

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

**Title of Consulting Service: Independent Interim
Evaluation for Mitigating Greenhouse Gas Emission
through Modern, Efficient and Climate-friendly Clean
Cooking Solutions (CCS) Project**

Method of Consulting Service: National

**Project Name : Independent Interim Evaluation for Mitigating Greenhouse Gas
Emission through Modern, Efficient and Climate-friendly Clean Cooking Solutions
(CCS) Project**

EOI : AEPC/CCS/EoI/2082/83-02

Office Name: Alternative Energy Promotion Center

Office Address: Tahachal Kathmandu Kathmandu

Funding agency : Grant

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A. Request for Expression of Interest

Request for Expression of Interest

Government of Nepal (GoN)

Name of Employer: Alternative Energy Promotion Center

Date: 12-06-2026 21:00

Name of Project: Independent Interim Evaluation for Mitigating Greenhouse Gas Emission through Modern, Efficient and Climate-friendly Clean Cooking Solutions (CCS) Project

Name of the Donor Agency: Grant

Donor Loan/Credit/Grant No: GCF

1. Government of Nepal (GoN) has received a Grant from Single Envelope Procedure toward the cost of Independent Interim Evaluation for Mitigating Greenhouse Gas Emission through Modern, Efficient and Climate-friendly Clean Cooking Solutions (CCS) Project and intends to apply a portion of this loan/credit/grant to eligible payments under the Contract for which this Expression of Interest is invited for National consulting service
2. The Alternative Energy Promotion Center now invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from eligible consulting firms ("consultant") to provide the following consulting services: Independent Interim Evaluation for Mitigating Greenhouse Gas Emission through Modern, Efficient and Climate-friendly Clean Cooking Solutions (CCS) Project
3. Interested eligible consultants may obtain further information and EOI document free of cost at the address Alternative Energy Promotion Center, Alternative Energy Promotion Center
Tahachal
Kathmandu
Kathmandu, Kathmandu
Bagmati Province
Nepal during office hours on or before 29-06-2026 10:00 or visit e-GP system www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp or visit the client's website www.aepc.gov.np
4. Consultants may associate with other consultants to enhance their qualifications.
5. Expressions of interest shall be delivered online through e-GP system www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp (manually not applicable) on or before 29-06-2026 10:00
6. In case the last date of obtaining and submission of the EOI documents happens to be a holiday, the next working day will be deemed as the due date but the time will be the same as stipulated.
7. EOI will be assessed based on Qualification 40.0 %, Experience 45.0 %, and Capacity 15.0 % of consulting firm and key personnel. Based on evaluation of EOI, only shortlisted firms will be invited to submit technical and financial proposal through a request for proposal.
8. Minimum score to pass the EOI is 65

B. Instructions for Submission of Expression of Interest

Instructions for Submission of Expression of Interest

1. Expression of Interest may be submitted by a sole firm or a joint venture of consulting firms and the maximum number of partners in JV shall be limited to three.
2. Interested consultants must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (descriptions, organization and employee and of the firm or company, description of assignments of similar nature completed in the last 7 years and their location, experience in similar conditions, general qualifications and the key personnel to be involved in the proposed assignment).
3. This expression of interest is open to all eligible consulting firm/ company.
4. In case, the applicant is individual consultant, details of similar assignment experience, their location in the previous 4 years and audited balance sheet and bio data shall be considered for evaluation.
5. The assignment has been scheduled for a period of 13 Weeks. Expected date of commencement of the assignment is 24-08-2026.
6. A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the QCBS method.
7. Expression of Interest should contain following information:
 - (i) A covering letter addressed to the representative of the client on the official letter head of company duly signed by authorized signatory.
 - (ii) Applicants shall provide the following information in the respective formats given in the EOI document:
 - EOI Form: Letter of Application (Form 1)
 - EOI Form: Applicant's Information (Form 2)
 - EOI Form: Work Experience Details (Form 3(A), 3(B) & 3(C))
 - EOI Form: Capacity Details (Form 4)
 - EOI Form: Key Experts List (form 5).
8. Applicants may submit additional information with their application but shortlisting will be based on the evaluation of information requested and included in the formats provided in the EOI document.
9. The Expression of Interest (EOI) document must be duly completed and submitted by electronically only using the forms and instructions provided by the system.
10. The completed EOI document must be submitted on or before the date and address mentioned in the "Request for Expression of Interest". In case the submission falls on public holiday the submission can be made on the next working day. Any EOI Document received after the closing time for submission of proposals shall not be considered for evaluation.

C. Objective of Consultancy Services or Brief TOR

TITLE OF CONSULTING SERVICE

Independent Interim Evaluation

METHOD OF CONSULTING SERVICE

Expression of Interest (EOI)

PROJECT

“Mitigating Greenhouse Gas Emission through Modern, Efficient and Climate-friendly Clean Cooking Solutions (CCS)” (FP172)

Microsoft Office User

Government of Nepal

1. Project Background

Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPC) is the nodal agency of Government of Nepal - under the purview of Ministry of Energy, Water resource and Irrigation - for the promotion and development of renewable energy and energy efficiency in the country. AEPC is mandated for promotion of technologies relating to clean energy, energy efficiency and climate change activities. AEPC was recognized by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) as a national Accredited Entity under the Direct Access modality in February 2019, following approval by the GCF Board via its 22nd meeting. The accreditation was formally operationalized with the signing of the Accreditation Master Agreement (AMA) in January 2020. GCF, a critical element of the historic Paris Agreement, is the world's largest climate fund, mandated to support developing countries to raise and realize their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) ambitions towards low-emissions, climate-resilient pathways.

To mitigate the impact of climate change and strengthen resilience of the most vulnerable communities to adapt to climate change, AEPC is implementing the project entitled "Mitigating GHG emission through modern, efficient and climate friendly clean cooking solutions (CCS)" through financial support from GCF. The project was approved by the GCF Board in October 2021 and the Funded Activity Agreement (FAA) was executed in December 2022. The project targets to switch 500,000 households from LPG and fuel-wood stoves to Electric Stoves (ECS), 490,000 households from loose biomass, dung cake and fuel wood to Tier 3+ Improved Cook stoves and to promote domestic biogas system for 10,000 households.

The project addresses specific barriers for transitioning from traditional inefficient cooking practice to an efficient and climate friendly cooking solutions. It seeks to reduce reliance on traditional biomass fuels, improve household air quality and health, promote sustainable energy practices, and contribute to climate change mitigation through reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Scaling up the government initiatives on Climate Change, the project aims at reducing an estimated 6.51 million tons of CO₂eq by bringing transformative changes in cooking pattern with wider usage of modern clean cooking solutions via ECS, Tier 3+ ICS and domestic biogas plants. This project is being implemented in 150 Local Levels (LLs) spread across 22 districts of the Terai Region of Nepal.

Project Innovation and Approach

The project introduces a much-needed paradigm shift in the clean cooking sector through innovative interventions, including bulk tendering via reverse auctioning, output-based financing, and capacity development of local governments, while simultaneously stimulating the clean cooking solutions (CCS) market, particularly for Tier 3+ improved cookstoves (ICS) and electric cooking technologies, which have historically been scarce. By implementing these approaches, the project is positioned to catalyze sectoral growth and lay the groundwork for sustainable scale-up beyond its lifespan.

Transitioning to clean cooking in Nepal requires a multi-pronged strategy:

1. Enhancing cost-effectiveness and investment efficiency through bulk tendering via reverse auctioning, coupled with output-based financing to mitigate financial risks.
2. Ensuring quality assurance and after-sales service by strengthening existing testing centers and expanding their services at regional and local levels.
3. Strengthening local government engagement, recognizing their pivotal role in improving access to clean cooking solutions, through targeted capacity development initiatives.

Collectively, these interventions aim to accelerate market development, strengthen institutional ownership, and enable sustainable scale-up of clean cooking solutions. The project’s approach is aligned with measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and contributes directly to the objectives of the GCF.

Project Overview			
Project Name	FP 172: “Mitigating Greenhouse Gas Emission through Modern, Efficient and Climate-friendly Clean Cooking Solutions (CCS)”		
Total financing (GCF + co-finance)	49,151,817 USD	Total GCF funding	21,128,224 USD
Beneficiaries	1 million households	AEPC Co-Financing	20,958,151 USD
District, Local Levels	22, 150	LG Co-Financing	7,065,442 USD
Expected mitigation impact	65,13,629 tCO ₂ eq	GCF ESS Category	C
Implementation period	5 years	Effective lifespan of investment	24 years

In accordance with FAA, an independent interim evaluation is to be carried out approximately two years and nine months into project implementation. This structured mid-term evaluation, undertaken at the project’s midpoint, will assess progress against planned objectives and results. It is a critical component of the project’s monitoring and evaluation framework, designed to assess progress, identify necessary adjustments, and ensure alignment with the project’s intended outcomes and impacts. The mid-term review will provide actionable recommendations to enhance project implementation and outcomes. These recommendations will be addressed in the second half of the project duration, and the results of the evaluation will be presented to AEPC Management, Project Implementation Unit (PIU) and Provincial Project Management Unit (PPMU).

2. Project Rationale

CCS project is premised on the understanding that achieving a sustainable transition to clean cooking requires systemic change, rather than stand-alone technology dissemination. Persistent

reliance on traditional biomass and inefficient cooking technologies reflects a combination of market failures, affordability constraints, institutional capacity gaps, and entrenched behavioural practices. The project therefore adopts an integrated approach that simultaneously addresses demand-side behaviour, supply-side market development, institutional strengthening, and affordability.

From a climate mitigation perspective, household cooking represents a significant source of emissions and black carbon, as well as pressure on biomass resources. By enabling sustained adoption of modern and efficient cooking technologies, the project contributes directly to Nepal's mitigation commitments under its NDCs, while also generating environmental co-benefits.

From a development and social perspective, the project responds to well-documented health and gender impacts associated with household air pollution and inefficient cooking practices. Women and children bear a disproportionate share of exposure to household smoke and time burdens related to fuel collection and cooking. Clean cooking adoption is therefore expected to generate co-benefits in health, safety, time savings, and household economic welfare, while supporting gender equality and social inclusion objectives.

A key feature of the project is its market-shaping and financial innovation. Rather than relying solely on traditional subsidy-driven approaches, the project introduces bulk procurement, output-based financing mechanisms, and structured co-financing involving households and local governments. These mechanisms are intended to reduce technology costs, improve affordability, stimulate competition among suppliers, and strengthen the long-term viability of clean cooking markets.

Institutionally, the project recognizes that Nepal's federal governance structure places increasing responsibility for energy planning and service delivery at the local level. Many municipalities, however, have limited technical and institutional capacity in the clean energy sector. The project therefore integrates institutional strengthening and municipal energy planning as core components, aiming to embed clean cooking within local planning and governance systems and enhance sustainability beyond the project period.

