



## **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR BASELINE STUDY CONSULTANCY FOR SHEEP PROJECT**

### **Introduction**

IRSS has a commitment to standards which ascribe to program quality and improved programming. This obliges us to conduct a baseline study for the SHEEP project in the 2 Counties (Yei and Kajo-Keji), Central Equatoria State we work in and in the specific areas of the project interventions. The baseline study will provide the much-needed platform for the project implementation process and re-alignment of interventions to improve project relevance and effectiveness.

### **The Baseline Purpose and Scope**

IRSS seeks to deliver a new project called SHEEP to address the Food Security & Livelihoods and WASH needs of the conflict affected food insecure 6,200 vulnerable smallholder farmers in Yei and Kajo-Keji Counties of South Sudan and is looking for an experienced Consultant to lead the planning and implementation of the Country level Baseline Study for the Project which will be led by the country project manager SHEEP Supported by the country respective Project teams, especially the MEAL Coordinator, Regional program manager- SHEEP and Regional MEAL Officer, the Consultant will carry out the Baseline study to provide information against which to monitor and assess the Project's activity progress, effectiveness during implementation and against which the final evaluation will be measured. This will encompass the whole ecosystem of the SHEEP Project. The consultant will develop all tools and resources to carry out the study in South Sudan and lead in the design and execution to establish the baseline status for all project indicators.

The objective of this consultancy assignment is to develop and prepare the baseline study that will provide solid basis for effective implementation and benefit of the SHEEP Project in improving lives of the project beneficiaries by clarifying conditions, opportunities and risks. The baseline study will help to avoid duplication and improve the project implementation process through analyzing the situation on the ground and finding solutions to affecting variables with possible recommendations that will guide the project implementation process. The scope of the baseline will include the following:

- i. All the project implementation areas
- ii. Control areas
- iii. All the partner organizations

- iv. In addition to institutional, country, and sector level data collection, supplementary data will also be collected at the national level to measure the status of specific national level indicators, as guided by the project logic framework

## **Project Outcomes**

1. Increased resilient livelihood opportunities through enhancing agricultural productivity, availability and consumption of diversified food to conflict affected food insecure vulnerable smallholder farmers.
2. Improved contribution to and influence of conflict affected smallholder women farmers over income and decision-making
3. Improved access to safe water and sustainable use of water facilities for the targeted conflict affected communities

## **Methodology**

The study will employ a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data on key performance indicators, ensure diverse perspectives to the baseline, and promote different stakeholder groups' participation. The evaluation will establish the baseline for the project key indicators, provide the benchmarks to measure the project performance, and form the final assessment basis. Besides, the baseline will inform the project target setting at various result levels

## **Study Design and Approach**

The consultant will propose a survey design that will be employed, in this design; the researcher will not control, manipulate or alter the variables or project beneficiaries, but will instead rely on interpretation, observation and interactions to conclude, through correlations. Although this design cannot demonstrate a true cause-and-effect relationship, it tends to have a high level of external validity, thus findings can be generalized to a larger population. The baseline study will employ a retinue of primary and secondary data collection methodologies to elicit both quantitative and qualitative data and will sample beneficiary households in the project implementation areas. The consultant will need to undertake a beneficiary mapping to determine their geographic area of coverage, key areas of interest, and estimated level of investments.

## **Sources of Data and Data Collection Methods**

Secondary and primary data collection methodologies will be employed to elicit data and triangulate the study findings. Secondary data will be elicited mainly through document review while primary data will be obtained through primary sources (both qualitative and quantitative).

A household questionnaire will be designed and used to elicit quantitative data in targeted beneficiary households. The respondents will be randomly selected using an appropriate random sampling methodology deemed appropriate by the consultant and approved by IRSS. The consultant can explore data capture through use of hand-held devices that

support technology or paper-surveys as per their determination. However, digital surveys have several advantages over paper-surveys that support overall data quality e.g. support skip logics, constraints, eliminates data entry errors, real time data availability etc. The quantitative data collected should then be exported to an analysis software e.g. Stata, SPSS, SAS etc. where cleaning will be undertaken before embarking on analysis. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and proportions/percentages, means, median, standard deviation use to describe the study findings for the project indicators. Data visualizations will be made by generating charts/graphs tabular summaries etc. for the different data points.

