

Terms of Reference

ASE Project Final Evaluation

1. Purpose of the Evaluation

This document outlines the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the external evaluation of the Access to Sustainable Employment (ASE) Project in Lebanon.

The ASE Project aims to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugee youth by addressing youth employment challenges.

The project provides life skills training, Technical and Vocational Trainings in three sectors (Information communication and technology, light construction, and agriculture), and sponsored internships for employability or business grants for self-employment eligible beneficiaries.

The evaluation should serve its primary intended users (Caritas Switzerland, Caritas Denmark, and Caritas Lebanon) and other relevant stakeholders as a learning exercise.

It will assess the project design and relevance, and achievement of project objectives. It will collect and analyze lessons learnt, challenges faced, and best practices obtained during implementation which will inform the programming strategy in the next programming phase.

2. Description of the Project

The Access to Sustainable Employment (ASE) Project intended to improve the livelihoods and socio-economic status of 510 vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugee youth by addressing youth employment challenges in Lebanon.

Through a targeted youth empowerment model based on a learning and coaching approach, the project assisted young Syrian refugees and Lebanese in managing the transition to employment or self-employment to stabilize household income and enhance self-reliance.

The project provided a customized package of support, including life skills training, technical and business capacity building, financial assistance for micro-enterprise start-ups, sponsored internships, and regular coaching.

Additionally, the project provided financial and strategic assistance to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) offering internships to the youth.

The project focuses on job areas identified through a local labor market assessment, specifically agriculture and agri-food, light construction, and information and communication technology (ICT).

ASE was by design divided into two cycles, each preceded by a two-months inception phase. Each cycle started with a three-month period for skills development, followed by a six-month period for business and employability support and concluded by research-focused activities for knowledge generation and model adaptation. This allowed to draw learnings throughout the project and adapt the model accordingly. Including but not limited to improving the implementation, the processes, the service providers, the tools used and the approaches, adapting to the contextual changes and beneficiaries needs. Consequently, Cycle Two could be implemented more qualitatively than Cycle One due to the lessons learned that were integrated into the programming.

The project has been extended to include a third cycle, through a no-cost extension. This new phase focused on providing TVET to approximately 100 Lebanese youth, alongside offering financial support to struggling MSMEs.

The project, consisting of three cycles with the first two having two phases each, utilized five learning reports to capture key takeaways from every phase.