Given the project's scale, innovative delivery mechanisms, and multi-level institutional arrangements, a Mid-Term (Interim) Evaluation is critical. The evaluation will assess early progress toward results, examine whether key assumptions within the theory of change are holding, identify implementation bottlenecks and risks, and provide actionable recommendations for adaptive management during the remaining implementation period. In line with the GCF Evaluation Policy and the FAA, the Interim Evaluation is intended to serve both accountability and learning functions, supporting improved performance, sustainability, and potential scale-up.

3. Purpose and Objectives of the Evaluation

The project is seeking to procure the services of an independent consulting firm to design, plan and conduct an interim evaluation of the project. The purpose of the Mid-Term Evaluation is to provide an independent, objective assessment of the project's performance and emerging results

at mid-point of implementation. Evaluation will support accountability, learning and informed decision-making by assessing the effectiveness of AEPC's programmatic approach, project implementation status, environmental, social and gender impacts, financial performance and the adequacy of institutional, administrative and organizational arrangements.

Evaluation will provide an independent and rigorous evaluation function, designing and implementing a framework which will assess the project along the GCF evaluation criteria and consistent with the GCF Evaluation Policy, the GCF Evaluation Standards, and the Integrated Results Management Framework (IRMF). It will provide practical recommendations for corrective actions, refinements to project design and improvements to the project monitoring framework to enhance effectiveness and sustainability.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, emerging impact, sustainability, and gender and social inclusion performance of the project in line with GCF evaluation criteria;
- Examine institutional, administrative, and organizational arrangements supporting project implementation at national and sub-national levels;
- Evaluate progress and early results in clean cooking adoption, behavioural change, market development, and institutional strengthening;
- Assess project performance against the implementation risks identified initially, evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of risk mitigation measures implemented to date, and identify any additional risks to the full implementation of the project with suggested mitigation measures;
- Evaluate actual GHG reductions achieved to date and assess whether the project is on track to meet its lifetime mitigation targets, supported by a GHG accounting annex with recalculation spreadsheets where applicable; and
- Evaluate the extent to which the project's anticipated impacts are likely to be achieved by the end of the project period, and identify any adjustments required to enhance the likelihood of achieving those impacts;
- Provide practical, prioritized, and actionable recommendations to strengthen implementation, enhance results, and support sustainability during the remaining project period.

4. Scope and Criteria of the Evaluation

The scope of this mid-term evaluation is comprehensive, covering all the major aspects of project design, implementation, and emerging results. The evaluation will examine both the substance of the project's activities and results as well as the implementation arrangements and processes.

Key dimensions of the scope include:

- **Project Strategy and Design:** The evaluation should consider the entire theory of change of the project verifying outputs delivered, assessing progress toward outcomes, and the

plausibility of achieving the long-term impacts (paradigm shift towards clean cooking and GHG emission reductions). Determine whether the project's design effectively addresses the identified needs for clean cooking solutions in the target areas and remains aligned with GCF strategic objectives and national policies.

- **Institutional, Administrative, and Organizational Setup:** Examine the effectiveness of the project's management structures and coordination mechanisms. This includes the roles and performance of the PIU, PPMU and partnership arrangements with local governments. The review will assess whether administrative and organizational arrangements have been conducive to efficient project execution and whether any institutional barriers or capacity gaps are hindering progress.
- **Project Progress:** Assess the status of implementation across all components of the project. This entails reviewing quantitative achievements against targets, as well as qualitative progress in community engagement and stakeholder mobilization. The evaluation will encompass all program activities, assessing progress across each component by measuring achievements against the log frame indicators.
- **Performance and Early Impacts:** Evaluate the performance of the project in delivering intended benefits and any early signs of impact on beneficiaries and communities. This includes environmental impacts (such as reductions in fuel-wood consumption and emissions), social and health impacts (such as reduction in household air pollution and associated health improvements), economic impacts (cost savings for households, job creation, market development for clean cooking solutions), and gender and social inclusion outcomes (how the project has benefited women and marginalized groups). Special attention will be given to the uptake and continued use of clean cooking solutions by households, as an indicator of the project's effectiveness and potential for lasting impact.
- **Financial Management and Efficiency:** Review the project's use of funds and resources to determine how efficiently inputs are being converted into outputs. This covers budget expenditure against plans, timeliness of fund disbursements, co-financing contributions and cost-effectiveness of approaches such as bulk procurement. The evaluation will also consider whether the project's financial management and procurement processes meet GCF and national standards, and whether any adjustments are needed to improve efficiency in the remaining period.

Geographical Coverage

Geographically, the evaluation will cover the project activities across all participating provinces and local governments. Given the breadth of the project, the evaluator(s) will sample representative sites for deeper field assessment. Field visits will be conducted at all four clusters to gather on-the-

ground insights. These field visits will allow validation of reported results, direct observation of changes at the household level, consultations with beneficiaries, local officials and other relevant stakeholders.

Stakeholder Engagement

It is expected that key stakeholders at all levels will be engaged during the review. This includes interviews and consultations with: AEPC management and the project's PIU and PPMU staffs, provincial and local government representatives involved in the project; partner organizations, suppliers, testing center; community representatives and end-users; relevant experts or civil society actors familiar with the project and other stakeholders. By involving a broad range of stakeholders, the evaluation will ensure a comprehensive understanding of the project's implementation and its effects.

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation will apply the standard GCF evaluation criteria as defined in the GCF Evaluation Policy and further detailed in the GCF Evaluation Guidelines. These criteria include the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria as well as additional GCF- specific considerations. The evaluation will be organized around key questions that address each of these criteria.

In line with GCF evaluation standards, the following key criteria will be applied:

- **Relevance:** Examine the extent to which the project's objectives and design address the needs and priorities of the target beneficiaries and stakeholders. This includes assessing alignment with national policies, local needs for clean cooking solutions, and GCF's strategic impact areas. The review will consider whether the project remains pertinent in the current context and if it can adapt to any changing circumstances or priorities. The evaluation will assess whether the project's design effectively addresses the identified needs for clean cooking solutions in the target areas and remains aligned with GCF strategic objectives and Nepal's NDCs.
- **Effectiveness:** Evaluate the degree to which the project is achieving its intended outcomes and outputs. Are the planned results on track to be met or exceeded? This criterion will involve assessing progress against the project's results framework indicators and understanding any factors contributing to or hindering the achievement of targets. What early evidence exists of outcomes such as reduced fuelwood or LPG use, improved household air quality, or time savings for women? How effective have the awareness campaigns and behavior change efforts been in increasing acceptance of new cooking technologies? Are there any outcomes related to gender empowerment or social inclusion as a result of the project interventions? Effectiveness will also include an explicit assessment of alignment with the GCF IRMF covering the validity of baselines and targets, the status of core mitigation indicators (e.g. tonnes of CO₂eq reduced or avoided), relevant supplementary indicators, and the adequacy of monitoring arrangements.

- **Efficiency:** Assess how well the project is utilizing its resources to deliver results. This involves examining if activities have been implemented on schedule and within budget, and if the project's approach is cost-effective. The review will consider process efficiency measures such as the bulk procurement, the timeliness of implementation steps, and the management of administrative costs. Any delays or cost overruns will be analyzed for underlying causes, and the evaluation will determine how efficiently coordination and decision-making processes are functioning. Evaluation shall also assess the adequacy of the project monitoring processes and systems.
- **Impact and GHG Performance:** Consider the broader and longer-term changes that can be attributed to the project, whether directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. Although this is a mid-term evaluation (and full impact may not yet be realized), the review will document any significant changes observed so far, such as improvements in quality of life for households (health benefits from reduced smoke, time savings from easier cooking, etc.), environmental benefits (e.g. decline in deforestation or carbon emissions reduction prospects), economic changes (new market opportunities, jobs, or income generation in the clean cooking sector), and policy/institutional changes (such as local governments integrating clean cooking into their development plans). Evaluate the extent to which the project's anticipated impacts are likely to be achieved by the end of the project period, and identify any adjustments required to enhance the likelihood of achieving those impacts; The evaluation is required to include an assessment of actual GHG reductions achieved to date, and to evaluate whether the project is on track to meet its lifetime mitigation target of 6,513,629 tCO₂eq. This assessment shall be supported by a GHG accounting methodology consistent with GCF requirements, and shall produce an annex with recalculation spreadsheets. The evaluator will also assess the project's processes for measuring impact including baseline versus current comparisons, surveys, and use of the GCF impact assessment toolkit and comment on the credibility of emerging results.
- **Sustainability:** The evaluation will assess the likelihood that the benefits and outcomes of the project will be sustained beyond the GCF funding period, examining sustainability across the four interrelated pillars of financial, institutional, social, and environmental sustainability. Financial sustainability will be assessed by reviewing the existence and viability of mechanisms to support continued access, maintenance, and replacement of clean cooking technologies, including market development, affordability, user willingness to pay, private-sector engagement, and government budgetary support. Institutional sustainability will be evaluated by examining the extent to which provincial, and local institutions have the capacity and systems to continue supporting clean cooking initiatives, including integration into policies, plans, and budgets, coordination mechanisms, and the presence of a clear exit strategy. Social sustainability will be assessed through analysis of beneficiary acceptance, behavioral change, gender-responsive engagement, inclusiveness of vulnerable groups, and the likelihood of sustained adoption without reversion to traditional cooking practices. Environmental sustainability will be evaluated by examining the durability and performance of installed technologies, availability of maintenance and after-sales service systems, and the

extent to which environmental benefits such as reduced biomass consumption, household air pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions are likely to be maintained over time. The evaluation will identify key risks across all four pillars and assess the adequacy of mitigation measures embedded within project design and implementation.

