

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Strengthening Learning Assessment and Examination Systems at Local Government Level in Nepal

1. About ActionAid International Nepal

ActionAid International Nepal (AAIN) was established in 1982 as an anti-poverty, human rights-based organization. Operating across various regions of Nepal, AAIN is part of the ActionAid International Federation and is engaged in both national and global social justice movements, civil society networks, alliances, and coalitions. Anchored in a rights-based approach, AAIN promotes **quality public education as a fundamental right**, in line with the Constitution of Nepal (2015), national education priorities, and global commitments such as **SDG 4**.

2. Background and Context

AAIN's education programming focuses on strengthening inclusive, safe, and gender-responsive learning environments, alongside improving education governance at the local level. Key strategies include enhancing teaching and learning practices, strengthening teacher capacity, and promoting meaningful participation of communities, including school governance structures and youth groups.

With the federalization of Nepal, **local governments now hold primary responsibility for school education**, including management, monitoring of learning outcomes, and administration of assessment and examination systems. However, there remain significant challenges related to technical capacity, system coherence, and effective use of assessment data.

This study seeks to generate evidence-based insights into **current learning assessment and examination practices at the local government level**, and to identify actionable strategies for strengthening these systems.

3. Purpose and Strategic Relevance

Effective learning assessment systems are critical for improving **education quality, equity, and accountability**. At the local level, reliable assessment data can support:

- Identification of learning gaps
- Evidence-based planning and budgeting
- Teacher support and system improvement
- Monitoring progress toward education goals

The study aligns with:

- National education policies and the School Education Sector Plan (SESP)
- Federal governance reforms in education
- Development partner priorities on results-based management and system strengthening

By focusing on local governments, this study contributes to strengthening **decentralized education systems** and enhancing the effectiveness of public education delivery.

4. Objectives of the Study

4.1 Overall Objective

To assess learning assessment and examination practices at the local government level and generate **practical, evidence-based recommendations** to strengthen their effectiveness and systematic use.

4.2 Specific Objectives

- Review existing assessment and examination practices in selected local governments and schools
- Examine governance, management, and accountability mechanisms related to assessments
- Assess alignment with national policies, standards, and guidelines
- Identify gaps, challenges, and promising practices
- Provide actionable recommendations for system strengthening

5. Scope and Study Areas

The study will be conducted in five local governments representing diverse contexts:

- Parsuram Municipality (Dadeldhura)
- Joraya Rural Municipality (Doti)
- Bheriganga Municipality (Surkhet)
- Adarsh Kotwal Rural Municipality (Bara)
- Shivraj Municipality (Kapilvastu)

5.1. The study will focus on:

- Local education units and selected public schools
- Assessment tools, methods, and examination processes
- Institutional roles and responsibilities
- Use of assessment data for planning and decision-making

5.2. Grade and Subject Focus:

- **Subject:** Language (Nepali) and technical (Math)
- **Grades 3 and 5:** Foundational learning, continuous assessment, inclusion
- **Grade 8:** Examination-based assessment, grading, and transition dynamics

6. Methodology and Approach

The study will be conducted by a qualified Technical Expert using a **mixed-methods approach**, including:

- Desk review of relevant policies and frameworks
- Key informant interviews (local officials, educators, stakeholders)
- Review of assessment tools and practices

A detailed methodology and workplan will be finalized during the inception phase in consultation with AAIN and key stakeholders.

Ethical Considerations:

- Do No Harm: Implement strict confidentiality and data protection measures; ensure informed consent; develop security protocols to protect participants from harm, stigma, or discrimination.
- Child Safeguarding: Follow ActionAid's child safeguarding policies if engaging with participants under 18.
- Data Protection: Comply with Nepal's data protection regulations; ensure secure storage and anonymization of sensitive data.

7. Expected Deliverables

The consultant is responsible for delivering the following outcomes;

- Inception Report (with methodology and workplan)
- Draft Study Report
- Final Study Report with recommendations
- Executive Summary tailored for policymakers and partners

8. Expected Results and Utilization

8.1. The study will:

- Strengthening evidence on local assessment practices
- Information on education planning and policy dialogue
- Support capacity development of local governments and schools
- Contribute to AAIN's education programming and advocacy

8.2. Key outcomes include:

- Improved local guidelines on assessment
- Enhanced data-informed decision-making
- Strengthened collaboration between stakeholders

9. Timeline

The study will be conducted over a **two-month period**, from: **15th June to 15th August 2026**
This duration allows for comprehensive data collection, analysis, and reporting.