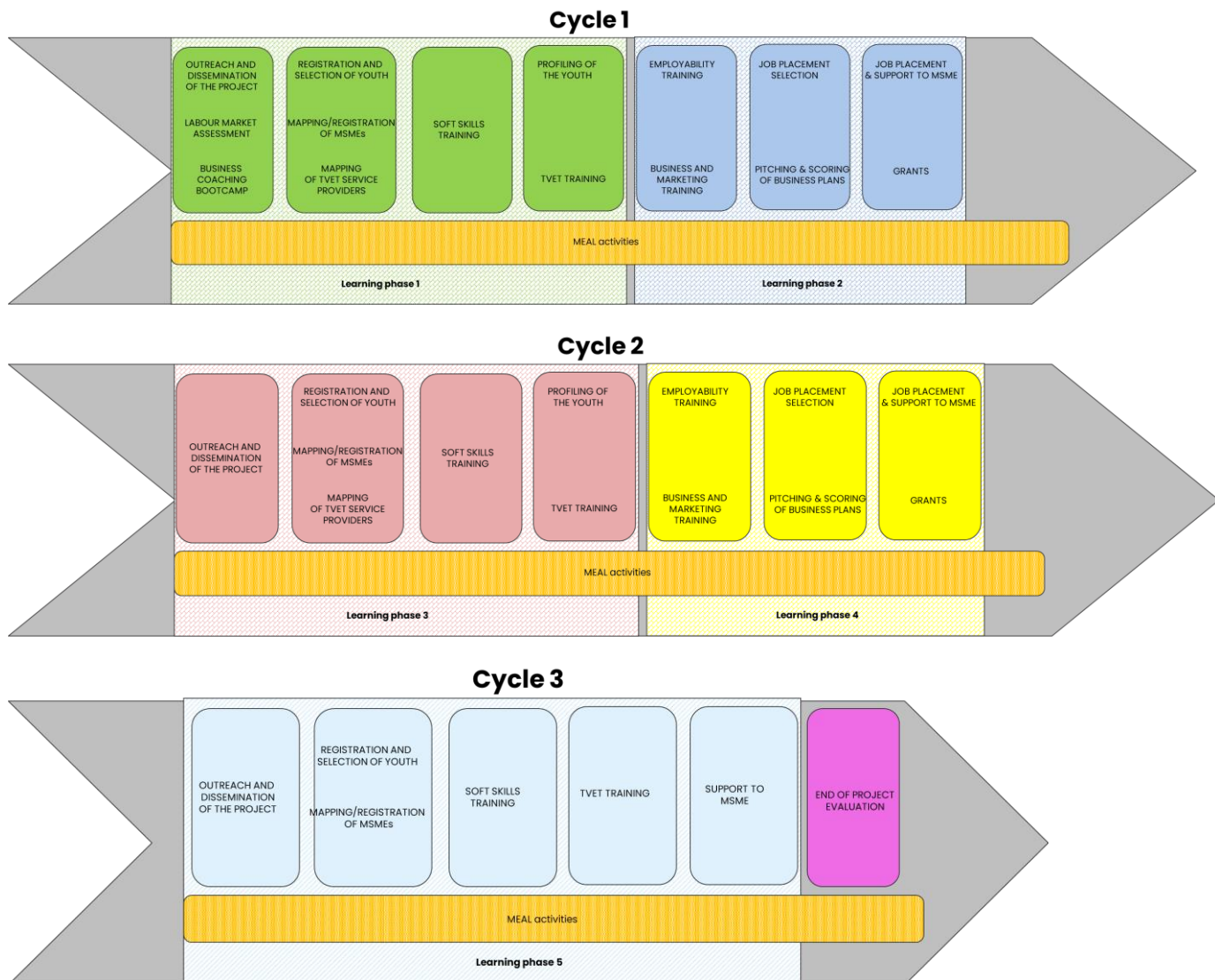
The ASE's first Learning Report documented and scrutinized the initial stages of the project, until beneficiaries received life skills training, technical and business capacity building in Cycle One.

The ASE's second Learning Report documented and scrutinized the second part of the first cycle related to the changes in the context and the impact on the implementation of the project, the findings related to the self-employment and job placement tracks.

The ASE's third Learning Report assessed the effectiveness of adjustments made in the first half of Cycle Two based on the lessons learned from Cycle One. It also analyzed findings on the initial phases of Cycle Two, including outreach, dissemination, scoring, eligibility criteria, planning, implementation of the trainings prior to the job placement and self-employment support offered to beneficiaries.

This fourth Learning Report focused on the second part of Cycle Two based on the lessons learned from Cycle One and presenting the learnings related to the challenges and outcomes of the self-employment track covering areas such as business plan creation, pitching and scoring, grant reception etc.,

The fifth and final Learning Report (Cycle Three) explored the learnings from the project's new market-oriented approach, specifically its focus on supporting MSMEs.



Project Summary

Project Title	Access to Sustainable Employment (ASE) Project in Lebanon
Brief description	<p>The project aimed to promote the livelihoods and socio-economic empowerment of 510 vulnerable Syrian refugee and Lebanese youth (thereof 50% women) by addressing some of the key constraints in youth employment in Lebanon. In this way, the project aimed to enhance the self-reliance of vulnerable youth in the long-term.</p> <p>The project went beyond simply providing support. It functioned as a pilot, testing and refining a youth empowerment model. Through this approach, the project generated valuable knowledge and best practices. These learnings are yet to be documented and shared with other organizations in Lebanon, facilitating the replication of the model and maximizing its impact.</p>
Objectives	<p>Project objective: To promote livelihoods and increase socio-economic self-reliance of vulnerable Syrian refugees and Lebanese youth in Lebanon through evidence-based, scalable approaches.</p> <p>The suggested intervention is comprehensive in its approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building skills of the youth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Soft skills training: enhancing communication, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities. o Technical training: offering options in digital ICT, light construction, and agriculture/agro-processing. o Employability skills/Business and marketing skills: preparing them for the job market through resume writing, interview skills, and business knowledge. - Facilitating Employment: connecting the youth to the market through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Subsidized internships: providing valuable on-the-job experience with local businesses MSMEs. o Self-employment grants: supporting aspiring youth to launch small businesses. o Supporting MSMEs: supporting MSMEs hosting the youths in their internship through business development and/or financial assistance - Continuous improvement of the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Model testing and validation: continuously assess and refine the youth empowerment model to ensure its effectiveness throughout the two phases of the project, through four learning cycles. o Capacity building of the staff: staff development through capacity-building programs to ensure that the staff provide the best possible support to young participants. <p>Project Outcomes:</p> <p>Outcome 1: Young women and men are supported to secure meaningful, well-paid employment through improved access to - and uptake of - effective, market-driven learning opportunities.</p> <p><i>Output 1.1.</i> Young women and men are supported to improve their life and technical skills through core life skills and TVET.</p> <p><i>Output 1.2.</i> Young women and men are supported to manage the transition into working life through employability training (Job placement track).</p> <p><i>Output 1.3</i> Young women and men are supported to improve their self-employment capacity through marketing and business training (self-employment track).</p>

