



Terms of Reference (ToR)

To Conduct Baseline Study of “Community Empowerment Support to Women and Girls (Component 1)” of the SSWSEEP Project

About CARE

CARE International (CI) is among the world’s largest international non-governmental humanitarian relief and development Confederations. Drawing on its 75 years of experience, through its 20 Members, Candidates and Affiliate, CI’s work reaches over 100 countries worldwide to save lives, defeat poverty and achieve social justice. CARE’s vision is to seek a world of hope, inclusion, and social justice; where poverty has been overcome and people live in dignity and security. CARE puts gender equality, diversity, and inclusion at the center of all we do because we know that we cannot overcome poverty and social injustice until all people have equal rights and opportunities.

About the Project

CARE International is implementing activities under Component 1 - Community Empowerment Support to Women and Girls, which forms part of the South Sudan Women’s Social and Economic Empowerment Project (SSWSEEP) in partnership with UN Women. The SSWSEEP is a government-led initiative implemented by the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare (MGCSW) with support from the World Bank. The project runs from July 2025 to August 2026, supporting 30,000 individuals: 17,600 women, 4,400 adolescent girls using VSLA plus approach as a framework as well as 6,400 men and 1,600 adolescent boys as male champion

Purpose, Objectives, and Rationale of the Baseline Study

Purpose: To generate a robust evidence base on the current socio-economic conditions, gender norms, and institutional factors influencing women and adolescent girls’ access to livelihoods, GBV services, and financial inclusion in the target areas. The findings will inform implementation and provide benchmark values to measure progress. The VSLA baseline/functionality assessment was concluded under the SSWSEEP which covered all 10 states and 2 administrative areas:

The baseline will build on relevant findings from the recent national assessment of VSLA functionality conducted across all ten states, while focusing specifically on indicators and geographic areas relevant to CARE’s activities. Where existing data is applicable, it will be integrated into the baseline framework; where gaps exist, new data will be collected through field surveys, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews.

Additional Rationale for a Baseline Survey includes

Identify Target Group Characteristics

Understand the demographics, needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities of the target population to ensure interventions are appropriately tailored.

Establish Contextual Understanding

Provide insight into the environmental context in which the project will operate. (social and economic is included already)



Support Risk Assessment and Mitigation

Identifies potential risks or barriers to implementation early on, allowing for proactive mitigation strategies.

Enhance Stakeholder Engagement

Engaging communities during the baseline can build trust, raise awareness, and foster ownership of the project.

Enable Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis

Helps assess disparities and design interventions that are inclusive and equitable.

Benchmarking Against National or Regional Indicators

Allows comparison with national statistics thus helping to align project outcomes with broader development agendas.

Specific Objectives

- Collect demographic and economic information on potential members of new VSLAs and those of intended VSLA participants.
- Establish baseline data on the socio-economic profile of potential members of new VSLAs and members targeted existing VSLAs.
- Establish baseline values for key performance indicators in the project's results framework.
- Understand current sources of income, livelihood activities, and financial practices (e.g., saving, borrowing, asset ownership, access to formal and informal services).
- Collect baseline information on women's access to and ownership of productive assets linked to key livelihood activities/opportunities/
- Analyze men's and boys' attitudes and practices related to women's economic empowerment, GBV risk mitigation, and market access.
- Identify barriers to women's and girls' access to GBV services, financial inclusion, entrepreneurship, and safe participation in the economy.
- Assess the current functionality, capacity, and training needs of existing VSLAs targeted for project support:
- Map the maturity level of existing VSLAs to tailor strengthening support, accordingly, based on criteria established in the SOP.
- Determine the types and value of productive assets currently held by women in targeted existing VSLAs
- Identify key asset needs women in targeted existing VSLA aligned with key local livelihoods/value chain
- Understand asset ownership patterns and control within households.
- Assess levels of women's participation in decision-making and perceived economic empowerment at household and community level
- Capture indicators of agency, including women's influence over household income use, business decisions, and participation in community structures.
- Measure perceptions of confidence, self-efficacy, and social capital through VSLA involvement.
- Develop a stakeholder engagement matrix indicating the role each stakeholder plays in the project delivery.



