

## INVITATION TO TENDER

### *Review of the Food Security and Natural Resource Management component of the 'Empowering Rural Afghanistan' Program*

<b>Assignment</b>	Review of the Food Security and Natural Resource Management component of the Empowering Rural Afghanistan (ERA) Program
<b>Program Location</b>	Kabul, with travel to Badakhshan and Ghazni provinces
<b>Start Date</b>	1st March 2021
<b>Consultancy Duration</b>	1st March to 30th April 2021
<b>Report Deadline</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2021
<b>Budget</b>	USD 25,000
<b>Review Focal Points</b>	<p><b>Primary focal points in Afghanistan:</b> Terje Magnussønn Watterdal, Country Director Contact address: <a href="mailto:cd@afghanistan.no">cd@afghanistan.no</a></p> <p><b>Primary focal point in Norway:</b> Liv Kjølseth, Secretary General Contact address: <a href="mailto:liv.kjolseth@afghanistan.no">liv.kjolseth@afghanistan.no</a></p>

### Overview

The Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC) will conduct an external review of its ongoing ERA program with the overall objectives detailed in Annex II. The review will provide a basis for the development of the second phase of the ERA Program (2022 to 2025).

#### The review aims to:

1. Assess to what degree the **food security and natural resource management** component of the ERA program, have contributed **to the goal** of reduced poverty (SDG 1) and improved food security (SDG 2) in rural Afghanistan.
2. Assess the **outcome** of the program with regard to income generation and economic empowerment of low-income male and female farmers
3. Assess the **effectiveness** of NAC's current approach in terms of reaching low-income households of the partner communities in Badakhshan and Ghazni provinces; and to what extent and in which ways NAC's approach has addressed the needs of women, youth (boys and girls).
4. Assess the **relevance** of the program according to farmers needs and national and subnational plans and priorities within the agriculture and natural resource management sectors
5. Assess to what extent the complementary programs funded by other donors has added value to the food security and natural resource management component of ERA, and to what extent NAC succeed in its efforts to link the humanitarian response to longer term development.
6. Assess to what degree the food security and natural resource management component has benefited from integration with other component of the ERA program (integrated rural development) and how the cross-cutting themes of Gender, Human Rights and Climate Change adaption are maintained.

7. 6. Assessing to what extent NAC succeed in its efforts to link the humanitarian response programs supported by other donors to longer term development initiatives to improve food security.
8. Assess the **sustainability** and exit strategy of the activities under the food security and natural resource management component.

## Background

*NAC Vision: NAC shall contribute to a peaceful Afghanistan, free from poverty, where rural communities are empowered and resilient, valuing equality and diversity.*

The Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC) is a member-based solidarity organization with the long-term program goal of reducing poverty in rural Afghanistan.

NAC has, since 1980, worked towards this goal together with the Afghan people. What started out as a grassroots movement in Norway, has grown to become a professional and humanitarian development organization working in some of the most challenging and insecure provinces of Afghanistan. NAC currently works in 9 provinces and has offices in Badakhshan, Faryab, Ghazni, Kapisa, Khost, Nangarhar and Paktia, with the country office located in Kabul. NAC has more than 300 national staff across Afghanistan, 2 international staff based in the country office in Kabul, and 4 staff working in the Head Office in Oslo. Volunteers organized through the Board of Directors and Program Committee are involved in supporting and monitoring programs in Afghanistan.

After 40 years' presence and development interventions in Afghanistan, and in light of the protracted security, political, economic and health crises, as well as the global development and humanitarian agenda, including the UN Sustainable Development Goals, it is important to reassess: NAC's added value; the impact of its programs and the extent to which these programs respond to the needs of local communities and the Afghan development agenda; the relevance of NAC's approach to development; and NAC's comparative advantage as a development partner to national and sub-national governance structures, civil society and local communities.

