



Near East Foundation - Lebanon

Request for Proposals for a Research Consultant on Livelihood Barriers and Opportunities of different Vulnerable Groups in Lebanon

CONTRACT DATA

Period of Performance: February 2025 – April 2025

Location of Assignment: Beirut Lebanon (with Travel to Project Sites Tripoli, Akkar, Beirut/Mount Lebanon)

Background: For 100 years, the Near East Foundation (NEF) has worked to build more sustainable, prosperous, and inclusive communities in the Middle East, Caucasus, and Africa through education, governance, and economic development initiatives. Working through a network of country offices and local partners, NEF currently has approximately 250 staff members – almost all nationals – and programs in ten countries: Armenia, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Mali, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, South Sudan, and Syria. Its programs are organized around three themes: Stabilization and Peacebuilding, Climate-resilient Development, and Inclusive Economic Development.

Project Overview: The project “Developing Economic Empowerment and Protection (DEEP) for Vulnerable Refugees and Host Communities” is implemented by the Near East Foundation (NEF) and Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) Lebanon, in partnership with the Regional Development and Protection Program for Jordan and Lebanon (RDPP III) under the Embassy of Denmark in Beirut. This project (2024–2026) focuses on socio-economic development, protection, and mental health for vulnerable refugees and local communities. The goal is to enhance self-reliance and resilience through sustainable livelihoods and protection services, particularly for women, youth, and people with disabilities (PwDs).

Assignment: The Near East Foundation (NEF) Lebanon office seeks a consultant to conduct a study to highlight opportunities and barriers regarding sustainable, durable solutions in the Lebanese context, exploring commonalities and divergences amongst different vulnerable groups from an age, gender, and diversity (AGD) perspective. This research will focus on the geography-specific opportunities and limitations faced by vulnerable refugees and Lebanese to generate tailored recommendations for women, youth, and PwDs. The study will provide insights and findings/recommendations to draw learnings and inform program design. NEF and DOT Lebanon will continuously apply learning throughout the project implementation to improve the interventions’ design and quality. Findings and evidence can also inform the RDPP and partners’ engagement, dialogue, and advocacy efforts with relevant stakeholders.

The Study aims to:

- ❖ Identify opportunities and barriers to sustainable, durable solutions for vulnerable refugees and Lebanese communities in the Lebanese context, specifically focusing on social, economic, environmental, and legal aspects.
- ❖ Explore the different experiences of women, youth, and PwD, highlighting commonalities and divergences among them.



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- ❖ Provide tailored recommendations for project design and advocacy efforts, generating insights to improve **socio-economic, protection, and MHPSS interventions** for the most vulnerable groups.

The Consultant will:

1. Conduct Desk Research and Field Assessment

Conduct Desk Research: Gather existing data on social, economic, environmental, and legal factors affecting income generation, job creation, and employment in Lebanon, focusing on vulnerable groups (Women, youths, PwDs, LGBTQIA+, and refugees). Develop a preliminary understanding of key sectors and identify stakeholders relevant to the fieldwork. Additionally, review existing labor market assessments in the project areas and compile data on sector size and growth rates.

Tool Development and Planning for Field Study: Collaborate with NEF Business Development team to develop questionnaires, surveys, and other tools for data collection.

Carry Out Field Assessments: Execute business owner surveys, key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGDs) with stakeholders (refugees, host communities, CSOs, SMEs) to map current opportunities and barriers across different geographical regions.

2. Identify Opportunities and Barriers Under;

Legal, Social, Economic, and Environmental

Social Barriers and Opportunities:

- ❖ Identify gender norms, lack of social networks, and discriminatory attitudes that hinder access to income-generating opportunities.
- ❖ Explore opportunities to foster social networks and support systems for marginalized groups to enhance their access to jobs.

Economic Barriers and Opportunities:

- ❖ Analyze limited access to financial resources, capital, or markets, as well as instability in the informal economy.
- ❖ Identify opportunities for small-scale businesses, self-employment, or social enterprises that can empower vulnerable groups economically.

Environmental Barriers and Opportunities:

- ❖ Assess scarcity of sustainable income sources linked to environmental degradation and lack of green business practices.
- ❖ Explore potential for job creation in eco-friendly sectors and promote sustainable business models among SMEs.

Legal Barriers and Opportunities:

- ❖ Examine regulatory challenges and the impact of legal status on refugees' ability to engage in income-generating activities.



