

Terms of Reference (TOR)
For
Baseline Study of “Building Resilient Communities for the Changing Climate (SAMUTTHAN) Project”

1. General Background

Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization established in October 1995 with its Head Office in Pokhara and Programme Coordination Office in Lalitpur. LI-BIRD is committed to capitalizing on local resources, innovations and institutions for the sustainable management of natural resources and building resilience to climate change for improving the livelihoods of target beneficiaries that includes smallholder farmers particularly women in Nepal.

LI-BIRD, in partnership with Rukumeli Social Development Center (RSDC) is implementing a project entitled ‘Building Resilient Communities for the Changing Climate (SAMUTTHAN)’ in Kalimati and Triveni Rural Municipalities of Salyan District, Karnali Province, Nepal. The project is funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland through FELM Nepal.

The project aims to improve the lives, livelihoods, and well-being of marginalized and climate-vulnerable families by strengthening social and economic inclusion and building climate resilience. It also expects to enhance food and nutrition security, diversify and strengthen climate-resilient livelihood opportunities, and improve access to sustainable agricultural production and markets for smallholder farmers. In addition, the project will strengthen community-based disaster risk reduction mechanisms and support local governments and communities to develop and operationalize inclusive disaster risk management and climate change adaptation plans, policies, and practices, thereby enabling communities to improve their resilience and actively engage in climate action and climate justice.

As part of the inception phase, to set up an initial benchmark (baseline) values for different indicators, LI-BIRD plans to conduct the baseline study of the project. The baseline study is expected to collect information and data from project areas and targeted beneficiaries as required for the project outcome focusing on current climate change and DRR situation and adaptive capacity of communities and local government including other relevant stakeholders. The results of the baseline study will be used to set baseline value of the target indicators to monitor the project progress throughout the project period (2026-2029).

2. Purpose of the Baseline Study

Project has defined project goals, outcomes and outputs with specified indicators that are expected to be achieved during the implementation period. Establishing the baseline status at the beginning of the project is essential for measuring progress, assessing results, and evaluating project achievements against the targets. A systematic comparison between baseline targets and endline results will enable the project to assess the extent to which the intended outcomes have been achieved within the project period.

Specifically, the baseline study aims to:

- Establish baseline values for all project indicators as defined in the project log frame and provide benchmark data against which project achievements will be measured during midline and endline evaluations.
- Assess the current socio-economic, livelihood, food and nutrition security, climate resilience, and disaster risk conditions of target communities.
- Identify existing gaps, vulnerabilities, capacities, and opportunities related to livelihoods, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk reduction in the project areas.
- Assess the institutional capacities of relevant local institutions (including local government and other CBOs) and functioning of market systems that are relevant to project implementation, and
- Generate evidence for project planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptive management throughout the project period

3. Objective of Baseline Study

Overall objective of the baseline study is to assess and identify the status and opportunities of agriculture-based livelihoods, food and nutrition situation, disaster and climate vulnerability, and adaptive capacity of communities and rural municipalities in the project sites and establish baseline values for monitoring project progress. The specific objectives are:

- To assess socio-economic and demographic characteristics of target households.
- To assess agriculture-based livelihoods, food and nutrition security, and income opportunities.
- To assess climate vulnerability, disaster risks, adaptive capacity, and resilience of communities.
- To assess institutional knowledge and capacity, governance, and policy environment related to agriculture, climate change adaptation, DRR and food and nutrition security of Local Governments.
- To establish baseline values for all project indicators with appropriate disaggregation (sex, age, disability, ethnicity and location).

4. Scope of the Study

Baseline study shall utilize a wide range of appropriate tools, approaches and methodologies to come up with the present status of targeted beneficiaries and stakeholders in the study areas. It shall generate reliable evidence on the current situation of the target communities and institutions and provide recommendations for effective project implementation establishing benchmark values for project indicators and helping in refining targets, if necessary. The baseline findings will be used to set targets, develop M&E plan, and measure progress results on a periodic basis. Furthermore, baseline study will also identify the existing status of GESI and pe with disabilities (PwD) and recommend possible GESI and PwD inclusive interventions in line with the outcomes and goal of the project.

LI-BIRD will provide relevant project documents, including the project proposal and result framework to the consultant. The consultant shall propose an appropriate methodology and

develop suitable data collection tools in consultation with the project team. To achieve the objectives of the study, the consultant should carry out comprehensive baseline study covering, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Review project proposal, result framework and other project related documents, relevant policies and documents (palika profile, LDCRP/LAPA) published by the respective project working palikas.
- Select the data collection tools and setting questionnaire/checklist covering the intended objective of the study.
- Develop and submit an inception report including the proposed methodology, work plan, sampling approach, and questionnaire/checklist for the field data/information collection.
- Conduct comprehensive household surveys in the project areas by using KoBo Toolbox or any other ODK software.
- Train/orient and supervise enumerators on questionnaires for quality data collection, considering ethical practices and safeguarding principles.
- Conduct Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KII) with relevant stakeholders using the standard checklist developed during the inception phase.
- Collect, compile, verify, analyse, and interpret primary and secondary data collected on the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the target communities including household composition, livelihood and income status, population disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other relevant social categories.
- Generate report and present the findings to LI-BIRD and relevant stakeholders for validation, and incorporate feedback received.
- Finalize the report after incorporation of feedback from the project team and Li-BIRD and submit along with both raw and cleaned data set.

