

Terms of reference

Midterm External Evaluation

Integrated economic development of Central and Uva provinces of Sri Lanka

DONOR	EuropeAid
PROJECT DURATION	48 months (14/07/2017 to 13/07/2021)
LOCATIONS	Sri Lanka Monaragala and Badulla Districts – Uva Province Nuwara Eliya and Matale Districts – Central province
PARTNERS (IF ANY)	Humanity and Inclusion, CEFENET Sri Lanka, Human Development Organization, Future in Our Hand
MAIN PROJECT OBJECTIVE	To contribute to poverty reduction in Uva and Central Provinces of Sri Lanka
OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION	<p>Overall objective: to determine whether current project activities are leading to achieve intended project objectives, to draw conclusions about lessons learned so far and to refine for rest of the programming.</p> <p><u>Specific objectives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To assess the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness, collaboration and synergies between the consortium partners, projected impact and sustainability of the project. - To collect lessons learned and best practices during past implementation period of the project. - To identify any corrective actions that might be needed to improve project performance and to make recommendations to use for the rest of the project's implementation period.
OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY FOR THE EVALUATION	<p>The external expert will assess the project according to the criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact, gender and inclusion, administration and c). Cross-cutting issues such as gender, environment, accountability and do no harm will also be part of the analysis.</p> <p>The methodology for data collection is to be determined by the consultant with the project consortium approval. The consultant is however expected to conduct field missions to obtain the necessary qualitative and quantitative data that provides evidence of the impact of the response with members of communities targeted by the project. The evaluation should be conducted mainly through secondary data review, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and household-level interviews with a broad range of project stakeholders, including beneficiaries, as well as direct observations.</p>

**EVALUATION
DATES**

Between five and six weeks from agreement signing date including travelling, data collection and finalizing the report (deadline for final report submission is 9th April 2020).

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ACTED

ACTED WORLDWIDE

ACTED is a non-governmental organization with headquarters in Paris, founded in 1993. Independent, private and not-for-profit, ACTED respects a strict political and religious impartiality and operates according to principles of non-discrimination and transparency.

ACTED endeavors to respond to humanitarian crises and build resilience; promote inclusive and sustainable growth; co-construct effective governance and support the building of civil society worldwide by investing in people and their potential.

ACTED's mission is to save lives and support people in meeting their needs in hard to reach areas.

ACTED develops and implements programmes that target the most vulnerable amongst populations that have suffered from conflict, natural disaster, or socio-economic hardship.

ACTED's approach looks beyond the immediate emergency towards opportunities for longer term livelihoods reconstruction and sustainable development.

As of 2018, ACTED was present in four continents and our teams intervene in 37 countries towards 16.7 million people, responding to emergency situations, supporting rehabilitation projects and accompanying the dynamics of development.

ACTED IN SRI LANKA

ACTED has been present in Sri Lanka since January 2005, following the immediate aftermath of the violent tsunami that struck the east coast of the island in December 2004. Since the deployment of disaster relief and rehabilitation activities in the Eastern Province, the NGO has remained mobilized to respond to specific emergencies caused in particular by natural disasters, and has worked with communities and local civil society to build sustainable resilience and support the most vulnerable.

At present ACTED operates in 7 districts in the country implementing several projects in economic development, reconciliation and women empowerment.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE OF THE PROJECT

Despite Sri Lanka having recently graduated to an upper middle income country, there remains pockets of poverty in the country, particularly among the marginalized communities in rural and estate sectors (4.3% and 8.8% poverty rates respectively compared 1.9% in urban areas). Estate communities have been identified as one of the most vulnerable groups in the country because of a number of socio economic and political issues connected to those communities. With the exception of Northern and

Eastern provinces, Uva and Central provinces are among the most vulnerable provinces in terms of poverty. At the same time the majority of estate communities in the country are located in Uva and Central provinces given that majority of tea estates are located in those provinces.

