

TERMS OF REFERENCE: Consultancy for a Socio-economic Inclusion Recovery Assessment in White Nile, South Kordofan, Central Darfur and Red Sea in Sudan

1. Context and justification

Since the Darfur crisis began in 2003, Sudan has faced prolonged civilian displacement, leaving many unprotected and exposed to threats such as armed attacks, insecurity, rising criminal activity, and acute food shortages caused by erratic rains and dry spells. High inflation on food, fuel, and other essentials, along with floods and recurrent disease outbreaks, have worsened the situation. Ongoing clashes between armed groups and government forces have led to road blockages and restricted rural access, preventing farmers from tending to crop or transporting goods. Military checkpoints and heavy presence have further hindered movement, causing trade routes to close or operate minimally. Sudan is now the world's largest displacement crisis. According to IOM's 2024 report, over 9 million people were internally displaced, with 6 million displaced within 11 months of conflict across all 18 states, particularly in River Nile, South Darfur, Aj-Jazirah, and White Nile. The escalating humanitarian crisis is compounded by long-standing economic challenges, pre-existing hostilities, and the disruption of essential services like food, water, fuel, and healthcare. This is further exacerbated by the collapse of financial services, frequent disruptions to internet, telecommunications, and electricity, and the destruction of critical infrastructure, including health facilities.

ACF began operations in Sudan in 2019, adopting a multisectoral approach aimed at preventing malnutrition through both life-saving interventions and early recovery efforts. Its programs integrate Health and Nutrition, WASH, and FSL sectors, with a strong emphasis on community disaster preparedness, resilience, and self-reliance, particularly for female beneficiaries. Gender and protection is mainstreamed through the sectors.

ACF is currently implementing a multi-year, multisectoral project titled "**Strengthening Resilience and Sustainability of Food-Insecure Households**" in 53 underserved communities across 11 localities in White Nile, Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and Central Darfur states in Sudan. Funded by Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the project aims to improve the nutritional status of the most vulnerable populations by enhancing women's protection and strengthening community resilience in these regions. Originally designed in 2022, before the outbreak of conflict in Sudan, the project now requires realignment to address the current situation. A socioeconomic assessment will play a pivotal role in this process by updating and revising value chain options based on pre-conflict documents, including the 2021 Value Chains Report: "Identification and Formulation of Programmes for Agri-Food Value Chains Towards Food Security and Sustainable Growth and Jobs for Sudan" by Lindell Mill. This assessment will also guide the project's expansion into the Red Sea region, identifying socioeconomic opportunities and challenges. The findings will provide actionable recommendations for designing interventions and ensuring the safe initiation of project operations in the Red Sea. Furthermore, the Socio-Economic Inclusion Recovery Assessment is essential for understanding the broader challenges communities face, evaluating barriers to socio-economic recovery, and shaping interventions that foster long-term resilience and sustainable recovery.

2. Aim and Objective

- **Assess Vulnerable Groups Challenges and Opportunities:** Identify vulnerable groups and marginalized populations, analyse social and economic disparities, and explore opportunities to foster economic development and enhance social cohesion.
- **Provide Evidence-Based Recommendations:** Develop actionable strategies and resilience-oriented interventions that align with the priorities of key stakeholders.
- **Support Value Chain Inclusion:** Building on the recommendations of the 2021 Value Chains Report (Lindell Mill), the assessment will inform strategies to enhance the socioeconomic inclusion of producers within the targeted value chains by addressing existing challenges and leveraging emerging opportunities.

3. Scope of the socioeconomic assessment

a. Geographical Scope

Focus on conflict-affected states such as White Nile (Kosti and Guli localities), South Kordofan (Elreef-e-shargi and Gadeer localities), and Central Darfur (Bendesei, Mukjar, Wadi Salah, and Zalingei localities), while also considering more stable states, such as parts of the Red Sea region (Sinkat, Al Guneb, and Haya localities).

b. Methodological Scope:

- **Participatory Approach:** Prioritize inclusive methods such as focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) to capture diverse perspectives.
- **Mixed-Methods Design:** Combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to ensure comprehensive data collection and analysis.
- **Conflict-Sensitive Framework:** Employ a conflict-sensitive lens to ensure data collection does not exacerbate existing tensions.
- **Secondary Data Review:** Leverage existing reports and data (e.g., the 2021 Value Chain Report) to build on prior knowledge.
- **Local Engagement and Validation:** Involve ACF team and local partners in the validation processes.
- **Risk matrix approach** to work on some factors of tensions and/or cohesion and its relation with relevant activities in the context.