5. Study Methodology

The baseline information should be collected in a way that the gathered information should cover all relevant indicators and cross cutting issues as defined in the project log frame and project documents. Additionally, secondary information including different data and index can be collected from project documents, Local Government profiles, district profiles and national level documents for agriculture productivity and commercialization. In addition to Household Surveys, FGDs and KIIs should be carried out to obtain information on the existing agricultural (vegetable cultivation, livestock farming) practices, existing market system, government plans and policies, disaster preparedness and risk mitigation measures. A structured Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG) Questionnaire shall be used to analyze functional limitations faced by PwDs. The study will recommend the possible GEDSI inclusive interventions in line with already established outcome and goals of project.

The consultant should propose an appropriate methodology for conducting the baseline study to achieve the objectives of the assignment. The proposed methodology should clearly demonstrate how the study will address the objectives of the baseline study and establish reliable baseline values for all project indicators defined in the project log frame. The technical proposal should clearly describe the proposed study design, sampling strategy, sample size determination, data

collection methods and tools, quality assurance mechanisms, ethical considerations, data analysis plan, and reporting approach. The proposed methodology should demonstrate how all project indicators and cross-cutting issues will be adequately assessed.

5.1. Study Area

Two local levels (Triveni Municipality and Kalimati Rural Municipality) of Salyan district will be the study area for this assignment.

5.2. Study population, sampling and sample size

The intended total beneficiary of this project is 2200 households considering 1 person from each household (HH). Sampling will be done from the members of the grassroot organizations such as farmer's groups or CBOS which are considered as communities. The sample population is spread over two Rural Municipalities, and the size is expected between 300-400 HHs. The consultant is required to propose appropriate sampling size and methodology along with the data collection tools, methodologies, and approaches in the technical proposal. The proposed sample size shall be statistically justified based on the study objectives, confidence level, margin of error, and population characteristics. The technical proposal shall also describe the proposed sampling framework, including respondent selection procedures, representation of vulnerable and marginalized groups, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and replacement procedures, where applicable.

5.3. Study Tools and Methodologies

The study shall be designed with qualitative and quantitative methods or tools to assess the required information in consultation with the project team.

5.3.1. Secondary data collection/desk review

The secondary sources include review of relevant project documents, including project proposal, log framework, MEAL plan and targets and indicators of the project. In addition, existing local, provincial and national policies on climate resilience, agroecology, and DRR need to be reviewed to understand the enabling environment and assess alignment with project interventions.

5.3.2. Primary data collection

The primary data will involve a combination of Household Survey, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. The consultant shall develop appropriate data collection tools, including household survey questionnaires, focus group discussion guides, key informant interview checklists etc. where applicable, and digital data collection tools (e.g., KoBoToolbox, Survey CTO, ODK Collect or equivalent), aligned with the project indicators and submit them to LI-BIRD for review and approval prior to field implementation.

5.3.2.1. Household survey

A semi-structured questionnaire shall be used for household surveys. The members of grassroot organizations such as farmer groups or CBOs, which will be the beneficiaries of the project and also considered communities in the log frame, will be the target population for the survey.

5.3.2.2.Focus Group Discussion

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with farmers' group, market actors and local government representatives shall be done. The discussion should focus on knowledge, capacity and budget on agriculture-based livelihood, climate change adaptation and DRR and food and nutrition security.

The number of FGD to be conducted shall be decided based on study sample. FGD at farmer groups level, market actors' level and other stakeholders' level shall be conducted as required and deemed necessary. While conducting FGDs, the presence of women, youths, marginalized people, Persons with Disabilities need to be ensured.

5.3.2.3.Key Information Interviews

Key Informant Interviews (KII) with representatives from local governments, officials or rural municipal department heads (such as Agriculture Development Department, Livestock Service Department, DRR Focal Person etc.), lead farmers, market actors and other stakeholders involved in agricultural production and marketing need to be done.

5.4. Analysis

The consultant shall apply appropriate quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods to establish baseline values for all indicators defined in the project log frame. The proposed analytical approach should ensure that the findings are robust, evidence-based, and suitable for informing project implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

The analysis should adequately address, but not be limited to, the following aspects:

- Household socio-economic and demographic characteristics,
- Agriculture-based livelihoods, food and nutrition security, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk reduction,
- Community and institutional capacities, governance, and market systems relevant to the project,
- Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI), environmental safeguarding, and other relevant cross-cutting issues, and
- Key findings, conclusions, and practical recommendations.

