



Terms of Reference: Empowering Communities Through Participatory Climate Action (WeACT 2)

Overview

Application deadline	31 August 2026
Contract start	September 2026
Duration	September – October 2026
Program sector(s)	Climate Change, Women's Economic Empowerment
Project/Program name	Empowering Communities Through Participatory Climate Action (WeACT 2)
Type of consultancy	Project Baseline Evaluation
Project/Program location	Long District, Luang Namtha Province
Consultant location	In-country
Funded by	Bread for the World and Botstiber Foundation

Organizational Overview

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, Luang Prabang, 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.

Project Overview

The ‘Empowering Communities Through Participatory Climate Action’ Project (WeACT 2) is the second phase (WeACT 1, 2023-2025) of community climate resilience and economic empowerment interventions in Long District, Luang Namtha. Funded by Bread for the World and Botstiber Foundation, WeACT 2 is a 3-year project implemented from January 2026 to December 2028. Building on the WeACT 1 Project’s achievements in generating sustainable agricultural opportunities, strengthening of community participation, and women’s financial empowerment across 15 villages in Long District, WeACT 2 aims to continue strengthening communities’ capacity for climate resilience; expanding the model to include 10 new villages, greater water resilience, and enhanced community ownership.

WeACT2 is built on the premise that climate resilience is most effective when it is community-led, gender-responsive, and backed by government systems. Informed by the lessons learned in WeACT 1, WeACT 2 is shifting its implementation approach – prioritizing **direct community facilitation and implementation**, and strengthening the role of trained community facilitators and local government actors who are permanently embedded in the target communities.

The **Overall Objective of the WeACT 2 Project** is that “**climate resilience, water resilience, and adaptive capacity of vulnerable and marginalized communities in Lao PDR are strengthened.**”

This overall objective is supported by **three Specific Objectives**:

Specific Objective 1: Livelihood resilience for food security has been strengthened.

Specific Objective 2: Local leadership in climate adaptation has been strengthened.

Specific Objective 3: Financial inclusion and community resilience have been strengthened.

The WeACT 2 Project objectives centre around three main areas: climate resilient community livelihoods, local leadership capacities, and financial inclusion and resilience. To achieve its objectives, the project will implement a range of activities aimed at enhancing climate resilience in all 15 target villages, including the development of Community Adaptation Action Plans (CAAP), Gender-Inclusive Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (GCVCA), inter-village peer mentorship, and the establishment of Village Disaster Management Committees (VDMC), Village Water Management Committees (VWMC), Forest and Water Management Committees (FWMC), and Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA).

The indicators designed to measure the achievement of the three project objectives are as follows:

Objectives and indicators	Outputs
Overall objective: Climate resilience, water resilience, and adaptive capacity of vulnerable and marginalized communities in Lao PDR are strengthened.	
Specific objective 1: Livelihood resilience for food security has been strengthened.	
SO1.1: % adoption of at least two climate-resilient practices among target individuals.	SO1.1: Adoption of at least two climate-resilient practices has been achieved by at least 70% of participants (at least 50% women).
SO1.2: % of peer mentors who have organized and facilitated climate adaptation activities with documented participation from their communities.	SO1.2: At least 80% of peer mentors have organized and facilitated climate adaptation activities with documented participation from their communities.
Specific objective 2: Local leadership in climate adaptation has been strengthened.	

SO2.1: # of Village Water Management Committees (VWMCs) demonstrating management capacity by holding regular meetings, maintaining records, and ensuring water system maintenance.	SO2.1: At least 10 out of 15 villages water management committees (VWMCs) demonstrate management capacity by holding regular meetings, maintaining records, and ensuring water system maintenance.
SO2.2: % of villages reporting improved household water availability compared to baseline.	SO2.2: Improved household water availability compared to baseline has been recorded in at least 50% of villages.
Specific objective 3: Financial inclusion and community resilience have been strengthened.	
SO3.1: % of VSLA committee members that have independently managed their VSLAs.	SO3.1: At least 80% of VSLA committee members have independently managed their VSLAs.
SO3.2: % of VSLA members who have increased savings and diversified their income sources.	SO3.2: At least 70% of VSLA members have increased savings and diversified their income sources.

