



Overview

Application deadline	31 August 2025
Contract start and end date	1 October to 30 November 2025
Duration	20 working days
Program sector(s)	Climate change, climate smart agriculture, climate resilient livelihoods
Project/Program name	MekongElevate: Ethnic Minority Communities Driving Gender-Just and Socially-Just Climate Action in the Mekong Sub-region
Type of consultancy	External Baseline Evaluation
Project/Program location	Phongsaly and Luang Prabang provinces, Lao PDR
Consultant location	In-country
Funded by	The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

Background

CARE International is a global NGO working to end poverty and achieve social justice. We rebuild and improve the lives of the most vulnerable groups, especially women and girls who are often the most marginalised individuals in their communities and face unequal access to social and economic rights. In 2024, CARE worked in more than 100 countries around the world, supporting 200 million people from vulnerable communities to fight poverty and social injustice. To date, CARE supported over 52 million participants to promote lasting change in their lives, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

CARE International in Lao PDR began its operations in 1992 and has worked since then to improve the lives of vulnerable groups in both rural and urban areas, particularly the ethnic minority communities. CARE works in partnership with community members, the government, local civil society organisations, and the private sector. CARE currently implements projects in seven provinces: Vientiane Capital, Phongsaly, Luang Namtha, Luangprabang, Salavan, Champasack and Sekong.

CARE's "Marginalized Women and Girls" program in Laos empowers women and girls through integrated initiatives focusing on women's health, economic empowerment, and climate resilience, utilizing evidence-based practices to drive sustainable socio-economic justice. This is achieved by strengthening health systems, combating gender-based violence, improving food access, fostering resilient livelihoods and inclusive value chains, and enhancing climate adaptation through community-driven action plans that combine scientific and traditional knowledge, ultimately contributing to poverty reduction and a more equitable society. CARE Laos commits to women and girl empowerment, locally led and globally scaled through a comprehensive approach to long-term commitment to building local capacity as central to our mission.

CARE's 'MekongElevate' project aims to strengthen the climate resilience of upland communities, particularly EM women, youth and people with disabilities, across two economically and environmentally interconnected regions of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

The project has three interrelated outcome areas:

1. Increased adoption of proven climate-smart agriculture (CSA) practices and other innovations that strengthen livelihood resilience among upland communities
2. Enhanced safety nets for upland communities to cope with unavoidable loss and damage (L&D) from extreme weather events
3. Amplified voices and leadership of EM women, youth, and people with disabilities in sub-national, national, and regional climate-related decision-making processes

Resilient livelihoods, safety nets for climate shocks, and an inclusive sustainable development approach will combat the risks of worsening poverty, fracturing communities, and transboundary environmental degradation, contributing to stability and prosperity across the greater Mekong sub-region.

Project Context

Lao PDR is home to diverse ethnic minority (EM) communities, particularly in remote, mountainous provinces like Luang Prabang and Phongsaly. While CARE Laos has worked alongside EM communities in the Mekong region to strengthen agricultural climate resilience, particularly amongst marginalized identity groups, since 1992, these communities continue to face the disproportionate impacts of climate change and intersectional marginalization. EM communities in the Mekong region are among the poorest in the country, with heavy reliance on climate-sensitive subsistence agriculture, making them highly vulnerable to climate-related threats, including increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, and landslides. Further compounding the agricultural impacts of climate change is the social marginalization faced by EM women, youth, and people with disabilities, resulting in limited access to education and decision-making, and consequently heightened vulnerability during climate crises. Early marriage remains prevalent among certain groups, further entrenching gender inequality. While Laos' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) acknowledge the gender dimensions of climate vulnerability, inclusion in policy and programming remains limited.

Purpose of Baseline Evaluation

The purpose of the Baseline Evaluation is to establish base measurements of the objective and result indicators identified in the project Logical Framework, against which to evaluate the project's impact before, during, and after implementation in the Lao country context.

