# Terms of Reference for

# Final Evaluation Consultancy

Project Title: **Improving local governance through inclusive development approaches.**

Country: **Georgia**

Project/Programme Number: **8379-00/2020**

Name of Partner Organisation: **Action Against Hunger**

The project *“Improving local governance through inclusive development approaches”* has been implemented by Action Against Hunger (AAH) in partnership with LNGO Alert in Abkhazia since October 2020 and will be completed at the end of January 2024. The total budget is 1,115,000 Euros which is co-financed by the Austrian Development Agency with funds Austrian Development Cooperation.

1. **Context and Background**

Traditionally within the South Caucasus there has been a predilection for resolving local development problems using a top-down approach, with limited engagement of local people in the prioritization and decision-making process. The introduction of the Community-led Local Development (CLLD) approach and the formation of Local Action Groups (LAGs) in Georgia proper and Abkhazia offers an opportunity for local people to have an increased role in local governance and to have a greater say in how development solutions are made and acted upon. The move towards participatory rural development and an integrated, multi-sector approach for tackling development needs, however, remains a work in progress. The LAGs are still at a nascent stage of development, and it has been important to continue to support their growth, strengthen their work and reinforce the work that has been performed to date.

The **objective** of the project is to strengthen his CLLD approach to rural development in the region and support Local Acton Groups (LAGs) in four municipalities/districts in Georgia (Akhmeta and Zugdidi) and Abkhazia (Gali and Tkvarcheli) to apply inclusive approaches in development planning and decision-making. Three of these LAGs were already formed and capacitated prior to the start of the project and are located in Akhmeta municipality in Kakheti and Gali and Tkvarcheli in Abkhazia. All three LAGs have been supported, or are being supported, by Action Against Hunger. In addition, the project established a new LAG in Zugdidi Municipality and has supported its development so that representatives from this municipality can become involved in this community-led governance approach and support the local development of vulnerable communities, while also benefitting from the project interactions and learning.

The project is providing the target LAGs with new learning experiences – through workshops, study tours and events – to broaden their knowledge on local and international CLLD and inclusive development best practices and will then support the LAGs to strengthen their engagement on the following 3 thematic development priorities:

1. Women’s economic engagement and leadership (WEEL)
2. Youth social and economic inclusion
3. Environmental protection and climate action (including climate-smart agriculture and sustainable tourism)

The project is also acting as a learning platform for other LAGs and local governance initiatives within Georgia and Abkhazia, as well as within neighbouring Armenia and Moldova. The engagement with Moldova and Armenia is culminating in two co-created transnational projects – one between Georgian and Armenian LAGs and one between Georgian and Moldovan LAGs – to develop relationships and further strengthen trans-national cooperation within the Eastern Partnership.

The intended **project outcome** is that community representatives working within local governance structures (Local Action Groups) apply inclusive approaches to increase the engagement of women, youth and the most vulnerable in development planning and decision-making processes and provide new local development opportunities that will strengthen resilience within their locality. The benefits that are generated are the new opportunities for women, youth, and vulnerable persons to improve the socio-economic conditions in their municipality or district and that the CLLD approach (or elements of the approach) that is showcased is continued to be supported/utilised both by state and non-state actors. The intended **impact** of the project is that it will contribute towards increased inclusion of women, youth and the most vulnerable in local development decision-making processes and socio-economic support.

The project aims to accomplish the following **three outputs:**

**Output 1 Women and youth capacitated to engage in governance, decision-making and inclusion processes:** The project will provide focused support to women and youth in the form of the Women’s Economic Engagement and Leadership (WEEL) programme and the Youth Leadership and Peer Education programme. The project will ensure, through targeted awareness raising campaigns, appropriate information materials and meeting locations and times, that vulnerable and disadvantaged communities and individuals are able to access and engage in these initiatives and benefit from the support provided. Both approaches will look to motivate and provide skills and knowledge to women and youth to act as an entry point to the LAGs in their locality and to increase their capability to successfully engage in the sub-project opportunities earmarked for women’s social and entrepreneurial support and youth inclusion.

**Output 2: Community-led local governance structures strengthened and better informed on inclusive rural development best practices**: Under this output the project will offer new learning and experiences for the target LAGs to broaden their knowledge on CLLD and inclusion practices and approaches, so that they are better prepared to incorporate new measures within their strategies to support the inclusion of women, youth and the most vulnerable.