Intended Users and Use

The study findings and processes will be shared with and used by relevant stakeholders. The following table outlines the expected communications to be produced throughout the study process, their purpose, intended users and who is responsible.

Table 2. Communication, Dissemination and Utilization Plan

Communication Format	Purpose of Communication	User	Person Responsible	Timing/Dates
Inception Report	Outline scope, approach, methodology and stakeholders	CARE, UN Women	Evaluator	
Study process update	Keep informed about study process	CARE, UN Women, MGCSW	Evaluator	
Presentation	Present preliminary findings	CARE, UN Women, MGCSW	Evaluator	
Presentation Summary slide decks for different audiences/Validation of findings	Present completed/final findings	CARE, UN Women, MGCSW	Evaluator	
Baseline Study Final Report	Present completed/final findings	CARE, UN Women, MGCSW	Evaluator	

The key indicators that the study will measure include:

- % of male who agreed with the importance of investing in women and adolescent girls to access markets and trade
- % of women and adolescent girls reporting increased decision-making in household finances
- % of women and adolescent girls reporting increased awareness of GBV service referral pathways
- % of VSLAs increased in group savings and loans disbursed
- % of women and adolescent girls reporting increased access to economic opportunities
- % of groups reporting improvement in income-generating activities
- % of women and adolescent girls with access to improved livelihoods or IGAs
- # of women-owned businesses created with project support
- % of VSLA members engaged in income-generating activities
- % of VSLAs progressing toward cooperative registration
- % of women and girls reporting increased knowledge of GBV services
- % of functional VSLAs and cooperatives established
- % of men and boys engaged in gender equity dialogues and advocacy



In addition to conducting the baseline process study, the consultant is expected to document key pre-implementation lessons and contextual insights. These will serve as reference points for midline and endline assessments to track learning, adaptation, and progress throughout the project lifecycle.

Study Design and Data Collection Methods

a. Methodology

Design a Mixed-methods approach—quantitative (household/VSLA surveys) + qualitative (FGDs, KIIs)

b. Sampling Strategy

For the NEW VSLAs group will be purposively sampled from women and communities identified for VSLA formation while Existing VSLAs will be Stratified based on age of VSLA, type of support previously received, and geographic spread.

c. Tools & Instruments:

Household/individual questionnaires covering, Income, savings, access to credit, decision-making power, Participation in economic activities, Asset ownership (land, livestock, tools, etc.).VSLA-level tool group dynamics, savings cycle status, constitution/bylaws, recordkeeping, etc.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guides with women, VSLA leaders, male household members Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): local government, NGO actors, community leaders

Primary Data Collection

The consultant will collect primary data directly from project participants and stakeholders in Wau, Jur River, Torit, and Magwi counties. Tools must reflect the gender and age disaggregation requirements of the project and be culturally appropriate, accessible, and survivor-sensitive and trauma-informed.

Secondary Data Collection

CARE will provide the necessary documentation and reference for the secondary information. The consultant is expected to also be well vast with gathering other information linked to the project objectives from other stakeholders.

Roles, Responsibilities, and the Study Timeline

Overall roles and responsibilities will be determined during the inception meeting that will be after the successful onboarding, however,

- **State Ministry of Gender, child and social welfare:** Provide technical guidance in the field, act as entry point
- **CARE International South Sudan:** Oversight, logistical support, stakeholder coordination
- **External Consultant:** Design, data collection, analysis, presentation during validation workshop, and reporting
- **Evaluation Committee:** Approve tools, review deliverables, validation
- **Local Stakeholders:** Facilitate access to communities and inform data collection



Deliverables

Key deliverables throughout the evaluation process include:

- Inception Report with detailed methodology and budget breakdown
- Draft study report using CARE Reporting template
- Validation workshop exercise documenting key findings, lessons learned and recommendations
- Data sets and all supporting documents compiled or produced during the study process, appropriately anonymized: quantitative data sets (raw and refined products), transcripts of qualitative data and others in an easy-to-read format and maintain naming conventions and labelling for the use of key stakeholders.
- Final Report that will be agreed by CARE and Project Partners through **bureaucratic processes** involving rigorous approval steps starting from CARE to UN Women, the PMU/MGCSW & the World Bank.

The contract will be a deliverables-based contract, and final payment will be contingent on receiving the agreed deliverables in their final versions, meeting acceptable quality standards from CARE and the MGCSW & the World Bank.