- **Coherence:** The evaluation will assess the degree to which the project is coherent with other national policies, programs, and development partner-funded initiatives in the clean cooking, renewable energy, health, and climate sectors. This includes identifying complementarities, synergies, overlaps, and gaps, as well as alignment with broader climate finance efforts in Nepal. For example, how does it align with government programs or other donors' efforts to promote improved cookstoves or LPG? Are there synergies or partnerships with other multilateral or bilateral climate finance efforts, and are there any conflicts or overlaps? The evaluation will also assess coherence in climate finance delivery, i.e., whether the project's approach is coordinated with other multilateral climate funds or initiatives in the country.
- **Country Ownership:** Examine the extent to which country ownership is demonstrated through leadership, engagement, and decision-making by national and local government institutions. This includes assessing the degree to which the project is embedded in national strategies, strengthens local institutional capacity, and promotes sustained public sector commitment. For instance, have national and local government counterparts taken responsibility and shown leadership in decision-making, outreach, and resource contributions? Is the project embedded in national strategies and does it strengthen local capacities to manage and sustain results.
- **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion:** Evaluation shall examine whether gender action plans and social inclusion strategies are being effectively implemented and whether any gender-differentiated results are evident (e.g., reduction in women's time spent collecting fuel, improved health for women and children, empowerment through involvement in user groups or as entrepreneurs in the supply chain). How well has the project integrated gender and social inclusion considerations? Is the project benefitting women and vulnerable groups (such as low-income households, indigenous or marginalized communities) as intended? Are both men and women participating in and benefitting from project activities (e.g., are women being reached through awareness campaigns, and are they among the recipients of clean cooking technologies)?
- **Innovativeness:** Evaluate the innovativeness of the project's approach. Are the project's concepts (such as reverse auction procurement, results-based financing, capacitating local governments while providing a boost to the CCS market etc.) innovative in the context of Nepal's clean cooking sector? How effective are these innovative elements proving to be? Is the project testing or demonstrating any new models that could be scaled or inform policy (for example, new financing mechanisms, technical solutions, or institutional arrangements)?
- **Replication and Scalability:** To what extent does the project have potential for replication or scaling up? Are there signs that the approaches used are being taken up beyond the project (e.g., other municipalities adopting similar clean cooking programs, or the national government

considering scaling the model)? Is the project documenting and sharing knowledge that facilitates replication? The interim evaluation should consider whether the project is creating conditions (market conditions, policy frameworks, institutional capacity, financial models) that will allow the clean cooking interventions to be scaled to other regions or continued at a larger scale after project completion.

- **Paradigm Shift and Enabling Environment:** In line with the GCF Evaluation Policy and IRMF requirements, the evaluation is required to assess the project's contribution to paradigm shift and enabling environment indicators. This assessment shall be conducted using a scorecard-based method, with narrative justifications supporting each score, as required by the GCF Guidelines (Annex 3 of the GCF Evaluation Operational Guidelines). The scorecard shall cover the relevant dimensions of the enabling environment including the policy and regulatory environment, market conditions, institutional capacity, financial models, and behavioral change and shall be produced as a structured annex to the evaluation report.
- **Risk Assessment:** In compliance with GCF Evaluation Policy requirements for examining assumptions and risks, the evaluation shall assess project performance against the implementation risks identified initially. These include technical risks (such as technology performance and quality assurance failures), institutional risks (capacity gaps at national and sub-national levels), financial risks (cost recovery and household affordability), and adoption barriers (behavioral, cultural, and socioeconomic). The evaluation shall assess the adequacy and effectiveness of risk mitigation measures implemented to date. In addition, the evaluation shall identify any new or emerging risks to the full implementation of the project and propose specific mitigation measures for each, directed at the relevant stakeholders (AEPC, local governments, GCF, etc.). This risk assessment shall be presented both within the evaluation narrative and as a summary matrix in the annexes.
- **Unexpected Results:** Identify and analyze any unintended or unexpected outcomes, both positive and negative, arising during implementation. For instance, has the project triggered any additional initiatives or interest (such as private sector innovations in cookstove design or new financing offers from banks for electric cookstoves)? Conversely, have there been any unanticipated challenges or negative effects (for example, any groups left behind, any rebound effects in fuel use, etc.)? These findings should be documented and analyzed within the context of the relevant evaluation criteria particularly Effectiveness, Impact, and Sustainability rather than in isolation, so as to avoid unnecessary duplication in the report.

Specific Focus Areas (Key Scope of the Evaluation)

Beyond the broad criteria above, the mid-term evaluation will explicitly investigate a set of specific result areas and questions that are of particular interest to this project. These focus areas reflect the key outcomes and innovations the project is expected to deliver.

The evaluation will specifically address the following:

- (i) The reduction in the use of traditional biomass as cooking fuel, quantifying where possible the percentage reduction or absolute tonnage of biomass saved in target households;
- (ii) Improvement in health and safety through reduced household smoke, including evidence from user testimonies and any available health data;
- (iii) Cost savings from the use of clean cooking solutions, including estimated savings per household and the effectiveness of financing and subsidy schemes;
- (iv) New job creation in the clean cooking sector, both directly through the project and indirectly through value chain development;
- (v) The continued and sustained use of CCS technology by households, including usage patterns, reasons for discontinuation, and barriers to sustained adoption;
- (vi) The scope, reach, and impact of awareness campaigns and behavior change communication activities;
- (vii) The effectiveness of Municipal Energy Plans (MEPs) and provincial energy oversight arrangements, including how many local governments have developed and adopted MEPs with the project's assistance;
- (viii) The extent of household technology switching, including any barriers to complete transition from traditional to clean cooking methods;
- (ix) Reduction in price of clean cooking solutions through bulk procurement, assess if this strategy has led to lower unit costs and whether these savings are being passed on to end-users; and
- (x) The functionality and effectiveness of the Management Information System (MIS) in supporting project management, data aggregation, and knowledge management.

The evaluator should use a mix of quantitative data and qualitative insights to assess each of the above areas. Where certain data are not yet available at mid-term, the evaluator should note these gaps and assess proxy indicators or the mechanisms in place to achieve those outcomes in the future.

Forward-Looking Recommendations

The scope of the evaluation also includes formulating forward-looking recommendations based on the findings. In particular, the evaluation should produce recommendations regarding (i) any corrective actions needed to address issues or under-performance, (ii) any updates or refinements to the project design or implementation strategy, and (iii) any necessary changes to the project's monitoring approach going forward. The evaluation's conclusions and recommendations will be critical for guiding the project team in the remaining implementation period.

5. Methodology of the Evaluation

Approach

The mid-term evaluation will adopt a mixed-methods approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis to ensure a comprehensive and credible assessment of project performance and results. Quantitative methods will be used to measure progress against the project's results framework, indicators, and targets, while qualitative methods will provide in-depth insights into implementation processes, stakeholder perceptions, and contextual factors influencing outcomes. Data will be collected from multiple sources and systematically triangulated to enhance rigor, objectivity, and validity of findings. The approach will be participatory, engaging key stakeholders throughout the evaluation process, and will adhere to ethical standards to ensure transparency, inclusiveness, and reliability of the evaluation results. Evaluation will follow GCF evaluation guidelines and will make use of associated toolkits, including GCF evaluation matrix etc.

Methodology

The methodology will be implemented through the following methods and sequential steps:

1. Inception Phase Requirements:

The Evaluation will commence with a structured inception phase. During the inception phase, the evaluator shall produce the following, all of which shall be submitted as components of the Inception Report.

- Evaluator shall develop a complete GCF Evaluation Matrix (following the template in Annex 1 of the GCF Evaluation Operational Guidelines), mapping each evaluation criterion to specific questions, indicators, data sources, collection methods, and analysis approach.
- Evaluator shall develop a dedicated data analysis framework that provides a clear, structured guide for the systematic analysis and triangulation of all collected data.
- Evaluator shall develop all data collection tools including interview guides, focus group discussion protocols, household survey questionnaires, and field observation checklists.
- Evaluator shall include, as a key evaluation question within the inception phase, an assessment of the adequacy of the project's monitoring processes and systems, including the functionality, accessibility, and use of the MIS, and whether monitoring data and baselines are of sufficient quality to support reliable evaluation.
- Evaluator shall present a detailed field visit schedule, a stakeholder engagement plan, and an initial list of documents required.

2. Desk Review:

The evaluator(s) will conduct a thorough review of all relevant project documentation. This includes the project funding proposal, agreement, annual work plans, progress reports, monitoring data from the MIS, minutes from project management committee meetings, previous verification or audit reports, GHG monitoring reports any studies or surveys done

and other relevant documents. The desk review will help the evaluation team familiarize themselves with the project's design, targets, reported achievements, and known challenges. It will also provide preliminary evidence and data for addressing the evaluation questionnaire.

Field visits shall be conducted in selected sample regions, ensuring coverage across all four clusters. During these visits, in addition to interviews, the evaluation team will observe conditions on the ground. This may involve visiting households to see installed cookstoves or biogas units in use, observing any ongoing project activity, and visiting local institutions. The evaluator will use an observation checklist to systematically note observations related to technology usage, community engagement, and any unintended outcomes visible. Photographs or brief notes may be taken to document evidence, as appropriate.

- **Beneficiary Household Survey:** A structured beneficiary household survey is a mandatory requirement of this evaluation. The survey shall apply a statistically appropriate sample size and a sound sampling approach (such as stratified random sampling across clusters, technology types, and demographic groups) so that the findings are sufficiently representative. The survey design, including the sampling methodology and justification for the sample size, shall be submitted as part of the Inception Report for AEPC's review and approval prior to field deployment.
- **Stakeholder Interviews and Consultations:** A series of semi-structured interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders at different levels. These will include interviews with AEPC management and the project team (PIU and PPMU) to understand project execution processes, management decisions, and perspectives on progress and challenges; discussions with project partners including provincial governments, local governments, manufacturers, testing centers, service centers, trainers, and other stakeholders to shed light on the effectiveness of project partnerships and operational arrangements; and focus group discussions or key informant interviews with a sample of beneficiary households in the field visit sites. Emphasis will be placed on capturing user experiences, with special attention given to including women (who are often primary cooks) and marginalized community members. All interviews will be guided by the evaluation matrix and tailored checklists for each stakeholder type, and information will be triangulated by cross-verifying facts across sources.

3. **Data Analysis, Triangulation and Synthesis:**

Evaluation team will compile and analyze all collected data using the dedicated analysis framework developed during the inception phase. Quantitative data will be analyzed for progress against targets and for any trends. Qualitative data from interviews and observations will be thematically analyzed. Triangulation will be a key principle – ensuring that findings are supported by evidence from multiple sources (documents, interviews, field observation, and data). Any assumptions or subjective viewpoints will be cross-checked for validation and any limitations or evidence gaps will be transparently reported. The

evaluator will then synthesize findings and explicitly assess each evaluation criterion, drawing concise, evidence-based determinations using the GCF evaluation matrix.

4. GHG Accounting Assessment:

As required by the GCF Evaluation Guidelines for mitigation and cross-cutting projects, the evaluation shall include an assessment of actual GHG reductions achieved to date and an evaluation of whether the project is on track to meet its lifetime mitigation targets. This assessment shall apply a GCF-compliant GHG accounting methodology, compare estimated reductions against the project's lifetime target, and assess whether monitoring data and emission factors are robust and consistent with the approved baseline. The findings shall be presented in a dedicated annex to the evaluation report, including recalculation spreadsheets where applicable.

5. Formulation of Conclusions and Recommendations:

Based on the evidence, the evaluation will draw conclusions regarding the project's performance and formulate actionable recommendations. These recommendations will correspond to identify issues or areas for enhancement. Recommendations will be prioritized and directed at specific actors (AEPC, local governments, GCF, etc. as appropriate) and will consider the timeframe (what can be done in the remaining project period versus longer-term actions). Before finalizing the report, the evaluator will conduct a validation session with AEPC to present initial findings and validate facts, correct any factual errors, and provide further inputs or clarifications on preliminary conclusions.

