

Terms of reference

For

Conduct /assessment of risk and social norms mapping to identify and assess prevalence of issues and barriers to promote women leadership and better understanding of intersectional vulnerabilities in the context of Disaster Risk Management

1 Background

Rautahat district in Nepal's Madhesh Province is highly vulnerable to natural hazards, particularly flooding and river erosion from the Bagmati River and other seasonal rivers such as the Lalbakaiya, Chandi, and Jhanj. The Durga Bhagwati Rural Municipality and Rajdevi Municipality within Rautahat frequently experience flooding from the Bagmati and Jhanj rivers. The region's flat topography, coupled with intense monsoon rainfall, weak embankments, and shifting river courses, results in frequent and severe floods that inundate homes, farmlands, and critical infrastructure such as schools, health centers, and roads. Its dense population and heavy reliance on agriculture increase susceptibility to climate-induced and seasonal disasters, while deeply rooted cultural and social norms, poverty, caste-based discrimination, gender-based discrimination and violence further compound the community's intersectional vulnerabilities. Vulnerable populations, including women, children, low-income households, and marginalized caste groups, face disproportionate impacts, experiencing displacement, loss of income, food insecurity, and limited access to essential services during flood events. The lack of a robust early warning system (EWS) significantly hinders the ability of communities and local authorities to anticipate and respond to flood risks effectively.

Local communities in Rautahat face recurrent flooding that disrupts livelihoods, shelter, education, and health disproportionately affecting women, children, the elderly, and marginalized groups. While Early Warning Systems (EWS) are increasingly deployed, their effectiveness is often limited by social barriers and a lack of inclusive local leadership, particularly by women. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) planning frequently overlooks local knowledge, women's perspectives, and informal coping strategies, weakening community resilience.

Similarly, the local communities of Bardiya along the Karnali River are impacted by recurrent flooding that disrupts livelihoods, shelter, education, and health disproportionately affecting women, children, the elderly, and marginalized groups. Few initiatives on Early warning system and Anticipatory Actions were already initiated in the Karnali River basin which has increased the understanding of EWS, however the current practices and social norms on women engagement on Anticipatory Action is still under priority. This lacks women to take leadership and meaningful participants in different groups and discussion of building resilience communities.

The Institute of Himalayan Risk Reduction (IHRR) is committed to sustainability through risk assessment and innovative Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM). IHRR develops cost-effective solutions, bridges policy-implementation gaps via advocacy, and enhances capacities using science, technology, and local resources. With a multi-hazard, interdisciplinary approach, it fosters stakeholder collaboration for resilient solutions.

Campaign Nepal is a non-governmental organization based in Rautahat District, Madhesh Province, Nepal, dedicated to promoting social justice, gender equality, and community resilience. The organization focuses on empowering marginalized communities, particularly women, girls, and vulnerable groups, through initiatives that address issues such as gender-based violence, child marriage, human trafficking, and barriers to women's leadership. Campaign Nepal collaborates with local and international partners to implement community-driven projects that enhance disaster risk reduction, anticipatory action, and inclusive development.

IHRR and Campaign Nepal, in partnership with CARE Nepal, aims to support women's voice and leadership in anticipatory action. The **Women's Voice in Leadership and Anticipatory Action**, also known as Sajag Samaj (SASA) project is being implemented in the Durga Bhagwati Rural Municipality and Rajdevi Municipality of Rautahat districts in the Madhesh province.

The project aims to establish and strengthen women-led anticipatory action, early warning, and early action mechanisms by ensuring the meaningful participation of women in both household and public spaces. It seeks to identify the prevailing cultural norms and practices that hinder women's voices and leadership, such as restrictions on young married women leaving the house, speaking openly with male in-laws, or making decisions in the absence of their husbands. These social norms act as significant barriers preventing women and girls especially young women from accessing public mechanisms and exercising agency.