## NAC Program Strategy

In 2019, the NAC General Assembly passed a new strategic plan for the organization's work both in Afghanistan and Norway. The development of the strategy was a participatory process involving relevant Afghan ministries and institutions, NAC staff from the country office, and regional, provincial and project offices in Afghanistan, and members and volunteers in Norway.

As part of the development of the strategic plan, NAC conducted an analysis of the main drivers of poverty in the targeted communities and districts. This analysis helped NAC identify the following four main root causes and drivers of poverty, which has guided the organization in taking a focused approach in its work in Afghanistan:

- **EMPOWERMENT: Afghans in general, and women and youth in particular, feel excluded from most key development processes, including the peace process:** Human rights and respect for diversity and inclusion are promoted in the rhetoric of the Afghan government and its

international development partners, but rarely practiced. The consequent frustration is a breeding ground for unregulated migration, conflict, crime, and extremism.

- **EDUCATION: Poor enrolment, participation, and completion rates:** The Afghan Ministry of Education (MOE) and UNICEF estimate 3.7 million, or almost half, of all school-aged children are out of school.
- **HEALTH: Poor access to quality healthcare services:** According to the 2015 Afghanistan Demographic and Health Survey (AfDHS), just 51% of deliveries of babies are assisted by a skilled birth attendant. The World Bank reports that basic healthcare services are out of reach for 43% of Afghans, mostly those residing in rural and hard-to-reach communities.
- **FOOD SECURITY & NRM: Unsustainable natural resource management, food insecurity, poor disaster management, and unemployment in rural Afghanistan:** The WFP reports that 39% of Afghans live below the poverty line, with huge differences in living standards between cities and rural areas. 41% of Afghan children under five have stunted growth; 10% are acutely malnourished. The UNDP reports that 80% of Afghans depend on rain-fed agriculture and cattle-grazing for income; both are threatened by temperature increases and erratic rainfalls. The 2012 Risk and Vulnerability Assessment estimates that 36% of Afghans have been affected by natural disasters. Disputes over land and water are major causes of local insecurity. Since 1978, arable land has declined by about 60%, leaving only 12% suitable for farming. Afghanistan's Central Statistics Organization reports youth unemployment rates of 31% and under-employment rates of 24%.

## NAC Programs in Afghanistan (details in Annex 1)

The current NAC Empowering Rural Afghanistan (ERA) program has four components: (1) Dialogue and Conflict Transformation; (2) Education; (3) Health, and (4) Food Security & Natural Resource Management, with disaster risk reduction, gender and human rights as cross cutting. The ERA program is the single largest program in the NAC's development program portfolio in Afghanistan and builds on the learnings and results of three phases of the Integrated Rural Development Programs between 2012-2018. All other NAC programs are aligned with one or more components of the ERA Program. The main focus of this external review is the fourth component of the ERA Program; **Food Security & Natural Resource Management**. This component is supplemented by humanitarian interventions supported by WFP, FAO, and Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF)

## Main Tasks

The consultant will:

Undertake a review of component 4 of ERA and other complementary programs in the form of a qualitative study, informed by budget analysis and review of M&E reports and log-frames, using participatory approaches, to facilitate learning within the NAC.

Visit pre-agreed districts, provinces and stakeholders including:

- i. assessing to what degree the food security and natural resource management component of the ERA program, have contributed to the **goal** of reduced poverty (SDG 1) and improved food security (SDG 2) in rural Afghanistan.
- ii. assessing the **outcome** of the program with regard to income generation and economic empowerment of low-income male and female farmers.



