

Terms of Reference (ToR)
For
External Evaluation of Scaling Up Climate Resilient Agriculture for Sustainable Livelihood of Smallholder Farmers in Nepal (CRA-III)

1. Background and Context

Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD) is a non-profit making, non-governmental organization registered in Kaski district in October 1995 under the laws of Nepal, with its Head Office in Pokhara and Programme Coordination Office in Lalitpur. LI-BIRD is committed to capitalizing on local initiatives for sustainable management of renewable natural resources and improving the livelihoods of rural people in Nepal.

LI-BIRD has been implementing the project titled "Scaling up Climate Resilient Agriculture for Sustainable Livelihood of Smallholder Farmers in Nepal" funded by Bread for the World (BftW), Germany, and DKA Austria. The project initiated its Phase I in October 2018 (running through September 2021), followed by Phase II (October 2021 to September 2024), and is currently implementing its third phase (CRA-III) from 01 October 2024 to 30 September 2027.

The overall impact goal of CRA-III is to ensure that Nepalese smallholder farming communities develop resilience to climate change and secure sustainable livelihoods. CRA-III builds upon the learnings of earlier phases and operationalizes agroecology at the landscape level through the Agroecological Village (AEV) Framework. This approach aligns field interventions with FAO's 10 elements and HLPE's 13 principles of agroecology, structured across seven localized components that best fit for the farming communities of Nepal, (1) Strengthening community-led institutions, (2) Agro-biodiversity and local seed system, (3) Soil fertility and water resource management, (4) Disease and pest management, (5) Traditional knowledge, social values, and food culture, (6) Renewable energy and women-friendly technologies, and (7) Value addition and marketing (including Participatory Guarantee System - PGS).

CRA-III directly works with 1,613 households across five municipalities in three districts of Nepal. The programme covers Annapurna and Rupa Rural Municipalities and Pokhara Metropolitan City in Kaski District, Phedikhola Rural Municipality in Syangja District, and Sunkoshi Rural Municipality in Sindhupalchok District.

Building on previous milestones, this phase places a heightened strategic focus on the capacity strengthening of community institutions, market management of agroecological produce, and targeted policy advocacy at the local and provincial levels. Alongside these core efforts, LI-BIRD's dedicated field activities and broader advocacy initiatives have continuously contributed to embedding agrobiodiversity and agroecology into national policies and frameworks.

2. Purpose of the Evaluation

The primary purpose of the evaluation is to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the impact, performance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the CRA-III project interventions. A team of

independent, external consultant(s) will be contracted to assess performance against the specific objectives and target indicators set in the project design, identify key factors contributing to achievements or creating barriers and challenges, and extract critical operational and strategic lessons. Additionally, the study will also focus on evaluating the extent to which the recommendations from the CRA Phase II External Evaluation Report have been incorporated and executed in Phase III. The overall findings and strategic recommendations will contribute to institutional learning for LI-BIRD, funding partners (BftW and DKA Austria), and local government agencies, while providing essential inputs for future program scalability and design.

3. Scope of the Work

The evaluation will employ updated evaluation criteria developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC), incorporating the newly added Coherence criterion as well as specific focus on Agroecological Principles, Resilience, and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) and Environmental & Social Safeguarding (ESS). Along with this, LI-BIRD expects the evaluation report to comply with the Evaluation Reporting format guided by the Adaptation Fund to the extent possible (Technical Evaluation Reference Group). The study will predominantly cover the following key aspects:

3.1. Relevancy

The appropriateness of project design and objectives in addressing the specific needs of smallholder farmers of Nepal:

- Realism and clarity of targeted log-frame indicators and capacity development strategies.
- Relevance of interventions to direct beneficiaries, particularly women, indigenous, and marginalized households.
- Alignment with national priorities, local municipal plans, and Nepal's Food Systems Transformation Strategic Plan.
- Alignment of project methodologies with the standard FAO Agroecology elements and HLPE principles, and 7 Pillars of Agroecology as locally contextualized by LI-BIRD.

3.2. Coherence (Internal & External)

The harmony and alignment of the project within institutional and external frameworks:

- Internal Coherence: Synergies between CRA-II/III interventions and other complementary programs/policies/strategies implemented by LI-BIRD.
- External Coherence: Degree of alignment, complementarity, and duplication avoidance with local municipality programs, provincial agriculture strategies, and actions by other development actors.

3.3. Effectiveness

Assessment of achievements towards intended outcomes and targets:

- Achievement of target indicators (60% HHs with 40% income increase; 70% HHs practicing minimum food diversity; local government resource allocation in 3/5 palikas).
- Effectiveness of the project approach, interventions and models including Agroecological Village (AEV) model in facilitating communitywide landscape level adoption.

- Factors influencing achievements or barriers, challenges, including major operational challenges and mitigation measures.