1. Purpose / Project Description

The primary goal of the project is to enhance the absorptive and adaptive capacity of vulnerable populations in Durga Bhagwati Rural Municipality and Rajdevi Municipality. To achieve this goal, the project will focus on several key areas. These include establishing and strengthening women-led anticipation, early warning, and early action mechanisms by building the capacity of women and Women's Leadership Organizations (WLOs) in management and functionalization and promoting women's leadership in community-level CDMCs to implement anticipation and early warning actions. The project will also work to strengthen the capacity of first responders, promote women's and girls' leadership and meaningful participation in anticipatory actions through the Humanitarian Partnership Platform (HPP), and advocate and lobby with government decision-makers and GBV service providers to secure resources for inclusive community Early Warning and Early Action systems.

The project will work to create an enabling environment by building women's confidence and agency, fostering stronger relationships with partners and family members through reflective dialogue, and enhancing their voice and leadership in disaster settings especially preparedness and anticipatory actions. This assessment will help identify the major issues faced by women, girls, and other vulnerable and marginalized communities, particularly during disasters, along with their underlying causes and consequences.

The assessment will help to map out the social issues like **violence against women and girls, girls trafficking, child marriage** and gender norms and other associated cultural values focusing on women and

other vulnerable and intersectional groups are facing during the disaster, which is hindering their mobility, participation and leadership development process. Based on the identified norms project will organize community dialogues with key power holders and influential leaders to promote a society where women can move freely, participate without hesitation, and lead anticipatory actions contributing to a more gender-equal and just society.

2. Objectives

The overall objective of the assignment is to conduct the assessment for Durga Bhagwati Rural Municipality and Rajdevi Municipality focusing on potential risk and social norms mapping to identify and assess prevalence of issues such as violence against women and girls, girls trafficking, dowry, child marriage, son preference, ignorance of women and other vulnerable groups distinct and different needs and barriers to promote women leadership and better understanding of intersectional vulnerabilities.

The specific objectives are:

- To identify and map social dimensions of disaster risks in Durga Bhagwati Rural Municipality and Rajdevi Municipality, including the prevalence and drivers of gender-based violence, dowry, child marriage, and trafficking.
- To assess the impact of prevailing social norms and intersectional vulnerabilities such as caste, gender, age, and socio-economic status on women's leadership, mobility, and participation in disaster risk reduction and response mechanisms.
- To explore barriers to women's access and participation in decision-making, early warning systems, and anticipatory actions, particularly during disasters.
- To provide evidence-based recommendations for promoting gender equality, enhancing women's leadership, and developing inclusive, community-led disaster preparedness and response strategies.

3. Scope of the Project

The project covers Durga Bhagwati Rural Municipality and Rajdevi Municipality, focusing on flood-prone areas along the Bagmati and Jhanjh rivers; and Geruwa and Rajapur Municipality along the Karnali River in Bardiya district. The project works in 5 Community Disaster Management Committee in three wards of Rauthat and 5 Community Disaster Management Committee (CDMC) in two wards of Bardiya district.

Key tasks include:

- **Literature Review and Context Analysis**
Conduct a desk review of existing reports, policies, and data related to women led Anticipatory action, disaster risks, gender-based violence, harmful social norms, and women's leadership in Durga Bhagwati Rural Municipality and Rajdevi Municipality to understand the broader context and gaps.
- **Hazard Risk and Social Norms Mapping**
Identify and map the key social and disaster-related risks, focusing on the prevalence and underlying causes of gender-based violence, dowry, child marriage, and trafficking of girls. This includes analyzing how these risks are influenced or exacerbated during disasters.