The economies of Badulla, Monaragala, Matale and Nuwara Eliya districts mainly depend on agriculture. Both subsistence and commercial agriculture practices are the livelihoods for the majority of households in these districts. According to the findings from the need assessments carried out by the project partnership during 2016 and the market study in 2018, the following challenges and opportunities were the most prominent agriculture value chains of the above districts:

- Dairy and Vegetable value chains are prominent in all the districts;
- Other major value chains are floriculture in Badulla and Nuwara Eliya, fruit in Monaragala and spices in Matale;
- The majority of businesses related to above the value chains are either micro or small level according to the definitions by the government;
- By improving the entrepreneurs in the above value chains, local poverty rates can be reduced while improving the income level of the businesses as well as the employees of the specific businesses;
- Major constraints for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) include a lack of capital, weak competences in business management and in technical sectors, no business plans, limited access to business development services and financial products, and poor linkages with other actors of the value chain;
- Difficulties in receiving required services from the business development service providers (BDSs) is another hindrance for the agri-business development in the targeted areas;
- The wider business environment, including government policies, the role of government and private actors are not conducive for the successful implementation of the businesses;
- Businesses should focus on addressing the risk sensitivity of their businesses as most of the targeted districts are vulnerable to natural disasters.

ACTED, HI (Humanity and Inclusion), CEFENET, HDO (Human Development Organization) and FIOH (Future in Our Hands) proposed to address these issues as a consortium to support MSMEs growth in Matale, Nuwara Eliya, Badulla, and Moneragala districts through three complementary sets of activity: firstly, through immediate strengthening of target MSMEs in the areas (output 1). This is being achieved by selecting MSMEs in a limited number of value chains with high potential for expansion, inclusion and diversification, ensuring integrated development of the businesses. The selected MSMEs are provided planning support, trainings, assets and linkages. Secondly, by focusing on improving the Business Development Services (BDS) of the target areas, and in particular their coordination and organizational/technical competencies (output 2). Thirdly, through the promotion of a business enabling environment, which would favour long-term support to the MSMEs (output 3), by means of capacity building of local governance actors to engage in integrated, climate-resilient and inclusive socio-economic development, support to existing coordination mechanisms (notably DS level Enterprise Development Forums – EDF, being established in all DS by the National Enterprise Development Authority – NEDA), and support to District Disaster Management Units. By so-doing, the action is expected to sustainably improve the livelihoods of the most vulnerable rural and estate communities in Nuwara Eliya, Matale, Badulla and Monaragala districts through the promotion of an integrated, climate-resilient and inclusive socio-economic development (Specific Objective). Ultimately, the supported MSMEs and value chains should be capacitated to create new employment opportunities and increase the level of employee incomes, thus contributing to poverty reduction in Uva and Central Provinces of Sri Lanka (Overall Objective).

ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT

Result 1: MSMEs in target value-chains, such as local farming, value-addition or retail ones, and including women-led ones, are developed.

- **A 1.1:** Conducting assessment of local markets for selected value chains.
- **A 1.2:** Elaborating individual risk-sensitive Business Plans of selected MSMEs
- **A 1.3:** Promoting business registration, licensing and certification for target MSMEs.
- **A 1.4:** Building the business management, technical and marketing capacities of target MSMEs.
- **A 1.5:** Raising awareness of target MSMEs on environmental sensitivity and equal employment opportunities.
- **A 1.6:** Supporting target BDS to provide tailored Business Counselling on Business Plan implementation to target MSMEs.
- **A 1.7:** Organizing buyers and sellers' forums and trade fairs
- **A 1.8:** Facilitating linkages between financial institutions and target MSMEs.
- **A 1.9:** Establishing collection centers and market places in communities

Result 2: Local Business Development Services providers are able to provide MSMEs with adequate support to pursue their development.

- **A 2.1:** Assessing the capacities, quality and inclusiveness of service delivered by relevant BDS providers.
- **A 2.2:** Conducting coordination meetings between target BDS providers to clarify their roles and responsibilities and develop linkages among them.
- **A 2.3:** Building the capacities of the target BDS providers

Result 3: CSOs, Local Authorities and deconcentrated government departments jointly engage in inclusive, resilient and multi-stakeholder economic development governance, thus providing an enabling business environment for target SMEs.

- **A 3.1:** Building the capacities of selected CSOs, Local Authorities and GN/DS officers in participatory governance
- **A 3.2:** Supporting the CSOs to lead inclusive risk-sensitive Village Development Plans in sample GNs with particular attention to the economic needs of target MSMEs
- **A 3.3:** Supporting the elaboration of inclusive, risk sensitive and climate-resilient DS-level economic development plans.
- **A 3.4:** Supporting implementation of DS inclusive, risk sensitive, climate-resilient economic development plan.
- **A 3.5:** Supporting district DMCs to gear weather-related warning and forecasting support towards the private sector.
- **A 3.6:** Organizing a best practices and lessons learned seminar.

KEY PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

The project is implemented by a consortium of partners. A summary of each partner is included below.