	<p><i>Output 1.4</i> Young women and men have increased knowledge on employee’s rights and business regulation through the provision of legal awareness sessions</p> <p>Outcome 2: Trained young women and men are supported to improve their household livelihood security through access to income generation opportunities within the sectors of focus.</p> <p><i>Output 2.1.</i> Young women and men have enhanced employability through subsidized job placements.</p> <p><i>Output 2.2</i> Young women and men are supported to start or expand their businesses through business grants and coaching</p> <p><i>Output 2.3</i> MSEs who support the young women and men in their job placements will be capacitated through business development support</p> <p>Outcome 3 A model for socio-economic empowerment of young women and men in Lebanon is tested, verified, endorsed, and shared with other key stakeholders in the sector.</p> <p><i>Output 3.1</i> Evidence on employability and self-employment support opportunities and barriers for young women and men in Lebanon is documented and validated.</p> <p><i>Output 3.2</i> Documented evidence on employability and self-employment support opportunities and barriers for youth in Lebanon widely disseminated through learning briefs and market and value chain assessment reports.</p> <p><i>Output 3.3</i> CL and CACH staff are capacitated through the provision of trainings to provide effective support to vulnerable young women and men</p>
Duration	April 2022 – April 2024 5 months No Cost Extension (NCE) May 2024 – September 2024
Location	Beirut, Mount Lebanon and Zahle
Target groups	510 Lebanese and Syrian youth (18 to 30 years old) (thereof 50% women) 158 MSMEs

3. Scope and Focus

This final evaluation of ASE Project shall cover:

- All project components, including but not limited to the consortium coordination, relevance of the project, all outcomes and outputs, achievements, challenges, risks, measures (internal and external), learnings and adaptations.
- The period from the project's inception to the present from 2022 to 2024 (start of evaluation), but also consider the project activities to be implemented by the end of the no-cost extension September 2024.
- All geographical areas in Lebanon where the project has been implemented (Beirut, Mount Lebanon and Bekaa).

The evaluation will focus on assessing the project intervention’s relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency particularly regarding strengthening livelihoods and socio-economic empowerment, and, as far as possible now possible, impact and sustainability, as detailed in section 4, below.

The final evaluation's objective is to provide an overall external assessment of the performance and the results of the project, measure/evaluate the level of achievement and quality of the activities, of the results obtained as well as the effects produced as compared to the objectives of the project, both for the purpose of accountability towards the donor and the public as well as for the purpose of learning to improve future planning and implementation of development cooperation programs similar to The ASE Project within the context of Lebanon and its neighboring countries.

4. Evaluation lines of inquiry

Below are the overarching evaluation sections along with lines of inquiry that should be considered when designing the evaluation tools and answered in the final Evaluation Report.

The evaluation of the ASE project will be to a large extent structured around the OECD Evaluation Criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

Each criterion will guide specific aspects of the evaluation process, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of the project. Evaluator is asked to orient the evaluation towards learnings that are relevant for future programming.