- The assessment will examine how entrenched social norms contribute to gender-based vulnerabilities in the target region, with a specific focus on: The persistence of harmful practices such as child marriage, dowry practices, witchcraft accusation, girl trafficking, and violence against women and girls (VAWG), driven by patriarchal values, unequal relation between men and women, low levels of education, limited access of available resources and services, and limited economic opportunities for women and girls.
- Barriers to women's leadership and participation in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and governance, including the cultural expectations and disproportionate household responsibilities, Male-dominated local power structures and decision-making spaces, social stigma, fear of retaliation, and risk of isolation for women who challenge traditional norms. The compounding impact of caste and religious identity on gender-based exclusion, particularly for Dalit and Muslim women, who face heightened marginalization.
- Understanding and addressing gender-based vulnerabilities requires a detailed analysis of the social norms and power dynamics that shape them. This includes social Norms Mapping: Identifying the underlying reasons for the continuation of harmful practices (e.g., dowry-related pressures leading to early marriage).
- Mapping key powerholders (e.g., religious and social leaders, political figures, family elders) and potential change agents (e.g., women's groups, networks, teachers, youth leaders, WRO and WLO, CBOs) to inform targeted engagement strategies.
- **Stakeholder Consultations and Field Assessments**
Engage with local stakeholders, including women, girls, community leaders, local government representatives, and marginalized groups through interviews, focus group discussions, and community consultations to gather qualitative insights on social norms, power dynamics, and barriers to women's participation.
- **Analysis of Intersectional Vulnerabilities**
Examine how various identity factors such as caste, gender, age, religion, disability, and socio-economic status intersect to shape the experiences of exclusion, vulnerability, and marginalization during disaster risk reduction and response efforts and also influence individual experiences of risk, exclusion, and access to services. Designing context-specific interventions that respond to the needs of the most vulnerable, moving beyond generic or "one-size-fits-all" DRR approaches.
- **Assessment of Barriers to Leadership and Participation**
Sex, Age, Disability, Disaggregated Data (SADDD) collection of women's participation and leadership status identification and gender analysis across the various local structures (CDMC, WDMC, LDMC and DDMC including different task force) to reflect women's participation in the recent context. Identify and evaluate women-led groups and networks at the local level, focusing on their roles in disaster risk reduction and anticipatory actions. It looks at how many such groups exist, what activities they are involved in particularly around early warning and early action and their understanding of key thematic areas such as preparedness, resilience, and risk mitigation. The assessment also explores their engagement in sharing early warning messages, developing early action plans, and contributing to overall anticipatory efforts within their communities.

Identify specific barriers that prevent women and girls from participating in decision-making, accessing early warning systems, and engaging in anticipatory and community-level disaster actions.

- **Development of Findings and Recommendations based on the assessment**

Synthesize findings into a comprehensive assessment report that includes practical, evidence-based recommendations aimed at promoting gender equality, enhancing women's leadership, and fostering inclusive, community-led disaster preparedness and response strategies.

- **Validation and Feedback**

Present preliminary findings to key stakeholders for validation and incorporate their feedback into the final report to ensure accuracy, relevance, and community ownership of the recommendations.

4. Methodology

Consultants should use the appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods during the assessments. However, project team will provide the need-based support during the methodology selection and other areas.

- **Mixed Methods Approach:** Combining qualitative and quantitative research methods to capture both broad patterns and nuanced experiences.
- **Surveys and Questionnaires:** For collecting data on women's leadership and agencies status and key constraints.
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** With women from various sectors to identify challenges and opportunities.
- **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** With local authorities such as LDMC, WDMC, DDMC and relevant others, women's rights organizations, WLO and CBOs and community leaders.
- **Gender Analysis Tools:** Use tools like, Gender Roles Framework, and Capability Approach.

5. Key Deliverables:

The consultant/team will be expected to submit the following deliverables:

- **Inception Report:** Outlining the methodology (including review framework, data collection tools), and work plan.
- **Draft Learning Document:** A comprehensive draft report (20-25 pages excluding cover pages and annexes) for review by IHRR and CARE Nepal highlighting the assessment of risk and social norms mapping to identify and assess prevalence of issues such as violence against women and girls, girls trafficking, child marriage and barriers to promote women leadership and better understanding of intersectional vulnerabilities. Potential mitigation strategies to address the identified issues and challenges regarding the women's voice and leadership in anticipatory action.
- **Findings:** Based on three review questions, provide details of the major findings, substantiating them by combining results from various approaches used to collect the information. Supplement the

section with respondent quotes, quantitative information (estimated, actual, or potential impact numbers), and case stories.