ACTED

ACTED is an international NGO and lead agency for the project, providing overall coordination and supervision of the project's implementation, contract management and will ensure the accountability of project funds. ACTED is working to improve disaster resilience, strengthen civil society and government authorities, and achieve sustainable and inclusive growth in Sri Lanka. Additionally, ACTED's Appraisal Monitoring and Evaluation Unit monitor and report on the project activities to assist the program team to improve their methods of delivering support to the beneficiaries and target communities. ACTED is leading the result 1 activities (Economic development) of the project.

HI

Humanity & Inclusion (HI) is the lead agency on all governance activities and will be engaged in achieving an inclusive, resilient and multi-stakeholder local governance environment, which enables target MSMEs to strengthen their business development as outlined in the third result. Furthermore, HI contributes their expertise in gender equality, inclusion and disaster risk management in the integrated approach of this project. HI is leading partner for result 2 and 3 (Governance) of the project.

CEFENET

Competency-based Economies through Formation of Enterprise (CEFE-NET) is the lead agency for all MSMEs and BDS trainings, based on the methodology developed by CEFE-NET international, promoting new business start-ups as well as the expansion, diversification and/or improvement of existing businesses. CEFE-NET trainers work directly with the four economic development district project teams. CEFENET is responsible for overlooking the training component of the project including business planning, management, marketing and technical aspects of the selected businesses.

FIOH

Future in Our Hands Development Fund (FIOH) is the implementing organization in Uva province and is an NGO working to assist poor communities to find solutions to their social, economic, political and environmental problems, through organized action at district, provincial, national, regional and global levels. FIOH field staff work with the target beneficiaries in economic development and good governance teams in the selected districts and support the operations of the project. FIOH directly supports the project by mobilizing the target groups including most vulnerable in Uva province.

HDO

Human Development Organization (HDO) is a rights- based NGO established as a platform for vulnerable communities and minorities to voice their concerns. HDO is the implementing organization in Central province and contributes a longstanding experience of working with plantation communities. Field officers from the organization work with the target beneficiaries in both economic development and good governance development and support the project operations in the selected districts. HDO mobilizes the target groups at the community level in order to achieve the project objectives.

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES (DIRECT)

MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (320)

The project strengthens target MSMEs in selected agricultural value chains of the four districts (Result 1). About 80 MSMEs have been selected for the project in each of the four target districts. By strengthening the MSME to engage successfully with the immediate and wider enabling environments the enterprise has the ability to sustainably expand, creating more jobs and building the rural economy. To achieve this, MSMEs in a limited number of value chains with a high potential for expansion, inclusion and diversification, ensuring integrated development of the businesses were selected as beneficiaries. Roughly 80 MSMEs were selected in the four target districts. Target MSMEs in this context included all players within the value chain- input suppliers, producers, processors, wholesalers and retailers. The project uses the Sri Lankan Government's definition of MSMEs (turnover and employees) for the manufacturing sector.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (60)

The project focuses on improving the capacity and outreach of Business Development Service (BDS) providers of the target districts, and their coordination and organizational/technical competencies (Result 2). It focuses on the stakeholders within the immediate enabling environment, which are referred to as Business Development Service (BDS) providers. These are most commonly operating at the local level – such as chambers of commerce or their affiliates in the districts, technical and financial institutions including micro-finance and other business training centers. They are service providers which MSMEs reach out to build their business capacity. Roughly 15 Business Development Service providers were selected by the project in each of the four target districts.

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (80) & LOCAL AUTHORITIES (16)/DISTRICT SECRETARIES (16)

Generally, the external environmental factors (political, economic, social, technology, environmental and legal) that can have a positive or negative impact on the enterprise growth. It includes Civil Society Organizations, local authorities, and policy makers who shape the environment that MSMEs operate within. Some of these external factors can be improved and linked successfully with MSMEs and the immediate enabling environment to better understand and support the MSMEs in the rural economy development. The project engages relevant stakeholders to promote a business enabling environment at the local level, which favours sustainable support to the MSMEs (Result 3). It involves capacity building of local governance actors to engage them in integrated, climate-resilient and inclusive socio-economic development.

OTHER GOVERNMENT INSTITUTES

The government agencies those who assist to achieve the project objectives. Such as Provincial council, Central Environment Authority (CEA), Export Development Board (EDB) etc.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide the consortium and the donor with an assessment of the project, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, efficiency, effectiveness, projected impact and sustainability of the project. The evaluation should provide information that is evidence-based, credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the future decision-making processes of the ACTED- led project consortium and the donor.

