



Terms of Reference (TOR) for External Final Project Evaluation of Enhancing Livelihood through Local Efforts (ELLEP) Project

1. Organizational Introduction

The Group of Helping Hands (SAHAS) – Nepal, established in 1996, is a non-profit making and non-governmental social development organization registered with the District Administration Office, Lalitpur, Nepal and associated with the Social Welfare Council of the Government of Nepal. Since its inception, SAHAS-Nepal has been working in the remote areas focusing on vulnerable families and rural communities who are socially excluded and deprived of opportunities using Right Based Approach and inclusive community-based approaches.

The thematic areas included i) Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security, ii) Natural Resources Management, Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change iii) Capacity Building and Empowerment, iv) Lobby and Advocacy and v) Action Research. Besides these Education and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion are cross-cutting thematic areas.

1.1 Background

The external project evaluation is commissioned by Group of Helping Hands (SAHAS) Nepal. This evaluation will examine whether the programmatic approach of SAHAS and its working modality that has been used in the Enhancing Livelihood through Local Efforts (ELLEP) project is designed appropriately and relevant to the context of 4 project districts. It will assess project relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and potential impact and sustainability. The evaluation will be contributing to generate substantial information on result achieved, challenges to progress and lesson learnt. SAHAS Nepal will incorporate recommendations for developing future programmes and projects.

1.2 Description of the Project

Group of Helping Hands (SAHAS) Nepal implemented Enhancing Livelihood through Local Efforts (ELLEP) Project in four districts: Thakre Rural Municipality of Dhading, Ajirkot Rural Municipality of Gorkha, Rishing Rural Municipality of Tanahu and Khatyad Rural Municipality of Mugu with the financial support from Felm since 2018. The project covered a total of 4,581 Households (HHs) organised into 186 Community Based Organisations (CBOs) (Dhading-45, Tanahun-45, Gorkha-45 and Mugu-51) in 35 Wards at four Rural municipalities and empowering the socially excluded and smallholder farmers to improve livelihood and dignify life. Different activities such as community empowerment, food security, educational improvement, income generation, climate change and DRR, advocacy, awareness on hygiene and sanitation, to improve the community level infrastructure and access to agricultural inputs and technologies and CBOs, Network formation and their capacity buildings. The project was also implemented in close coordination with other stakeholders such as local governments (Rural Municipality, District Coordination Committee) and other relevant stakeholders in the project districts.

1.2.1 Development Goal: Improved food security and sustainable livelihood of marginalized and vulnerable community

1.2.2 Objectives of the project

- Improved food security, increased their household production and productivity, income, and access to safe drinking water of minorities
- Increased adaptation on climate change of minorities
- Micro enterprises (SMEs) based on agriculture and local knowledge and practices with especial focus to women and socially excluded groups increased.
- Climate change resiliency of local farming communities enhanced.
- Civil society actively advocate for rights of the discriminated groups and sustainable development through formation of CBOs and CBNOs



Terms of Reference (TOR) for External Final Project Evaluation of Enhancing Livelihood through Local Efforts (ELLEP) Project

- Capacity of community institutions for increased social mobilization, resource utilization, and access to services and self-governance increased.
- Gender equality and equity in participation, decision making and access to resources mobilization and benefit sharing enhanced
- Aware and responded to prevention and control COVID-19

1.2.3 Geographical coverage:

The project covers a total of 4 Rural Municipalities from 4 districts (Thakre Rural Municipality of Dhading, Ajirkot Rural Municipality of Gorkha, Rishing Rural Municipality of Tanahu and Khatyad Rural Municipality of Mugu).

2. Purpose of the Evaluation

The main purpose of the final evaluation is to find out to what extent project objectives have been achieved and at assessing the impact of the project particularly on improving the status quo of the direct and indirect beneficiaries. The focus will also be on assessing the emerging impacts of the intervention (either positive or negative) and the sustainability of the project's beneficiaries and the CBNOs strategy and capacity to sustain them. The final evaluation will also look at strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and challenges and any external factors that have affected the achievement of the immediate objectives and the delivery of the project outputs and look out for the best practices which can be replicated in other project area as well to improve the sustainability of benefits from project, and aid in the overall enhancement of SAHAS Nepal programming. The evaluation will also serve as an opportunity for joint learning and accountability among target groups, stakeholders, local development bodies as well as funding partners.