- iii. assessing the **relevance** of the program according to farmers needs and national and subnational plans and priorities within the agriculture and natural resource management sectors.
- iv. assessing the **effectiveness** of NAC's current approach in terms of reaching low-income households of partner communities in Badakhshan and Ghazni provinces, and to what extent and in which ways the approach has addressed the needs of women and youth (girls and boys).
- v. assessing to what degree the food security and natural resource management component has benefited from integration with other component of the ERA program (integrated rural development) and how the cross-cutting themes of Gender, Human Rights and Climate Change adaptation are maintained.
- vi. assessing to what extent NAC succeed in its efforts to link the humanitarian response programs supported by other donors to longer term development initiatives to improve food security.
- vii. assessing collaboration with relevant partners in the field.
- viii. assessing the sustainability and exit strategy of the activities under the food security and natural resource management component

Detail the learning process with relevant examples of practice and experience to inform NAC's future planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programs, projects, and initiatives. Collection of evidence for the program review and strategy development will involve both document review and work in the field.

The review is to be structured according to the OECD's DAC Criteria for evaluating development assistance (details in Annex II).

Based upon the above and a synthesis of existing reviews of the NAC's Afghanistan program components (undertaken previously), the consultant will facilitate a series of workshops in Kabul and the regions. The workshops will be aimed at validating findings and supporting the required development process for a second phase of the ERA Program.

**Outputs:** The consultant will provide the following:

- Work plan
- Inception report
- Brief summary reports for each stakeholder meeting
- Workshop reports and presentations
- Final report not exceeding 50 pages (excluding annexes), including an executive summary

For deliverables see, Annex III.

## Methodology

With access to their own local team, the consultant will design, lead, and implement the following processes, for which a methodology will be provided in the work plan and a detailed breakdown in the inception report:

- **Desk review and fieldwork preparations:** review of relevant background documents and financial reports to be provided by NAC and independently sourced by the consultant.
- **Interviews, focus group discussions and workshops:** interviews, FDGs and relevant data gathering and analysis approaches to be conducted in-country (with key individuals, focus groups, including representatives of relevant organisations). Workshops with NAC staff to share and discuss feedbacks and preliminary findings and recommendation
- **Reports:** the format/template for reporting will be agreed upon and finalised during the Inception Phase. The final report should strike a balance between depth and breadth and should include: a table of contents, table of figures (as appropriate), list of acronyms, executive summary, introduction, purpose of the review, section on research design and methodology, and sections on findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations. Where appropriate, the report should utilize tables and graphs to link with data and other relevant information. The report should include, as an annex, any dissenting views from consultant team members, or NAC staff, on any of the findings, or recommendations.

## Support to the Consultant from NAC

NAC will facilitate the following (costs to be included in the consultant's proposed budget):

- Guest house facilities (in Kabul and in the field) including food costs: 50 USD per night.
- Local transportation by car (as relevant for conducting the review): 100 USD per day.
- Local transportation by plane (as relevant for conducting the review): 360 USD per trip.
- Mobile telephone with pre-paid credits (only for Afghanistan/domestic calls and texts for 2 months): 100 USD.
- Insurance: 400 USD (per person, per month while in Afghanistan).
- *NAC staff (national) with interview and FGD training to support data collection: Contribution by NAC over and above the budget for the external program review.*

**Note: NAC will facilitate the above, but the costs, as indicated previously, are to be included in the budget.**

For consultants already based in Afghanistan:

- The consultant can budget for the use of guest housing up to the NAC cost for accommodation.
- Travel in Kabul must be covered by the consultant's budget, but costs associated with field travel will be managed by NAC.
- Should the consultant have their own insurance, NAC will cover the cost up to the amount indicated by the cost of NAC insurance - in this case NAC will have no liability/responsibility for coverage.
- For Afghanistan-based consultants, NAC will not cover international travel.
- For mobile phones, NAC will cover up to the amount stipulated above.
- In Kabul, the consultant will be responsible for their own security measures but required to adhere to NAC security protocols during field visits.

## Criteria for Applications

The consultant must have experience of working in Afghanistan and doing field visits in high-risk areas. In order to conduct the review and gain feedback from a gender balance of project participants, a fieldwork team of both men and women are required. The consultant must have completed relevant training, such as first aid training, how to operate in high-risk areas and stress management, or equivalent. The relevant training must be completed upon the signing of the contract.