**Output 3: Local development solutions designed and delivered supporting socio-economic inclusion, environmental protection and climate action:** Once the LAGs members have been capacitated, the project will assist them to all the necessary tools and systems to professionally run a sub-project competition that will support community-led initiatives in line with the 3 thematic development priorities of the project, and ensure that vulnerable communities and individuals benefit from the support measures.

1. **Purpose and Objectives**

Action Against Hunger is seeking an evaluation consultant, or consultants, to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the project to determine whether it has strengthened the ongoing Community-led Local Development (CLLD) approach to rural development in the region and support to Local Acton Groups (LAGs) in Akhmeta, Zugdidi, Gali and Tkvarcheli to better apply inclusive approaches in development planning and decision-making. Also, the evaluation will determine if the community representatives working within these Local Action Groups have been capacitated to increase the engagement of women, youth and the most vulnerable in development planning and decision-making processes and have provided new local opportunities in the three development priority areas. Finally, the evaluation will assess if the project has broadened the LAGs networking potential – regionally within the Eastern Partnership (Armenia and Moldova) for the Georgian LAGs, and within Abkhazia for the Abkhazian LAGs. The main objective of the evaluation is to assess and report to Action Against Hunger and the Austrian Development Agency the extent to which the project outputs have been delivered and the desired outcomes have been achieved. The evaluation will be used for both accountability and learning purposes to assess whether the actions of the project have had the intended impact and as well as to identify lessons learned and good practices to inform future project design and implementation.

1. **Scope**

The evaluation is scheduled to be conducted in **October/November 2023** with a timeframe of **25 working days.** The evaluation will be taking place at the end of the project implementation period and will be a combination of desk review and in-country analysis in the target geographical areas of Zugdidi & Akhmeta municipalities in Georgia proper and Gali and Tkvarcheli districts in Abkhazia.

At the outset the evaluation consultant(s) should discuss with Action Against Hunger representatives and its partner, LNGO Alert, to better understand the rural development context in the region, as well as other NGOs and UN Agencies working in the target locations and sector. The evaluator(s) will be provided with all relevant project documents/report for desk review at the outset and then the evaluation research should be conducted through Key Informant Interviews, and Focus Group Discussions in the target locations. This process should encompass a wide range of stakeholders and beneficiaries in each of the target municipalities/districts including the LAG members, project beneficiaries (Young Leaders, WEEL participants etc.), sub-grant recipients and other key stakeholders – including remote meetings with project stakeholders in Armenia and Moldova. The evaluation consultant(s) should also observe and assessment the inputs provided to the sub-grant recipients and the quality of support delivered. For this reason, it is important for the evaluation consultant(s) are able to travel to the municipalities and districts where the project activities have been undertaken.

Under the specific **OECD/DAC evaluation criteria** concerning **effectiveness, efficiency, impact,** and **sustainability,** the evaluator(s) has to analyse the following:

1. The extent to which the project has already achieved its objectives and results or is likely to achieve them, including the extent to which the capacities of the LAGs has already been improved and how they are benefitting the communities in their localities.
2. The strengths and weaknesses of the project in terms of planning, management and implementation and how this could have been improved.
3. The extent to which cross-cutting issues (gender, environment mainstreaming and social inclusion) were applied.
4. **Evaluation Questions**

The evaluation should look to answer the following questions:

***Effectiveness***

* To what extent has the project worked towards achieving its intended outcome or will be likely to achieve it?
* To what extent has the project already achieved its expected outputs or will be likely to achieve them?
* What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the outcome(s) and outputs? (Also consider any which were possibly beyond the control of the project)
* Did the project actions, such as trainings and study visits contribute to capacity development as planned? To what extent is the project likely to increase the capacity of the stakeholders and how has this learning been replicated?
* To what extent gender, environment and social inclusion mainstreaming included in the project?

***Efficiency***

* Was the project managed as planned? If not, what issues occurred and why?
* Was the project implemented in the most efficient way (time, personnel resources)? Have any issues emerged, if so which ones and why?
* To what extent have all project stakeholders collaborated as planned. Assess the coordination and collaboration between the project team and the stakeholders?
* To what extent did the project supplement the activities and inputs with resources from other projects/programmes (run both by Action Against Hunger and other stakeholders)?

***Impact***

* Which target groups have benefited most from the project and in what way?
* How have the LAG members already benefitted from the project?
* What exactly has already changed in the lives of the people impacted by the project (immediate impact)?
* Which positive and/or negative effects/impacts in terms of gender, environment and social inclusion can be possibly be attributed to the project/programme?