3. Objectives of the Evaluation

- Assess the outcome, impact and sustainability of the projects activities.
- An analysis of the relevant external context is available (stakeholder analysis of local governments, stakeholders and CSO actors providing health and sanitation, education facilities, i.e. rural health centers, schools) in the project regions. Assess relevance, sustainability, and approaches applied of the project components.
- Assess the sustainability of SAHAS Nepal's community development approach of CBO/MC/CBNO (3 phase-concept), i.e. to understand the role of community organizations in ensuring sustainability and ownership of SAHAS Nepal projects.
- Recommend realistic ways forward on how future initiatives, project innovation, and further priority aspects could be built in the future projects
- Documenting lessons learned, possible good practices approaches, and the potential for replication and upscaling.

4. Scope of Work

SAHAS Nepal will invite interested qualified consultants to submit offers to conduct an external final evaluation of the ELLEP project undertaking so far. The evaluation will analyze the achieved results and progress, gaps and challenges with regards to the progress made towards achievements of outcomes and impact of the projects. It will further scrutinize the changes on the life of target groups and gender equality along with social inclusion as a result of project, ownership of stakeholders, and likelihood of sustainability of the actions. Additionally, the evaluation will identify the positive and negative changes produced directly or indirectly by the projects on the opportunities of different groups of people and on the socioeconomic condition of their localities, if any.



Terms of Reference (TOR) for External Final Project Evaluation of Enhancing Livelihood through Local Efforts (ELLEP) Project

In the evaluation sample, assess Community Based Network Organisation (CBNO) Main Committees (MCs) and Community Based Organisation from ELLEP project areas. There should be a good mixture of CBOs in order to assess different levels of organizational capacities, needs, and self-reliance. In addition, the evaluation will also consult with different stakeholders (Rural Municipality and Wards, teachers, etc.) from the project areas. The evaluation will also interact with relevant project staff, field staff, senior management staff, board members, etc. regarding the project progress, lesson learnt and challenges.

5. Key questions of evaluation

It is expected that the evaluation report offers a complete and detailed description of the projects implemented over the time, the different stakeholders involved and the relations between them. Recommendations shall also be formulated in the report regarding the main evaluation topics as well as to the key questions under the specific evaluation criteria.

Cross-cutting issues such as gender and social inclusion shall be considered in all of the questions where possible and reasonable. Analyses how human rights approach and gender equality principle are integrated throughout the planning, and implementation. The evaluation team will answer the key questions based on OECD/DAC evaluation criteria as given below.

5.1 Relevance:

- To what extent the project address rights and needs of the target groups?
- To what extent the project reduces inequalities?
- To what extent the project contributes to achieving national priorities?
- To what the project contributes to achieving partners' policies?
- To what extent are the objectives, planned activities and planned outputs of the projects still valid? Are there differences between the time when the projects were designed and today?
- To what extent did the projects make use of a rights-based approach?

5.2 Effectiveness:

- To what extent have the project objectives been achieved/are likely to be achieved?
- Measures what has been achieved and the project strategic importance of the achievements?
- To what extent are the current strategies and the working approach of SAHAS effective towards the achievement of the objectives?
- To what extent have the project contributed to ensure marginalized and vulnerable groups have improved their access to economic opportunities and social protection?
- What factors contributing to achieving the desire goals and objectives looking at the various contributions of rural municipalities, Wards, CBOs and other stakeholders?
- Are there any exceptional experiences e.g. case-studies, best practices, upscaling and replication potentials which should be highlighted?