3.4. Efficiency

Conversion of financial, human, and material inputs into qualitative and quantitative outputs:

- Cost-effectiveness of project resource utilization across the three target districts including cost sharing and co-financing.
- Timeliness of activity implementation and milestone delivery.
- Synergies created with local governments, cooperatives, community seed banks (CSBs), and academic/ research institutions.

3.5. Impact & Resilience

Longer-term transformative changes and structural resilience building:

- Evidence of social, ecological and economic resilience developed by smallholder farming communities against climate shocks.
- Categorical evaluation of technical, economic, environmental, social, and gender impacts.
- Unintended positive or negative impacts of project interventions and mitigation strategies applied.

3.6. Sustainability

Likelihood of post-project continuation of benefits and institutions:

- Institutional and financial sustainability of community-led organizations (farmer groups, cooperatives, Community Seed Banks).
- Degree of ownership and institutionalization of agroecology frameworks into local government budgets and policies.
- Viability of market system models, Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), and women-friendly technology adoption.

3.7. Gender Equality, Social Inclusion (GESI) and Environmental & Social Safeguarding (ESS)

- Responsiveness towards GESI standards and reduction of women's drudgery through women-friendly renewable energy technologies.
- Adherence to and implementation of LI-BIRD's standard policies on ESS and GESI across all interventions.

4. Methodology

The evaluation must employ a participatory, inclusive, and multi-methodological approach combining qualitative and quantitative tools. Findings must be substantiated by numerical data, case studies, oral histories, and photographs. The recommended methodology includes but not limited to:

- *Desk Review*: Comprehensive review of CRA-III project proposal, cooperation agreement, log-frame/effect chain, annual work plans, progress reports, knowledge products, and relevant local policy documents.
- *Household Survey*: Representative sample survey across beneficiary households in Kaski, Sindhupalchok, and Syangja to measure income change, dietary diversity, and practice adoption.
- *Key Informant Interviews (KII)*: Semi-structured interviews with LI-BIRD staff, provincial and local government representatives (Palika leaders/agricultural officers), cooperative leaders, BftW/DKA representatives, and academic partners.
- *Focus Group Discussions (FGD)*: Discussion with both model Agroecological Village (AEV) groups and non-AEV community groups (such as women's groups, farmers' cooperatives, and CSB executive committees) to evaluate and compare the impact and effectiveness of AEV practices.
- *Field Observations & Verification*: Physical verification of AEV sites, agroecological technologies adoption by project beneficiaries, irrigation/water management infrastructures, CSBs, and technology demonstration plots.

5. Logistics

LI-BIRD's project team will assist the consultancy firm with necessary logistics, including field itinerary coordination, stakeholder introductions, and facilitating local consultation meetings in Kaski, Sindhupalchok, and Syangja. However, the total cost of logistics of the evaluation team along with enumerators shall be borne by the consultancy firm itself while executing the assigned evaluation task.

6. Deliverables and Timeline

The evaluation assignment will be executed within a total period of 45 working days spread across October to December 2026 from the date of agreement. The expected deliverables and tentative timeline are detailed below:

S.N.	Deliverables	Working Days	Expected Timeline
1	Review of project documents, and meeting with project team	3 days	15 Oct 2026
2	Inception Report including agreed approach, detailed evaluation matrix, sampling plan, survey tools, and work plan	3 days	26 Oct 2026
3	Tool pre-testing, enumerator orientation, and survey preparation	4 days	2 Nov 2026
4	Field Data Collection (Household Surveys, KIIs, FGDs, field observations in Kaski, Sindhupalchok, Syangja)	15 days	2 Nov-30 Nov 2026
5	Data cleaning, processing, data analysis, and sharing of preliminary findings to the project team	5 days	7 Dec 2026

6	Draft report preparation, report presentation to project team and submission for review	8 days	15 Dec 2026
7	Incorporation of feedback and submission of revised report for final review	4 days	25 Dec 2026
8	Final Evaluation Report along with cleaned raw dataset and field photos	3 days	31 Dec 2026

Note:

- The data collected during the course of the study, relevant photos, graphics, respondent's testimonies or statement should be included in the report and submitted to LI-BIRD. Such materials shall remain the property of LI-BIRD.
- All payments are contingent to confirmation from the project team of CRA-III, LI-BIRD.
- LI-BIRD requires that if consultant/s or contracting firms does not finish, to the satisfaction of LI-BIRD, within the time specified for any part of the total of the items as required in the agreement, professional will pay penalties as per the organization's decision/policy.