Responsible Data Management, and Data Ownership

The consultant must comply with CARE's global and South Sudan country office safeguarding policies, including strict adherence to informed consent protocols, secure data storage, and anonymization of all personally identifiable data.

Safeguarding

Special care must be taken during engagement with GBV survivors or at-risk populations, in line with international best practices. The consultant will comply with the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) for the world bank to compliment CARE's safeguarding requirements.

Proposal Submission Requirements

Interested evaluators or firms are required to submit a comprehensive technical and financial proposal in response to this Terms of Reference. The proposal must include the following elements:

1. **Baseline study Design and Understanding of the ToR:** A detailed description of the proposed evaluation methodology, demonstrating a clear understanding of the project context and objectives as outlined in this ToR. The design should explain the use of a mixed-methods approach, quantitative surveys to capture baseline indicators, and qualitative methods (FGDs, KIIs, participatory tools) to explore social norms, gender dynamics, and access barriers. Sampling strategy should include disaggregation by age, sex, location, and vulnerability status. A brief risk mitigation approach (e.g. for conflict sensitivity, safeguarding, and access limitations) should also be included.



2. **Timeline of Key Activities (Gantt Chart Format):** A visual and narrative work plan covering all phases of the assignment:
 - Inception phase and tool development
 - Ethics clearance and recruitment of enumerators
 - Training, pilot testing, and data collection
 - Data cleaning, analysis, and initial findings
 - Validation workshop and final reporting
 - The Gantt chart should include sequencing, dependencies, and anticipated number of days per activity.

3. **Primary Data Collection Action Plan:** This section should clearly specify:
 - Number and profiles of enumerators (including gender balance)
 - Field logistics in Wau, Jur River, Torit, and Magwi
 - Translation and transcription needs
 - Security considerations
 - Required support from CARE (e.g. access facilitation, introductions to local authorities)
 - Safeguarding protocols for interviewing women, girls, and potential GBV survivors.

4. **Detailed Budget:** The financial proposal must present a detailed, line-item budget in USD, clearly linked to the number of working days, deliverables, and roles within the evaluation team. The budget should be realistic, transparent, and cover all direct and indirect costs associated with the baseline study. It must be broken down by the following categories:
 - **Personnel:** Lead evaluator, technical expert(s), enumerators, translators, drivers, data analysts, etc.
 - **Travel:** International and / or national airfare (if applicable), in-country transport, vehicle hire, fuel
 - Accommodation and per diem for field teams
 - **Materials:** Printing of tools, Personal Protective Equipment, audio recorders, stationery
 - **Data management:** Tablets, software licenses, transcription services
 - Workshop costs for validation sessions
 - Contingency (maximum 5%)

5. **Evaluation Team Composition:** Supervision mechanisms, quality assurance procedures, and ethical oversight responsibilities should be described. A description of the evaluation team structure, specifying roles and responsibilities of all core members needs to be submitted, including:
 - Team Leader / Principal Evaluator
 - Gender/GBV Specialist (if not the same person)
 - Local Team Supervisor(s)
 - Data Collection and Quality Assurance Lead
 - Field Enumerators / Translators



-
- Supervision mechanisms, quality assurance procedures, and ethical oversight responsibilities should be described.
6. **Disclosure of Involved Staff (if applicable):** If any members of the proposed team were involved in the project's design, implementation, or monitoring, the proposal must clearly state their prior roles, justify their inclusion, and explain how independence and objectivity will be ensured.
 7. **Consultant/Firm Profile:** The proposal should include:
 - Organizational background or individual CV(s)
 - Experience in conducting evaluations in fragile/conflict contexts, preferably in South Sudan for more than 5 years
 - Thematic experience in women's economic empowerment, GBV, gender-transformative programming, and VSLA models
 - Experience working with CARE or similar INGOs (preferred)
 - References from at least 2 recent similar evaluations
 8. **Sample baseline Report (Optional):** A sample report from a prior evaluation conducted by the consultant/team—preferably on a similar theme or in a comparable setting—may be submitted to demonstrate analytical rigor, gender-sensitivity, and clarity in reporting.

