Consultant – External Evaluation
Building the Resilience to Disasters of Rural Communities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

Contract ref. ECHO/DIP/BUD/2010/02001

ACTED is seeking an experienced evaluator to assess its disaster risk reduction programme in the Ferghana Valley of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

1. BACKGROUND

The Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) is an apolitical, and non-confessional international relief agency operating in 27 countries worldwide. ACTED began working in Tajikistan in 1997 and Kyrgyzstan in 2005 after the collapse of the Soviet Union, civil war and ethnic violence left both country’s infrastructure and economy in ruins. In these Central Asian countries ACTED works in promoting rural development, microfinance, disaster risk reduction, and effective local governance.

The project to be evaluated is a natural disaster risk reduction project (DRR) funded by the Disaster Preparedness Programme of the Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission (DIPECHO). The project aims to build the resilience to disasters of rural communities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan through technical training, capacity building of local institutions, and mobilising communities to build local level resilience. Beneficiaries include local authorities, village councils, teachers, school children, and community members. ACTED focuses on the villages in the Ferghana valley of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, which are at particularly high risk for disaster.

2. EVALUATION INFORMATION

2.1: OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The overall purpose of this evaluation is to assess the outcomes of the project. The specific evaluation objectives are as follows:

1. To identify the outcomes of the project - unplanned and those defined in the results framework (60%)

2. To assess the relevance and potential sustainability of project outcomes (20%)

3. To review the appropriateness of the ACTED disaster risk reduction project methodology employed to achieve outcomes (20%)

2.2: SCOPE AND LINES OF INQUIRY
The evaluator should identify the project outcomes based on the indicators designed and measured at the beginning of the project (see below), in addition to any outcomes that were not planned or intended. The evaluator should then assess the relevance of these outcomes in addressing the core disaster risk and management problems faced by the target beneficiaries (as per the original problem analysis, ACTED appraisals, and any additional primary or secondary source data). Finally, the evaluator will consider the sustainability of outcomes and the appropriateness of the ACTED project methodology in achieving the intended outcomes. Though the focus is on outcomes, the role of ACTED implementation processes is a cross-cutting theme and should be considered within the scope of each of the three objectives.

Questions that should be addressed by the evaluation include:

1. Did the project effectively achieve its objective - “to improve the abilities of villagers and the government in the Ferghana valley of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to manage disaster situations and minimise their negative effects”?

2. Did the project effectively achieve its four intended results (i.e. sub-objectives):
   a. “Community volunteer representatives are capable to identify, assess, monitor and take concrete measures on disaster risks;”
   b. “Disaster risk reduction is prioritised on the local level and mainstreamed into development programmes;”
   c. “Target communities have increased awareness of disaster risk reduction, preparedness, mitigation and response; and,”
   d. “Strengthened disaster preparedness for effective response at the cross-border level within Ferghana Valley?”

3. How relevant are these outcomes to the target beneficiaries?

4. Is the ACTED disaster risk reduction methodology appropriate for achieving the project’s objectives?

5. Is there evidence that the project had any major unintended outcomes (negative or positive)?

6. What is the potential for project outcomes to be sustained when the project ends?

7. What was the role of ACTED national and cross-border implementation processes in achievement of outcomes?

8. Were implementation processes responsive to the changing context and needs of stakeholders (to ensure project relevance)? Did project implementers routinely utilize data and evidence to inform their decisions?

Project Outcome Indicators

- 60% of 90,705 villagers demonstrate increased knowledge of disaster risk reduction, preparedness, mitigation and response, by the end of the project, compared with before the project
- 60% of school children by the end of the project demonstrate increased knowledge about DRR
• 480 community representatives report and demonstrate increased capacity to identify, assess, monitor and to take concrete measures on disaster risk reduction by the end of the project
• 40 Disaster Preparedness Committees (DPCs), comprising 480 community members, created and functioning, with 65% of DPC members report increased capacities in disasters preparedness by the end of project
• 90% of 189 local, district and national government officials report and demonstrate increased capacity on DRR and increased local and cross-border coordination at the end of the project
• 75% of representatives of 40 CBOs, 9 municipalities and 4 districts are able to name at least one instance where DRR was newly incorporated into their work
• 13 DRR Management Boards (9 at municipal level, 4 at district level) are successfully functioning

2.3: METHODOLOGY
The evaluator is responsible for designing the methodology, but it should meet the requirements elaborated here. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods must be used. The evaluation will include a survey of a sample of the school children and community members in the target villages and of the 189 local, district and national government officials involved in the project (~470-500 total sample size). The survey should be based on the baseline survey instrument and methodology as to ensure a sound comparison between baseline and endline data.

To complement the survey and support the interpretation of findings, the evaluation should also include qualitative methods on a more modest scale. This could include interviews, focus groups, or other participatory methods with project staff, community members, Disaster Risk Reduction Management Boards, and/or village disaster preparedness committees. ACTED will value methodology proposals that are participatory and learning-oriented, in line with its organizational values.