5.5. Data Quality, Safety and Security

The consultant shall describe the measures to ensure data quality, safety, security, and ethical compliance throughout the baseline study. The proposal should outline the approach for data verification and validation, informed consent, confidentiality, and secure data management of both electronic and hard copy data. Appropriate measures shall be adopted to prevent unauthorized access, loss, misuse, or disclosure of data throughout the assignment.

5.5.1. Legal and Ethical Safeguards for Data Protection

The consultant shall comply with applicable laws of Nepal and internationally accepted research ethics in all data collection and management processes. Informed consent shall be obtained from all participants prior to data collection, and all personal information shall be kept confidential. Data shall be used solely for the purpose of this assignment and protected against unauthorized access, disclosure, or any other use.

5.5.2. Ethical Considerations and Safeguarding

The consultant shall conduct the study in accordance with the principles of Do No Harm, GEDSI, and LI-BIRD's and Felm's safeguarding policies throughout all the stages of the assignment including planning, data collection, analysis, reporting, and dissemination of findings. The consultant shall ensure respectful, inclusive, and non-discriminatory engagement with all participants and comply with the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), Child Protection, and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) requirements throughout the assignment.

All members of the study team shall sign and adhere to applicable Code of Conduct for Consultants /Contractors and Visitors prior to commencing field activities. The consultant shall clearly communicate the provisions of the Visitor's Code of Conduct to all participants before commencing data collection to ensure transparency, informed participation, and adherence to safeguarding principles.

5.6. Report

The study findings will be incorporated into a baseline report along with the methods and recommendations from the finding. The report shall provide the status of the beneficiaries regarding social, financial, climatic, and demographic conditions. It should address every indicator mentioned in the log frame which would be the benchmark of the project while tracking the progress, developing a M&E plan, and measuring the project achievement at the end of the project. The project log frame shall be updated with the baseline values.

As an annex to the final baseline report, the consultant shall prepare and submit a Baseline Indicator Matrix in line with the approved project log frame. The matrix shall present the baseline values of all project indicators together with their operational definitions, unit of measurement, means of verification/data source, level of disaggregation (where applicable), and any relevant assumptions or data limitations.

The outcome of the study will be a final document consisting present status of project beneficiaries and communities with demographic data, livelihood, food and nutrition security, climate change and DRR. The document will set a benchmark for the project and for those communities on the basis of which the project interventions are tracked and guided to achieve the intended target/goal as set in the project.

6. Competency of Study Team

The consultant shall propose a multidisciplinary study team comprising a Team Leader and other required experts as per the given scope of work. The proposed team should have demonstrated experience in conducting baseline surveys or similar studies related to agriculture-based livelihoods, food and nutrition security, climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction (DRR), socio-economic research, and GEDSI. The Team Leader should have a minimum of a master's degree in agriculture, agricultural economics, or another relevant field.

7. Key Deliverables and Schedule

The deliverables and anticipated work timeline for baseline study is from 1 to 30 August 2026. The details of the deliverables and working days are outlined in the table below.

S.N.	Deliverables	Estimated number of days	Expected delivery time
1.	Inception report preparation, sharing and submission	4 days	4 August 2026
1.1	Study project documents and desk review		
1.2	Revision of methodology and development of data collection instruments (survey questionnaire, checklists)		
1.3	Detailed study implementation and reporting plan with timeline		
2.	Survey preparation, orientation and execution	14 days	18 August 2026
2.1	Orientation to enumerators, field pre-testing and finalization of questionnaires		
2.2	Field survey (both HHs, KII and FGD)		
3.	Data analysis, draft report and baseline indicator matrix preparation and sharing with project team	10 days	28 August 2026
4.	Finalization and submission of report incorporating the feedback along with raw data	2 days	30 August 2026

8. Selection Criteria

The submitted proposals will be evaluated based on both technical and financial criteria. The final score will be calculated by combining the Technical Score (70%) and Financial Score (30%). The consultant/firm obtaining the highest combined score will be recommended for contract award, subject to successful negotiation and approval by LI-BIRD.

A. Technical Evaluation (70 %)

Criteria	Score
Understanding of the assignment and proposed methodology	25
Relevant experience of the firm / consultant in similar assignments	20
Qualification and competency of the proposed team	15
Work plan, quality assurance and ethical considerations	10

B. Financial Evaluation (30 %)

Financial proposals of technically qualified consultants/firms will be evaluated based on cost competitiveness and value for money.

