

Terms of Reference (ToR)

End of Project Evaluation

Decentralization and Local Governance Project, Phase II

1. Background

The Decentralization and Local Governance Project (DLGP), Phase II, builds on initiatives and results achieved under Phase I. Where Phase I focused mainly on policies and institutions at central and district levels, Phase II aims to connect policies to application by concretely applying these gains to essential public services that directly benefit citizens in 5 districts in the south, central, and eastern regions of Bhutan. The Project theory of change is that living standards of citizens will improve when the overall quality of key public services is improved and the local economy provides opportunities for vulnerable groups, specifically women and youth. Key public services in this project refers to water, road access, and local economic opportunities including sustainable tourism. For this to happen, the involvement of citizens in decisions and monitoring needs to be enhanced, and sustainable local economic opportunities need to be facilitated. This combination of improving key public services and enhancing local economic opportunities is expected to lead to social and economic empowerment in the Project targeted communities.

Towards the above, the Project has the goal: *Increased engagement of citizens contributes to improved quality and enhanced citizen satisfaction with key public services.* To contribute towards the goal, there are two specific objectives: (1) Increased participation of citizen groups in planning, implementation, and management of key public services; and (2) Enhanced local economic opportunities for youth and women. A summary of the expected products and services (outputs) and main activities are as below:

Outputs	Main Activities
1.1 Citizen groups trained on planning & governance of key public services	Review of existing group by-laws affecting 230 group members and local leaders Training of 500 water user and road user group members on group governance, social accountability, and networking with local government councils
1.2 Citizen groups network & collaborate for common public service interest	Facilitate 2 regional peer learning and exchange programs among group members Establish networks at the county level and identifying common issues within the network Strengthen mechanisms to present identified common issues at village levels Direct engagement with 450 groups members and local leaders
1.3 Skills & mechanisms developed for citizen groups to engage in implementation & monitoring of key public services	Establish linkages with two vocational schools Build skills of 100 youth to engage in small scale construction and maintenance of public infrastructure Develop tools (checklist and quality monitoring and reporting app) to enable citizen groups to monitor and maintain public infrastructures related to water and road accessibility
1.4 Strengthened functional relationship between citizen groups & local government institutions	Facilitate and strengthen common platforms between citizen groups and local government institutions Develop information sharing mechanisms including e-formats (e.g. social apps), and strengthen grievance redressal mechanisms Reach out to 2900 citizens through this output

2.1 Community-based tourism piloted in partners communities with youth and women groups	Feasibility studies on community-based tourism in pilot counties Stakeholder workshops and consultations, products identification and development Launch of community-based tourism activities in pilot counties.
2.2 Increased capacity of youth and women groups to generate income through community-based tourism	Capacity development of interested community-based tourism stakeholders with a specific focus on benefits for youth, women, and poor households Reach out to a total 220 youth and women

The approximate number of direct beneficiaries that the Project seeks to reach is more than 2900 individuals (about 2200 citizen group members and 700 youth and women community-based tourism members) in 5 districts covering 10 counties. Indirect beneficiaries include the entire population in the project sires, estimated to be 196,000 individuals (48% women) and 400 local government officials.

The Project direct cost budget is CHF 637,456, and the duration is from 01.01.2023 – 31.12.2025.

2. Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to:

- Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of the project.
- Review achievements toward the Project's stated results (Goal, outcomes, outputs).
- Identify challenges and risks faced during implementation and measures taken.
- Determine the sustainability of results beyond the Project timeline (e.g. tools, mechanisms, practices, networks likely to be sustained).
- Provide actionable recommendations for future local governance and decentralization programming, including community-based tourism.
- Identify and document lessons learned and good practices that could be built upon

3. Scope of the Evaluation

- **Time Period Covered:** 01.01.2023 to 31.03.2025
- **Thematic Focus Areas:**
 - Social empowerment through capacity building, networking, engagement in decision making in essential public services, and participation in local governance processes
 - Economic empowerment through capacity building, networking, local economic activities including community-based income generating initiatives
 - Engagement of vulnerable groups, specifically women and youth
 - Accountability and transparency mechanisms
 - Partnership modalities

5. Evaluation Questions

The evaluation will address the following questions:

Relevance

- To what extent has the Project addressed local governance priorities and relevant challenges in the partner Dzongkhags/Gewogs?
- How well did the project address the needs of key stakeholders, particularly women and youth?

Coherence

- How well did the project align with national priorities of the government and other similar ongoing initiatives of the government and other relevant agencies?
- Are the Project design and results framework logically connected to achieve the overall goal and objectives of Helvetas' broader programme in Bhutan?

Efficiency

- Were project resources (human, financial, time) used optimally?
- Did the project use or leverage upon other available resources to enhance its efficiency?

Effectiveness

- To what extent did the Project achieve its intended outcomes?
- What factors have contributed to achievements? What factors have hindered performance?

Impact

- What are the short- and long-term effects of the Project?
- How has the project contributed to introducing changes that has a long-term impact on the overall national local governance system?

Sustainability

- Are there mechanisms/elements/components that are likely to continue beyond the Project timeline?
- What measures are required to sustain the gains made through the Project?

6. Methodology

The proposed methodology include:

- Desk review of project documents: project document/strategy, annual workplans, annual progress reports, M&E data, other documentations produced
- Key informant interviews with stakeholders: implementation partners, project steering committee members, and Project Manager and Project Advisor
- Focus group discussions with primary stakeholders: direct beneficiaries from social groups (e.g. water and road users), direct beneficiaries from economic groups (community-based tourism members).
- Other relevant sources of information as deemed necessary by the evaluator.

7. Deliverables

The evaluators will provide the following outputs:

1. **Draft Evaluation Report:** For review and feedback
2. **Presentation of Key Findings:** To PSC members, to Helvetas Head Office including focal person for FGC in Helvetas Geneva
3. **Final Evaluation Report:** Incorporating feedback (within 1 week of receiving comments)

8. Timeline

The evaluation will be conducted over a period of 4 weeks. The tentative schedule is as follows:

Activity	Timeline
Clarification of ToR, finalization of methodology, listing stakeholders	4 th week November, 2025
Desk review, FGDs, Stakeholder Interviews	2 weeks in December, 2025
Draft report writing and submission	0.5 week in December, 2025
Feedback incorporation and final report submission	0.5 week in December, 2025

9. Required Qualifications and Experiences

- Advanced degree in social sciences, public policy, or a related field
- At least 5 years of experience in evaluating development projects, preferably on topics of local governance, decentralization, women and youth empowerment

- Proven experience in monitoring and evaluation, results-based management, or project cycle management
- Excellent analytical and reporting writing skills are essential
- Fluency in English and Dzongkha is essential

10. Management and Oversight

The evaluation will be managed by:

- Project Manager and Project Advisor – Focal Point for ensuring access to relevant reports, data, contacts with key stakeholders

The Project Steering Committee will provide feedback and ensure quality assurance.

11. Ethical Considerations

The evaluation must comply with ethical standards including:

- Informed consent
- Confidentiality
- Do no harm principles
- Gender and cultural sensitivity