10. Budget

The consultant is required to submit their financial proposal based on the TOR and provide the detail breakdown in the attached format. AAIN will cover all logistical and operational costs associated with the assignment.

11. Coordination and Oversight

The study will be implemented in close coordination with:

- Education Review Office, Sanothimi, Bhaktapur
- Education units of Local governments
- School and Relevant stakeholders

AAIN will provide overall technical guidance, quality assurance, and coordination support.

12 Risks and Mitigation

Potential risks include	Mitigation measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited stakeholder availability • Data access challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early engagement with stakeholders • Flexible data collection approaches • Continuous coordination with local authorities

13. Intellectual Property

The copyright for all the materials produced and all related documentation will be reserved by AAIN.

14. Consultancy Payment Modality

The fee will be made on an instalment basis linked to deliverables. AAIN will deduct tax as per the prevailing law of Nepal while making the payment. The payment schedule is as follows:

- **50%** upon submission and approval of Inception Report
- **50%** upon submission and approval of Final Report
- All the costs to be incurred by the consultant during official field visits will be covered as per AAIN policy and procedures, separately from the consultancy fee.

15. Consultant's Profile

Organizational Requirements (for Individual/consultancy firms):

- Legally registered organization/firm/individuals with at least 5 years of experience in conducting baseline surveys, research and evaluations - for firms
- Experience conducting research on marginalized communities and local authorities
- Demonstrated commitment to ethical research practices and safeguarding
- Must be registered with PAN/VAT
- Latest tax clearance of the registered firm/organization.
- submission of original PAN/VAT Invoice for payment is a must – Firms/individuals

Team Leader/Lead Consultant:

- Master's degree or higher in Social Sciences, Development Studies, Gender Studies, Human Rights, or related field
- Minimum 7 years of experience in designing and conducting baseline surveys, evaluations, and social research
- At least 3 completed baseline/endline surveys for development projects

- Proven experience in education, inclusion rights, gender equality, or social inclusion research
- Strong knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies
- Excellent analytical and report writing skills in English
- Familiarity with Nepal's political landscape and legal framework including local authorities
- Fluency in English and Nepali (knowledge of local languages is an advantage)

The consultant must propose a qualified team including research specialists with learning assessment system expertise, data analysts, and enumerators with experience working with government counterpart e.g. Local and federal Government, Education Review Office (ERO) and including public schools.

16. Required Documents

The consultant needs to submit the following documents:

- A technical proposal (maximum 15 pages) including understanding of assignment, detailed methodology, data collection tools (samples), sampling strategy, work plan with timeline, team composition, quality assurance measures, and ethical protocols
- A financial proposal outlining relevant costing details (including VAT, if applicable), with breakdown of professional fees, field work costs, data collection costs, validation workshop costs, and other expenses
- Organization profile and registration certificate
- CV of proposed Team Leader (maximum 3 pages) highlighting relevant work experiences
- CVs of key team members (maximum 2 pages each)
- At least 3 references of similar assignments completed in the last 5 years (with contact details)
- Sample work related to the current consultancy assignment
- PAN/VAT registration certificate.

17. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

All proposals received shall be reviewed following different indicators. These will be but not limited to sound understanding of the assignment, competent methodology, consistency, coherence and compliance, the experience of the proposed consultants, inclusiveness of the team, and efficient budget planning.

Key Areas for Proposal Evaluation	Weightage
Technical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of assignment and proposed approach (10 points) • Methodology and data collection tools (10 points) • Team composition and qualifications (10 points) • Work plan and timeline (5 points) • Ethical protocols and safeguarding measures (5 points) 	40%
Financial Proposal	60%

A clear financial proposal linked to the assignment, highlighting key costs and any reimbursable expenses (if any).	
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Minimum technical score of 45 points (75%) required to qualify for financial evaluation.	
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Selection Method: The contract will be awarded to the consultant/firm with the highest combined technical and financial score (40:60 ratio).

18. Proposal Submission Guideline

Interested consultancy firms/individuals who meet the above requirement should send their technical and financial proposals (which also includes detailed methodology, a work plan, a budget, team CVs, and supporting documents) to P&C Department through jobs.nepal@actionaid.org by **31st May 2026**. The selection will be based on a combination of technical expertise, relevant experience, and the proposed budget.

Subject Line: "Proposal for SLAES (Strengthening Learning Assessment and Examination Systems at Local Government Level in Nepal)"

19. Amendment of Terms

AAIN reserves the right to amend these terms of reference at any time, and any such amendments will be communicated in writing to the selected consultant. AAIN also reserves the right to cancel the recruitment process at any stage. Only shortlisted candidates for further process.