9. Budget and Payment Procedure

The consultant shall submit a total budget with detail breakdown including applicable taxes at the time of proposal submission. The budget covers consultancy fees along with travel and accommodation costs of team members and enumerators and other applicable budget lines (as per

the agreed budget). The final budget will be agreed between LI-BIRD and the consultant/firm prior to signing the agreement. The consultant/firm shall bear all tariffs, duties, and applicable taxes or charges levied at any stage during the execution of the work. The total consultancy fee will be paid into two installments:

- 40% upon signing the contract
- 60% upon submission and approval of the final report

10. Termination of the 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.

11. Anti-Corruption and Conflict of Interest

The consultant shall maintain the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and professional ethics throughout the assignment. Any actual or potential conflict of interest that may affect the independence of the study shall be disclosed to LI-BIRD in writing. The consultant should not engage in any form of fraud, corruption, bribery, collusion, or other prohibited practices during the period of the assignment. LI-BIRD reserves the right to terminate the contract if such practices are identified.

The tender/proposal can be rejected, or the contract terminated if the contract arrangement or the implementation of the contract involves bribery or corresponding unlawful activity (including bribing a foreign public official).

12. Copyright, Ownership and Use of Findings

All reports, datasets, photographs, maps, analytical outputs, and other materials produced under this assignment will be the property of LI-BIRD. The consultant shall maintain the confidentiality of all information obtained during the assignment and shall not publish, reproduce, distribute, or use any study findings without prior written approval from LI-BIRD. Upon completion of the assignment, all raw and cleaned datasets, reports, and other relevant documents shall be submitted to LI-BIRD in editable electronic formats.

13. Risk Management

The consultant shall identify potential risks that may affect the quality, timeline, safety of both the consultant team and respondents, and impact the successful completion of the assignment and propose appropriate mitigation measures in the proposal. Risks may include, but are not limited to, field access and logistics, adverse weather or disasters, data quality, respondent availability, safeguarding and ethical concerns, occupational health and safety, and other operational risks. The consultant shall propose and implement appropriate mitigation measures throughout the assignment and promptly inform LI-BIRD of any significant risks that may affect the quality or timely completion of the study.

14. Documents to be consulted

- Project Proposal
- Project logframe/Result Matrix

(Will be shared to the selected consultant/firm)

15. Application Procedure and Submission Deadline

Interested firms and consultants are requested to submit technical and financial proposals along with CVs as outlined in point 6 of this document. The overall project impact, outcome, and outputs is attached in Annex. The consultant is expected to determine the appropriate methods for data collection and develop tools for collection of baseline data of each indicator.

Technical proposals should clearly articulate the methodology to be used in this assignment. Sealed proposal may be submitted on or before **5:00 pm 27 July, 2026** through Courier Service/By Hand only to the address below:

Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD)

Head Office: Pokhara-11, Kaski, Nepal; Tel. No.: 061-585357

Or

Programme Coordination Office: Sanepa, Lalitpur, Nepal; Tel No.: 01-5440330

Proposal must be written in English language. Proposal received after the deadline will not be considered for evaluation. Proposals that do not meet the requirements will be rejected. Proposal that meets the requirements and offers the best value for money will be selected.

LI-BIRD reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals without assigning any reason.

Annex 1

1. Project Summary

Project Title	Building Resilient Communities for the Changing Climate (SAMUTTHAN)
Project Supported By	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland through FELM Nepal
Organization	Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD)
Type of Project	Climate Resilience (Livelihood and Disaster)
Type of Study	Baseline Study
Study Location	Kalimati and Triveni Rural Municipalities of Salyan District, Karnali Province, Nepal
Project Lifespan	45 Months: April 2026 - December 2029
Project Impact	Improve and diversify food and nutrition security by creating income opportunities in target communities while improving climate change adaptation and disaster risk management capacities of local governments, institutions and communities.
Project Outcome and Outputs	Outcome: Communities have improved their climate resilience and actively demand climate justice Output 1.1: Smallholder farmers and vulnerable households adopt climate-resilient agriculture practices and diversify livelihoods through improved production and market access. Output 1.2: Community-based disaster risk reduction mechanisms and local climate adaptation plans are established and operational in target communities.
Target Groups	The main target groups of this project are marginal and climate-vulnerable smallholder farmers living in poverty, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), women (female-headed households and women within male-headed households), youth, other ethnic minorities/disadvantaged groups. Likewise, 2 local governments and 80 Community based organizations - CBOs [farmers' groups, seed producer groups, Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs), Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) etc.] also constitute important target groups with some of them falling under the category of duty bearers for this project. The project will work with 2200 individuals as direct beneficiaries, reaching out approx. 20,000 individuals as indirect beneficiaries.
Baseline Purpose	To identify the current status of the project defined indicators related to project outcome, outputs, and anticipated impact.
Duration of Assignment	Approximately 30 Working Days
Deadline for proposal submission	27 July 2026
Expected date of completion of assignment	30 August 2026