5.3 Efficiency:

- Measure how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, staffing, etc.) have been converted to results?
- Are project plans implemented on time and adapted as necessary?
- Was implementation systematically monitored, and the data used to inform decision-making?
- What factors contributed to efficiencies?

5.4 Impact

- To what extent are the project contributing to a long-term positive effect on the livelihoods of the targeted communities?



Terms of Reference (TOR) for External Final Project Evaluation of Enhancing Livelihood through Local Efforts (ELLEP) Project

- What differences have the project activities brought about for marginalized and disadvantaged target groups (e.g. considering gender, ethnicity, disability, socio-economic)?
- What are the other intended/unintended positive and negative effects that have occurred owing to the project's interventions?
- What factors contributed to the positive impact?

5.5 Sustainability:

- To what extent will the project activities continue to lasting and sustainable benefits in the project areas?
- How sustainable is the working modality of SAHAS (CBOs-Main Committees-CBNO)?
- How self-reliant and interdependent are the existing CBNO from SAHAS?
- To what extent can the different project components be financially sustainable (or partially self-sustaining financially by accessing available government funds/services, etc.)?

5.6 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion:

- To what extent have gender equality and social inclusion been considered throughout the planning, monitoring, and implementation of the projects?
- To what extent have the projects contributed to ensuring that women, Dalits, PwDs and Janajati have improved access to economic opportunities and adequate social protection based on their rights?

6. Evaluation design/Methodology:

The evaluation will be conducted based on OECD/DAC criteria with the methodology designed by the evaluation team. The evaluator(s) will ensure that the evaluation process will be participatory and respect different views from the project areas.

The most important stakeholders who should be considered in the evaluation are the responsible project officers of SAHAS Nepal, the field staff on the ground, the senior management staff, Board members, target groups, representatives from collaborating institutions and people in the project areas, other organizations working in the region, local government bodies, stakeholders as well as teachers, local leaders, etc.

Documents which shall be consulted are contract documents, letter of submission, project proposals, progress reports, SAHAS strategic plan, audit reports and project progress/monitoring sheets, result matrix and annual reports along with CBOs and CBNOs relevant documents (where applicable).

7. Process of the evaluation/ Time Frame:

The tentative project time frame for this final project evaluation of the above-mentioned project is a total of 20 days starting from 16th April to 30th June 2021. A timeframe has been suggested, but it can be refined and finalized by the evaluator(s) in consultation with SAHAS Nepal.

The evaluator must take consideration of time required for:

- Clarification/Kick-off meeting,
- Developing evaluation design and methodology,
- Developing research tools (questionnaires, interview guidelines, etc.),
- Literature review and desk work,
- Inception report,
- Field work or data collection,
- Validation workshop at the end of the field mission,
- Analysis of gathered data and information,



Terms of Reference (TOR) for External Final Project Evaluation of Enhancing Livelihood through Local Efforts (ELLEP) Project

- Draft report preparation,
- Presentation of main findings and draft report,
- Final report submission

8. Expected Products

The evaluator will have to prepare/conduct:

- Inception report (see below)
- Draft final evaluation report (see below)
- Final evaluation report (see below)

8.1 Inception report (max. 10 pages, English)

The inception report should be prepared after the kick-off meeting, initial interviews and consultations with the reference group, and a study of key documents. The inception report shall include at least:

- which evaluation design will be used;
- which methods and instruments will be used (incl. questionnaire/s for interviews);
- which stakeholders and how many representatives of them will be included;
- which kind of support will be needed;
- a detailed work plan and time schedule, including plans for field visits.

The inception report shall be written in English and should not exceed 10 pages. SAHAS Nepal has the chance to comment the report within a defined timeframe and has to accept it in written form.

8.2 Draft evaluation report

It is expected that the evaluators present and discuss the preliminary findings of the evaluation during a validation workshop to collect comments and feedback from consulted stakeholders at the end of the field mission. After data collection and inputs received from relevant experts/stakeholders, the evaluator will prepare a draft report. After presenting the draft report, the evaluation results and recommendations shall be presented in a final debriefing workshop and discussed with SAHAS Nepal Management Team to collect comments and feedback. The draft report shall also be shared with Felm for comments and feedback.