The evaluation will specifically:

- Assess the extent to which current project activities are leading to achieve intended project objectives within the timeframe;
- Identify any corrective actions that might be needed to improve the project performance and success for achieving the objectives;
- Highlight lessons learnt, best practices and make recommendations for improving implementation for the remaining period of the project.

RESEARCH CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The evaluation shall use all eight of the following Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) criteria and corresponding questions. The consultant will be able to review and revise the questions (not the criteria) and methodology in consultation with the consortium representatives and ACTED country office AME team, as part of the inception phase of the evaluation, and as relevant. All criteria below should be considered within a gender and inclusion framework.

1. **Relevance:** The appropriateness of project objectives to the problems that it was supposed to address, and to the physical and policy environment within which it operated. It should include an assessment of the quality of project preparation and design – i.e. the logic and completeness of the project planning process, and the internal logic and coherence of the project design.

The following questions should be answered:

- Was the action adequately designed to respond to the needs of the direct beneficiaries?
- Did the selection processes for the beneficiary groups fulfil the objectives in choosing the right target groups?
- Are the beneficiaries satisfied with the support they are receiving from project and do they understand their role in supporting the rural poor?
- Is the project addressing the specific needs of the women, People with Disabilities and plantation communities in the target areas under results 2 and 3?

2. **Efficiency:** The fact that the project results have been achieved at reasonable cost, i.e. how well inputs/means have been converted into activities, in terms of quality, quantity and time, and the quality of the results achieved. This requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same results, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted.

The following questions should be answered:

- What are the external constraints to achieving the project objectives and how well are they mitigated?
- Is the project managed in a cost-efficient manner (in terms of human, financial and other resources versus the results)?
- Are beneficiaries sufficiently involved in the project implementation? How is beneficiary feedback incorporated into project implementation?

The consultant shall analyze the efficiency of project management arrangements and duly justify any issue. Factual statements on the quality and quantity of inputs shall be provided, delays should be measured by means of comparison with the latest update of the planning. Any significant deviations shall be analyzed. Conclusions on cost efficiency of outputs shall be drawn.

- 3. Effectiveness:** An assessment of the contribution made by results to achievement of the project purpose, and how assumptions have affected project achievements. This should include specific assessment of the benefits accruing to target groups.

The following questions should be answered:

- To what extent the project's specific objective is likely to be achieved?
 ("To sustainably improve the livelihoods of the most vulnerable rural and estate communities in Nuwara Eliya, Matale, Badulla and Monaragala districts through the promotion of an integrated, climate-resilient and inclusive socio-economic development")
- Are the targets set for the indicators likely to be achieved?
- Are the expected results likely to be realized?
 - R 1: Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in target value-chains, such as local farming, value-addition or retail ones, and including women-led ones, are developed.
 - R 2: Local Business Development Services providers are able to provide MSMEs with adequate support to pursue their development.
 - R 3: Civil Society Organizations, Local Authorities and deconcentrated government departments jointly engage in inclusive, resilient and multi-stakeholder economic development governance, thus providing an enabling business environment for target MSMEs.
- To what extent the project has applied approaches in project implementation to achieve gender and inclusion objectives of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) of the project?

The consultant's focus should be on outputs' and outcomes' delivery and quality (not activities); he/she is expected to explain any causes of deviations and the implications thereof. The level of achievement of results should be assessed as reflected by indicators covering the specific objective (outcome), providing a transparent chain of arguments.

- 4. Impact:** The effect of the project on its wider environment, and its contribution to sector objectives (as summarized in Results 3). In particular, the evaluation of impact should address the following key elements:

- Social level impact
- Technical level impact
- Economic level impact.

The following questions should be answered:

- What evidence is there that the project is contributing to the achievement of its overall objective?
- Is the project methodology and activities on track to achieve the expected impact? What, if any, corrective measures should be taken? What, if any, were the unintended impacts of the project intervention, both positive and negative? Is the project able to monitor, mitigate and respond to any unintended negative effects?
- What real difference has the activity made to the direct beneficiaries?

- 5. Sustainability:** An assessment of the likelihood of benefits produced by the project to continue to flow after external funding has ended (probability of continued long-term benefits).