***Sustainability***

* To what extent will the benefits of the project continue after the withdrawal of the donor?
* Will the results of the project be integrated into local structures (in Georgia proper) and/or funded by other sources?
* What are the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project?
* What needs to be done and/or improved to ensure sustainability?
1. **Design and Approach**

The evaluation approach will consist of several phases:

1. Contract and Kick-off meeting: Contract is signed, and a discussion of the assignment takes place. First documents, including available data, are provided to the evaluator(s).
2. Desk Review: The evaluation consultant(s) studies all necessary project proposal and logframe documents, analyses the intervention logic and project theory of change and its assumptions. The evaluation consultant(s) reviews all project reports to date, and all supplementary reports. Existing data should be analysed and interpreted.
3. Inception-Phase: In the inception report the evaluator(s) will describe the design of the evaluation, including the submission of the evaluation design and methodology, and an evaluation matrix outlining key evaluation questions, data sources, data collection methods/tools and methods for the data analysis. The use of a data collection planning worksheet or a similar tool is required. In addition, the inception report should include the data collection instruments tailored for specific survey or qualitative data collection methods. Data triangulation and quality control are very important and need to be discussed in the inception report.

A human rights-based approach, ADC’s cross-cutting issues, as well as the basic principles and quality standards applying to ADA’s programme and project design should be incorporated in the evaluation design, approach and methods.

*N.B. The data collection and field phase will only take place upon official approval of the inception report by the contractor.*

1. Field-phase: Data will be collected through Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions and other surveys as identified through the Inception Report in both Georgia proper and Abkhazia. The collected data should be analysed and interpreted. It is expected that the evaluation will include quantitative and qualitative data disaggregated by sex.
2. Presentation: A presentation of key findings (feedback workshop) should be conducted to Action Against Hunger at the end of the field phase.
3. Draft Final Report: Submission and presentation of final draft report, inclusion of comments from partners and contractor.
4. Final Report: Submission of final report, see reporting requirements under point 9).

The evaluation consultant(s) will submit the following reports:

* an **inception report** (approx. 10 pages without annexes) on the design of the evaluation and how the data will be obtained and analysed,
* a **final draft evaluation report** (about 25-30 pages without annexes)and the results-assessment form (see attached and part of the reporting requirement)
* and the **final evaluation report** (25-30 pages without annexes)and the results-assessment form (part of the reporting requirement)

All reports need to be written in English. The executive summary should summarize key findings and recommendations (three to five pages) and needs to be submitted as part of the final draft report. The findings and recommendations of the draft final report and final report have to be structured according to the evaluation questions. An outline of the report’s structure needs to be agreed upon during the inception phase.

The quality of the reports will be judged according to the following criteria:

* Is the results-matrix format part of the report?
* Does the report contain a comprehensive and clear executive summary?
* Were the Terms of Reference fulfilled and is this reflected in the report?
* Is the report structured according to the OECD/DAC criteria?
* Are all evaluation questions answered?
* Are the methods and processes of the evaluation sufficiently documented in the evaluation report?
* Does the report describe and assess the intervention logic (e.g. logframe, program theory of change) and analyze a theory of change and its underlying assumptions?
* Are cross-cutting issues analyzed in the report?
* Are the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings and are they clearly stated in the report?
* Does the report clearly differentiate between conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations?
* Are the recommendations realistic and is it clearly expressed to whom the recommendations are addressed to?
* Were the most significant stakeholders involved consulted?
* Does the report present the information contained in a presentable and clearly arranged form?
* Is the report free from spelling mistakes and unclear linguistic formulations?
* Can the report be distributed in the delivered form?

N.B. The Guidelines for Project and Programme Evaluations developed by the Austrian Development Agency need to be considered throughout the entire evaluation process.

 ADA Evaluation Policy: [**Evaluationpolicy.pdf (entwicklung.at)**](https://www.entwicklung.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Evaluierung/Englisch/Evaluationpolicy.pdf)