2.4: AUDIENCE
The evaluation has three primary audiences. Firstly, the European Commission/DIPECHO requires this evaluation and will use it to assess ACTED’s effectiveness and to inform future strategies in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Secondly, ACTED will use the evaluation findings to identify lessons learned and take steps to improve disaster risk reduction project quality, methodology, and implementation processes in the future. Thirdly, the Government of Tajikistan (national and local) will receive information on key evaluation findings to inform their DRR work and future engagement with ACTED.

3. IMPLEMENTATION INFORMATION
3.1: MANAGEMENT
The evaluation will be managed by the heads of the independent ACTED Appraisal, Monitoring and Evaluation Units (AMEU) in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Though the evaluator is ultimately responsible for designing the methodology, plan, instruments, and tools, all must be approved by the AMEU Managers. The evaluator should expect to collaborate closely with both AMEU Managers.

The quantitative survey will be implemented by 4-5 independent data enumerators managed by AMEU. The evaluator is expected to design the tools, make the sample,
train the enumerators, supervise data collection and entry for 2-3 days in each country and analyse the aggregate data. ACTED AMEU will manage the data enumerators and data entry staff since the data collection may extend beyond the evaluator’s time in country.

3.2: LOCATION
The data collection will take place in the target districts of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Kyrgyzstan:
- 7 villages in Kengesh and Gulistan Municipalities, Nookat District, Osh Province
- 8 villages in Taldy-Bulak Municipality, Bazar-Korgon District, Jalal-Abad Province
- 5 villages in Beshkent Municipality, Leylek District, Batken Province

Tajikistan:
- 3 villages in Shaidon Jamoat, Asht District, Sughd Province
- 5 villages in Oshoba Jamoat, Asht District, Sughd Province
- 5 villages in Pongoz Jamoat, Asht District, Sughd Province
- 3 villages in Asht Jamoat, Asht District, Sughd Province
- 4 villages in Punuk Jamoat, Asht District, Sughd Province

3.3: EXPECTED OUTPUTS
1. Evaluation plan and timeline
2. Data collection tools and instruments
3. Summary of preliminary findings
4. Final evaluation report and recommendations (maximum 35 pages):
   - Table of contents
   - List of acronyms
   - Executive summary (no more than 2 pages)
   - Overview of the context
   - Organization and program background
   - Evaluation methodology
   - Evidence-based findings and analysis
   - Recommendations
   - Appendices (Terms of Reference, sample, dissenting interpretations)
5. Presentation of key evaluation findings (by skype)

3.4: TIMELINE (TENTATIVE)
- **19-23 September 2011**: Document review conducted and initial tools and instruments prepared (remote)
- **26 September - 21 October 2011**: Assessment conducted (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan)
- **31 October – 11 November 2011**: Analysis and reporting writing (remote)
- **11 November 2011**: Final assessment report due

3.5: LOGISTICAL SUPPORT
ACTED will manage all logistical aspects related to the evaluation, including arranging requested meetings, contacting beneficiaries, and organizing transport.

4. EVALUATOR

4.1: Qualifications

- Advanced degree in evaluation science, international development, disaster management, or other related field (experienced candidates currently pursuing an advanced degree might also be considered)
- Minimum of 3 years of experience evaluating development and/or humanitarian programs implemented by international aid organizations
- Strong experience and training in relevant evaluation methods (participatory methods, qualitative methods, and surveys)
- At least some experience in substantive areas related to the project (i.e. disaster preparedness and management, community development, and/or local governance development)
- At least some experience in organizational learning and development of international NGOs
- Willingness to travel to remote and potentially unstable locations
- Fluency in English
- Flexibility and patience
- Experience in Central Asia desirable
- Russian, Kyrgyz, or Tajik language a plus

4.2: Terms and Conditions

1. Daily consultancy fee is negotiable, although it must be within ACTED’s regular range for evaluators and fit within the evaluation costs allocated under the project budget.
2. ACTED will provide trained data enumerators who have worked on previous ACTED surveys to collect the data for the survey component of this evaluation.
3. The evaluator or evaluation firm will be contracted via ACTED Headquarters in Paris, France.
4. The evaluator will be accommodated in ACTED guesthouses in all locations unless a room is not available, in which case ACTED will provide the evaluator with a room at a trusted, pre-vetted hotel or guesthouse.
5. ACTED will provide the evaluator with 3 meals/day or a local food allowance when in country. The allowance will be the same amount that ACTED staff receive as per ACTED policy.
6. ACTED will arrange and provide all international, national, and local transport.

4.3: Expression of Interest

Interested parties should send:

1. CV
2. Evaluation firm profile (if affiliated with a firm)
3. Maximum two-page EOI indicating their:
   - experience in project evaluation (relevant methods and substantive areas)
• proposed methodology or tools in conducting this evaluation
• proposed timeline
• professional fee

Please email the application to tenders@acted.org. Interviews will be conducted as applications arrive. ACTED will hire a candidate no later than 31 August.