Throughout the evaluation process, the team will adhere to ethical standards, including obtaining informed consent from interviewees, ensuring confidentiality of respondents, and being culturally sensitive and respectful in all interactions. The methodology will remain adaptive to context – for example, if certain data are not available or certain stakeholders are hard to reach, the evaluator will adjust the approach after prior approval from AEPC.

6. Quality Assurance and Risk Management

Quality assurance must be embedded across the entire evaluation lifecycle from inception and data collection through to analysis, reporting, and finalization and is not limited to review of the final report. All evaluation activities and deliverables shall meet the quality, credibility, and ethical integrity standards applicable to GCF-funded evaluations, as set out in the GCF Evaluation Operational Guidelines, Annex 2 (GCF Secretariat Evaluation Quality Assurance and Review Framework for AE-led Evaluations).

As part of its proposal, and subsequently as an annex to the Inception Report, the consulting firm shall submit a Quality Assurance Plan and Contingency Plan. The QA Plan shall describe the firm's internal peer review and sign-off processes; how methodological rigor will be maintained across all phases, including data collection instrument quality, sampling procedures, and analytical methods; how evaluator bias, interviewer bias, and social desirability bias will be minimized; and how evidence from multiple sources will be systematically triangulated. Any data gaps, limitations, or uncertainties must be transparently acknowledged and reported.

The QA Plan shall also confirm the evaluation's compliance with the GCF Gender Policy, the GCF Indigenous Peoples Policy, and the Policy on Prevention of and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH). This includes ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and safe participation for all respondents with particular care given to women, marginalized groups, and vulnerable communities in the Terai region. AEPC will review all draft deliverables and the evaluator is expected to respond to and incorporate feedback accordingly.

The evaluator shall further identify potential risks to the conduct of the evaluation such as low stakeholder response rates, travel or logistical constraints, data limitations, or contextual disruptions during the evaluation per and present, for each identified risk, a specific mitigation measure. The evaluator is expected to exercise a duty of care for all team members and participants, ensuring safety and ethical research practice throughout all field activities.

7. Deliverables

The key deliverables of this assignment are as follows:

SN	Deliverable	Description	Timeline	Remarks
1	Inception Report	This report will include the understanding of the assignment, refined evaluation questionnaire, detailed methodology, GCF evaluation matrix and data collection tools, a work plan and schedule for field visits and interviews, and an initial list of information required	Within 2 weeks of signing the contract	To be approved by AEPC. AEPC review the draft inception report and will finalize the evaluation approach
2	Presentation of preliminary findings	Presentation of general field findings along with key methodologies, approach and key considerations. All evaluation approach papers should have a well-defined dissemination and knowledge management plan.	Within 6 weeks of submission of inception report	The evaluation team will debrief AEPC at key milestones during data collection.
3	Draft Report Submission and Presentation	Draft report will be structured logically covering: an executive summary, introduction (background and context), methodology, findings (organized by evaluation criteria, evaluation matrix and key questions, GHG performance assessment), risk assessment matrix, conclusions, and recommendations. It will also include any appendices (such as the list of stakeholders interviewed, data	Within 4 weeks of presentation of preliminary findings	Draft report to be circulated to PIU for review and feedback

		collection instruments, or detailed data tables).		
4	Validation Meeting	Share the key findings and recommendations of the mid-term review. This debrief will facilitate discussion on the implications of the findings and help build consensus on actions to take forward.	Within a week of draft report submission	Evaluator to compile, document and maintain comprehensive records of all the feedbacks and inputs received
5	Final Report	Final report should be professionally edited and formatted. It will serve as the official record of the mid-term evaluation results. The report should clearly highlight the evaluation's conclusions on the project's performance and the specific recommendations for improvement. It should also document the lessons learned so far in the project which could inform not only the remaining implementation but also future projects in the clean cooking or broader renewable energy sector. The final report shall also incorporate management response and action plan to address recommendations.	Within 2 weeks after the conclusion of validation meeting	AEPC will review the draft final report against a quality-assurance checklist (based on GCF's Evaluation Quality Framework) before approval.

All deliverables will be submitted in English (unless otherwise specified) and in both electronic form (MS Word/PDF for reports, PowerPoint for presentations) and three hard copies. The executive summary of the report should be written in such a way that it is legible to a broad audience.

8. Duration of the Assignment

The total duration of this assignment shall be around 90 working days and shall not exceed the duration of four months from the date of signing the contract. Below is an indicative timeline:

Activities	Tentative Timeline (Weeks)												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Contracting of evaluator(s) and kick-off meeting													

Inception phase (Approval of Inception report along with methodology)	■	■												
Desk Review and Field Visit Planning		■	■											
Field Visit and Data Collection				■	■	■	■							
Data Analysis, Triangulation and Synthesis							■	■						
Presentation of Preliminary Findings							■	■						
Draft report presentation									■	■				
Validation Meeting											■			
Finalization of report and Submission of final Deliverables												■	■	■

This schedule can be adjusted based on any logistical constraints or if the review is initiated later than expected. The evaluator will work closely with AEPC/PIU team to ensure that field missions are timed conveniently and that all necessary arrangements (such as travel to provinces, meetings with local governments, translators if needed, etc.) are planned in advance.

9. Institutional Arrangements and Logistics

The evaluation team will be contracted by and report to AEPC, specifically the Project Coordinator of CCS Project and/or his designee. The evaluation team would facilitate access to information and provide inputs at key stages (inception, draft report review), without compromising the independence of the evaluation.

Logistical support will be provided to the evaluation team as needed, including: access to documents, coordination of meetings and field visits, introductions to stakeholders. However, to maintain the independence of the evaluation, AEPC will not interfere with the evaluator’s conduct of the review and will encourage stakeholders to provide candid feedback

The evaluator/team is expected to make their own travel and accommodation arrangements for field work.

10. Team Composition and Qualifications Required

The Evaluation team should comprise the following key human resources, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, to ensure the effective, independent, and high-quality implementation of the evaluation assignment.

SN	Key HR Requirement	Minimum Qualification Requirement	Minimum General Experience Requirement	Minimum Specific Experience Requirement
1	Team Leader (One)	Master's degree in Public Policy/ Engineering/Sociology/ Development Studies/Environmental Science/ Public Administration	At least 15 years of professional experience in development/ climate change, or energy-sector projects, with demonstrated engagement in donor-funded programs (bilateral, multilateral, or climate finance institutions) and a strong understanding of international development frameworks, result-based management, and project cycles.	Experienced in leading donor-funded project evaluations, reviewing results frameworks, and translating complex findings into clear, actionable recommendations, with attention to gender, social inclusion, and environmental safeguards.
2	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Expert (One)	Master's degree in Climate Change/ Environment/Natural Resources Development/ Policy Studies/Social Sciences/ Economics/Public Administration/ Statistics/ Management	At least 10 years of experience in results-based approaches, including the integration of monitoring, evaluation and reporting, in national/international, multicultural or research settings.	Proven experience in the evaluation of donor-funded development projects, applying recognized evaluation frameworks and methodologies.
3	Energy Sector Expert (One)	Master Degree in Renewable Energy / Climate Change / Environmental Engineering	10 years of relevant experience in the energy sector, with demonstrated focus on clean cooking solutions. Strong evaluation capacity to assess technical performance and feasibility of the solutions promoted, and interprets sector-specific results accurately.	Experience in design, implementation, or assessment of clean cooking technologies (electric, biomass and biogas), demonstrable experience in GHG accounting or verification methodology

4	Gender and Social Inclusion Expert (One)	Master degree in Gender and Social Inclusion/ Development Studies/ Sociology	10 years of experience analyzing gender dynamics and social inclusion outcomes in development projects, ensuring that the evaluation methods and findings fully incorporate GEDSI considerations.	Experience assessing differential impacts on women, marginalized groups, and vulnerable populations, particularly in energy, health, or community-based interventions.
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The consulting firm shall submit a Conflict of Interest (COI) declaration confirming that the firm and all proposed evaluation team members are independent and have not been involved in the design, implementation, supervision, or management of the project. The declaration shall also disclose any past or current professional, contractual, or financial relationships with AEPC, project suppliers, or other project partners. The firm shall further confirm that neither the firm nor its team members have any current or prospective contractual or financial interests that could influence the objectivity of the evaluation.

The firm shall include in its proposal a brief statement describing the measures that will be applied to ensure the independence, impartiality, and objectivity of the evaluation. This should outline how the evaluation team will mitigate potential bias during data collection, analysis, and reporting, including the use of transparent methodologies, triangulation of data sources, and safeguards to ensure that findings and recommendations are evidence-based and free from undue influence by project stakeholders.

11. Payment Schedule

Payments shall be made upon satisfactory completion and approval of deliverables by AEPC. The payment schedule will be as follows:

- An initial payment up to 20 percent of the contract price shall be made upon approval of the Inception Report
- Second payment up to 60 percent of the contract price shall be made upon submission and approval of the Draft Report
- Final payment of remaining amount of the contract price shall be paid upon submission and approval of the Final Report

All deliverables need to be in compliance with the contractual obligations. AEPC reserves the right to withhold or adjust associated payments in the event of delayed, incomplete, or unsatisfactory deliverables.

D. Evaluation of Consultant's EOI Application

Evaluation of Consultant's EOI Application

Consultant's EOI application which meets the eligibility criteria will be ranked on the basis of the Ranking Criteria.

i) Eligibility & Completeness Test

Sl. No.	Criteria Title	Compliance
1	Corporate Registration	
2	Tax Clearance Fy 2081/82	
3	VAT/PAN Registration	
4	EOI Form 1: Letter of Application	
5	EOI Form 2: Applicant's Information Form	
6	EOI Form 3: Experience (3(A) and 3(B))	
7	EOI Form 4: Capacity	
8	EOI Form 5: Qualification of Key Experts	
9	In case of a natural person or firm/institution/company which is already declared blacklisted and ineligible by the GoN, any other new or existing firm/institution/company owned partially or fully by such Natural person or Owner or Board of director of blacklisted firm/institution/company; shall not be eligible consultant.	
10	If the corruption case is being filed to Court against the Natural Person or Board of Director of the firm/institution /company or any partner of JV, such Natural Person or Board of Director of the firm/institution /company or any partner of JV shall not be eligible to participate in procurement process till the concerned Court has not issued the decision of clearance against the Corruption Charges.	

ii) EOI Evaluation Criteria

A. Qualification

Sl. No.	Criteria	Minimum Requirement
1	Qualification of Key Experts	as per TOR
2	Experience of Key Experts	as per TOR

Score: 40.0

B. Experience

Sl. No.	Criteria	Minimum Requirement
1	General Experience of consulting firm	General Experience minimum 3 years
2	Specific experience of consulting firm within last 7 years.	Experience conducting evaluations of multilateral/bilateral/climate finance-funded projects (GCF, GEF, ADB, World Bank, UNDP, etc.)
3	Specific experience of consulting firm within last 7 years.	Experience in clean cooking, improved cook stoves, biogas, or household energy efficiency projects or Renewable Energy technology
4	Specific experience of consulting firm within last 7 years.	Experience in GHG accounting, carbon emission verification, or climate mitigation assessments / Experience with GEDSI analysis as a formal evaluation component

Score: 45.0

C. Capacity

Sl. No.	Criteria	Minimum Requirement
1	Financial Capacity.	Financial Capacity. Average turnover required 3 million, (Best 3 of recent 7 years)

Score: 15.0

Minimum score to pass the EOI is: 65

Note : If the corruption case is being filed to Court against the Natural Person or Board of Director of the firm/institution /company or any partner of JV, such Natural Person or Board of Director of the firm/institution /company or any partner of JV such consultant's proposal shall be excluded during the evaluation.