- Lessons and recommendations: Describe how the outcome/impact substantiation, stories from the field, and implementation experience provide key learning to address the social and gender related issues focusing on anticipatory action.
- Annexes: Include data collection tools, respondent details (without names), and other applicable information.
- Final Learning Document: A polished report incorporating feedback, with case studies, lessons learned, and recommendations.
- Presentation of Findings: A summary presentation for both internal and external dissemination, emphasizing social and gender norms mapping including intersectional vulnerabilities specific on women voice and leadership in anticipatory action in Nepal.

6. Technical skills and knowledge:

The consultant/team should have the following qualifications and expertise for this assessment.

- The consultant should hold a master's degree in Gender Studies, Women's Studies, Sociology, or a related Social Science field, and possess a strong background in research.
- Expertise in Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI): Strong understanding of gender equality, women's rights, and social inclusion principles, especially in the context of rural and marginalized communities in Nepal.
- Knowledge of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Humanitarian Contexts: Familiarity with disaster risk management frameworks, anticipatory action, early warning systems, and the intersection of DRR with gender and social vulnerabilities.
- Understanding of Harmful Social Norms and Protection Issues: In-depth knowledge of issues such as gender-based violence, child marriage, trafficking, and cultural practices that limit women's leadership and mobility.
- Experience in Risk and Social Norms Mapping: Proven ability to conduct risk analysis and social norms assessments using participatory and inclusive methodologies, with sensitivity to local contexts.
- Qualitative Research and Participatory Assessment Skills: Strong skills in designing and conducting interviews, focus group discussions, and community consultations particularly with women, girls, and marginalized groups.
- Data Analysis and Report Writing: Ability to analyze qualitative and contextual data, identify trends and insights, and present findings clearly in a comprehensive, well-structured assessment report with actionable recommendations.

- **Cultural and Contextual Awareness:**
Familiarity with the socio-cultural dynamics of Madhesh Province, including caste-based and gender-based power relations, local governance structures, and community practices.
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Facilitation Skills:**
Experience in engaging local stakeholders, power holders, and community leaders in dialogue processes to validate findings and encourage ownership of recommendations.
- **Language Proficiency:**
Proficiency in English and Nepali is essential; knowledge of local languages spoken in Madhesh (e.g., Maithili or Bajika) is highly desirable for effective communication and engagement

7. Duration and time frame

The project spans 4 **weeks** (21 working days), with tasks structured for rapid delivery:

Activity	week 1	week 2	week 3	Week 4
Inception meeting Finalize the methodology and questionnaire Inception report				
Coordination with key community members and stakeholders and conducting the assessment				
Report preparation and finalization Sharing the findings with the project team and other wider stakeholders				

Note: Tasks may overlap to maximize efficiency.

8. Team Composition

The call is open to individual expert consultants or technical service provider companies.

9. Budget and Payment Terms

The consultant will submit a detailed financial proposal including:

- Expert Fees.
- Field visit costs (travel, accommodation, and logistics).
- Workshop and sub-committee interaction costs.

The payment will be made in installments based on the satisfactory submission of deliverables.

10. Consultant Selection Process

The selection of the consultant will be based on technical and financial proposals. Interested candidates will be evaluated based on their experience, proposed methodology, and team composition. The evaluation committee will consider the quality and relevance of past assignments in flood hazard mapping

and disaster risk management. Proposals will be evaluated with 80% weightage for the technical proposal, including the team's approach and qualifications, and 20% for the financial proposal. The consultant with the best value offer, balancing quality and cost, will be selected for the assignment.

11. Proposal Submission Details

Interested individuals with PAN or **VAT** registered technical service providers are requested to submit technical and financial proposals via email by 1 June 2025. Proposal must include following:

For individual consultant:

- Cover letter
- Technical proposal
- Financial proposal
- Signed CV

For companies:

- Signed (and stamped) cover letter
- Technical proposal
- Financial proposal
- Signed CVs of team member(s)
- Organization profile with experience for companies (Not exceeding 2 pages)
- Organization registration and renewal certificates
- VAT registration certificate
- Latest tax clearance and audit report

12. Mode of Payment

The payment will be made as per IHRR policy and upon submissions of satisfactory deliverables. Note that payments are subject to tax deduction as per prevailing government rules.