Qualitative data will be gathered through non-random sampling method involving key project stakeholders. This will take the form of Key informant interviews, focus group discussions and observation/checklists with project targeted beneficiaries and other stakeholders. The findings from qualitative data will then be triangulated with the quantitative data to make conclusions and recommendations in the baseline study report.

### **Sampling Strategy**

A probability proportionate to sampling approach will be used to select respondents for household survey from the project area . The consultant will suggest an appropriate random sampling strategy and sample size determination approach bearing in mind there are no available beneficiary lists and the communities are settled in clusters while being reached by different components of this project. A clear sample size calculation procedure and rationale for the parameters should be described in the inception report. The design chosen should be well justified to the context. For the qualitative data, purposive sampling method will be used to select participants, based on the role they are playing in the project .

### **Data cleaning and analysis Procedures**

The consultant needs to outline the procedures they intend to employ to manage data quality and privacy throughout the study process. Quantitative data collected using structured questionnaire should be checked for accuracy, consistency and completeness before being exported into statistical software. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages, means, standard deviation and medians) will be used to describe the study findings for the project indicators.

Qualitative data collected using recorders/note books, will be entered in appropriate data entry template, grouped and analyzed thematically using content analysis/theme analysis. The findings from qualitative data will be triangulated with both the quantitative data, and secondary data from project documents for the conclusions of the study findings.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

**Lead Consultant** will plan and coordinate data collection, review data, analyze it and prepare a high quality report

**Reports to the MEAL Coordinator and works closely with IRW Regional Program Manager for SHEEP Project, Regional MEAL Officer and Project MEAL Officer** (will support in coordination of data collection process and coordinate review of report)

### **Key Responsibilities of the consultant**

- Develop an inception report, detailing the study design, methodology, indicators, data- gathering tools, work plan schedule and budget to carry out the assignment agreed in consultation with MEAL coordinator
- Conduct desk-review of relevant project documents
- Develop quantitative and qualitative data gathering tools in consultation
- Conduct training for the data collection teams including pre-testing of data collection tools
- Plan and coordinate quantitative and qualitative data collection
- Work with IRSS project team planning in planning study logistics
- Data quality assurance
- Review, clean and analyze data collected
- Present preliminary findings to project stakeholders for validation
- Incorporate input from project stakeholders and submit final report
- Produce Baseline study report

### **Desired Qualifications and abilities**

- A minimum of master's degree in social sciences or relevant field
- At least 10 years' experience undertaking Baselines/ evaluations and/or assessment for Food security, livelihoods and integrated projects
- Must have led at least two to three similar/assignments in the past 4 years
- Proven skills in research, monitoring and evaluation
- Proven experience in conducting qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods evaluation studies
- Computer proficiency with good knowledge of MS office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) and SPSS desirable
- Experienced in undertaking baselines/evaluations in the horn of Africa any country will be an added advantage
- Excellent analytical and report writing skills
- Excellent written and spoken English
- Excellent time management skills
- Ability to work well both independently and in a team
- Excellent conflict sensitive approaches and able to work in highly sensitive environments

### **Role of IRSS**

- Recruit external consultant for the baseline study
- Review and provide input on the consultant's deliverables
- Guide on the engagement with consultant
- Provide consultant with background documents, reports and available secondary data for review
- Provide oversight during data collection

- Ensure smooth flow of consultancy engagement processes including contractual obligations.

## **Reporting and dissemination plan of the Baseline study Report**

The consultant must submit three bound copies and a soft copy of the final study report which is expected to be within 50 pages (without annexes) and with the following components:

- Preliminary Pages (Title page, Table of Contents including a list of annexes, Acknowledgement, Executive Summary, List of Acronyms and Abbreviations, Definition of Terms and Concepts)
- Introduction describing the Project background and context
- A description of the project, including the results framework and theory of change
- Purpose and Objectives of the baseline study
- Key study questions or objectives and a statement of the scope of the study, with information on limitations and delimitations
- An overview of the study approach, methodology and data sources
- Study findings
- Conclusion based on study findings
- Recommendations based on survey findings
- Appendices