Section 1: Project Effectiveness and Impact

Achievement of Outcomes/Effectiveness and coherence:

- To what extent did the ASE Project achieve its intended outcomes of improving livelihoods, socio-economic self-reliance, and employability for vulnerable youth? And for the MSMEs?
- How does similar programming work in other contexts (provide examples) and/or similar contexts? Would this model be easily replicated in different contexts? What would be the main differences in the Lebanon context?
- What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
- Did the project have a measurable impact on household income generation and youth empowerment and create lasting positive changes for the targeted youth?
- What was more effective and sustainable in providing resilience to beneficiaries between micro business grants and internship components?
- To what extent was the labour market assessment useful in serving its essential role?

Implementation and Monitoring:

- Highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation and monitoring processes.
- How effectively did the project adapt to changing circumstances and challenges, and what key learnings and adaptations were made during the project period?

Impact:

- What intervention package/activities proved to be most effective and have the potential of achieving long-term impact achieving the main aim of job creation?
- What is the potential of scaling this intervention/what activities to be scaled?
- What are unintended effects (positive or negative) and how can they be strengthened or mitigated?

Sustainability:

- What measures were taken to ensure the sustainability of project outcomes?

- Will the project's benefits continue after the project ends? Are there mechanisms in place to ensure the continuity of benefits from the project after the end of project?
- Did the project contribute to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? How far did the project activities support the attainment of SDGs?
- How effectively were local communities and stakeholders engaged to sustain the project's impact?
- What are lessons and options building on this experience for a future role for Caritas Lebanon in livelihood considering Caritas Lebanon core mandate and what are other actors doing in livelihood?
- What (additional) capacities need to be further developed and/or strengthened to support future livelihood programs?
- What other considerations shall be taken for the Lebanese evolving context for future similar projects?

Section 2: Efficiency and Relevance

Resource Utilization & efficiency:

- How efficiently were the project resources utilized in achieving the intended outcomes?
- Did the governance structure and management (consortium) effectively support the successful implementation of the project? Was there a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities?
- Did the implementation of the project activities happen according to the defined schedules or workplan?
- Were the project's resources (financial, human, & material) used optimally to achieve the desired outcomes?
- What was more cost effective between internships and business grants in terms of budget vs impact?
- Were the selected modalities appropriate in delivering the services?
- Could other models or approaches be achieving similar outcomes, yet more efficient?
- How did Outcome 3 affect outcomes 1 and 2 in terms of the efficiency / effectiveness of the project

Relevance to Needs and Priorities:

- How relevant was the project design and implementation in addressing the needs of the target population (vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian youth groups in Lebanon)?
- Are the locations chosen appropriate?
- How did the project fit in the current market conditions of the intervention areas?
- Did the project effectively reach the intended target groups?
- How well did the project align with local and national priorities and policies?
- Does the approach make sense in such context?
- To what extent does the project address the specific socio-economic challenges faced by different groups of its target beneficiaries?
- What are challenges/ barrier faced by intended target beneficiaries to participate in the project? How did/ can the project address these?
- Did the project plan consider and adapt to factors like labor laws and business registration requirements?

Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination:

- How effectively were beneficiaries and other stakeholders involved in the project planning, implementation, and evaluation processes?
- What was the level of satisfaction among the stakeholders regarding their engagement and the project's outcomes?

- How does the ASE project align with donors' initiatives, other national and international initiatives aimed at supporting youth groups and livelihood in Lebanon?
- How did ASE align and/or collaborate with private sector?
- How did ASE/Caritas consortium participate and coordinate in coordination mechanism (cluster etc)?

Section 3: Model Development and Replication

Testing and Refinement:

- How effective was the ASE Project in testing and refining its youth empowerment model?

Evidence Generation and Replication:

- Did the project successfully generate evidence on the effectiveness of the model and its potential for replication by other organizations?

Section 4: Additional Considerations and recommendations

Inclusiveness:

- Did the project reach all target groups, including women and men equally? Both targeted nationalities? Leave No-One-Behind approach?

Rights-Based Approach:

- Did the project respect the rights of participants?

Learning, Improvement and Best Practices:

- What could have been done better? How can we improve in future similar projects? Take into account the context, the changes, legal aspect, program aspect and consortium coordination aspect.
- What could be lessons for the consortium for a similar action in future (capitalization of learnings). What elements of the project can be used as models for future interventions?
- What would be the recommendations for improving the approach / intervention logic for similar projects in the future (considering external challenges like security, labor laws, geographical locations and economic instability).

