (DECN), an organisation that specializes in working with people with disabilities. With the support of DECN, we have conducted a 3-day training on Disability Inclusive Development (DID) for 24 project staff. This has enhanced the staff's capacity on DID and contributed to the planning and implementation of project activities with the DID lens. Further, we have conducted capacity-building training for the Organization of People with Disability (OPD) and they are actively working in DID as well as engaged with local government and stakeholders to lobby and advocate for a PWD-focused program (policy and program). Moreover, we have conducted 8 events of interaction meetings among municipal representatives one each in 8 rural municipalities aiming to put priority on DID. The project has facilitated to form a network of people with disability in project rural municipalities to advocate with local government for inclusive policy, plan, and program.

As the project extensively engages in gender equality, disability and social inclusion, there is a planned initiative to document evidence on the impact and effectiveness on this intervention. The objective is to document, widely disseminate and replicate the best practices adopted within the project. In this context, the project is seeking support from an expert organization with extensive experience in similar assignments.

3. Objective of the work

The main objective of this assignment is to document evidence on the impact, effectiveness and learning of gender and social inclusion (GESI) interventions implemented under the SAMUNNATI project. This documentation will provide comprehensive insights into how these initiatives have contributed to women's empowerment, disability inclusion, and the overall social and economic resilience of marginalized groups in the project areas.

The specific objectives are to

- Assess the integration of GESI into various stages of the project cycle, including the specific tools, approaches, and strategies employed by the project.
- Identify and document examples of GESI, highlighting whether the changes achieved are gender-sensitive, empowering, or transformative for women, marginalized groups, and people with disabilities.
- Document the influence of GESI initiatives on policy and advocacy, specifically related to government policies, planning, and resource allocation, as well as the role of informal agriculture labor groups and networks of people with disabilities in advocating for inclusive policies and programs.
- Identify key challenges encountered during the implementation of GESI actions and how these challenges were addressed. Also, document lessons learned to inform future GESI-focused projects and interventions.

Based on the objectives, the consulting team will undertake a series of activities, including the review of project documents, progress reports, research report and other relevant documents. The consulting team will coordinate with project teams and conduct field assessments in the project locations: at least six rural municipalities among eight RMs in three districts—Dang (Dangisaran and Shantinagar), Rolpa (Runtigadi, Triveni, Thawang, and Pariwartan), and Rukum East (Bhume and Puthauttarganga).

4. Methodology

Based on objective of the study, appropriate approach, and methodology will be proposed by the consulting team and approved by Practical Action. The following steps will guide the process; however, the external consultant and the team will propose methods within this broad framework.

5. Output and Deliverables:

Working package	Deliverables	Expected timeline
Methodology development	The consultant team will discuss with the PA team to understand in detail the objectives, and methodology for the assignment. Additionally, the consultant team will review the documents provided by PA. Based on the discussion and review of the documents, the consultant team will refine and finalize the methodology and include it as a key component in the inception report. Deliverable: Inception report with a clear methodology and approaches.	Week 1-2
Preparation for data collection	Develop materials (such as questionnaires etc.) and prepare data collection tool and logistics for field work and data collection.	Week 3

	Deliverable: A section of data collection tools/ materials	
Data collection, fieldwork	The consultant will manage and work with project team to conduct data collection activities in the project locations. Data will be consolidated and shared with PA team. Deliverable: Consolidated data	Week 4-5
Review and discussion with wider team	The consultant team will write up the results, prepare a draft learning brief report and share with PA team for input and feedback. Deliverable: Draft learning brief report of analysis and findings	Week 6-7-8
Final report	The consultant will deliver a learning brief report detailing the methodology used in the project, findings, recommendations, and conclusions from the field assessment. Deliverable: Final learning brief report with content including - executing summary, key achievements and learnings, case studies, methodology and annex of data collection materials, analysis of findings, recommendations, conclusions.	Week 9-10-11

6. Expertise and management

The consultant team should possess substantial experience in conducting, analyzing, and documenting learning on GESI in the project. The team should include personnel with relevant academic and work experiences, including but not limited to the following roles.

