

Terms of Reference for External Evaluation of the projects “Structural Alleviation of Poverty and Marginalisation in the Poorest Regions of Bangladesh” (SAHOSH) and “Strengthening of marginalized families to overcome structural poverty in areas with high rates of malnutrition (SOMMAN)”

1. Background

NETZ Partnership for Development and Justice (NETZ) is a non-profit organization registered in Germany and Bangladesh. NETZ has been working in Bangladesh since 1989 to establish human dignity and fight against poverty with a bottom-up, self-help approach. Across its programmes, NETZ works together with local partner NGOs and focuses its support on income and food security for extremely poor people, primary education for children of extreme poor families and promotion of human rights situation in Bangladesh.

Under its Livelihood programme, together with 9 Partner-NGOs, NETZ implements the SAHOSH and the SOMMAN project which run from May 2014 until April 2017 and from May 2015 until April 2018. The projects are follow-up phases of development interventions in different project areas in Bangladesh and India. The predecessor projects aimed at supporting people living in extreme poverty and to significantly improve their living conditions by addressing the issues income and food security, as well as economic, social and political empowerment. Following components were/are applied to pursue these aims:

- The transfer of capital either in the form of productive assets or as loans (with conditions appropriate for the specific target group) as the primary step to ensure that their food-insecurity is reduced and incomes are regular and diversified
- Alongside the transfer of assets and loans to individual households, the extremely poor project beneficiaries united under self-help organisations (SHOs) to enhance their social and political empowerment and effectively address the structural causes of poverty. In a first step, they formed village-based groups which conducted weekly meetings. When these groups became strong enough they formed Union Parishad (UP) or union-based federations with representatives of the village groups.
- Revolving Loan Funds (RLF) and Revolving Capital Funds were introduced to establish an internal financial aid system in the groups of the extremely poor people, which strengthened the financial capacity of the groups and federations and supported people in reducing vulnerability and enhance economic situation.

The SAHOSH and the SOMMAN project aim at enhancing the competencies and capacities of the existing self-help organisations of the marginalised people and PNGOs so that they can participate actively in the social, political and economic development processes at micro-, meso- and macro-level, thus contributing directly to eradicate hunger and malnutrition.

2. Objectives

Both projects follow a complex logic and focus among other things on strengthening the self-help organisations of the beneficiaries and handing over the project-related responsibilities to them. This innovative approach requires a detailed analysis of the target group’s current situation as well as of the previous successes and challenges of the former project approaches. A broad-based external evaluation combining quantitative and qualitative methods (triangulation) shall be conducted in order to create a deeper understanding for specific aspects of the economic and social foundation created in previous projects and to further develop specific measures tailored to the needs of the target group.

Through the analysis of the projects and evidence-based recommendations, the evaluation will help NETZ and its Partner NGOs to improve its sustainable long-term strategy for the support of the target group and to design more efficient development interventions.

3. Scope of work

The evaluation team will produce a comprehensive analysis report using the agreed format. The evaluation will be guided by, but not limited to, the OECD DAC quality criteria. Specific areas and questions to be covered include, but are not limited to:

- A. Effectiveness and adequacy of former approaches / future needs
- B. Current capacities of the target group and SHOs / future needs
- C. Capacities of PNGO staff on steering and on field level / future needs
- D. Capacity of NETZ / future needs
- E. Recommendations

4. Methodology

In a preparatory phase, the consultants will review relevant materials related to the previous phases of SAHOSH and SOMMAN, which include (but not limited to) all project proposals, all baseline and end line reports, impact studies, donor reports, previous studies and evaluations and any other reports or documents that may be relevant.

To attain the mentioned objectives, the evaluation will be based on (a) the analysis of quantitative data collected in the predecessor projects and (b) the analysis of quantitative and especially qualitative data collected during field visits in the framework of this baseline evaluation. It is expected that the evaluation team will compare and analyse the baseline, midterm and end line data that has been collected in the projects.