1. **Workplan**

A total of **25 working days** is the estimated timeframe for this assignment with the following tentative schedule.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Responsible** | **Date** |
| Submission of bid (electronically) | Consultant/s | 20/09/23  |
| Interviews of Consultant | Contractor & Consultant/s | Week beginning 25/09/23 |
| Contract signed and documents provided  | Contract signed between the Contractor and Consultant/s | 28/09/23 |
| Kick-Off meeting  | Meeting between Contractor and Consultant/s | 29/09/23 |
| Desk Study and preparation of inception report | Consultant/s | **5 working days** over the period 02/10/23 – 06/10/23 |
| Submission of draft inception report | Consultant/s | 06/10/23 |
| Written feedback provided by AAH | Contractor | 10/10/23 |
| Submission of final inception report | Consultant/s | **1 working day**11/10/23 |
| Conduct interviews, FGDs, perform data analysis and feedback workshop | Consultant/s | **12 working days** over the period 16/10/23 –27/10/23  |
| Writing of draft final report  | Consultant/s | **5 working days** over the period30/10/23 – 03/11/23 |
| Submission of draft final report  | Consultant/s | 03/11/23 |
| Written feedback provided by AAH | Contractor | 08/11/23 |
| Submission of final evaluation report (hard copy and electronic copy) to contractor | Consultant/s | **2 working days**09/11/23 – 10/11/23 |

1. **Evaluation Management Arrangements**

Evaluation Management will be led by Action Against Hunger MEAL Manager based in Tbilisi, Georgia, with the support of the Technical Coordinator and Program Manager. The point of contact for this consultancy application and for all future evaluation management issues is:

**Richard Maxfield: Technical Coordinator**.Contact details: rmaxfield@sc.acfspain.org

Mobile: +995 599 88 73 51

While carrying out the evaluation, the management will respect the ethical standards and guiding principles for evaluation, including impartiality and independence.

The ownership of the evaluation documents will belong to Action Against Hunger and the donor organisation exclusively. The document, or any publication related to it, will not be shared by the evaluation consultant(s) to anybody prior to the delivery of the final document to the donor by Action Against Hunger.

Action Against Hunger may share the results of the report with the following groups:

* Donor(s)
* Key Stakeholders
* Various co-ordination bodies
1. **Requirements for the Evaluator(s)**

The evaluation team will consist of either one or two members (international) who have the possibility to travel to both Georgia and Abkhazia.

Key Qualifications in the team should be:

* Academic degree (master level) in Research Methods, Social Sciences, Statistics, Economics, or relevant subject.
* Solid experience in project Monitoring and Evaluation having conducted at least three evaluations in the last five years ideally.
* A minimum of three years’ experience and expertise in the field/sector of social inclusion with a focus of LEADER/CLLD approach
* Experience of working in the South Caucasus and/or knowledge of the region’s context is an asset.
* Experience analysing a theory of change.
* In case of a team of two evaluators, a gender balance and diversity would be considered an advantage.
* Excellent oral and written English skills.
* Russian or Georgian language skills an advantage.
* Strong communication and analytical skills.
* Demonstrated skills in drafting reports.
* Excellent writing, presentation/public speaking skills.
* Computer literacy.

*N.B. The evaluation consultant(s) must not have been involved in the design, implementation or monitoring of this project.*

1. **Specifications for the Submission of Offers**
* Interested applicants should send their **CV** and a **two-page** **technical** and a **financial proposition**.
* The technical proposition should clearly lay out the consultancy evaluation design and methodology, including the data collection tools to be used as well as the data analysis approach.
* The financial proposition should include the proposed **gross daily rate** for remunerationin **Euros.** The rate should also include subsistence costs.*Please note that all costs for flights, accommodation, internal travel and translation will be paid by Action Against Hunger and should not be included in the financial proposition.*
* The weight given to the assessment of the technical proposition is 50% and the financial offer is 50%
* The proposition should also state the earliest date that the applicant could begin the consultancy.
* Any materials required to carry out the assigned consultancy (laptop, mobile phone etc.), must be provided by the evaluation consultant(s)
* Applications to be sent to the Action Against Hunger email address procurement@sc.acfspain.org with the subject “**AAH Evaluation”** no later than **September 20th, 2023.**
1. **Annexes** (only to be filled during the evaluation – not in the application):
* Results-Assessment Form [Annex 9\_Results\_Assessment Form Template.xlsx (live.com)](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.entwicklung.at%2Ffileadmin%2Fuser_upload%2FDokumente%2FEvaluierung%2FEvaluierung_Templates%2FAnnex9_Results_AssessmentForm_Template.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* Evaluation Matrix Template: [Annex 7 Evaluation Matrix Template.xlsx (live.com)](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.entwicklung.at%2Ffileadmin%2Fuser_upload%2FDokumente%2FEvaluierung%2FEvaluierung_Templates%2FAnnex7_EvaluationMatrix_Template.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)