E. EOI Forms & Formats

E. EOI Forms & Formats

Form 1. Letter of Application

Form 2. Applicant's information

Form 3. Experience (*General, Specific and Geographical*)

Form 4. Capacity

Form 5. Qualification of Key Experts

Standard EOI Document

1. Letter of Application

(Letterhead paper of the Applicant or partner responsible for a joint venture, including full postal address, telephone no., fax and email address)

Date:

To,

Full Name of Client: _____

Full Address of Client: _____

Telephone No.: _____

Fax No.: _____

Email Address: _____

Sir/Madam,

1. Being duly authorized to represent and act on behalf of (hereinafter "the Applicant"), and having reviewed and fully understood all the short-listing information provided, the undersigned hereby apply to be short-listed by **[Insert name of Client]** as Consultant for **[Insert brief description of Work/Services]**.
2. Attached to this letter are photocopies of original documents defining:
 - a) the Applicant's legal status;
 - b) the principal place of business;
3. **[Insert name of Client]** and its authorized representatives are hereby authorized to verify the statements, documents, and information submitted in connection with this application. This Letter of Application will also serve as authorization to any individual or authorized representative of any institution referred to in the supporting information, to provide such information deemed necessary and requested by yourselves to verify statements and information provided in this application, or with regard to the resources, experience, and competence of the Applicant.
4. **[Insert name of Client]** and its authorized representatives are authorized to contact any of the signatories to this letter for any further information.¹
5. All further communication concerning this Application should be addressed to the following person,

[Person]

[Company]

[Address]

[Phone, Fax, Email]
6. We declare that, we have no conflict of interest in the proposed procurement proceedings and we have not been punished for an offense relating to the concerned profession or

¹ Applications by joint ventures should provide on a separate sheet, relevant information for each party to the Application.

Standard EOI Document

business and our Company/firm has not been declared ineligible.

7. We further confirm that, if any of our experts is engaged to prepare the TOR for any ensuing assignment resulting from our work product under this assignment, our firm, JV member or sub-consultant, and the expert(s) will be disqualified from short-listing and participation in the assignment.
8. The undersigned declares that the statements made and the information provided in the duly completed application are complete, true and correct in every detail.

Signed :

Name :

For and on behalf of (name of Applicant or partner of a joint venture):

Standard EOI Document

2. Applicant's Information Form

(In case of joint venture of two or more firms to be filled separately for each constituent member)

1. Name of Firm/Company:
2. Type of Constitution (*Partnership/ Pvt. Ltd/Public Ltd/ Public Sector/ NGO*)
3. Date of Registration / Commencement of Business (*Please specify*):
4. Country of Registration:
5. Registered Office/Place of Business:
6. Telephone No; Fax No; E-Mail Address
7. Name of Authorized Contact Person / Designation/ Address/Telephone:
8. Name of Authorized Local Agent /Address/Telephone:
9. Consultant's Organization:
10. Total number of staff:
11. Number of regular professional staff:

(Provide Company Profile with description of the background and organization of the Consultant and, if applicable, for each joint venture partner for this assignment.)

Standard EOI Document

3. Experience

3(A). General Work Experience

(Details of assignments undertaken. Each consultant or member of a JV must fill in this form.)

S. N.	Name of assignment	Location	Value of Contract	Year Completed	Client	Description of work carried out
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						

Standard EOI Document

3(B). Specific Experience

Details of similar assignments undertaken in the previous seven years

(In case of joint venture of two or more firms to be filled separately for each constituent member)

Assignment name:	Approx. value of the contract (in current NRs; US\$ or Euro) ² :
Country: Location within country:	Duration of assignment (months):
Name of Client:	Total No. of person-months of the assignment:
Address:	Approx. value of the services provided by your firm under the contract (in current NRs; US\$ or Euro):
Start date (month/year): Completion date (month/year):	No. of professional person-months provided by the joint venture partners or the Sub-Consultants:
Name of joint venture partner or sub-Consultants, if any:	Narrative description of Project:
Description of actual services provided in the assignment: Note: Provide highlight on similar services provided by the consultant as required by the EOI assignment.	

Firm's Name: _____

² Consultant should state value in the currency as mentioned in the contract

Standard EOI Document

3(C). Geographic Experience

Experience of working in similar geographic region or country

(In case of joint venture of two or more firms to be filled separately for each constituent member)

No	Name of the Project	Location (Country/ Region)	Execution Year and Duration
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

Standard EOI Document

4. Capacity

4(A). Financial Capacity

(In case of joint venture of two or more firms to be filled separately for each constituent member)

Annual Turnover	
Year	Amount Currency

- **Average Annual Turnover**

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(Note: Supporting documents for Average Turnover should be submitted for the above.)

Standard EOI Document

4(B). Infrastructure/equipment related to the proposed assignment³

No	Infrastructure/equipment Required	Requirements Description
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

³ Delete this table if infrastructure/equipment for the proposed assignment is not required.

Standard EOI Document

5. Key Experts *(Include details of Key Experts only)*

(In case of joint venture of two or more firms to be filled separately for each constituent member)

SN	Name	Position	Highest Qualification	Work Experience (in year)	Specific Work Experience (in year)	Nationality
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

(Please insert more rows as necessary)

TITLE OF CONSULTING SERVICE

Independent Interim Evaluation

METHOD OF CONSULTING SERVICE

Expression of Interest (EOI)

PROJECT

“Mitigating Greenhouse Gas Emission through Modern, Efficient and Climate-friendly Clean Cooking Solutions (CCS)” (FP172)

Microsoft Office User

Government of Nepal

1. Project Background

Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPC) is the nodal agency of Government of Nepal - under the purview of Ministry of Energy, Water resource and Irrigation - for the promotion and development of renewable energy and energy efficiency in the country. AEPC is mandated for promotion of technologies relating to clean energy, energy efficiency and climate change activities. AEPC was recognized by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) as a national Accredited Entity under the Direct Access modality in February 2019, following approval by the GCF Board via its 22nd meeting. The accreditation was formally operationalized with the signing of the Accreditation Master Agreement (AMA) in January 2020. GCF, a critical element of the historic Paris Agreement, is the world's largest climate fund, mandated to support developing countries to raise and realize their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) ambitions towards low-emissions, climate-resilient pathways.

To mitigate the impact of climate change and strengthen resilience of the most vulnerable communities to adapt to climate change, AEPC is implementing the project entitled "Mitigating GHG emission through modern, efficient and climate friendly clean cooking solutions (CCS)" through financial support from GCF. The project was approved by the GCF Board in October 2021 and the Funded Activity Agreement (FAA) was executed in December 2022. The project targets to switch 500,000 households from LPG and fuel-wood stoves to Electric Stoves (ECS), 490,000 households from loose biomass, dung cake and fuel wood to Tier 3+ Improved Cook stoves and to promote domestic biogas system for 10,000 households.

The project addresses specific barriers for transitioning from traditional inefficient cooking practice to an efficient and climate friendly cooking solutions. It seeks to reduce reliance on traditional biomass fuels, improve household air quality and health, promote sustainable energy practices, and contribute to climate change mitigation through reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Scaling up the government initiatives on Climate Change, the project aims at reducing an estimated 6.51 million tons of CO₂eq by bringing transformative changes in cooking pattern with wider usage of modern clean cooking solutions via ECS, Tier 3+ ICS and domestic biogas plants. This project is being implemented in 150 Local Levels (LLs) spread across 22 districts of the Terai Region of Nepal.

Project Innovation and Approach

The project introduces a much-needed paradigm shift in the clean cooking sector through innovative interventions, including bulk tendering via reverse auctioning, output-based financing, and capacity development of local governments, while simultaneously stimulating the clean cooking solutions (CCS) market, particularly for Tier 3+ improved cookstoves (ICS) and electric cooking technologies, which have historically been scarce. By implementing these approaches, the project is positioned to catalyze sectoral growth and lay the groundwork for sustainable scale-up beyond its lifespan.

Transitioning to clean cooking in Nepal requires a multi-pronged strategy:

1. Enhancing cost-effectiveness and investment efficiency through bulk tendering via reverse auctioning, coupled with output-based financing to mitigate financial risks.
2. Ensuring quality assurance and after-sales service by strengthening existing testing centers and expanding their services at regional and local levels.
3. Strengthening local government engagement, recognizing their pivotal role in improving access to clean cooking solutions, through targeted capacity development initiatives.

Collectively, these interventions aim to accelerate market development, strengthen institutional ownership, and enable sustainable scale-up of clean cooking solutions. The project’s approach is aligned with measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and contributes directly to the objectives of the GCF.

Project Overview			
Project Name	FP 172: “Mitigating Greenhouse Gas Emission through Modern, Efficient and Climate-friendly Clean Cooking Solutions (CCS)”		
Total financing (GCF + co-finance)	49,151,817 USD	Total GCF funding	21,128,224 USD
Beneficiaries	1 million households	AEPC Co-Financing	20,958,151 USD
District, Local Levels	22, 150	LG Co-Financing	7,065,442 USD
Expected mitigation impact	65,13,629 tCO ₂ eq	GCF ESS Category	C
Implementation period	5 years	Effective lifespan of investment	24 years

In accordance with FAA, an independent interim evaluation is to be carried out approximately two years and nine months into project implementation. This structured mid-term evaluation, undertaken at the project’s midpoint, will assess progress against planned objectives and results. It is a critical component of the project’s monitoring and evaluation framework, designed to assess progress, identify necessary adjustments, and ensure alignment with the project’s intended outcomes and impacts. The mid-term review will provide actionable recommendations to enhance project implementation and outcomes. These recommendations will be addressed in the second half of the project duration, and the results of the evaluation will be presented to AEPC Management, Project Implementation Unit (PIU) and Provincial Project Management Unit (PPMU).