In a first step, the evaluation team shall analyse the outcomes of the predecessor projects across the different phases by comparing the initial status of the beneficiaries in each project with the current status of the beneficiaries in each project. Areas of analysis should closely relate to the main indicators of the analysed projects. In a next step, the evaluation team shall identify opportunities for comparative analyses across projects with regard to the main indicators of the projects using the quantitative data at hand. These comparative analyses shall be further substantiated by collecting qualitative data (and, if necessary, further quantitative data) in the field.

Qualitative and quantitative surveys may include (but not be limited to) the following interviewees: the project beneficiaries, the project management staff at NETZ and its PNGOs, the Directors of the PNGOs, relevant stakeholders at the project sites (e.g. local government representatives, civil administration offices, and extension services offices). Qualitative data collection methods may include (but not be limited to): Life history interviews (in relation to the life history of beneficiaries, incl. an in-depth part of the project-related history), Focus Group Discussions (FDGs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA) etc.

5. Outputs and Deliverables

The final evaluation report shall be written in English, consist of no more than 30 pages (excluding annexes) and has as a minimum to include the following contents:

- a) Executive Summary: a tightly drafted, to-the-point document including the key issues of the evaluation, major findings, lessons learnt and recommendations.
- b) Introduction: purpose of the evaluation, evaluation scope and key questions. Short description of the programme to be evaluated and relevant framework conditions
- c) Evaluation design and methodology
- d) Key results and findings: with regards to the questions stated in the TORs (incl. examples from life history interviews with the beneficiaries and groups)
- e) Conclusions and lessons learnt based on evidence and analysis
- f) Recommendations regarding future steps/ activities/ follow-up
- i) Annexes (TORs, list of evaluators, timetable of the evaluation, list of interviewees/ participants, list of references, Questionnaires and other data / information gathering

instruments, minutes of end-of-evaluation debriefing meeting, implementation plan for recommendations)

6. Reporting

The evaluation team shall:

- Present a detailed evaluation plan to NETZ and the Partners within three days of commencing the evaluation work.
- Conduct a debriefing on the key findings after completing the field visit;
- Prepare a draft evaluation report including key findings and recommendations for comments by NETZ and its PNGOs.
- Submit the final report within 7 days after receiving the comments.

7. Expert Profile of the Evaluation Team

The evaluation team should consist of up to three people¹ with a profound expertise in three different areas: project development, advocacy for structural change and financial management in development projects. The team should be led by a key consultant while the other consultants should work as her/his associates. At least one team member should be female. Furthermore, the consultants should have experience in working in Bangladesh/South Asia.

The expert in project development should be well conversant with comparable development programmes and experienced in the field of self-help organisations on their way to becoming independent after development interventions. He/she should be experienced in the field of gender equality, be able to analyse the social, political and cultural impact of the project and be an expert in issues of food security for the ultra-poor, including key development models, such as micro-credits, asset transfer, etc. The expert for advocacy for structural change should have a profound expertise in rights-based development approaches and multi-level advocacy, for instance on the inclusion of ultra-poor people's perspectives in the formulation of state policies or decisions that affect their lives. The financial expert should have profound experiences in assessing financial aspects of development projects, financial management and micro-economic processes. The consultants should have profound knowledge on the use of qualitative methods in development settings and the analysis of quantitative data.

In addition to the consultant team, personnel for data collection may be hired in order to collect the quantitative and qualitative data.

8. Management of the Evaluation

The NETZ country office will supervise and guide the evaluation process. NETZ will be responsible for the management of the entire logistics of the evaluation. The PNGO management staff shall ensure that the concerned officers will be available throughout the process for a timely and smooth completion of the evaluation. The PNGOs will provide all data and information necessary for the evaluators to carry out their assignments in the field and prepare the evaluation report.

9. (Tentative) Timeframe

Approximate implementation period: April / May 2016

Total number working days: Final number of man-days depends on number of consultants

¹ If one consultant can be found who is qualified to fully cover more than one of the focus areas, the number of hired consultants can be less than three.