The consultant will be required to provide the following documents as part of the application:

- Cover Letter
- Tender (including detailed workplan, methodology, number of interviews and/or FGDs for different stakeholders, proposed outline of report)
- Budget (including breakdown of travel in/out of country, insurance, accommodation, etc.)
- CV(s) of consultant(s) (and key project team members, if not independent)
- Samples of previous relevant work (reports, multi-sector program reviews, etc.)
- Proof of in-country capacity to undertake field visits and related data gathering in Dari/Pashto
- Minimum 2 references from review consultancies (completed after 2015)

## Submission of applications

- The submission deadline is 7<sup>th</sup> February 2021
- Submissions (with all documents requested) to be sent to: [review@nacf.org](mailto:review@nacf.org) and [nac@afghanistan.no](mailto:nac@afghanistan.no)

## General Information

- Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.
- All consultants hired by NAC must adhere to NAC's Ethical Guidelines and Commitments and NAC security protocols.
- The consultant is responsible for visa and visa costs (in budget) (with administrative support from NAC for documentation required).
- The review is to be done in accordance with OECD's DAC Principles for Review of Development Assistance (see Annex II).
- The consultant must demonstrate strong understanding of Results Frameworks (Logical Frameworks).
- All information provided to the consultant should be treated as confidential.
- The publication of the report remains the responsibility of NAC and Norad.
- Tender, contract, and report are all to be in English.
- NAC will not cover any costs associated with preparations done for the tender.
- Payment is proposed to be disbursed in 3 stages:
  - 20% upon signing of consultancy contract.
  - 40% upon submission of draft final report.
  - 40% after submission of final report and presentation.

**Workplan according to timeline:**

ACTION	COMPLETED / DEADLINE
Tender Deadline	07.02.2021
Notification of award	18.02.2021
Contracts start	25.02.2021
	10.03.2021
Desk-review and field trip planning (latter with NAC assistance)	25.02-11.03.2021
Inception report	11.03.2021
Incorporate feedback to Inception report	21.03.2021
Data collection, meetings, and workshops in Afghanistan	11.04.2021
Draft program review report	25.04.2021
NAC response to the review report	02.05.2021
Revisions of draft report by Consultant	09.05.2021
Final program review report	15.05.2021

## ANNEX I – Overview of relevant NAC programs, projects, and initiatives

- **Empowering Rural Afghanistan (ERA)**
  - Project Period: 2019 to 2021
  - Budget: NOK 90,000,000
  - Donor: Norad
  - Locations: Badakhshan (and Takhar), Faryab, Ghazni, Kabul, Nangarhar and Paktia
  - Brief description of activities: 1) Dialogue and Conflict Transformation; 2) Education (from pre-primary to tertiary levels); 3) Health (education of female health workers); 4) Food Security and Natural Resource Management (including Disaster Risk Reduction)
- **Integrated Rural Development – Phase III (IRD III)**
  - Project Period: 2016 to 2018
  - Budget: NOK 71,700,000
  - Donor: Norad
  - Locations: Badakhshan, Faryab, Ghazni, Kabul, Kapisa, Khost and Nangarhar
  - Brief description of activities: 1) Governance & Civil Society; 2) Gender & Human Rights; 3) Education (from pre-primary to tertiary levels); 4) Health (education of female health workers); 5) Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) & Emergency Response, and 6) Food Security & Job Creation
- **WFP Food for Assets (multiple programs)**
  - Project Period: 2019 to 2020
  - Budgets (total for all programs): AFN 12,200,000
  - Donors: World Food Program (WFP)
  - Locations: Badakhshan
  - Brief description of activities: maintenance of roads, cleaning of irrigation system, establishment of upper water catchment areas, and construction of irrigation canals and flood protection measures (e.g., super passages and gabion walls)
- **Afghanistan Humanitarian Funds (AHF) – Emergency Food Assistance to Food Insecure Population Groups in Badakhshan**
  - Project Period: 2020
  - Budget: USD 776,785
  - Donor: UN OCHA
  - Location: Badakhshan
  - Brief description of activities: Distribution of food to food-insecure households in five districts (Arghanjkhwa, Kohistan, Kuran-wa-Munjan, Raghestan and Yawan).
- **FAO – Time-critical emergency agriculture input assistance to marginal and food-insecure farming households**
  - Project Period: 2020 to 2021
  - Budget: USD 69,850
  - Donor: UN FAO
  - Locations: Badakhshan (one district overlaps with ERA) and Ghazni (no geographical overlap with ERA)
  - Brief description of activities: 1) Provision of seeds and fertilizer, and 2) Training and capacity building of farmers