The following questions should be answered:

- To what extent were the risk mitigation and sustainability plans in the project proposal, in addition to unforeseen risks, addressed during project implementation? How realistic are these?
- What evidence is there to suggest the project's interventions and/or results will be sustained after the project end? Particularly, how BDS have increased their capacities

and are able to provide continuous support to MSMEs (including women & disability-hold businesses);

- What are the possibilities for replication and extension of the project's outcomes?

Human, organizational (including policies and institutions) and financial factors, as well as environmental and gender viability, are the main sustainability factors.

6. Gender and Inclusion: The extent to which the project has applied gender and inclusion sensitive approaches and explicitly aimed for results that improve gender equality and people with disabilities:

- To what extent have the implementing organizations achieved targets in the Gender Action Plan to improve gender and inclusion policies within their organisation?
- To what extent, project activities have been designed for ensuring women and people with disabilities participation/inclusion? (at MSMEs level for Women and People with disabilities led MSMEs, at staff level; or for joining CSOs led activities)

7. Administration: The project has the appropriate management capacity.

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- To what extent the partners know their roles and offer timely, cost –effective and quality contributions?
- What control mechanisms are in place for monitoring activities and allowing of corrective measure to be taken where necessary for the project?
- Is the project communication tailored to meet the objectives of the population it is targeting?

8. Cooperation: Project partners are involved to the greatest extent possible

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- Are the partners kept regularly informed and involved in decision-making processes concerning the project's steering and implementation?
- Do the partners actively contribute towards the project's success (across all divisions/ departments)?

Based on the above criteria the consultant will prepare the tools for the interviews/discussions and observation checklists. The tools will be reviewed by the technical advisory team of the project along with the consultant. The finalized tools will be used for data collection by the consultant.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The consortium suggests the following mixed-methods methodology in order to collect the relevant data from project staff, beneficiaries and stakeholders. However, the consultant is expected to consider and propose a methodological approach for discussion and approval during the inception phase, which may include or differ from that listed in this section below. Final approval will be made by the consortium.

The evaluation methodology should consist of both primary data collection and secondary data review.

The consultant shall first review the available project documents (project proposal, logframe, interim reports to the donor, project AME Framework, baseline report and annexes, business development

and action plans from the beneficiary groups and any other relevant documents –all in English). The external expert will be provided with all available project documentation at the beginning of the consultancy. Project specific context shall also be taken into account. Secondary data review will be helpful for the consultant to find the necessary information as well as to triangulate the findings from the primary data collection.

Primary data collection will take place from the beneficiary groups of the project including the targeted consortium staff, beneficiaries (including vulnerable target groups), Gender and Inclusion (GAP) focal points and relevant government stakeholders of the project.

For primary data collection, the consultant shall visit the locations of the people to be interviewed or surveyed. Interviews/group discussions with the beneficiaries/beneficiary groups will be done primarily in local language (Sinhala and Tamil). The interviews with the project staff can be done either in English or local language, based on the preference of the staff. Any interview with the expatriates shall be conducted in English. It is the responsibility of the consultant to budget for a translator if required. Participation of stakeholders in the evaluation shall be maintained at all times, reflecting opinions, expectations and vision about the contribution of the project towards the achievement of its objectives.

Based on the consortiums proposed methodology, there will be 22 interviews with project staff across Colombo, Uva and Central Province (5 in Colombo, 6 in Uva project offices, 6 in Central project offices, plus 5 gender focal points in Colombo, Kandy and Badulla). It is also expected that interviews will be conducted with an estimated 20 MSMEs, 8 BDS, 1 CSO focus group, 4 Divisional Secretariats and 4 Local authorities. The list of the relevant officers and institutes will be produced to the consultant at the beginning of the contract. The details of this are explained below in the tables. The consultant may vary from this proposed list and a project staff organigram can be provided to the consultant in the inception phase as part of this.

The external consultant will also interview the donor of the project (the European Union to Sri Lanka and the Maldives) during this evaluation. The EU Program Manager, located in Colombo, will be introduced by the project focal point to the external consultant, who is then responsible for completing the interview with them.

Colombo

The following project staff are recommended to be interviewed during the evaluation to get overview on the project, progress, successes and challenges encountered.

Organization	Designation and number of staff
ACTED	Program manager (Economic) – 1
	Appraisal Monitoring and Evaluation Manager -1
HI	Program manager (Governance) – 1
	Gender and inclusion specialist -1
CEFENET	Technical focal point – 1

Implementing districts (Badulla, Monaragala, Matale, Nuwara Eliya)

For each of the two implementing provinces 6 project staff (12 in total) are recommended to be interviewed to get overview on the project, progress, successes and challenges encountered in that area.