2. Project Rationale

CCS project is premised on the understanding that achieving a sustainable transition to clean cooking requires systemic change, rather than stand-alone technology dissemination. Persistent

reliance on traditional biomass and inefficient cooking technologies reflects a combination of market failures, affordability constraints, institutional capacity gaps, and entrenched behavioural practices. The project therefore adopts an integrated approach that simultaneously addresses demand-side behaviour, supply-side market development, institutional strengthening, and affordability.

From a climate mitigation perspective, household cooking represents a significant source of emissions and black carbon, as well as pressure on biomass resources. By enabling sustained adoption of modern and efficient cooking technologies, the project contributes directly to Nepal's mitigation commitments under its NDCs, while also generating environmental co-benefits.

From a development and social perspective, the project responds to well-documented health and gender impacts associated with household air pollution and inefficient cooking practices. Women and children bear a disproportionate share of exposure to household smoke and time burdens related to fuel collection and cooking. Clean cooking adoption is therefore expected to generate co-benefits in health, safety, time savings, and household economic welfare, while supporting gender equality and social inclusion objectives.

A key feature of the project is its market-shaping and financial innovation. Rather than relying solely on traditional subsidy-driven approaches, the project introduces bulk procurement, output-based financing mechanisms, and structured co-financing involving households and local governments. These mechanisms are intended to reduce technology costs, improve affordability, stimulate competition among suppliers, and strengthen the long-term viability of clean cooking markets.

Institutionally, the project recognizes that Nepal's federal governance structure places increasing responsibility for energy planning and service delivery at the local level. Many municipalities, however, have limited technical and institutional capacity in the clean energy sector. The project therefore integrates institutional strengthening and municipal energy planning as core components, aiming to embed clean cooking within local planning and governance systems and enhance sustainability beyond the project period.

Given the project's scale, innovative delivery mechanisms, and multi-level institutional arrangements, a Mid-Term (Interim) Evaluation is critical. The evaluation will assess early progress toward results, examine whether key assumptions within the theory of change are holding, identify implementation bottlenecks and risks, and provide actionable recommendations for adaptive management during the remaining implementation period. In line with the GCF Evaluation Policy and the FAA, the Interim Evaluation is intended to serve both accountability and learning functions, supporting improved performance, sustainability, and potential scale-up.

3. Purpose and Objectives of the Evaluation

The project is seeking to procure the services of an independent consulting firm to design, plan and conduct an interim evaluation of the project. The purpose of the Mid-Term Evaluation is to provide an independent, objective assessment of the project's performance and emerging results

at mid-point of implementation. Evaluation will support accountability, learning and informed decision-making by assessing the effectiveness of AEPC's programmatic approach, project implementation status, environmental, social and gender impacts, financial performance and the adequacy of institutional, administrative and organizational arrangements.

Evaluation will provide an independent and rigorous evaluation function, designing and implementing a framework which will assess the project along the GCF evaluation criteria and consistent with the GCF Evaluation Policy, the GCF Evaluation Standards, and the Integrated Results Management Framework (IRMF). It will provide practical recommendations for corrective actions, refinements to project design and improvements to the project monitoring framework to enhance effectiveness and sustainability.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, emerging impact, sustainability, and gender and social inclusion performance of the project in line with GCF evaluation criteria;
- Examine institutional, administrative, and organizational arrangements supporting project implementation at national and sub-national levels;
- Evaluate progress and early results in clean cooking adoption, behavioural change, market development, and institutional strengthening;
- Assess project performance against the implementation risks identified initially, evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of risk mitigation measures implemented to date, and identify any additional risks to the full implementation of the project with suggested mitigation measures;
- Evaluate actual GHG reductions achieved to date and assess whether the project is on track to meet its lifetime mitigation targets, supported by a GHG accounting annex with recalculation spreadsheets where applicable; and
- Evaluate the extent to which the project's anticipated impacts are likely to be achieved by the end of the project period, and identify any adjustments required to enhance the likelihood of achieving those impacts;
- Provide practical, prioritized, and actionable recommendations to strengthen implementation, enhance results, and support sustainability during the remaining project period.

4. Scope and Criteria of the Evaluation

The scope of this mid-term evaluation is comprehensive, covering all the major aspects of project design, implementation, and emerging results. The evaluation will examine both the substance of the project's activities and results as well as the implementation arrangements and processes.

Key dimensions of the scope include:

- **Project Strategy and Design:** The evaluation should consider the entire theory of change of the project verifying outputs delivered, assessing progress toward outcomes, and the

plausibility of achieving the long-term impacts (paradigm shift towards clean cooking and GHG emission reductions). Determine whether the project's design effectively addresses the identified needs for clean cooking solutions in the target areas and remains aligned with GCF strategic objectives and national policies.

- **Institutional, Administrative, and Organizational Setup:** Examine the effectiveness of the project's management structures and coordination mechanisms. This includes the roles and performance of the PIU, PPMU and partnership arrangements with local governments. The review will assess whether administrative and organizational arrangements have been conducive to efficient project execution and whether any institutional barriers or capacity gaps are hindering progress.
- **Project Progress:** Assess the status of implementation across all components of the project. This entails reviewing quantitative achievements against targets, as well as qualitative progress in community engagement and stakeholder mobilization. The evaluation will encompass all program activities, assessing progress across each component by measuring achievements against the log frame indicators.
- **Performance and Early Impacts:** Evaluate the performance of the project in delivering intended benefits and any early signs of impact on beneficiaries and communities. This includes environmental impacts (such as reductions in fuel-wood consumption and emissions), social and health impacts (such as reduction in household air pollution and associated health improvements), economic impacts (cost savings for households, job creation, market development for clean cooking solutions), and gender and social inclusion outcomes (how the project has benefited women and marginalized groups). Special attention will be given to the uptake and continued use of clean cooking solutions by households, as an indicator of the project's effectiveness and potential for lasting impact.
- **Financial Management and Efficiency:** Review the project's use of funds and resources to determine how efficiently inputs are being converted into outputs. This covers budget expenditure against plans, timeliness of fund disbursements, co-financing contributions and cost-effectiveness of approaches such as bulk procurement. The evaluation will also consider whether the project's financial management and procurement processes meet GCF and national standards, and whether any adjustments are needed to improve efficiency in the remaining period.

Geographical Coverage

Geographically, the evaluation will cover the project activities across all participating provinces and local governments. Given the breadth of the project, the evaluator(s) will sample representative sites for deeper field assessment. Field visits will be conducted at all four clusters to gather on-the-

ground insights. These field visits will allow validation of reported results, direct observation of changes at the household level, consultations with beneficiaries, local officials and other relevant stakeholders.

Stakeholder Engagement

It is expected that key stakeholders at all levels will be engaged during the review. This includes interviews and consultations with: AEPC management and the project's PIU and PPMU staffs, provincial and local government representatives involved in the project; partner organizations, suppliers, testing center; community representatives and end-users; relevant experts or civil society actors familiar with the project and other stakeholders. By involving a broad range of stakeholders, the evaluation will ensure a comprehensive understanding of the project's implementation and its effects.

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation will apply the standard GCF evaluation criteria as defined in the GCF Evaluation Policy and further detailed in the GCF Evaluation Guidelines. These criteria include the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria as well as additional GCF- specific considerations. The evaluation will be organized around key questions that address each of these criteria.

In line with GCF evaluation standards, the following key criteria will be applied:

- **Relevance:** Examine the extent to which the project's objectives and design address the needs and priorities of the target beneficiaries and stakeholders. This includes assessing alignment with national policies, local needs for clean cooking solutions, and GCF's strategic impact areas. The review will consider whether the project remains pertinent in the current context and if it can adapt to any changing circumstances or priorities. The evaluation will assess whether the project's design effectively addresses the identified needs for clean cooking solutions in the target areas and remains aligned with GCF strategic objectives and Nepal's NDCs.
- **Effectiveness:** Evaluate the degree to which the project is achieving its intended outcomes and outputs. Are the planned results on track to be met or exceeded? This criterion will involve assessing progress against the project's results framework indicators and understanding any factors contributing to or hindering the achievement of targets. What early evidence exists of outcomes such as reduced fuelwood or LPG use, improved household air quality, or time savings for women? How effective have the awareness campaigns and behavior change efforts been in increasing acceptance of new cooking technologies? Are there any outcomes related to gender empowerment or social inclusion as a result of the project interventions? Effectiveness will also include an explicit assessment of alignment with the GCF IRMF covering the validity of baselines and targets, the status of core mitigation indicators (e.g. tonnes of CO₂eq reduced or avoided), relevant supplementary indicators, and the adequacy of monitoring arrangements.

- **Efficiency:** Assess how well the project is utilizing its resources to deliver results. This involves examining if activities have been implemented on schedule and within budget, and if the project's approach is cost-effective. The review will consider process efficiency measures such as the bulk procurement, the timeliness of implementation steps, and the management of administrative costs. Any delays or cost overruns will be analyzed for underlying causes, and the evaluation will determine how efficiently coordination and decision-making processes are functioning. Evaluation shall also assess the adequacy of the project monitoring processes and systems.
- **Impact and GHG Performance:** Consider the broader and longer-term changes that can be attributed to the project, whether directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. Although this is a mid-term evaluation (and full impact may not yet be realized), the review will document any significant changes observed so far, such as improvements in quality of life for households (health benefits from reduced smoke, time savings from easier cooking, etc.), environmental benefits (e.g. decline in deforestation or carbon emissions reduction prospects), economic changes (new market opportunities, jobs, or income generation in the clean cooking sector), and policy/institutional changes (such as local governments integrating clean cooking into their development plans). Evaluate the extent to which the project's anticipated impacts are likely to be achieved by the end of the project period, and identify any adjustments required to enhance the likelihood of achieving those impacts; The evaluation is required to include an assessment of actual GHG reductions achieved to date, and to evaluate whether the project is on track to meet its lifetime mitigation target of 6,513,629 tCO₂eq. This assessment shall be supported by a GHG accounting methodology consistent with GCF requirements, and shall produce an annex with recalculation spreadsheets. The evaluator will also assess the project's processes for measuring impact including baseline versus current comparisons, surveys, and use of the GCF impact assessment toolkit and comment on the credibility of emerging results.
- **Sustainability:** The evaluation will assess the likelihood that the benefits and outcomes of the project will be sustained beyond the GCF funding period, examining sustainability across the four interrelated pillars of financial, institutional, social, and environmental sustainability. Financial sustainability will be assessed by reviewing the existence and viability of mechanisms to support continued access, maintenance, and replacement of clean cooking technologies, including market development, affordability, user willingness to pay, private-sector engagement, and government budgetary support. Institutional sustainability will be evaluated by examining the extent to which provincial, and local institutions have the capacity and systems to continue supporting clean cooking initiatives, including integration into policies, plans, and budgets, coordination mechanisms, and the presence of a clear exit strategy. Social sustainability will be assessed through analysis of beneficiary acceptance, behavioral change, gender-responsive engagement, inclusiveness of vulnerable groups, and the likelihood of sustained adoption without reversion to traditional cooking practices. Environmental sustainability will be evaluated by examining the durability and performance of installed technologies, availability of maintenance and after-sales service systems, and the

extent to which environmental benefits such as reduced biomass consumption, household air pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions are likely to be maintained over time. The evaluation will identify key risks across all four pillars and assess the adequacy of mitigation measures embedded within project design and implementation.