- **IADC – Vocational training and support to women’s entrepreneurship in the Province of Badakhshan**
  - Project period 2018 to 2020
  - Budget: EUR 107,000
  - Donor: IADC Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
  - Location: Badakhshan
  - Brief description of activities: Training and capacity building of women on vegetable and mushroom cultivation, and business development

## ANNEX II – KEY ISSUES FOR REVIEW of ERA based on OECD-DAC Principles

REVIEW OF THE ERA PROGRAM STRATEGY – GUIDING QUESTIONS
<p><b>RELEVANCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do program activities contribute towards the overall ERA objective?</li> <li>• To what extent is the ERA approach relevant to the needs of targeted stakeholders?</li> <li>• How relevant is NAC’s work perceived to be among the partners we work with?</li> <li>• How inclusive is the ERA program and to what extent is NAC successful in reaching women and girls, youth and other population groups that are most vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion?</li> <li>• How well are NAC’s activities aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goals, National and Sub-National Development Priorities and Plans, and other national and international commitments within agriculture and natural resource management?</li> </ul>
<p><b>EFFECTIVENESS &amp; EFFICIENCY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective is NAC in working with partners and are we targeting the right partners and communities (in terms of geography and vulnerability) for achieving our objectives?</li> <li>• Are NAC programs reducing poverty and improving food security among income-poor population groups in the targeted communities? If not, how can improve reach and impact?</li> <li>• Value for money: Are budgets, technical and human resources used efficiently and effectively in achieving program objectives?</li> </ul>
<p><b>IMPACT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent has NAC contributed to changing attitudes, knowledge, and practices in targeted program communities, and thus facilitated sustainable results and impacts?</li> <li>• Does the LFA have relevant indicators for goal achievement, and reference to baseline data?</li> <li>• To what extent is NAC a learning organization, and contributing to learning of others by sharing and disseminating experiences gained locally, at national and international levels (including informing national policies)?</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUSTAINABILITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what degree is NAC able to ensure sustainability of program activities through institutionalization and community participation?</li> <li>• What are the key factors (external and internal) influencing sustainability of program interventions?</li> <li>• Does NAC have plans for an exit strategy, thus permitting partners to continue the initiatives and/or maintain the results when support is discontinued?</li> </ul>
<p><b>END PRODUCT: REPORT CONTENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of the program along the criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relevance</li> <li>- Impact</li> <li>- Effectiveness &amp; Efficiency</li> <li>- Sustainability (including ownership and work with partners)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Documented examples on output and outcome levels, that can substantiate changes at impact level, including how the NAC program component on food security and natural resource management has contributed to the empowerment of women and men in rural Afghanistan, and how programs from other donors strengthens the impact of ERA in the target communities</li> <li>• Identification of which program activities are suitable for scaling up</li> <li>• Challenges and opportunities, including “low-hanging fruit” and possible divestment strategy</li> <li>• Assessment of the work done on gender, youth and inclusion of community members who are vulnerable to exclusion and marginalization</li> </ul>

## ANNEX III - DELIVERABLES

The consultant, with support from NAC, will be responsible for overall design, conduct and completion of the Review, including the timely submission of all reports and documentation, but particularly for the following:

Consultant's Planning Meeting: Essential in organizing the consultant's efforts. During the meeting, the consultant should: review and discuss the ToR in its entirety; clarify team members' roles and responsibilities; discuss the work plan; discuss the development of data collection methods and instruments; review and clarify any logistical and administrative procedures for the assignment; and prepare to brief designated NAC personnel.