Sector	Designation and number of staff to be interviewed
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Economic	District Project Manager – 1 (ACTED / HI)
	Project coordinator -1 (FIOH / HDO)
	CEFE Coordinator – 1
Governance	District Project Manager – 1 (ACTED / HDO)
	Project coordinator -1 (FIOH / HDO)
Supportive staff	Admin/logistics – 1 (HI / ACTED)
Program focal points	HDO/FIOH program focal points (1 from each organization)

As project beneficiaries and stakeholders, the following interviews and focus group should be included for this evaluation:

- 5 MSMEs selected using purposive sampling techniques from each district should be interviewed to get their reflections, feedback, suggestions, challenges and lessons learnt from the project. The sample should represent the selected value chains, the players and targeted most vulnerable groups of the project. **All together 20 MSMEs will be interviewed from the implementing districts.**
- 4 BDS selected in each province will be interviewed to get their reflections, feedback, suggestions, challenges and lessons learnt. **A total of 8 BDS supported by the project.**
- **1 Focus group discussion** will be conducted with CSOs representatives who participated for VDP process in Nuwara Eliya to get their reflections, feedback, suggestions, challenges and lessons learnt. The consultant may wish to hold additional focus group discussions with CSOs in other districts.
- 2 Local Authorities and 2 Divisional Secretariat officers from each province will be interviewed to get their reflections, feedback, suggestions, challenges and lessons learnt. **A total of 4 LA and 4 DS will be interviewed for the project.**

Gender and Inclusion focal points

Five gender and inclusion focal points (one per consortium partner) will be interviewed. They are located in Colombo (3), Kandy (1) and Badulla (1). The Gender and inclusion officer for this project is located in Colombo and will be interviewed (see above).

The methodology must consider participants' safety throughout the evaluation (including recruitment and training of research staff, data collection / analysis and report writing) as well as research ethics (confidentiality of those participating in the evaluation, data protection, age, gender and ability-appropriate assent processes) and quality assurance (tools piloting, enumerators training, data cleaning).

If any party (the beneficiaries, the community and the stakeholders) have any query on the evaluation process, they shall communicate to ACTED Beneficiary Complaint and Response Mechanism (BCRM), which is the formal referral mechanism for the project. All the responses from any party will be handled independently and strictly confidential way and will be provided the feedback within the standards governing ACTED BCRM and agreed to by the Board of Directors.

The above-described methodology is indicative, the consultant is expected to provide a detailed methodology and work plan. He/she will also be free to collect additional data in order to reply to all the research questions.

POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS TO THE EVALUATION

Based on the proposed methodology, only around 6 percent of total MSMEs will be interviewed as the main beneficiary group. Also less than 15 percent of total BDS will be interviewed under result 2 and 25 percent of total LA/DS will be interviewed under result 3. Lesser number of interviews with the direct beneficiaries should be acknowledged by the consultant, taking into account potential impact on the mid-term evaluation report.

DELIVERABLES

The consultant shall provide ACTED Colombo office in Sri Lanka with the following deliverables. ACTED will then circulate them to the consortium representatives for feedback. All deliverables should be in electronic version, Word/Windows compatible format and in English.

Deliverables	Deadline
Inception Report	To be delivered no later than 28 th February 2020
Draft Final Evaluation Report	To be delivered no later than 2 nd April 2020
Final version of the Final Evaluation Report	To be delivered no later than 9 th April 2020

For all deliverables, the external expert is expected to underline factual statements using evidence, and to comment on any deviation.

INCEPTION REPORT

The inception report shall include the following elements:

- Summary of preliminary findings of the secondary document review (proposal, logframe, interim and progress reports, etc.)
- Detailed description of the methodology for the evaluation
 - o Data collection methods
 - o Data collection tools
 - o Sampling
 - o Approach to quality control
- Data analysis methods
- Justification for revising the Evaluation Questions (if relevant)
- Detailed workplan
- Analysis of anticipated limitations and mitigation measures

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

The consultant shall use the Final Mid-Term Evaluation Report template (to be provided at the beginning of the evaluation), including the following elements:

Executive summary (2 pages max)	Should be tightly drafted, and usable as a free-standing document. It should be short. It should focus on the main analytical points, indicate the main conclusions, lessons learned and specific recommendations.
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	<p>Specific guidance on how to develop the Executive Summary will be provided at the beginning of the evaluation.</p> <p>Note that this section of the template also contains an overview scoring table that should be filled by the consultant in a consistent and sound manner.</p>
<p>Project synopsis</p> <p><i>(this section should not exceed 1 page in length)</i></p>	<p>The project synopsis serves as an introduction and provides background information. It therefore includes a short text on the objectives of the project and issues to be addressed by it, a description of the target groups and a summary of its intervention logic, including the indicators at the three levels of the intervention logic: overall objective/impact, specific objective/outcome, outputs. The synopsis does not include appreciations and observations on issues related to the project implementation.</p>
<p>Methodology</p> <p><i>(this section should not exceed 1 page in length)</i></p>	<p>The methodology section should detail the tools used in the evaluation; locations, sample sizes, sampling methodology, tools used, dates, team composition, limitations faced and other pertinent facts.</p>
<p>Findings</p> <p><i>(max. 2 pages per DAC criteria)</i></p>	<p>The findings section should present the results of the evaluation in an objective and non-judgmental way that gives an honest portrayal of the project.</p> <p>Included in the findings should be a discussion of how well the project achieved each of the criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, Gender and Inclusion administration and cooperation).</p> <p>The consultant shall highlight the most important findings relating to the performance of the project and elaborate on them in detail while also pointing out any critical issues and/or serious deficiencies. Findings shall be accurate, concise and direct. They must be based on and coherent with their answers to the evaluation questions.</p> <p>The consultant is expected to provide a self-sustaining explanation of their assessment which must be understandable by any person unfamiliar with the project while at the same time providing useful elements of information to the stakeholders. The consultant should avoid the following weaknesses: not evidence based, lack of technical content (e.g. experts provide an analysis which does not take into account the state of the art of knowledge in a given sector or topic). Full source details (including file name, page numbers...) are always to be included.</p>
<p>Conclusions, Lessons Learned, Best Practices, and Recommendations</p> <p><i>(max.3 pages)</i></p>	<p>These should be presented as a separate final chapter. Wherever possible and relevant, for each key conclusion there should be a corresponding recommendation. The consultant shall set out the main conclusions and recommendations based on the answers given to the evaluation questions and which are summarized in the findings section.</p> <p>Recommendations should be as realistic, operational and pragmatic as possible and drafted in a way that the stakeholders to whom they relate are clearly identified. Recommendations derive from the conclusions and address issues of major importance to the performance of the project. They must take in consideration applicable rules and other constraints, related for example to the</p>

	<p>context in which the project is implemented. They must not be phrased in general terms but constitute clear proposals for solutions and they target the most important issues rather than minor or less relevant aspects of a project.</p> <p>Through conclusions, lessons learned, best practices and recommendation, the evaluation will generate knowledge and support accountability to beneficiaries, the donor, ACTED and its partners, and the overall humanitarian community. It will provide information on the processes or activities that ACTED and partners have implemented to develop insights, knowledge, and lessons from past experiences so as to improve current and future performance.</p>
Annexes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference of the evaluation • Assessment tools used (questionnaires, checklists, scoring grids, etc.) • List of persons (job titles only, no names)/organizations consulted • List of literature and documentation consulted • Other technical annexes (e.g. statistical analyses and other pertinent elements, graphs, etc.)

A single project-wide report shall be produced, with agency-specific and/or country-specific findings clearly identified.

FEEDBACK ON DELIVERABLES

Please note that both inception and final mid-term evaluation reports are subject to approval before they are considered as final deliverables and corresponding milestones payment can be released.

Upon submission of the draft inception report / draft final mid-term evaluation report by the consultant, ACTED and its partners, will formulate comments as well as indicate any factual errors, within five working days of reception.

Comments will be formulated on the basis of the Inception Report and Final Mid-Term Evaluation Report Quality Control Checklists that will be provided to the consultant at the beginning of the evaluation.

For the draft final mid-term evaluation report, consultants are informed that ACTED and its partners will provide an opinion on the quality of the evaluation report and each of its components (synopsis, methodology, findings, conclusions and recommendations, and annexes), which should be taken into account by the consultant. For each recommendation, ACTED and its partners will also state to what extent (Yes, Partially, No) it agrees with the recommendation and accurately reports the opinion of the consulted stakeholders.

All comments should be considered by the consultant before the two reports are considered completed. The consultant shall take note of these comments and decide whether or not to revise the reports and, where appropriate, succinctly explain why comments cannot be taken into account. The consultant submits a revised version of the report to ACTED and its partners, within five days (Inception Report) / five days (Final Mid-Term Evaluation Report) of receipt of ACTED comments. The revised version should clearly highlight all changes made.