Purpose of the Baseline Evaluation

The Baseline Evaluation's main goal is to establish baseline readings of the project indicators that will be used to track and evaluate progress towards the project's goal and objectives included in the project Logical Framework, as well as the impact of the planned actions both during and after the project's completion.

In addition to the above-identified project indicators, the Baseline Evaluation is intended to respond to the following Key Evaluation Questions (KEQ), based on the OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria:

1. **Relevance:** To what extent are the proposed interventions aligned with community needs, desires, and priorities?
2. **Coherence:** To what extent do the proposed interventions align well with CSO, village, district, provincial, and national government priorities? How do they interact with previous or ongoing interventions?
3. **Effectiveness:** Are the project objectives and their causal/logical pathways achievable, given the contextual reality and learning from previous phases?
4. **Efficiency:** How efficiently do the proposed interventions utilise material, financial, and human resources? How well are the project inputs and outputs balanced? What operational bottlenecks could emerge in the course of the project?
5. **Impact:** To what extent can the proposed interventions realise the targeted impact? What unintended positive or negative outcomes may emerge?
6. **Sustainability:** How conducive are the proposed interventions and design to community ownership? How well are they aligned to communities' capacity to sustain the interventions?
7. **Gender equality:** Are the proposed interventions contextually appropriate to present gender norms? To what extent could they positively impact gender equality? Are there potential risks or unintended consequences?

Baseline target group

The assessment population will include the direct target participants/beneficiaries and stakeholders/partners including: government staff at provincial and district levels, cluster representatives, remote ethnic farmers from both genders (including representation of the villages ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities where possible), village members, village authorities, CSO staff, and CARE International personnel in Vientiane and in Luangnamtha.

Note: The actual number of individuals in these target groups will be terminated later between the consultant and the project team.

Scope of the Baseline Evaluation

The Baseline Evaluation will cover at least 9 villages or 60% of 15 target villages of the project, including 2 existing target villages (Phase 1), and 7 new villages. Village sampling should ensure that selected villages include representation of the diverse ethnicities, genders, geographies, and economic statuses in Long District. Population data and village profiles will be provided to the selected consultant for the purposes of sample size calculation.

The following are the suggested procedures for the consultant for this evaluation:

Phase One:

- Review all documents related to this project, including the logframe, and CARE's related strategy documents: CARE Vision 2030, Climate Justice Strategy, Marginalized Women and Girls- Long-term Program Strategy, Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, Gender Equality and Women's Voice Strategy, CARE Laos FAM Guidelines, Phase 1 Project documents (as relevant), Other related documents such as Lao National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED).

Phase Two:

- Develop study design and sampling methodology.
- Present inception report along with data collection tools and organizes online or face to face meeting with CARE team for preparing the evaluation plan prior to conducting the data collection enumerator training.
- Provide data collection tool training to enumerators and translate data collection tools into Lao (if the tools are in English); and pilot the tool.
- Lead the data collection process in the field with multiple target groups along with the enumerators to ensure the data is collected effectively. It is strongly recommended that the lead evaluation consultants travel on the field trip with the data collection team.

Phase Three:

- Lead cleaning and validation of quantitative and qualitative data
- Conduct data analysis
- Present the evaluation result to the CARE team
- Prepare draft report and take feedback for finalization of the report and presentation of key findings. Please expect multiple rounds of feedback.
- Submit final, cleaned version of the report, including amended feedback

Approach and Methodology

The baseline evaluation will take a mixed-methods, participatory approach based on the following:

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 (ethnicity) sensitive.
4. Sampling will be discussed and decided together with CARE. The baseline evaluation will not cover all target villages, but the sampling will be purposeful and represent local diversity (i.e. distance to roads, gender, ethnicity, type of production, access to land).
5. Train staff as enumerators of data collection, especially project staff, CSOs, 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 and gender and any other relevant diversity criteria in line with the project's Theory of Change and MEAL standard.
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 evaluation.