Work Plan: The consultant will prepare a detailed work plan that will clearly organize the program review, as well as the program strategy development, each with realistic timeframes, responsible use of human resources and the budget. The consultant is expected to implement the plan effectively and efficiently while maintaining the highest professional standards.

Desk Review and methodology: The ERA program review, and program strategy development process will be designed in a consultative manner with relevant NAC staff to ensure all the requirements can be met by the proposed methodology. In addition, the consultant will review all relevant documents (project documents, annual outcome monitoring, secondary literature, etc.) and develop a detailed list of methods and approaches to be undertaken to gather and analyze the required data and information.

Inception Report: The consultant will prepare, submit, and present the inception report with a work plan, presentation of the methodology, and details of the literature sourced. This should also include staff involved in the review. The inception report should be submitted for approval within 15 days of signing the contract. The inception report will be reviewed and agreed by NAC, prior to commencement of actual field work.

### Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (Afghanistan):

- Interviews with community members, relevant line departments, DDAs, CDCs, local government representatives, program staff and program participants in Kabul, Badakhshan and Ghazni, staff of other relevant programs in the area.
- Focus Group Discussions with community members (beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries), including gender and age specific groups, relevant line departments, program staff and participants.
- Interviews with national staff and Senior Management Team, implementing partners/CSOs and CDC/Shura representatives relating to NAC's Program Strategy.

Regular Updates: The consultant will brief the NAC focal points and designees on progress on a weekly basis (at minimum), in person, or by electronic communication. Any delays, or complications must be quickly communicated to NAC as early as possible to allow quick resolution and to minimize any disruptions to the review. Emerging opportunities to strengthen the review should also be discussed with NAC, as they arise.

Workshops: The consultant will facilitate a consultative and participatory review with workshops on national and regional levels (Badakhshan and Ghazni). NAC will provide the venue and other

physical facilities in Kabul, including audio-visual equipment, as pre-agreed between the consultant and NAC personnel.

Documents for all workshops will be the responsibility of the consultant. These documents will include copies of presentations and minutes of proceedings.

Draft Review Report: The consultant will submit a review report to NAC on the pre-agreed date, before the debriefing. Within five working days after receipt of the draft report, NAC will provide comments. The draft report will then be amended in concert with the NAC Country Office prior to the debriefing.

Debriefing with NAC: The consultant will present the main findings to NAC's Management and Board through a Power Point presentation. The debriefing will include a discussion of achievements and issues found during the review as well as any preliminary recommendations. The consultant will consider NAC's comments and incorporate them in the Draft Report.

Final Review Report: The Consultant will submit a Final Review Report that incorporates NAC's comments and suggestions on the pre-agreed date. The report will be submitted in English, electronically. The final report should meet the criteria outlined in Annex II.

The format of the final report should strike a balance between depth and breadth. The report should include: a table of contents; table of figures (as appropriate); list of acronyms; executive summary; introduction, purpose of the evaluation; section on research design and methodology; and sections on findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations. Where appropriate, the report should utilize tables and graphs to link with data and other relevant information. The report should include, as an annex, any dissenting views from consultant team members, or NAC staff, on any of the findings, or recommendations.

All quantitative data, if gathered, should be (1) provided in an electronic file, in easily readable format; (2) organized and fully documented for use by those not fully familiar with the project or the evaluation; (3) owned by NAC and made available to the public, barring rare exceptions.