The objectives, results, and corresponding indicators to be measured during the baseline are as follows:

- A. **End of Program Outcome:** Targeted upland communities - particularly ethnic minority women, youth, and people with disabilities - in the interconnected border provinces of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam have increased resilience to the impacts of the climate crisis contributing to the stability and prosperity of the greater Mekong sub-region.
 1. # and % of targeted individuals who have applied at least 3 practices to protect their livelihoods from negative impacts of climate-related shocks and stresses

2. # and % of people of all genders and people with disabilities in targeted households who have used formal and informal financial services in ways that actively support climate resilience
 3. # and % of people of all genders and people with disabilities who have actively participated in formal and informal climate-relevant decision-making spaces in targeted communities
 4. The barriers and opportunities faced by diverse individuals and groups (women, youth, people with disabilities) for increasing resilience among targeted upland EM communities
 5. Average % increase in self-assessed livelihood security among targeted households over baseline
 6. # and % of targeted EM households reporting improved adaptive capacity to climate-related shocks over baseline
 7. # of people directly reached through project activities (excluding campaigns)
- B. **Intermediate Outcome 1:** Increased adoption of CSA practices and other innovations that strengthen livelihood resilience among targeted upland communities
1. # and % of targeted EM producers/women, youth, and people with disabilities adopting CSA practices and/or innovations
 2. % of targeted households reporting income increase of at least 20% from CSA/innovation-based activities
 3. The barriers and opportunities faced by diverse individuals and groups (women, youth, people with disabilities) for adopting CSA practices among targeted upland EM communities
 4. # of new non-project communities/villages where CSA practices/innovations are adopted by themselves
- C. **Intermediate Outcome 2:** Enhanced safety net for targeted upland EM communities to cope with unavoidable loss and damage from extreme weather events
1. # and % of EM households in targeted communities entitled to access Community Disaster Relief Fund (or equivalent) if extreme weather events happen
 2. # of innovative L&D schemes identified through joint research
- D. **Intermediate Outcome 3:** Amplified voices of ethnic minority women, youth, and people with disabilities in sub-national, national, and regional climate-related decision-making processes in the Mekong
1. % of EM women, youth, and people with disabilities reporting increased confidence to participate and/or lead in climate-related decision-making spaces
 2. The barriers and opportunities faced by diverse individuals and groups (women, youth, people with disabilities) to participate and/or lead in climate-related decision-making spaces in targeted upland EM communities
 3. # of policy or decision-making processes influenced by voices from EM women, youth and people with disabilities (focusing on sub-national and community levels)
 4. # of new/amended or better implemented climate-relevant policies, legislation, programs, and/or budgets which increase people of all genders' ability to adapt to the effects of climate change, foster climate resilience (focusing on sub-national level)

Note: The Logical Framework will be provided to the consultant during the evaluation.

Additionally, the baseline survey will also include CARE's Global Indicators for Measuring Change as following under the climate justice impact areas.

Indicator #	Indicator name
CLJ Indicator 28	Climate justice - # and % of people of all genders that have used their increased capacities for resilience and adaptation to the effects of climate change
CLJ Indicator 28.1	Climate-resilient livelihoods - # and % of people of all genders that have applied at least 3 practices to protect their livelihoods from negative impacts of climate related shocks and stresses.
CLJ Indicator 28.3	Financial services - # and % of people of all genders that have used formal and/or informal financial services in ways that actively support climate resilience.
CLJ Indicator 28.6	Formal/informal decision-making - # and % of people of all genders who have actively participated in formal and/or informal climate-relevant decision-making spaces and processes.
CLJ Indicator 17	Change in formal structures - # of new/amended or better implemented ambitious climate-relevant policies, legislation, multilateral agreements, programs, and/or budgets which increase people of all genders' ability to adapt to the effects of climate change, foster climate resilience and/or low greenhouse gas emissions development.

Evaluation target group

Target of participants that will be involved in the baseline survey include the following.

1. **Community members:** members of target upland communities in the Mekong subregion, particularly ethnic minority women, youth, and people with disabilities.
2. **CSO members:** members of local CSO partners engaged in regional development, sustainable agriculture, and climate resilience, including the Association for Rural Mobilisation and Improvement (ARMI) and the Sustainable Agriculture & Environment Development Association (SAEDA).
3. **Government staff:** representatives from Lao national, provincial, and district-level government ministries, including the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI), the National University of Laos (NUoL), the District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO), the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO), the District Lao Women's Union (DLWU), and the District National Front for Construction (LFNC).