Consultant Qualifications

The consultant or evaluation team must demonstrate the following minimum qualifications:

- **Proven experience in gender-responsive evaluations**, particularly in areas related to women's economic empowerment, GBV prevention and response, and social norm change. Prior work on VSLA, SAA, EMAP, or similar models is strongly preferred.
- **Demonstrated expertise in mixed-method evaluation design and implementation**, including experience with quantitative baseline surveys, qualitative tools (e.g., FGDs, KIIs, participatory methods), and integrating feminist or do-no-harm approaches into data collection and analysis.
- **Strong understanding of the South Sudan context**, especially the socio-political dynamics, gender norms, and operational realities in fragile and conflict-affected settings.
- **Familiarity with the local context in Western Bahr el Ghazal (Wau and Jur River) and Eastern Equatoria (Torit and Magwi)** is a strong advantage. Preference will be given to teams with access to local enumerators or networks.
- **Fluency in English (spoken and written)** is required; proficiency in relevant local languages is an added advantage for qualitative data collection and translation.
- **Demonstrated capacity for timely delivery** of high-quality outputs under tight deadlines, including strong coordination, supervision, and time management skills.
- **Experience working with international NGOs or UN agencies**, and familiarity with donor requirements for evaluations will be an added asset.



Budget breakdown

Description	Total Amount	# of consultants	Period/Days	Rate per day	Total Cost (US\$)	Remarks
Consultant's fees (This is the professional fee for the consultancy)						This cost MUST be inclusive 20% Government Withholding tax
Per diem						Consultant will cater for it but must follow CARE's standard per diem rates for Wau and Torit
Flight ticket Juba Torit, Torit Juba, Juba Wau and Wau Juba						CARE will provide this
Accommodation, and Internet in Torit and Wau						Consultant will cater for this
Stationery and printing						CARE will provide this
Transportation in the field						Consultant will cater for this
Identification of enumerators						Consultant will identify the team
number of Enumerators (10 enumerators if any in Wau and Torit)						
Hiring of venue during the training of enumerators						CARE will cater for this
Training of enumerators						Consultant will do this
Incentives for enumerators						Consultant to cater for this. List of enumerators, timesheets and contractual agreement MUST be provided as evidence for reimbursement



Evaluation criteria

Technical Criteria	Description
Consultant's operation status with CARE	Is the consultant in CARE's blacklist? (Yes / No)
Experience with CARE	CARE Previous Experience (Yes / No)
Individual consultant or Registered consultancy firm	Legal status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of Tax Compliance Certificate for firms - TIN Certificate for Individual Consultants (Yes / No)
General understanding of the TOR.	Does the proposal demonstrate a clear understanding of the TOR? Does the consultant try to interpret the objectives? (10 marks)
Methodology	To what extent is the methodology clear and detailed? Is the sampling method and sample size computation scientifically acceptable? Are all the relevant methods of data collection included in the proposal? (15 marks)
Team composition	Does the consultant (or proposed team) have the necessary competencies and experiences as described in the TOR to undertake this study? (15 marks)
Experience in similar or related survey	Experience of conducting Endline surveys in South Sudan, preferably within proposed geographical area has competitive advantage. Experience with similar assignments with INGOs/ other organizations and UN Agencies is an added advantage. (10 marks)
Quality of previous work done	Quality of their previous reports like this assignment, Layout, content, and organizational structures (5 marks)
Workplan	Is an action plan part of the proposal? Is it reasonable or realistic? Does it meet the expected deadlines? Is it flexible to accommodate any changes without compromising the deadline and quality of outs. (10 marks)
Budget	To what extent is the presented budget reasonable. Is the budget clearly aligned with the planned amount? (5 marks)

Submission:

The subject line of the email should read: "**Application to Conduct a Baseline Survey_SSWSEEP Project**"

All proposals MUST be received no later than **Friday, 12th December 2025 before 4:00 pm CAT**, by email ONLY addressed to SSD.Procurement@care.org and will be scored on the criteria above.

Deadline: No applications will be accepted **after Friday, 12th December 2025 before 4:00 pm CAT**.

Attached is the CARE vendor questionnaire form which will be submitted together with the technical and financial proposal.

Baseline study start date: 12th January 2026

Vendor set-up Form



Vendor set-up
Form.docx