Sub-questions shall be suggested by the evaluation team together within the Inception Report.

5. Methods

Methodology shall be mixed, both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis tools to be used.

The consultant/firm is requested to propose a methodological concept complying with the following minimum requirements:

- **Desk research:** should include a review of all the material and documentation developed within the project, the reports of local teams, beneficiaries and consultants, the tools created or adapted, including the monitoring and evaluation ones, etc. The consultant(s) should review all quantitative

as well as qualitative information to be found in reports, assessments, minutes of meetings etc. The desk research includes a financial analysis (expenditure against the budget provided).

- **MEAL system review:** Since the ASE project has developed and is operating a comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning (MEAL) system, the evaluation consultant will in detail review the data and information generated by the MEAL team and use these data for their analysis
- **Qualitative Methods/Key Informant Interviews/Focus Group discussions:** The consultant(s) should carry out interviews/group discussions with the project team and all partners as well as representatives of the target groups/beneficiaries, training providers etc.
- **Quantitative Methods:** Surveys, statistical analysis of project data, and efficiency ratios.

The detailed methodology will be listed in the final inception report.

6. Responsibilities

The final evaluation will be carried out completely by the consultant/team. The deliverables to be submitted are listed in Section Eight below.

Caritas Switzerland's Programme Manager, Dina Hajjar, will be responsible for providing relevant project documentation, and for advising on specific (methodological and technical) questions during the evaluation.

Caritas Lebanon will support in arranging meetings and consultations with staff and beneficiaries and will share relevant documents related to the project.

7. Qualifications

Applicants must meet the following conditions:

- The evaluation consultant/team will comprise the best available mix of skills that are required to assess the project and will have a diverse level of expertise in all the following subject matters: Rural Development, Local Economic Development, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), MSMEs Development, Youth and Women Affairs, Employment/Job Creation Strategies and Policies.
- A proven record of experience at senior level with development cooperation and livelihood projects
- A minimum of 5-7 years of experience in conducting evaluations, particularly in humanitarian or development contexts.
- Familiarity with quantitative and qualitative evaluation methodologies.
- Demonstrated experience in evaluating livelihood, socio-economic empowerment, or similar projects.
- Preferably experience in highly inflationary contexts.
- National of Lebanon or resident of the country with valid work permit.

Other requirements:

- Excellent writing and verbal communication skills in English and Arabic is mandatory
- A good understanding of the context in Lebanon and the evolving changes related to the Syrian Crisis in Lebanon
- Availability in line with the defined mission calendar and ability to deliver as per the agreement.
- Commitment to ethical guidelines in research and evaluation and data protection

Caritas Switzerland reserves the right to fully or partially cancel this bid for consultancy service.

8. Ethical Standards and Quality

Caritas Switzerland shall ensure that the evaluation is designed and conducted to respect and protect the rights and welfare of people and the communities of which they are members, and to ensure that the evaluation is technically accurate, reliable, and legitimate, useful and conducted in a transparent and impartial manner, and contributes to organizational learning and accountability. The evaluation is carried out complying with the DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation.

All documents and data collected from interviews will be treated as confidential and used solely to facilitate analysis. Interviewees will not be quoted in the reports without their explicit permission.

The evaluator(s) must adhere to ethical guidelines and ensure confidentiality and sensitivity in dealing with vulnerable populations and sensitive data:

- Ensuring confidentiality and informed consent in data collection.
- Sensitivity to the cultural and socio-political context of the communities.
- Adhering to Do No Harm standards and protocols when collecting data.

The report and its findings are the intellectual property of Caritas Switzerland. It will be used solely by Caritas Consortium and will not be made public. However, upon specific request, the results of this evaluation can be made available to interested third parties.

9. Deliverables

The evaluator(s) will be required to provide:

- An Inception Report detailing the proposed methodology, evaluation plan, and timeline.
- A Draft Report (about 15-25 pages without annexes), including a draft executive summary and the results-assessment form (part of the reporting requirement)
- A Final Evaluation Report of max 30 pages (excluding annex) including executive summary, methodology, findings, conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations and Annexes.
- A presentation of the evaluation findings to the project team and stakeholders.

