



## **Terms of Reference (TOR) for External Program Evaluation of Local Initiatives for Food Security Transformation (LIFT) Project**

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### **1. Organizational Introduction**

Group of Helping Hands (SAHAS) Nepal is a non-profit, non-governmental, social development organisation founded in 1996. Since inception, the organisation has been working in remote rural areas focusing on vulnerable and socially excluded families who are deprived of development opportunities. SAHAS puts its development efforts towards strengthening the capacities of communities and local development partner organisations to create an enabling environment for sustaining development activities by fostering collective efforts of the communities themselves. SAHAS Nepal continues to use the “grassroots approach”, “Rights-Based Approach (RBA)” and “inclusive communitybased approach” to community development to identify and serve its target groups. These approaches involve group formation focusing on the vulnerable, Dalits, women, persons with disability and other marginal groups, ensuring full ownership over their development activities.

### **2. Background**

The external program evaluation is commissioned by Dr. Surendra K. Shrestha, Executive Director of 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 Local Initiatives for Food Security Transformation (LIFT) projects is designed appropriately and relevant to the context of 6 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.

### **Description of the Projects to be evaluated**

Project number N-NEP-2019-0135 LIFT project is funded by BftW.

#### **A. Local Initiatives for Food Security Transformation (LIFT) Project**

Local Initiatives for Food Security Transformation (LIFT) Project is under implementation since 2019 in Okhaldhunga, Udayapur, Lalitpur, Mugu, Kalikot and Bajura districts. The current phase started in 05/2019 and due to complete in 04/2022, was developed based on the learnings generated from the first second and third phase.

The project has been implemented in a total of 7 rural municipalities and 3 municipalities from six districts for improving the food security situation of the target communities. The project has benefitted a total of 10,066 households from the rural areas, who are poor and marginalised farmers, especially, Dalits, Janajati and Women. LIFT project has united poor and marginalised section in the form of a total of 406 Community Based Organisations (CBOs), where about 40 per cent of the CBOs are led by women. The 5 CBOs are supported to enhance their capacity to implemented different community development activities. The project is also implemented in close coordination with other stakeholders such as local governments such as ward, rural municipality, and sectoral line agencies in the project districts.



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SN	Project phase	Project No.	Project Period	Target districts	Target RMs	Total Households	Total CBOs	Total CBNOs
1	LIFT	N-NPL-2019-0135	01.05.2019-30.04.2022	Okhaldhunga, Udayapur, Lalitpur, Mugu, Kalikot, Bajura	10	10,066	406	5

### Objectives of the project

- The food and nutritional security of smallholder farmers in the project area is improved
- CBOs and CBNOs are functional in their duty for integrated community development
- Small farmers are resilient against climate shocks and natural disasters

### 3. Purpose of the Evaluation

The evaluation shall give concrete recommendations on the future program design and on the relevance and priorities of the existing program components. The evaluation will also serve as an opportunity for joint learning and accountability among target groups, line agencies, local development bodies as well as funding partners.

### 4. Objectives of the Evaluation

- Assess the outcome, impact and sustainability of the projects activities.
- Assess relevance, sustainability, and approaches applied of the project components like food security, nutrition, livelihood, climate, hygiene and sanitation and education facilities.
- 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 project.
- Recommend realistic ways forward on how future initiatives, project and programme innovation, and further priority aspects could be built in the future project and programme.
- Documenting lessons learned, possible good practices approaches, and the potential for replication and upscaling.

### 5. Scope of Work

SAHAS Nepal will invite interested qualified consultants to submit offers to conduct an external evaluation of the LIFT project undertaking so far. The project was developed based on the learnings generated from the first, second and third phase. 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.

In the evaluation sample, SAHAS suggests to assess 5 Community-Based Network Organisations (CBNOs), 6 MCs and 18 CBOs for LIFT project. For LIFT evaluation sample, there should be a good mixture of CBOs

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and MCs in order to assess different levels of organizational capacities, needs, and self-reliance. In addition, the evaluation will also consult with different stakeholders (Ward and RMs representatives, teachers, agriculture, health and education unit representatives, 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.

**Table: Description of suggested evaluation sample of RMs, CBOs, MCs, CBNOS, Stakeholders, and Project duration**

Project	Project No.	Project duration	RMs	CBOs	MCs	CBNOS	Stakeholders
LIFT	N-NPL-2019-0135	01.05.2019-30.04.2022	10	18	6	5	Rural/Municipality (RM/M) agriculture, health and education units of RM/M, local leaders, teachers and CBNOS' Board.