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- ❖ Identify opportunities for advocacy to reform labor laws and improve the legal framework for marginalized groups.

Analyze and Identify Sectoral and Vulnerable Group-Specific Opportunities and Barriers

Sectoral Analysis:

- ❖ Conduct a detailed sectoral analysis to identify sectors with growth potential for income generation, job creation, and employment.
- ❖ Map sector-specific barriers and opportunities to inform targeted interventions.

Vulnerable Groups:

- ❖ Focus on the unique challenges and opportunities for women, youth, PwDs, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and refugees.
- ❖ Assess demand for soft and technical skills in various sectors and propose ways to expand access to these skills for marginalized groups.

3. Explore Sustainability

Explore Sustainable Livelihoods: Identify and promote opportunities for sustainable livelihoods through green and eco-friendly practices, particularly for SMEs and new small and medium enterprises (NSMEs).

Assess Green Job Potential: Evaluate sectors that offer potential for job creation in environmentally sustainable practices.

4. Provide Recommendations

Provide Actionable Recommendations: Develop strategies to address identified barriers and enhance opportunities for income generation, job creation, and employment.

Suggest Tailored Approaches: Propose methods for improving access to opportunities for vulnerable groups through social inclusion initiatives, targeted skill-building programs, and advocacy for legal reforms that support marginalized populations.

Consultant's Responsibilities:

- ❖ Provide drafts of expected deliverables to NEF for review before finalization by the consultant.
- ❖ Review relevant project materials.
- ❖ Conduct desk research and analysis.
- ❖ Conduct KIIs, business owner surveys, FGDs and any other primary data collection in field sites with relevant project stakeholders and beneficiaries.
- ❖ The consultant is expected to use their own transportation, laptop, and phone.
- ❖ Maintain data confidentiality and compliance with all data received and data collected.

NEF's Responsibilities:

- ❖ Provision of project documents and data.
- ❖ Provision of documents to introduce systems and standard operating procedures.



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- ❖ Provision of curriculum and materials including PPTs, handouts, booklets, etc.
- ❖ Review and approval of deliverables submitted by the consultant.
- ❖ Issue the payments as per the scheduled agreement.

Expected Deliverables of the Consultancy: Under the supervision of the Operations and Program Director, and with support from the Project Manager and MEAL Coordinator, the Consultant will be required to deliver the following outputs:

- ❖ The consultant shall prepare a brief work plan. The workplan should set out the consultant's approach for conducting research activities for the study. The period of consultancy should be completed within a minimum of 30 working days over a period of 4 months, starting with the day the agreement is signed.
- ❖ A solid inception report including (a) preliminary analysis following key project documentation review; (b) the methodology proposed, including a sampling strategy and the data collection tools; and (c) a detailed workplan. The draft of inception report is expected by **February 26, 2025**, for review by NEF Lebanon before finalization by the consultant.
- ❖ A solid draft report in English detailing the methodology, analysis of results, validation results, key findings (qualitative and quantitative), research criteria and research questions, lessons learned, and in-depth recommendations that will inform the project (2025-2026) and future programming. The draft report should be submitted for review and comments to NEF by **March 17, 2025**, with the possibility of up to 3 rounds of reviews. Collected quantitative and qualitative data and analysis should be annexed.
- ❖ A presentation/debriefing on the report, highlighting key results, lessons learned and recommendations to key staff by **April 7, 2025**.
- ❖ A final version of the research report by **April 1, 2025**. The report will be written in English and submitted electronically in a MS Word document. The consultant is responsible for proofreading the final report, which should consist of:
 - Table of contents, list of acronyms, abbreviations and list of tables and charts.
 - Executive summary of key findings, lessons learned and recommendations.
 - Project background information and context analysis presented per key research criterion with a brief description.
 - Research methodology with clear explanation of data collection approach, sampling and limitations, participants' selection and data analysis approach.
 - Research findings, analysis, with associated data presented, where appropriate, in clear graphs or charts. One to two pages of key infographics highly recommended. The findings can include subsections for each research criterion.
 - Conclusion, including recommendations for current and future project implementation. The recommendations should be framed according to each research criteria.
- ❖ Report submissions should also include the soft and hard copies such as handwritten and electronic transcripts of data collected, hard copies of survey questionnaires, lists of participants, etc.