- **Coherence:** The evaluation will assess the degree to which the project is coherent with other national policies, programs, and development partner-funded initiatives in the clean cooking, renewable energy, health, and climate sectors. This includes identifying complementarities, synergies, overlaps, and gaps, as well as alignment with broader climate finance efforts in Nepal. For example, how does it align with government programs or other donors' efforts to promote improved cookstoves or LPG? Are there synergies or partnerships with other multilateral or bilateral climate finance efforts, and are there any conflicts or overlaps? The evaluation will also assess coherence in climate finance delivery, i.e., whether the project's approach is coordinated with other multilateral climate funds or initiatives in the country.
- **Country Ownership:** Examine the extent to which country ownership is demonstrated through leadership, engagement, and decision-making by national and local government institutions. This includes assessing the degree to which the project is embedded in national strategies, strengthens local institutional capacity, and promotes sustained public sector commitment. For instance, have national and local government counterparts taken responsibility and shown leadership in decision-making, outreach, and resource contributions? Is the project embedded in national strategies and does it strengthen local capacities to manage and sustain results.
- **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion:** Evaluation shall examine whether gender action plans and social inclusion strategies are being effectively implemented and whether any gender-differentiated results are evident (e.g., reduction in women's time spent collecting fuel, improved health for women and children, empowerment through involvement in user groups or as entrepreneurs in the supply chain). How well has the project integrated gender and social inclusion considerations? Is the project benefitting women and vulnerable groups (such as low-income households, indigenous or marginalized communities) as intended? Are both men and women participating in and benefitting from project activities (e.g., are women being reached through awareness campaigns, and are they among the recipients of clean cooking technologies)?
- **Innovativeness:** Evaluate the innovativeness of the project's approach. Are the project's concepts (such as reverse auction procurement, results-based financing, capacitating local governments while providing a boost to the CCS market etc.) innovative in the context of Nepal's clean cooking sector? How effective are these innovative elements proving to be? Is the project testing or demonstrating any new models that could be scaled or inform policy (for example, new financing mechanisms, technical solutions, or institutional arrangements)?
- **Replication and Scalability:** To what extent does the project have potential for replication or scaling up? Are there signs that the approaches used are being taken up beyond the project (e.g., other municipalities adopting similar clean cooking programs, or the national government

considering scaling the model)? Is the project documenting and sharing knowledge that facilitates replication? The interim evaluation should consider whether the project is creating conditions (market conditions, policy frameworks, institutional capacity, financial models) that will allow the clean cooking interventions to be scaled to other regions or continued at a larger scale after project completion.

- **Paradigm Shift and Enabling Environment:** In line with the GCF Evaluation Policy and IRMF requirements, the evaluation is required to assess the project's contribution to paradigm shift and enabling environment indicators. This assessment shall be conducted using a scorecard-based method, with narrative justifications supporting each score, as required by the GCF Guidelines (Annex 3 of the GCF Evaluation Operational Guidelines). The scorecard shall cover the relevant dimensions of the enabling environment including the policy and regulatory environment, market conditions, institutional capacity, financial models, and behavioral change and shall be produced as a structured annex to the evaluation report.
- **Risk Assessment:** In compliance with GCF Evaluation Policy requirements for examining assumptions and risks, the evaluation shall assess project performance against the implementation risks identified initially. These include technical risks (such as technology performance and quality assurance failures), institutional risks (capacity gaps at national and sub-national levels), financial risks (cost recovery and household affordability), and adoption barriers (behavioral, cultural, and socioeconomic). The evaluation shall assess the adequacy and effectiveness of risk mitigation measures implemented to date. In addition, the evaluation shall identify any new or emerging risks to the full implementation of the project and propose specific mitigation measures for each, directed at the relevant stakeholders (AEPC, local governments, GCF, etc.). This risk assessment shall be presented both within the evaluation narrative and as a summary matrix in the annexes.
- **Unexpected Results:** Identify and analyze any unintended or unexpected outcomes, both positive and negative, arising during implementation. For instance, has the project triggered any additional initiatives or interest (such as private sector innovations in cookstove design or new financing offers from banks for electric cookstoves)? Conversely, have there been any unanticipated challenges or negative effects (for example, any groups left behind, any rebound effects in fuel use, etc.)? These findings should be documented and analyzed within the context of the relevant evaluation criteria particularly Effectiveness, Impact, and Sustainability rather than in isolation, so as to avoid unnecessary duplication in the report.

Specific Focus Areas (Key Scope of the Evaluation)

Beyond the broad criteria above, the mid-term evaluation will explicitly investigate a set of specific result areas and questions that are of particular interest to this project. These focus areas reflect the key outcomes and innovations the project is expected to deliver.

The evaluation will specifically address the following:

- (i) The reduction in the use of traditional biomass as cooking fuel, quantifying where possible the percentage reduction or absolute tonnage of biomass saved in target households;
- (ii) Improvement in health and safety through reduced household smoke, including evidence from user testimonies and any available health data;
- (iii) Cost savings from the use of clean cooking solutions, including estimated savings per household and the effectiveness of financing and subsidy schemes;
- (iv) New job creation in the clean cooking sector, both directly through the project and indirectly through value chain development;
- (v) The continued and sustained use of CCS technology by households, including usage patterns, reasons for discontinuation, and barriers to sustained adoption;
- (vi) The scope, reach, and impact of awareness campaigns and behavior change communication activities;
- (vii) The effectiveness of Municipal Energy Plans (MEPs) and provincial energy oversight arrangements, including how many local governments have developed and adopted MEPs with the project's assistance;
- (viii) The extent of household technology switching, including any barriers to complete transition from traditional to clean cooking methods;
- (ix) Reduction in price of clean cooking solutions through bulk procurement, assess if this strategy has led to lower unit costs and whether these savings are being passed on to end-users; and
- (x) The functionality and effectiveness of the Management Information System (MIS) in supporting project management, data aggregation, and knowledge management.

The evaluator should use a mix of quantitative data and qualitative insights to assess each of the above areas. Where certain data are not yet available at mid-term, the evaluator should note these gaps and assess proxy indicators or the mechanisms in place to achieve those outcomes in the future.

Forward-Looking Recommendations

The scope of the evaluation also includes formulating forward-looking recommendations based on the findings. In particular, the evaluation should produce recommendations regarding (i) any corrective actions needed to address issues or under-performance, (ii) any updates or refinements to the project design or implementation strategy, and (iii) any necessary changes to the project's monitoring approach going forward. The evaluation's conclusions and recommendations will be critical for guiding the project team in the remaining implementation period.

5. Methodology of the Evaluation

Approach

The mid-term evaluation will adopt a mixed-methods approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis to ensure a comprehensive and credible assessment of project performance and results. Quantitative methods will be used to measure progress against the project's results framework, indicators, and targets, while qualitative methods will provide in-depth insights into implementation processes, stakeholder perceptions, and contextual factors influencing outcomes. Data will be collected from multiple sources and systematically triangulated to enhance rigor, objectivity, and validity of findings. The approach will be participatory, engaging key stakeholders throughout the evaluation process, and will adhere to ethical standards to ensure transparency, inclusiveness, and reliability of the evaluation results. Evaluation will follow GCF evaluation guidelines and will make use of associated toolkits, including GCF evaluation matrix etc.

Methodology

The methodology will be implemented through the following methods and sequential steps:

1. Inception Phase Requirements:

The Evaluation will commence with a structured inception phase. During the inception phase, the evaluator shall produce the following, all of which shall be submitted as components of the Inception Report.

- Evaluator shall develop a complete GCF Evaluation Matrix (following the template in Annex 1 of the GCF Evaluation Operational Guidelines), mapping each evaluation criterion to specific questions, indicators, data sources, collection methods, and analysis approach.
- Evaluator shall develop a dedicated data analysis framework that provides a clear, structured guide for the systematic analysis and triangulation of all collected data.
- Evaluator shall develop all data collection tools including interview guides, focus group discussion protocols, household survey questionnaires, and field observation checklists.
- Evaluator shall include, as a key evaluation question within the inception phase, an assessment of the adequacy of the project's monitoring processes and systems, including the functionality, accessibility, and use of the MIS, and whether monitoring data and baselines are of sufficient quality to support reliable evaluation.
- Evaluator shall present a detailed field visit schedule, a stakeholder engagement plan, and an initial list of documents required.

2. Desk Review:

The evaluator(s) will conduct a thorough review of all relevant project documentation. This includes the project funding proposal, agreement, annual work plans, progress reports, monitoring data from the MIS, minutes from project management committee meetings, previous verification or audit reports, GHG monitoring reports any studies or surveys done

and other relevant documents. The desk review will help the evaluation team familiarize themselves with the project's design, targets, reported achievements, and known challenges. It will also provide preliminary evidence and data for addressing the evaluation questionnaire.

Field visits shall be conducted in selected sample regions, ensuring coverage across all four clusters. During these visits, in addition to interviews, the evaluation team will observe conditions on the ground. This may involve visiting households to see installed cookstoves or biogas units in use, observing any ongoing project activity, and visiting local institutions. The evaluator will use an observation checklist to systematically note observations related to technology usage, community engagement, and any unintended outcomes visible. Photographs or brief notes may be taken to document evidence, as appropriate.

- **Beneficiary Household Survey:** A structured beneficiary household survey is a mandatory requirement of this evaluation. The survey shall apply a statistically appropriate sample size and a sound sampling approach (such as stratified random sampling across clusters, technology types, and demographic groups) so that the findings are sufficiently representative. The survey design, including the sampling methodology and justification for the sample size, shall be submitted as part of the Inception Report for AEPC's review and approval prior to field deployment.
- **Stakeholder Interviews and Consultations:** A series of semi-structured interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders at different levels. These will include interviews with AEPC management and the project team (PIU and PPMU) to understand project execution processes, management decisions, and perspectives on progress and challenges; discussions with project partners including provincial governments, local governments, manufacturers, testing centers, service centers, trainers, and other stakeholders to shed light on the effectiveness of project partnerships and operational arrangements; and focus group discussions or key informant interviews with a sample of beneficiary households in the field visit sites. Emphasis will be placed on capturing user experiences, with special attention given to including women (who are often primary cooks) and marginalized community members. All interviews will be guided by the evaluation matrix and tailored checklists for each stakeholder type, and information will be triangulated by cross-verifying facts across sources.