Gender and Social inclusion expert: The GESI expert will manage the overall assignment, ensuring that various elements are efficiently planned and undertaken in an appropriate manner that provides clear learnings, recommendations, and conclusions. S/he should have at least a master's degree in Gender Study, Social Science, or a related discipline and a proven track record of at least five years of relevant experience in a similar assignment. Proven analytical and learning, as well as brief report writing skills, are a must. Strong interpersonal skills for collaborative work in a diverse environment, demonstrated initiative, and meeting deadlines are essential. Exceptional coordination skills with the project team and relevant stakeholders are expected. The expert should exhibit a positive attitude and respect for professional and socio-cultural values.

Disability Inclusive Development (DID) expert: The DID expert will provide technical inputs regarding integration and achievement of disability -specific considerations in project interventions. S/he should have at least a master's degree in relevant subjects and proven track record of at least two years of experiences in similar field. Strong interpersonal skills for collaborative work in a diverse environment, demonstrated initiative, positive attitude, and respect for professional and socio-cultural values.

7. Budget

The maximum available budget is **NPR 7,50,000** (In words: Seven Lakh Fifty Thousand Rupees only) **inclusive of applicable taxes**. This includes consultant's fee, lodging/accommodation, air fare/travel cost associated with this assignment. All applicable taxes will be deducted at source. The payment will be done in three instalments: 40% of total agreed amount shall be disbursed upon submission of inception report, 30% will be disbursed

upon submission of draft learning brief and remaining 30% will be paid after submission of final learning brief report and all other deliverables mentioned in section 5 of ToR.

Apart from the above, submission of the following will be taken into account during the selection process:

- a) A full technical and financial proposal along with the budget breakdown.
- b) A copy of Company Registration
- c) A copy of VAT certificate (obligatory)
- d) A copy of tax clearance for last fiscal year from Inland Revenue Office; and
- e) The proposed professional must sign the copy of clearly mentioning his/her proposed position in this assignment.

8. Duration and timeline:

The consultant is expected to complete the task within 3 months of the commencement of the assignment which is anticipated to be effective from 1st August 2024 and will be completed by 30th October 2024.

9. Evaluation criteria:

The received proposal/CVs shall be reviewed following different indicators. These will be but not limited to sound understanding of the assignment, competent methodology, consistency, coherence and compliance, experience, and efficient budget planning.

10. Invitation for the letter of interest:

Practical Action Nepal Office requests consulting firms (registered in VAT) to submit (i) an application highlighting the letter of interest (LoI) (ii) brief technical proposal along with your proposed methodology (not more than 7 pages) (iii) recently updated CV, and (iv) a financial proposal with detail cost breakdown to conduct the proposed work in a non-editable pdf version through an email mentioned below **on or before 17:00 hrs., 23rd July 2024.**

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starts small

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**To assess the application and integration of agroecology in the
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The overall objective of the project is to contribute to Nepal Government's SDG 1 target of reducing extreme poverty to less than five per cent by 2030 whereas the specific objective of the project is to improve economic and social resilience from market-oriented agriculture production (focused value chains are vegetable, dairy, goat, walnut and mandarin) and off-farm employment of 6,000 women, men from marginalised groups and people living with disability in province 5 in Dang, Rolpa and Rukum East Districts in Nepal. The project works directly with farmers' groups, farmers' cooperatives, civil society organizations, women networks, agro-vets, business service providers, insurance companies, financial institutions, development partners and local government.

The project is expected to achieve following five broad expected results.