Roles and Responsibilities

Team Member and Roles

Phase	Responsible Person	Primary Tasks
Planning	MILKA Advisor, Climate Change team, and Project Manager	Lead in the facilitation evaluation process and managing the external consultant by collaborating with CARE Germany, CSO Partners, and government partners.
	External Consultant	- Lead in designing the necessary methodology and tool for evaluation by collaborating with CARE Laos' program team and CARE Germany and Bread for the World. - 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, Project Manager & Project Team	- 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 (interview CARE team, GoL and CSOs partners including the target group).
Data Analysis	External Consultant	- Lead in cleaning the data and data processing/translation if required.

		- Lead in analyzing the data following the objective and requirement from the baseline evaluation ToR and approved inception report. - Cross-check all data to ensure that collected data meets the needs of the baseline evaluation 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, CARE Germany, and relevant Partners. - Provide a full evaluation report. - Provide a one-page evaluation summary. - Provide key findings presentation in the PPT format.

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.	
Data collection	Conduct field data collection in 09 villages in Long district, Luangnamtha province.	
Draft Baseline Evaluation 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 Evaluation Design - Sampling strategy - Data analysis plan VIII. Key limitation and ethical Considerations to Baseline Evaluation IX. Results, analysis, and discussion 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. (CARE Evaluation template will be shared with the selected consultant)	
Indicator summary table	Update the indicator in the log frame (baseline readings)	

PowerPoint presentation (debriefing)	Includes the methodology, sampling, tools, key findings, imitations, and recommendations from the baseline evaluation.	
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.	
Completion of the approved final Baseline Evaluation report	Following the feedback on the draft report – submit the final version to CARE	

Timeframe

Fieldwork for the baseline evaluation is expected to start by September. The final report is due by 28 October 2026.

The following table shows the anticipated work schedule:

	Item	Specific Task	Days	Tentative dates
1	Pre-field activities	Project literature review - CARE to support with project documents	1	
		Design methodology and plan data collection. Develop Baseline Evaluation tools.	2	
		Inception report	1	
		Sub-total	4	
2	Field activities	Travel to Long District, Luangnamtha Province	-	
		Training on data collection and preparing for fieldwork	1	
		Data collection in 09 villages in Long District	9	
		Consultant travel to VTE	-	
		Sub-total	10	
3	Report writing	Data analysis	2	
		Prepare the draft Baseline Evaluation Report	3	
		Prepare presentation for CARE senior program team and CARE Germany & relevant partners	1	
		Finalize the report (considering comments from CARE) and submit the finalized report to CARE.	2	
		Sub-total	8	
		Grand Total	22	

NOTE: CARE in Laos will cover the consultant's transportation and accommodation during data collection in Luangnamtha, except per diem and travel insurance.

NOTE: Where more than 5 days are necessary for data collection, the consultant should not expect that

supporting CARE or partner staff will work without break for this entire period and respect that they are entitled to weekends as per the CARE HR policy. The consultant therefore accepts that they may be located outside of their usual place of residence at weekends and that it cannot be assumed that this is working time for field staff (accommodation will be covered).

Selection Criteria

1	Experience	- At least 5 years experience in the fields of climate change adaptation, agriculture and food security programming, gender, and women's empowerment 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 evaluations, especially for climate resilience and development projects. - Demonstrated good understanding of gender issues, and women's empowerment in Laos. - Relevant technical experience (e.g. climate change, agricultural and food security, gender mainstreaming, ethnicity, VSLA, rural livelihoods, institutional development, 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 evaluations.
4	Language	- Excellent command of English and Lao (writing and speaking). - Relevant ethnic minority language skills are desirable (Akha, Khmu, Hmong, Lahu).
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 study plan, and (5) cost quotation (daily rate) to: Lao.contracts@care.org by 31 August 2026 **please include the text: “Application for WeACT 2 Baseline Evaluation Consultancy”** in the subject of your email.

Note that the cost quotation should include the consultant’s daily rate as well as any materials and travel costs required for the consultant to complete the baseline evaluation outlined above.

For specific technical and more information, please contact Ms. Phouvieng at Phouvieng.thansengsouvanh@care.org