All reports, including drafts, will be written in English and the consultant/firm is responsible for conducting a thorough copy/edit of the text so it is coherent and understandable to non-technical audiences . The executive summary should summarize key findings and recommendations (three pages maximum) and needs to be submitted as part of the final draft report. The findings and recommendations of the Draft Final Report and Final Report must be structured according to the Line of Inquiry and Evaluation Questions. An outline of the report's structure needs to be agreed upon during the inception phase.

Ownership of data from the evaluation rests with project donors and Caritas Switzerland. Use of the data for publication and other presentations can only be made with the written agreement of project donors.

The Evaluation Report shall include as a minimum:

Cover Page

- Title: External Final Evaluation Report – Access to Sustainable Employment (ASE) Project, Lebanon
- Date of Report
- Prepared by: [Evaluator's Name/Company]
- Prepared for: [Project Name/Organization]

Acknowledgments

- Recognition of individuals and organizations that provided significant support

Table of Contents

- List of main sections and sub-sections with page numbers.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations**Executive Summary**

- Brief overview of the evaluation purpose, methodology, key findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Introduction

- Background of the ASE Project.
- Purpose and objectives of the evaluation.
- Scope of the evaluation.

Methodology

- Description of the evaluation approach and design.
- Data collection methods and sources.
- Limitations and challenges faced during the evaluation.

Project Context

- Overview of the socio-political and economic context in Lebanon.
- Description of the target population and project areas.
- Examples of similar projects in different contexts – main differences and common points

Findings

- Detailed presentation of evaluation findings, structured according to evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability).
- Use of visuals (tables, graphs, photos) where appropriate.

Analysis and Discussion

- In-depth analysis of the findings.
- Discussion on how the findings relate to the project objectives and broader sectoral issues.

Conclusions

- Summary of key insights derived from the findings and analysis.
- Assessment of the overall performance of the project.

Recommendations

- Practical and actionable recommendations for the project team and stakeholders.
- Suggestions for future programming and policy implications.

Lessons Learned

- Key lessons identified during the evaluation that can inform future projects.

Annexes

- Additional supporting information such as:
 - Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation.
 - Detailed data collection instruments (questionnaires, interview guides, etc.).
 - List of people interviewed.
 - Case studies or success stories.
 - Detailed data tables or analysis outputs.

References

- Bibliography of documents and sources consulted.

10. Timeline

Activity	Week no.							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Launch of the evaluation – inception meeting and evaluation plan and methodology	x							
Inception report submission and revision		x	x					
Desk review and preparation (project documents, reports, relevant data, evaluation tools development)		x	x					
Data collection – FGD, KII, field visits, collection of qualitative and quantitative data			x	x				
Data analysis			x	x	x			
Meeting to discuss results						x		
Dissemination and feedback workshop with local stakeholders						x		
Draft report submission							x	
Final report submission								x

Eight weeks are currently estimated for this assignment. The applicant is free to suggest an alternative calendar provided that the final evaluation report will be submitted by the latest September 30, 2024.

11. Application process

Evaluators intending to apply must provide the following information:

- **Personal statement**
 - o 1-page expression of interest, highlighting relevant experience and knowledge of the context, overall cost of the evaluation
 - o CV(s) of an individual or a team
 - o A statement confirming availability of the consultant to conduct this assignment within the intended timeframe
 - o Contact details for 2 references and links to 2 evaluations conducted
- **A short technical offer** describing evaluation methodology
 - o Proposed activities, time frame (implementation plan) and scope of work
 - o Team composition and roles
 - o Evidence that the evaluator has the experience to conduct the evaluation (e.g. a list of previous evaluations)
- **Financial offer**
 - o Cost of evaluator(s), all inclusive
 - o Proposed payment schedule

Application process:

Please send an e-mail with your full application package with the subject header “Evaluation of the ASE Project” to the following email: recruitment.scr@caritas.ch

Application Deadline: by 31st of July 2024, 12:00 noon.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

Assessment of the offers

The offer will be evaluated by using the best value for money (combined scoring method). Technical proposal will be evaluated with 70% weight, whereas the financial one will be evaluated with 30%.