8.3 Final evaluation report (max. 45 pages plus annexes, English)

The evaluation report will be finalized incorporating the inputs from the validation workshop and final presentation where relevant and appropriate. The final report shall be written in English, following the format attached as annex, and should not exceed max. 45 pages plus annexes. The report should respect the quality criteria which will be agreed between the evaluators and SAHAS Nepal. The final report should also be shared with Felm for feedback.

9. Total Budget of Evaluation

The total budget for the final external evaluation of ELLEP project is NRs. 300,000.00 and payment will be in two instalments (40% and 60%) start out and submission of the final report.

10. Profile of the evaluator/s

The team of evaluators should consist of at least two evaluators. One coordinating evaluator will have the responsibility for the overall coordination of the evaluation and for the final coherence and quality assurance of the report. He or she should have extensive experience in leading evaluations and report writing. The team leader has the choice to include more people if needed.



Terms of Reference (TOR) for External Final Project Evaluation of Enhancing Livelihood through Local Efforts (ELLEP) Project

At least one team member should also look into the cross-cutting issues and ownership aspects as well as in how far a rights-based approach has been practiced, i.e. to what extent the target groups feel that they “own” the projects and take responsibility for sustainability of the progress.

The evaluation team must demonstrate:

- Advance degree in social and development studies or related field or equivalent demonstrated development experience,
- At least 5 years of proven experience with OECD/DAC evaluation criteria,
- Knowledge and working experience with NGOs/INGOs in rural and social community development and/or projects ,
- Knowledge and experience relating to topics such as community development and food security, climate resilient agriculture practices, micro entrepreneurship development and strengthening grass root organisation
- Demonstrate ability to reliably contribute to outcome and impact based evaluation both assessment and learning aspects,
- Experience with participatory evaluation and qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed method design, triangulation),
- Familiar with rights-based approaches, gender and social inclusion
- Familiar with the country/culture,
- Excellent analytical skills and ability to consolidate findings and clearly present recommendations,
- Excellent ability to work in English, Nepali and local language effective oral and written communication skills,
- Strong facilitation and interviewing skills

Annex I: Format for Final Evaluation Report

- Executive summary: a tightly drafted, to-the-point, free-standing document (about 5 pages), including the key issues of the evaluation, main analytical points, conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations.

Acknowledgement

Table of contents

List of acronyms and abbreviations

Main report

- Key data of the evaluation: Name, number, duration of the projects/projects to be evaluated, title of the evaluation, principal of the evaluation (who commissioned the evaluation), contractor of the evaluation, date of the report.
- Objectives of evaluation
- Users of evaluation
- Methods used for evaluation including, rationale for choice for methodology, source of data, data collection methods and analysis, participatory methods, cross-cutting issues (gender, inclusion, etc.), and limitations
- Key members of the evaluation team with specific roles of team members (very brief)
- Description of projects and external context analysis (short)
- Target group and stakeholder analysis (short)
- Analysis of programme approaches (short)



Terms of Reference (TOR) for External Final Project Evaluation of Enhancing Livelihood through Local Efforts (ELLEP) Project

- Key findings of the evaluation: with regard to the core questions pointed out in the ToR; assessment of the extent to which participatory tools, issues of social inclusion, gender, and rights-based approach are reflected throughout the project.
- Analysis of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project or project components
- Conclusions*: based on evidence and analysis, incl. an overall assessment of the work appraised and presenting the 'lessons learnt'.
- Recommendations*: regarding future steps/activities/follow-up – prioritised and addressed to specific actors at all levels, relevant and feasible (if possible for each conclusion a recommendation; use implementation table as provided).
- Annexes (Final ToR, list of persons/ organisations consulted, literature and documentation consulted, selected photographs of evaluation process)

* The interlinkages between key results/findings, conclusions and recommendations/lessons learnt have to be clear and transparent.

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