## **Study deliverables**

- Inception report (detailing consultant's understanding of the assignment and costs associated with the assignment)
- Cleaned quantitative dataset (for quantitative data)
- The final report shall be submitted in 3 hard and soft copies.
- FGD score sheets/ reports/recordings and key informant interview forms/ reports.
- Related codebooks, and data analysis files (SPSS syntax files,)
- All field notes which should guarantee anonymity for the interviewees
- Indicator summary sheet
- Monitoring toolkit and dashboard where possible

## **Schedule, Timelines and Logistics**

The consultant should describe the evaluation's overall schedule (i.e., duration, phasing, timing) as well as work hours, required preparation work, conditions that might affect data collection, meeting-arranging procedures, and needed and available office space (e.g., interviewers). However, below are some suggested timelines owed to the urgency of this assignment.

ITEM	# of days to complete	Suggested dates
Selection of the consultant	-	
Inception meeting between IRSS and the consultant to discuss the understanding of the assignment	1	
Review of project documents and submission of inception report including data collection tools	3	
Finalize inception report and data collection tools based on feedback received	2	
Planning & actualization of consultancy logistics	3	
Conduct training for enumerators including pre-testing, and prepare for fieldwork	2	
Conduct data collection	8	
Data cleaning, analysis and submission of data tables and syntax files	2	
Drafting and submission of preliminary report	4	
Validation workshop with IRSS	1	
Drafting and submission of draft final report after incorporating input on preliminary report and from the validation workshop	2	
Incorporation of final report review comments and submission of final report to IRSS	2	
TOTAL	30	

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The below ethical considerations will be adhered to during the evaluation survey:

- IRSS recognizes the personal dignity and rights of children and vulnerable adults, towards whom it has a special responsibility and duty of care and respect. The consultant is expected to adhere to IRW Safeguarding policy and sign as an appendix to their contract of engagement and agree to conduct themselves in accordance with the provisions of these documents.
- The evaluation will be conducted by an independent and impartial external consultant assisted by IRSS MEAL Teams.
- Quantitative data will be obtained from a randomly selected representative population sample.
- Assert that their participation in the survey will be voluntary and they are aware that they can opt out at any time. (Note that participants may leave or refuse to answer any question at any time and that this will not affect their standing with the organization)
- Anonymity, confidentiality and safeguarding of survey data will be guaranteed.

- There will be no risks and benefits for individual participants
- The culture, norms and traditions of study populations will be respected.
- Consent will be sought prior to commencing data gathering
- Views and opinions of the different survey subjects will be respected.
- For interviews with children, there will be an informed consent process to ensure that all children, their parents/guardians and vulnerable adults are fully aware of all aspects of the evaluation process and voluntarily provide their consent to take part. All caregivers/guardians will be asked to provide informed consent for children's participation in the study, in line with UNCRC's recognition of children's evolving capacities and a parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure a child's well-being and safety.
- All the respondent's data will be kept in a confidential way and shared only with the consent of IRSS

### **Products rights and ownership**

The ownership of the evaluation reports and associated products will belong to IRSS and any documents or publications related to this evaluation will not be shared externally except with the consent of the IRSS country director

### **Applications and Quotation Requirements**

- **Capability statement:** How the consultant or firm is structured for the assignment, the role each staff will play including the CVs of the key personnel who will take part in the consultancy.
- **Technical Proposal:** The consultant's understanding and interpretation of the Terms of Reference (TOR), a detailed methodology on how the data collection and analysis will be done and detailed implementation schedule for the study as well as any other proposed approaches the consultant may deem fit for this baseline study.
- **Financial proposal:** Itemized budget proposal that should include the consultancy fees and operational costs (including all logistics and accommodation).
- **References:** Names, addresses, telephone numbers of three organizations that you have conducted baseline/evaluations for within the last three years that will serve as your professional referees.
- **List of Baseline/ Evaluation reports:** Final reports for the baselines or evaluations conducted for the three reference organizations provided.

Interested consultants/firms that meet the requirements should submit an expression of interest to [IRSS.Tender@islamic-relief.com.ss](mailto:IRSS.Tender@islamic-relief.com.ss)

The deadline for submission of proposals from interested parties is **March 13, 2023**.