c. Thematic Scope:

- **Livelihood Restoration and Value Chains:** Evaluate the existing challenges and opportunities for livelihood recovery, with a focus on agricultural and livestock production. Identify gaps within value chains, explore potential growth areas, and assess the impact of conflict on value chains and livelihood activities.
- **Socioeconomic Disparities and Inclusion:** Address the impact of the conflict on vulnerable groups (e.g., women, displaced populations), identifying barriers to inclusion and potential interventions to promote resilience and social cohesion.
- **Market Systems and Trade Dynamics:** Evaluate market access, trade routes, and infrastructure disruptions, with actionable recommendations to restore economic activity and strengthen supply chains.

- Gender and Social Cohesion: Highlight the role of gender dynamics efforts, ensuring interventions are inclusive and promote community cohesion.
- Alignment of the assessment findings with ACF's strategic objectives and programmatic priorities informing future interventions of livelihoods and socioeconomic recovery in targeted states (Central Darfur, South Kordofan, White Nile and Red Sea) and in line with ACF socioeconomic inclusion programmatic proposal ([link](#)).

4. Deliverable of the consultancy

- A detailed work plan and methodology for the assessment.
- Tools for data collection (e.g. focus group discussion guides, questionnaires, and interview protocols).
- Preliminary desk review of existing data and contextual analysis.
- Identification of key stakeholders and communities to engage.
- Draft Socioeconomic Assessment Report with much focus on;
 - Barriers, market access, and demand shifts as a priority for actionable insights.
 - Reflect on the current income sources and coping strategies used by farming and pastoral communities.
 - Provide insights on the emerging trends in the field, including observations on challenges encountered during data collection.
 - Include a risk matrix to address factors of tension / foster social cohesion.
 - Provide propositions of adjustment for activities previously identified in the value chains report.
 - Provide recommendations on potential needs of adjustment for program's indicators (including targets, baseline values, etc.)
- Validation workshop.
- Final socioeconomic assessment report and executive summary.

5. Duration of consultancy

The consultancy shall last a maximum of 2 months from the date of the contract signing. A detailed milestones and deadlines should be provided.

6. Terms of the payment

40% will be paid after full validation of the inception report, while the balance (60%) will be paid after validation of the final report.

7. Competencies and requirements for the consultancies

Individual/or entity should provide;

- Educational Requirements; Advanced degree (master's or higher) in Social Sciences, Economics, Rural Development, Agriculture, Livelihood Studies, or related fields.
- Technical Expertise in Socioeconomic Assessments; Strong understanding of social and economic issues, particularly in rural, conflict, or post-conflict settings, a proven experience in assessing livelihoods, food security, agriculture, and livestock systems. And Familiarity with gender analysis and social inclusion approaches

- Research and Analytical Skills; Advanced skills in designing and implementing qualitative and quantitative research.
- Expertise in data collection, processing, and statistical analysis and Ability to interpret complex data and present actionable recommendations.
- Contextual Knowledge; Understanding of the specific cultural, political, and economic dynamics in the targeted area, Sudan; Experience in working with vulnerable populations in fragile contexts.
- Language; "Fluency in English is required, and proficiency in Arabic is an advantage for consultants."

8. The evaluation criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Understanding of the consultancy objectives.
- Proposed methodology and availability.
- Relevant qualifications and experience.
- Budget and timeline.

9. Application; Information to be provided in the application:

- CV of consultant/or company profile.
- Date of availability
- A technical proposal detailing an understanding of the ToR, Scope of Work, and expected outputs should also be included. It should include timelines, with specific dates from commencement to final roll-out, a work plan, and a Gantt chart.
- Financial offer signed and stamped: Please note that the consultant will take care of all her/his expenses related to this assignment including travel ...etc. Therefore, all expenses should be included in the financial offer, as ACF will not be responsible for any expense apart from the sum of the contract offer. Kindly include all deductible taxes as applicable in your offer.
- Terms of payment if different from the one proposed in this ToR. Currency of payment, preferably in Euro (€).

****This consultancy is for both individuals, groups/or companies.***

****We strongly encourage qualified Sudanese nationals to apply. Local knowledge and a deep understanding of the cultural, social, and economic dynamics of the targeted states will be highly prioritized during the selection process.***

Interested candidates should submit their application by the 07th of April 2025.