1. Increased agriculture production and climate resilience
2. Improved market linkages
3. Increased entrepreneurial capacity.
4. Increased access to affordable credit and finance
5. Reduced drudgery and increased empowerment

2. Implementation of agroecology, regenerative, and climate smart agriculture practices (ARCS)

The project has established 224 Climate Field Schools (CFS) and 9 learning centers across eight rural municipalities, directly benefiting 6,013 individuals (including 4,894 women). Within these CFS, 224 trained lead farmers actively demonstrate commercial vegetable farming, agroecology, and regenerative agricultural practices. These practices include improved compost manure, bio-pesticides, bio-liquid manure, vermicompost, bokashi manure, biochar, compost tea, intercropping, mixed cropping, and legume cropping, among others. Additionally, climate-adaptive technologies such as resilient crop varieties, irrigation services, and soil management practices have been incorporated. Initially, reliant on regional markets for essential materials like IP liquids, these practices have spurred local demand through farmer-agrovets interactions and training sessions. Consequently, agrovets now locally supply inputs necessary for regenerative practices, ensuring ongoing support for farmers and a conducive business environment.

Currently, both lead and member farmers from the CFS actively implement agroecology and regenerative agriculture practices. Approximately 1,850 lead farmers and members have integrated these technologies, utilizing farm by-products such as vegetable leaves, mustard cake, ash, wood dust, and weeds to produce improved compost. They also use rice husk for biochar and cattle urine for bio-liquid fertilizer. By adopting practices like manuring, bio-pesticide use, straw mulching, crop rotation, and legume cropping, farmers reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers

and pesticides, thereby lowering input costs.

Focused on two rural municipalities—Bhume and Putha Uttarganga—in Rukum East, the project promotes regenerative practices for safe vegetable production. Farmers cultivate diverse vegetable species suitable for their local environment, including endangered landraces, thereby contributing to biodiversity conservation and year-round soil cover. Under the dairy and goat interventions, emphasis is placed on animal health, safe milk production, and market linkage. The project supports farmers and cooperatives with feed management, goat rearing, grass seeds, and infrastructure improvements such as sheds, milk cans, cream separators, and chilling vats. Twenty-seven Village Animal Health Workers (VAHWs) provide technical knowledge and counseling services to farmers.

In promoting these technologies and practices, the project prioritizes gender equality, disability inclusion, and social equity, ensuring the participation of women, marginalized groups, and people with disabilities. The project fosters positive ecological interactions, synergy, and complementarity among agroecological elements—plants, animals, soil, and water.

With a strong focus on agroecology and regenerative agriculture, the project aims to generate evidence, document best practices, and disseminate them widely for replication. Consequently, the project seeks support from experts or organizations with relevant experience to advance these objectives.

3. Objective of the work

The primary objective of this consultancy is to assess the application and integration of FAO's 13 principles of Agroecology in the project, providing detailed analysis, identifying gaps, and offering recommendations for improvement.

Based on the objective, the consultant will undertake a series of activities, including the review of project documents, progress reports, research report and other relevant documents. The consultant will coordinate with project teams and conduct field assessments in the project locations: at least five rural municipalities among eight RMs in three districts—Dang (Dangisaran and Shantinagar), Rolpa (Runtigadi, Triveni, Thawang, and Pariwartan), and Rukum East (Bhume and Puthauttarganga). The assessment will be conducted in representative sample of climate field schools in five rural municipalities.

4. Methodology

Based on the objective of the study, appropriate approach, and methodology will be proposed by the consultant and approved by Practical Action. The following steps will guide the process; however, the external consultant will propose methods within this broad framework.

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The consultant should possess substantial experience in conducting, analyzing, and documenting impact, identifying gaps with recommendations on agroecology in the project. S/he should have relevant academic and work experiences, including but not limited to the following roles.

Agroecology expert: The expert will manage the overall assignment, ensuring that various elements are efficiently planned and undertaken in an appropriate manner that provides clear conclusions. S/he should have at least a master's degree in agriculture, or a related discipline and a proven track record of at least five years of relevant experience in a similar assignment. Proven analytical and technical learning, as well as brief report writing skills, are a must. Strong interpersonal skills for collaborative work in a diverse environment, demonstrated initiative, and meeting deadlines are essential. Exceptional coordination skills with the project team and relevant stakeholders are expected. The expert should exhibit a positive attitude and respect for professional and socio-cultural values.

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