3. **Data Analysis, Triangulation and Synthesis:**

Evaluation team will compile and analyze all collected data using the dedicated analysis framework developed during the inception phase. Quantitative data will be analyzed for progress against targets and for any trends. Qualitative data from interviews and observations will be thematically analyzed. Triangulation will be a key principle – ensuring that findings are supported by evidence from multiple sources (documents, interviews, field observation, and data). Any assumptions or subjective viewpoints will be cross-checked for validation and any limitations or evidence gaps will be transparently reported. The

evaluator will then synthesize findings and explicitly assess each evaluation criterion, drawing concise, evidence-based determinations using the GCF evaluation matrix.

4. GHG Accounting Assessment:

As required by the GCF Evaluation Guidelines for mitigation and cross-cutting projects, the evaluation shall include an assessment of actual GHG reductions achieved to date and an evaluation of whether the project is on track to meet its lifetime mitigation targets. This assessment shall apply a GCF-compliant GHG accounting methodology, compare estimated reductions against the project's lifetime target, and assess whether monitoring data and emission factors are robust and consistent with the approved baseline. The findings shall be presented in a dedicated annex to the evaluation report, including recalculation spreadsheets where applicable.

5. Formulation of Conclusions and Recommendations:

Based on the evidence, the evaluation will draw conclusions regarding the project's performance and formulate actionable recommendations. These recommendations will correspond to identify issues or areas for enhancement. Recommendations will be prioritized and directed at specific actors (AEPC, local governments, GCF, etc. as appropriate) and will consider the timeframe (what can be done in the remaining project period versus longer-term actions). Before finalizing the report, the evaluator will conduct a validation session with AEPC to present initial findings and validate facts, correct any factual errors, and provide further inputs or clarifications on preliminary conclusions.

Throughout the evaluation process, the team will adhere to ethical standards, including obtaining informed consent from interviewees, ensuring confidentiality of respondents, and being culturally sensitive and respectful in all interactions. The methodology will remain adaptive to context – for example, if certain data are not available or certain stakeholders are hard to reach, the evaluator will adjust the approach after prior approval from AEPC.

6. Quality Assurance and Risk Management

Quality assurance must be embedded across the entire evaluation lifecycle from inception and data collection through to analysis, reporting, and finalization and is not limited to review of the final report. All evaluation activities and deliverables shall meet the quality, credibility, and ethical integrity standards applicable to GCF-funded evaluations, as set out in the GCF Evaluation Operational Guidelines, Annex 2 (GCF Secretariat Evaluation Quality Assurance and Review Framework for AE-led Evaluations).

As part of its proposal, and subsequently as an annex to the Inception Report, the consulting firm shall submit a Quality Assurance Plan and Contingency Plan. The QA Plan shall describe the firm's internal peer review and sign-off processes; how methodological rigor will be maintained across all phases, including data collection instrument quality, sampling procedures, and analytical methods; how evaluator bias, interviewer bias, and social desirability bias will be minimized; and how evidence from multiple sources will be systematically triangulated. Any data gaps, limitations, or uncertainties must be transparently acknowledged and reported.

The QA Plan shall also confirm the evaluation's compliance with the GCF Gender Policy, the GCF Indigenous Peoples Policy, and the Policy on Prevention of and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH). This includes ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and safe participation for all respondents with particular care given to women, marginalized groups, and vulnerable communities in the Terai region. AEPC will review all draft deliverables and the evaluator is expected to respond to and incorporate feedback accordingly.

The evaluator shall further identify potential risks to the conduct of the evaluation such as low stakeholder response rates, travel or logistical constraints, data limitations, or contextual disruptions during the evaluation per and present, for each identified risk, a specific mitigation measure. The evaluator is expected to exercise a duty of care for all team members and participants, ensuring safety and ethical research practice throughout all field activities.

7. Deliverables

The key deliverables of this assignment are as follows:

SN	Deliverable	Description	Timeline	Remarks
1	Inception Report	This report will include the understanding of the assignment, refined evaluation questionnaire, detailed methodology, GCF evaluation matrix and data collection tools, a work plan and schedule for field visits and interviews, and an initial list of information required	Within 2 weeks of signing the contract	To be approved by AEPC. AEPC review the draft inception report and will finalize the evaluation approach
2	Presentation of preliminary findings	Presentation of general field findings along with key methodologies, approach and key considerations. All evaluation approach papers should have a well-defined dissemination and knowledge management plan.	Within 6 weeks of submission of inception report	The evaluation team will debrief AEPC at key milestones during data collection.
3	Draft Report Submission and Presentation	Draft report will be structured logically covering: an executive summary, introduction (background and context), methodology, findings (organized by evaluation criteria, evaluation matrix and key questions, GHG performance assessment), risk assessment matrix, conclusions, and recommendations. It will also include any appendices (such as the list of stakeholders interviewed, data	Within 4 weeks of presentation of preliminary findings	Draft report to be circulated to PIU for review and feedback

		collection instruments, or detailed data tables).		
4	Validation Meeting	Share the key findings and recommendations of the mid-term review. This debrief will facilitate discussion on the implications of the findings and help build consensus on actions to take forward.	Within a week of draft report submission	Evaluator to compile, document and maintain comprehensive records of all the feedbacks and inputs received
5	Final Report	Final report should be professionally edited and formatted. It will serve as the official record of the mid-term evaluation results. The report should clearly highlight the evaluation's conclusions on the project's performance and the specific recommendations for improvement. It should also document the lessons learned so far in the project which could inform not only the remaining implementation but also future projects in the clean cooking or broader renewable energy sector. The final report shall also incorporate management response and action plan to address recommendations.	Within 2 weeks after the conclusion of validation meeting	AEPC will review the draft final report against a quality-assurance checklist (based on GCF's Evaluation Quality Framework) before approval.

All deliverables will be submitted in English (unless otherwise specified) and in both electronic form (MS Word/PDF for reports, PowerPoint for presentations) and three hard copies. The executive summary of the report should be written in such a way that it is legible to a broad audience.

8. Duration of the Assignment

The total duration of this assignment shall be around 90 working days and shall not exceed the duration of four months from the date of signing the contract. Below is an indicative timeline:

Activities	Tentative Timeline (Weeks)												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Contracting of evaluator(s) and kick-off meeting													

Inception phase (Approval of Inception report along with methodology)	■	■											
Desk Review and Field Visit Planning		■	■										
Field Visit and Data Collection				■	■	■	■						
Data Analysis, Triangulation and Synthesis							■	■					
Presentation of Preliminary Findings							■	■					
Draft report presentation									■	■			
Validation Meeting											■		
Finalization of report and Submission of final Deliverables												■	■

This schedule can be adjusted based on any logistical constraints or if the review is initiated later than expected. The evaluator will work closely with AEPC/PIU team to ensure that field missions are timed conveniently and that all necessary arrangements (such as travel to provinces, meetings with local governments, translators if needed, etc.) are planned in advance.

9. Institutional Arrangements and Logistics

The evaluation team will be contracted by and report to AEPC, specifically the Project Coordinator of CCS Project and/or his designee. The evaluation team would facilitate access to information and provide inputs at key stages (inception, draft report review), without compromising the independence of the evaluation.

Logistical support will be provided to the evaluation team as needed, including: access to documents, coordination of meetings and field visits, introductions to stakeholders. However, to maintain the independence of the evaluation, AEPC will not interfere with the evaluator’s conduct of the review and will encourage stakeholders to provide candid feedback

The evaluator/team is expected to make their own travel and accommodation arrangements for field work.

10. Team Composition and Qualifications Required

The Evaluation team should comprise the following key human resources, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, to ensure the effective, independent, and high-quality implementation of the evaluation assignment.

SN	Key HR Requirement	Minimum Qualification Requirement	Minimum General Experience Requirement	Minimum Specific Experience Requirement
1	Team Leader (One)	Master's degree in Public Policy/ Engineering/Sociology/ Development Studies/Environmental Science/ Public Administration	At least 15 years of professional experience in development/ climate change, or energy-sector projects, with demonstrated engagement in donor-funded programs (bilateral, multilateral, or climate finance institutions) and a strong understanding of international development frameworks, result-based management, and project cycles.	Experienced in leading donor-funded project evaluations, reviewing results frameworks, and translating complex findings into clear, actionable recommendations, with attention to gender, social inclusion, and environmental safeguards.
2	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Expert (One)	Master's degree in Climate Change/ Environment/Natural Resources Development/ Policy Studies/Social Sciences/ Economics/Public Administration/ Statistics/ Management	At least 10 years of experience in results-based approaches, including the integration of monitoring, evaluation and reporting, in national/international, multicultural or research settings.	Proven experience in the evaluation of donor-funded development projects, applying recognized evaluation frameworks and methodologies.
3	Energy Sector Expert (One)	Master Degree in Renewable Energy / Climate Change / Environmental Engineering	10 years of relevant experience in the energy sector, with demonstrated focus on clean cooking solutions. Strong evaluation capacity to assess technical performance and feasibility of the solutions promoted, and interprets sector-specific results accurately.	Experience in design, implementation, or assessment of clean cooking technologies (electric, biomass and biogas), demonstrable experience in GHG accounting or verification methodology

4	Gender and Social Inclusion Expert (One)	Master degree in Gender and Social Inclusion/ Development Studies/ Sociology	10 years of experience analyzing gender dynamics and social inclusion outcomes in development projects, ensuring that the evaluation methods and findings fully incorporate GEDSI considerations.	Experience assessing differential impacts on women, marginalized groups, and vulnerable populations, particularly in energy, health, or community-based interventions.
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The consulting firm shall submit a Conflict of Interest (COI) declaration confirming that the firm and all proposed evaluation team members are independent and have not been involved in the design, implementation, supervision, or management of the project. The declaration shall also disclose any past or current professional, contractual, or financial relationships with AEPC, project suppliers, or other project partners. The firm shall further confirm that neither the firm nor its team members have any current or prospective contractual or financial interests that could influence the objectivity of the evaluation.

The firm shall include in its proposal a brief statement describing the measures that will be applied to ensure the independence, impartiality, and objectivity of the evaluation. This should outline how the evaluation team will mitigate potential bias during data collection, analysis, and reporting, including the use of transparent methodologies, triangulation of data sources, and safeguards to ensure that findings and recommendations are evidence-based and free from undue influence by project stakeholders.

11. Payment Schedule

Payments shall be made upon satisfactory completion and approval of deliverables by AEPC. The payment schedule will be as follows:

- An initial payment up to 20 percent of the contract price shall be made upon approval of the Inception Report
- Second payment up to 60 percent of the contract price shall be made upon submission and approval of the Draft Report
- Final payment of remaining amount of the contract price shall be paid upon submission and approval of the Final Report

All deliverables need to be in compliance with the contractual obligations. AEPC reserves the right to withhold or adjust associated payments in the event of delayed, incomplete, or unsatisfactory deliverables.