Scope of the Baseline Survey

The evaluation will cover 80 % of the total project villages (16 total) in Phongsaly (8 villages in Mai District) and Luang Prabang (8 villages in Chomphet District) Provinces. The consultant should ensure that village sampling is based on the criteria of demographic diversity, location, and socioeconomic profile. There following are the expected phases of the baseline:

Phase One:

- Review all documents related to this project and relevant CARE policies: CARE Laos policies and tools such as CARE 2030 Vision, CARE Climate Justice Strategy, CARE Right to Health Strategy, CARE Gender Equality Strategy, CARE International in Lao PDR - Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, CARE International in Lao PDR - Gender Equality and Women's Voice Strategy, CARE International in Lao PDR - Health Strategy, MoU, MekongElevate proposal, Log Frame, budget, and other project documents.

Phase Two:

- Present inception report along with data collection tools
- Provide data collection tool training to enumerators, and pilot and translate data collection tools into Lao (if the tools are in English).
- Lead the data collection process in the field with multiple target groups along with the enumerators to ensure the data is collected in an effective manner.

Phase Three:

- Overseeing cleaning and validation of quantitative and qualitative data
- Conducting all data analysis
- Present the evaluation result through a data validation workshop
- Prepare draft report and take feedback for finalization and presenting the key findings.
- Provide a one-page summary of the report after the final report is submitted.

Approach and Methodology

The baseline survey will take a mixed-method approach and will process with:

1. A mix of quantitative and qualitative instruments and methods will be used.
2. A participatory approach should be adopted to capture the perspectives of key stakeholders and project participants/beneficiaries.
3. The methodology will be gender and target-group (ethnic minority, disability) sensitive.
4. Sampling will be discussed and decided together with CARE. The baseline survey will cover a minimum of sixteen (16) villages but can cover all twenty (20) villages if possible. The sampling will be purposeful and represent local diversity (i.e. distance to roads, gender, ethnicity, geography, environmental risks, access to land).
5. Train staff as enumerators of data collection, especially project staff, and government partners who are invited to join the process of the evaluation.
6. Present findings to relevant partners/stakeholders/CARE Staff
7. All project target groups of beneficiaries should be included during the data collection process.
8. The data collection should be disaggregated by age, gender, ethnicity, disability, and any other relevant diversity criteria in line with the project's Theory of Change and MEL Framework.
9. All raw data (including data entry forms, database of entered data, graphics, and analysis for each village) shall be made available to CARE Staff and submitted with the baseline survey.

Roles and Responsibility

Team Members and Roles

Phase	Responsible Person	Primary Tasks
Planning	MILKA team, Climate Change team, and MekongElevate national and regional project teams	Lead in the facilitation evaluation process and managing the external consultant by collaborating with CARE Donor (CARE Australia, DFAT), and government partners.
	External Consultant	- Lead in designing the necessary methodology and tool for evaluation by collaborating with CARE Laos' program team and CARE team. - Lead in providing training to the data collection team on methodology and tools to be used in the evaluation. - Ensure the appropriate team composition by collaborating with the CARE team regarding ethnic groups. - Lead in writing the inception report.
Data Collection	MILKA Advisor & MekongElevate national and regional project teams	- Lead in facilitating the logistics and making an appointment with the selected target groups mentioned above. - Provide relevant information and data as requested.
	External Consultant	- Lead in collecting the data following the data collection plan.
Data Analysis	External Consultant	- Lead in cleaning the data and data processing/translation if required. - Lead in analyzing the day following the objective and requirement from the baseline survey ToR. - Cross-check all data to ensure that collected data meets the needs of the baseline survey objectives and requirements.
Reporting	External Consultant	- Debriefing for the community representative and government partners at the district level. - Debriefing for the program team from CARE Laos, donor, and relevant Partners. - Provide a one-page evaluation summary for CARE

Deliverables

Below are summaries of key deliverables:

Deliverable	Description	By when
Inception report	Including the methodology, sampling, tools, and the guiding principles of the evaluation and data analysis plan.	W1 of Oct