7. Budget

The interested consultant team / consulting firm shall submit a budget sheet with a detailed breakdown including applicable taxes at the time of proposal submission. The budget should cover consultancy fee of expert/s, plus travel and accommodation costs and all other applicable budget lines for field activities during the process including the cost of enumerators required for the survey. The total budget will be negotiated between two parties and the agreed budget will be included in the final contract. The consultant shall bear all tariffs, duties, and applicable taxes or charges levied at any stage during the execution of the work. The consultant/s or contracting firms are expected to complete the deliverables within 31st December 2026.

8. Payment Mechanism

Payments are milestone-based and will be released upon approval of each deliverable, as agreed with the selected consultant during the contractual process.

9. Consultant Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on a total score of 100% according to the following weights:

- Corporate Capability (10%): Understanding the Terms of Reference and Scope of Work.
- Technical Proposal & Methodology (25%): Rigor of proposed methodology, evaluation matrix, and understanding of AEV framework.
- Personnel Capability (25%): Experience and qualifications of the proposed Lead Evaluator and team members.
- Demonstrated Experience (10%): Proven track record in evaluating climate-resilient agriculture, agroecology, and livelihoods projects in Nepal.
- Financial Proposal (30%): Cost-effectiveness, realism, and clarity of budget breakdown.

The first four criteria constitute the Technical Proposal, carrying a total weight of 70%. To qualify for further evaluation, bidders must obtain a minimum score of 60% (out of 70%). Only proposals

meeting the minimum technical threshold will be shortlisted for further evaluation. The proposal receiving the highest combined score will be ranked first and considered for award.

10. Qualification and Specific Criteria

- Lead Consultant must hold Master's degree (Preferably PhD) in Agriculture Science, Agroecology, Environmental Science, Climate Change, Rural Development, or related social sciences with at least 7–10 years of experience in leading external evaluations of agriculture, agroecology, and climate resilience projects in Nepal.
- Consulting team should have strong understanding of FAO Agroecology principles, OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, GESI frameworks, ESS, and smallholding farming systems of Nepal in context to agroecology.
- Excellent analytical, facilitation, quantitative/qualitative data analysis skills, and report writing skills.
- Experience in assessing organizational capacity and gaps and ability to recommend the corrective measures.

11. Termination of Contract

LI-BIRD will terminate the contract, if the consultant/firm commits a breach in the performance or observance of its obligation under this ToR. The consultant/firm shall be notified in written form within a week prior to the termination of the agreement.

12. Intellectual property, Copyright, and Ownership of all prepared information

The Consultant/ consultancy firm shall warrant that all arise Intellectual Property, materials and/or products produced in pursuit of this assignment shall be original and shall not infringe on any third party's claim. Copyright of all technical or business information, in whatever medium or format, originated, collated or prepared by or for the Consultant in contemplation, course of, or as result of this assignment shall be transferred to LI-BIRD without restriction on completion and shall not be used by the Consultant for any other purpose without expressing written permission of LI-BIRD

13. Commitment to Safeguarding and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH)

LI-BIRD is committed to creating and maintaining a safe environment guided by the principle of "Do No Harm" that effectively prevents sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH). All individuals engaged with LI-BIRD are obligated to uphold the dignity, safety, and rights of all community members, especially vulnerable individuals and children. LI-BIRD upholds a zero-tolerance policy toward all forms of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH). In accordance with this policy, the Pollinator Policy Expert/Consultant is obligated to strictly adhere to safeguarding principles and prevent SEAH during the performance of their duties; any violation shall result in immediate disciplinary action, including termination of the agreement.

14. Application Procedure and Submission Deadline

LI-BIRD expects the submission of EOI with a technical and financial proposal within 14 days of the date of announcement, accommodating the following:

- Letter of interest
- Technical proposal
- Financial proposal
- Copy of legal documents like: PAN/VAT, latest tax clearance certificate & registration documents etc.
- Self-declaration
- Samples of previous work (at least one)
- CVs of proposed professional (2 pages max for each)

Note: All proposed professionals must sign the CV and clearly mention their roles, responsibilities, and level of engagement in the proposed study.

The Technical Proposal and the Financial Proposal files MUST BE COMPLETELY SEPARATE. Interested private firms, NGOs, and individuals who meet the above-mentioned requirements are encouraged to apply by submitting above mentioned documents with subject line **“External Evaluation of CRA III Project”**.

The proposal may be submitted on or before **5:00 pm, 23 September 2026**. The technical and financial proposal should be submitted by hand delivery or courier to either of the following two addresses in a sealed envelope:

LI-BIRD Head Office Pokhara-11, Kaski Contact No.: 061-576834	LI-BIRD Programme Coordination Office Sanepa-2, Lalitpur Contact No.: 01-5540330
---	--

LI-BIRD reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the bids, in whole or in part, at its sole discretion and without assigning any reason whatsoever. The proposal or bid can be rejected and a contract terminated, if any corrupt practices are connected with the award or implementation of the contract. All the costs associated with preparing and submitting the letter of interest and proposal shall be borne solely by the companies.