### 6. 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.

#### 6.1 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?
- Are the problems addressed still a major problem in the project regions?
- To assess in how far there is a need for innovation in the role, vision and mission of SAHAS project design considering the changing external environment and the local site-specifics of the different geographical project areas?
- How did the projects identify the specific development needs of the target communities? To what extent have their needs been addressed?
- Has the work of SAHAS been able to redefine identities of people as being owners and leaders of their development and not only being beneficiaries?

- To what extent did the projects make use of a rights-based approach?

### 6.2 Effectiveness:

- To what extent have the project objectives been achieved/are likely to be achieved? What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
- 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 projects contributed to ensure that traditionally disadvantaged 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 wards, RMs, CBOs, CBNOs and other stakeholders?
- To what extent the target groups (esp. CBO, MCs, and CBNOs) were able to effectively access funds from wards, rural municipalities, and other stakeholders to the maximum potential?
- Are there any exceptional experiences e.g. case-studies, best practices, upscaling and replication potentials which should be highlighted? What approaches by the project can be regarded as innovative or as adaptations of good practice?
- How could partnerships (esp. with CBOs, MCs, CBNOs, and Government stakeholders), approaches, and management be made more effective?

### 6.3 Efficiency:

- Measure how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, staffing, etc.) have been converted to results? With no expectation of a detailed financial analysis, is it felt that the activities or outputs could have been achieved at lower costs?
- Are project plans being used, implemented and timely adapted as necessary (especially in response to changes in the external environment)?
- Was implementation systematically monitored, and the data used to inform decision-making?
- What factors contributed to efficiencies?

### 6.4 Impact

- To what extent are the projects contributing to a long-term positive effect on the livelihoods of the targeted local communities?
- What real differences have the project activities brought about for traditionally disadvantaged target groups (e.g. considering gender, ethnicity, disability, socio-economic group)?
- 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?
- What factors detracted?

### 6.5 Sustainability:

- To what extent will the projects as well as formed CBOs/MCs/CBNOs continue to lasting and sustainable benefits in the project areas?
- How sustainable is the working modality of SAHAS (CBO-MC-CBNO)? How feasible is the exit strategy of SAHAS for this approach?
- How self-reliant and independent are the existing CBNOs from SAHAS?

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- Is there any evidence of organizations/communities that have replicated good project practices beyond the project areas?
- To what extent can the different program components be financially sustainable (or partially self-sustaining financially by accessing available government funds/services, etc.) and what cannot?
- Operational working relation between SAHAS and the local cooperating NGOs, exit strategies, cooperation with government programmes, etc.
- What would be an appropriate direction for SAHAS Nepal's future work in these project areas?

### 6.6 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 and Janajati have improved access to economic opportunities and adequate social protection based on their rights?

## 7. 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, sectorial line agencies as well as ward, RMs, agriculture, health and education units representative, 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, project monitoring framework and annual reports along with CBOs and CBNOs relevant documents (where applicable).

## 8. Process of the evaluation/ Time Frame:

The tentative project time frame for this final program evaluation of the above mentioned projects is a total of 43 days starting in December 2022. 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,
- Draft report preparation,



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

### **9. Expected Products**

The evaluator will have to prepare/conduct:

- Inception report (see 9.1)
- Draft final evaluation report (see 9.2)
- Final evaluation report (see 9.3)

#### **9.1 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:

- if the objectives of the evaluation can be reached, possible restrictions and additional issues and questions;
- 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.

#### **9.2 Draft evaluation report**

It is expected that the evaluators present and discuss the preliminary findings to SAHAS Nepal and inputs received, 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 BftW for comments and feedback.

#### **9.3 Final evaluation report (max. 45 pages plus annexes, English)**

The evaluation report will be finalized incorporating the inputs. 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 BftW for feedback.

### **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.

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.



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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 similar kind of evaluations,
- Knowledge and working experience with NGOs in rural and social community development and/or projects ,
- Knowledge and experience relating to topics such as community development, food sovereignty, climate change adaptation, climate resilient agriculture practices, rural entrepreneurship development, health, education,
- 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

### **11. Content of the evaluators' offer**

To participate in the tender process, offers must be submitted to the e-mail-address below by 19 December, 2021 and consist of the following documents:

- A sound CV of all of the participating evaluators;
- An offer detailing the evaluation design, methods and instruments to be used to answer the evaluation questions (max. 4 pages);
- A Time Table
- A budget stating precisely the daily fees for the evaluators (disclosing taxes), costs for transport and all additional costs.

#### **Please hand the offer via e-mail in to:**

Group of Helping Hands (SAHAS) Nepal  
Sanepa, Lalitpur  
infor@sahasnepal.org.np



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### 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

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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)
- 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 projects/programmes.
- 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.