Data collection	Conduct data collection for the end of project evaluation in sixteen (16) villages in Mai District, Phongsaly Province, and Chomphet District, Luang Prabang Province.	W2-3 of Oct
Draft baseline survey report (max 30 pages, annexes excluded)	Included: I. Cover Page II. Table of Contents III. Acknowledgments IV. Abbreviations V. Executive Summary VI. Brief Project Overview VII. Methodology - Brief Baseline survey Design - Sampling strategy - Data analysis plan VIII. Key limitation and ethical Considerations to Baseline survey IX. Results, analysis, and discussion (for baseline survey specifically including a log frame showing baseline survey status for selected indicators). X. Conclusion and recommendations XI. References with proper citation XII. Appendices or Annexes XIII. Photos are CARE property and will be annexed to the final report together with consent forms. (Please refer to CARE Evaluation template)	W2 of Nov
Indicator summary table	Update country indicator targets and values in MEL Framework	W2 of Nov
PowerPoint presentation (debriefing)	Includes the methodology, sampling, tools, key findings, imitations, and recommendations from the baseline survey study	W2 of Nov
Cleaned qualitative and quantitative data sets.	The consultant should deliver, at minimum, all files including quantitative data sets (raw and refined products), transcripts of qualitative data, and others in an easy-to-read format and maintain naming conventions and labeling for the use of the project/program/initiative and key stakeholders.	W2 of Nov
Completion of the approved final report	Following the feedback on the draft report – submit the final version along with one page evaluation summary and materials to CARE	W4 of Nov

Timeframe

Fieldwork for the baseline survey is expected to start as soon as possible: at the latest, in W1-2 of October 2025. The final report is expected to be submitted by no later than W1 of December 2025. Total days for this baseline survey: 20 days

The following table shows the anticipated work schedule:

	Item	Specific Task	Days	Tentative dates
1	Pre-field activities	Project literature review - CARE to support documents (will be provided by CARE)	2	W1 of Oct
		Design methodology and plan data collection. Develop baseline survey study tools.	2	
		Inception report	1	
		Sub-total	5	
2	Field activities	Travel to Chomphet District, Luang Prabang Province	-	W2-3 of Oct
		Training on data collection, document preparation, coordination with government and CSO partners	2	
		Data collection in eight (8) villages in Chomphet District in Luangprabang Data collection in eight (8) villages in Mai District in Phongsaly Data collection in 2 provinces should happen at the same time.	8	
		Consultant travel to VTE	-	
		Sub-total	10	
3	Report writing	Prepare the draft Report	3.5	W2-3 of Nov
		Prepare presentation for CARE senior program team and donor & relevant partners	0.5	W 3 of Nov
		Finalize the report (considering comments from CARE) and submit the finalized report to CARE.	1	W4 of Nov
		Sub-total	5	
		Grant Total	20	

NOTE: CARE in Laos will cover the consultant's transportation and accommodation during data collection in Luang Prabang and Phongsaly Provinces, except perdiem and travel insurance.

Selection Criteria

1	Experience	- At least 5 years experience in the fields of climate resilience, agriculture, sustainable livelihoods, and gender- and ethnic minority-empowerment programming in Lao PDR or southeast Asia - Demonstrated strong social research and reporting skills, including experience conducting quantitative and qualitative research. - Demonstrated successful experience in conducting project baseline survey studies, especially for development projects. - Demonstrated good understanding of gender issues, and women's empowerment in Laos.
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		▪ Relevant technical experience (e.g. climate change, agriculture, sustainable livelihoods, women's empowerment, ethnic minority empowerment, etc.) is preferred.
2	Qualification	▪ Relevant post-graduate qualifications.
3	Technical skills	▪ Research, survey (e.g. PRA/PLA), stakeholder interviews (ranging from field level to national level stakeholders), report writing, and presentation. ▪ Ability to work autonomously and demonstrated skills in leading baseline survey projects.
4	Language	▪ Excellent command of English (writing and speaking). ▪ Experience in Lao PDR and Lao language skills are desirable. ▪ Proficiency in an ethnic minority language (Khmu, Akha, Hmong) desirable
5	References	▪ A minimum of two referee contacts who have managed the proposed consultant previously.

As a matter of course, all consultants are subject to the following policies:

- CARE Lao Child Protection Policy.
- Terrorist Check Safety and Security Management Plan.
- CARE Code of Conduct.

How to apply

If you are interested in this role, please submit your (1) CV, (2) cover letter, (3) two references, (4) proposed baseline evaluation study plan, and (5) cost quotation (daily rate) to: Lao.contracts@care.org by **31st August, 2025**, please include the text: **"Application for MekongElevate Baseline Evaluation Consultancy"** in the subject of your email.

For specific technical and more information, please contact Nouandam Kommana at nouandam.kommana@care.org