Please note that both inception and final reports are subject to ACTED's approval before they are considered as final deliverables. All comments should be addressed before the two reports are considered completed.

SCHEDULE AND DELIVERABLES

This assignment is expected to be accomplished within 2 (two) months and is expected to commence in mid-February 2020 and end by end of April 2020 (9 weeks).

The following schedule and deliverables are suggested:

Deliverables	Suggested schedule
Review of program activities, implementation policies and reporting mechanisms, based on available documentation	1 Weeks (5 consultant days)
Development of an Inception Report, outlining the methodology for data collection and analysis, and presentation to all relevant departments/partners	1 Week (2 consultant days)
Collection of program data for analysis	4 Weeks (20 consultant days)
Analysis of gaps, priorities and program performance based on the criteria and the corresponding research questions listed above	2 Weeks (7 consultant days)
Delivery of the Final Mid-Term Evaluation Report, taking into account ACTED / partners' comments on its quality and accuracy, and presentation to all relevant departments / partners	1 Week (5 consultant days)

The consultant will be expected to meet weekly with ACTED management staff to provide updates on the evaluation timeframe. This can be done either by phone or in person.

EXPERTISE REQUIREMENTS

The consultant/firm should have the following background:

- Post graduate qualifications in development studies or relevant area;
- Experience in project Monitoring and Evaluation, in particular economic development /civil society capacity building projects;
- Strong knowledge of agriculture development (preferably value chain development);
- Knowledge on the plantation sector of Sri Lanka;
- Strong knowledge and/or demonstrated experience in designing and conducting similar monitoring and evaluation activities
- Proven background of evaluating women targeted projects/programs;
- Strong analytical skills and ability to clearly synthesize and present findings;
- Good written and oral English essential.

The consultant shall identify a focal point for communication and reporting purposes, with appropriate skills and experience. At the briefing session, the focal point should submit a full contact list of all those involved in the evaluation.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Leading consultant is requested to include the following in the application:

- CV(s) of the personnel deployed (including field team)

- Organogram of the team structure
- Sample from previous work (max. 10-20 pages) from at least 2 separate projects; description of similar past experience, including description of the evaluation criteria, project, area of intervention, and total budget
- Technical Proposal including a detailed methodology and work plan
- Detailed Financial Proposal (cost effective and showing unit costs)

Please note that the consultancy firm will have to comply with all government rules and will be responsible for government taxes.

By undertaking this assessment, consultants are expected to abide to humanitarian principles and to ensure the confidentiality of the data collected. It is also demanded that consultants follow at all times ACTED's Security Plan and Code of Conduct.

All data collected as part of this evaluation will remain ACTED's property. By the end of the final evaluation, the external evaluator shall submit all ACTED-/project-related documentation back to ACTED management. The Final External Evaluation Report produced under the present contract shall not be shared externally without ACTED's prior written approval.

It is the responsibility of the consultant to budget for a translator (if required), as well as a medical / health / repatriation insurance.

ACTED on behalf of the consortium will not take the responsibility of the transportation, access, accommodation and food-related expenses. It is the sole responsibility of the evaluator to take the appropriate measure to ensure access and lodging of the team on the field.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the consortium cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility and selection of bidders. The consortium has no obligation to provide clarifications on the call for tender; should the consortium decide to provide additional information, it will be published by ACTED to be available to all potential bidders.

APPLICATIONS' SCORING

Applications will be scored on the following criteria:

I. Technical Proposal		70pts
a.	Technical skills of personnel deployed (CVs, organizational structure of the team, experience in conducting similar final evaluations - similarity to the evaluation criteria, project and covered area will be scored equally)	35pts
b.	Context specificity /relevance of Methodology and work plan	20pts
c.	Sample from previous work	15pts
II. Financial Proposal		30pts
TOTAL		100pts

Any offer submitted after the deadline will be automatically rejected. Any missing document will lead to the direct disqualification of the applicant.

Offers that do not comply with the overall length and deadline of the assignment (as provided above), do not include field visits and/or do not plan to assess each of the five DAC criteria will be disqualified.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the instructions listed in the Terms of Reference may lead to the rejection of the bid.

Clarifications will only be requested by ACTED to bidders when information provided is not sufficient to conduct an objective assessment of the submitted offer.