

## Terms of reference

### Midterm External Evaluation

720BHA23GR00014 - Holistic and multisectoral emergency response, using Settlements Approach, for the population living in and around informal settlements in North, West and Eastern Afghanistan

DONOR	Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)
PROJECT DURATION	01/12/2022 – 01/11/2024
LOCATIONS	Afghanistan (Herat, Balkh, Kunduz, Nangarhar)
PARTNERS (IF ANY)	Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), REACH Initiative
MAIN PROJECT OBJECTIVE	The project's objective is to enhance the impact of humanitarian responses in Afghanistan by ensuring they are informed, coordinated, prioritized, and community-led, using a Settlements Approach to provide timely, flexible responses to shocks, thereby offering targeted communities more effective humanitarian services and greater opportunities for multi-sectoral recovery.
OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION	Overall objective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To provide an external opinion on the relevance and performance of the project, as compared to the project document and with a strong focus on results.</li> <li>- To highlight key lessons learnt, best practices and recommendations to feed back into current and future Acted programming in the same sectoral areas and using similar approaches to meeting their objectives.</li> </ul>
OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY FOR THE EVALUATION	The external expert will assess the project according to the following DAC criteria: relevance, efficiency, coherence, effectiveness, impact. Cross-cutting issues such as gender, accountability and do no harm will also be part of the analysis. The methodology for data collection is to be determined by the evaluator with Acted approval. The evaluator is however expected to conduct field missions to obtain the necessary qualitative and quantitative data that provides evidence of the impact of the response with members of communities targeted by the project. The evaluation should be conducted mainly through secondary data review, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and household-level interviews with a broad range of project stakeholders, including beneficiaries, as well as direct observations.
EVALUATION DATES	1st of May 2024 – 15th of July 2024

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the European Union's ROM Handbook and guidance for final evaluations.

# ACTED

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## ACTED WORLDWIDE

Acted is a non-governmental organization with headquarters in Paris, founded in 1993. Independent, private and not-for-profit, Acted respects a strict political and religious impartiality and operates according to principles of non-discrimination and transparency.

Acted endeavors to respond to humanitarian crises and build resilience; promote inclusive and sustainable growth; co-construct effective governance and support the building of civil society worldwide by investing in people and their potential.

Acted's mission is to save lives and support people in meeting their needs in hard to reach areas.

Acted develops and implements programs that target the most vulnerable amongst populations that have suffered from conflict, natural disaster, or socio-economic hardship.

Acted's approach looks beyond the immediate emergency towards opportunities for longer term livelihoods reconstruction and sustainable development.

As of 2022, Acted was present in four continents and our teams intervene in 42 countries towards 17.8 million people, responding to emergency situations, supporting rehabilitation projects and accompanying the dynamics of development.

## ACTED IN AFGHANISTAN

Founded in Afghanistan in 1993, Acted is committed to immediate humanitarian relief to support those in urgent need and protect people's dignity, while co-creating longer term opportunities for sustainable growth and fulfilling people's potential. Through its long-standing presence in Afghanistan (currently 18 provinces), Acted has built a long-term legacy of community access and acceptance and has extensive experience in the country, especially in the North, West and East. In 2023, Acted implemented over 30 projects, funded by multiple donors (UNICEF, ECHO, FAO, AHF, BHA, and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

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### BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE OF THE PROJECT

Supported by USAID and in alignment with the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance's (BHA) efforts in Afghanistan, a consortium comprising Acted, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and REACH Initiatives is set to implement a project titled "Holistic and Multisectoral Emergency Response." This initiative adopts Area-Based Approaches to aid populations residing in and adjacent to informal settlements across the Northern, Western, and Eastern regions of Afghanistan. The project spans from December 1st, 2022, to November 1st, 2024, focusing on providing multifaceted emergency responses.

The primary objective of this project is to address the specific humanitarian needs arising from community displacements and the various shocks experienced within Afghanistan. The undertaking is informed by insights and effective practices gleaned from a previous BHA-funded project (award number 720BHA21GR00307) conducted from June 2021 to January 2023. The experiences from this past initiative offer foundational knowledge that shapes the current project's approaches and strategies.

The consortium aims to extend its support to particularly vulnerable segments within Afghan society, notably those residing in informal settlements (ISETs) across the provinces of Balkh, Herat, Nangarhar, and Kunduz. The initiative seeks to reach a total of 960,386 individuals, encompassing 313,709 internally displaced persons (IDPs). The intervention spans several sectors, including Humanitarian Coordination, Agriculture, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Shelter, and Settlements, aiming to address a wide array of needs.

## ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT

Outlined below are the key activities and purposes planned within the scope of the project:

Purpose name	Year 1	Year 2	Location	Activity included in evaluation
<b>Purpose 1: Equip humanitarian and community-based actors with multi sectoral data and information tools to contribute to increased evidence-based response planning / targeting and inform settlements-based inclusive and integrated service provision</b>				
Sub-Purpose 1.1: Provide annual evidence base multi-sectoral data and monitor shifts in development to strengthen humanitarian response planning, prioritization and early identification for timely and targeted response	Yes	Yes	Afghanistan (All 34 provinces)	No
Sub-purpose 1.2: Provide settlements-based information on needs and services to inform community-led coordination mechanisms and pathways	Yes	Yes	Afghanistan (All 34 provinces)	No
<b>Purpose 2: Establish community-led protection and information pathways, coordination systems, service delivery platforms and referral mechanisms in areas of informal settlements to promote inclusive and integrated service provision; while providing tailored emergency protection assistance</b>				
Sub-Purpose 2.1: Provide community-led protection and information pathways and coordination mechanisms, and improved referral mechanisms	Yes	Yes	Balkh, Herat, Kunduz, Nangarhar	Yes
Sub-Purpose 2.2: Provide immediate protection assistance and protection trainings to 4,040 HHs, information, counselling and legal assistance to 7,351 beneficiaries	Yes	Yes	Balkh, Herat, Kunduz, Nangarhar	Yes
<b>Purpose 3: Deliver effective, integrated and multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance and access to basics services for 318,887 displacement-affected individuals (25,591 HHs), including women-headed HHs, living in or nearby ISETs in Herat, Mazar, Kunduz and Jalalabad.</b>				
Sub-Purpose 3.1: Improve food security for 2,400 women-headed HHs, through HH-level agricultural assistance	Yes	Yes	Balkh, Herat, Kunduz, Nangarhar	Yes

Sub-Purpose 3.2: Provide access to safe drinking water for 25,600 vulnerable individuals, improved sanitation facilities for 600 HHs, and improved hygiene practices for 1,000 beneficiaries.	Yes	Yes	Balkh, Herat, Kunduz, Nangarhar	Yes
Sub-Purpose 3.3: Improve settlement-level living conditions for 8120 individuals, access to adequate and safe shelters for 600 HHs and provide winterization assistance for 400 HHs.	No	Yes	Balkh, Herat, Kunduz, Nangarhar	Yes
<b>Purpose 4: Provide for an emergency, flexible and mobile response to immediate humanitarian needs of individuals affected by sudden shocks, natural hazards, throughout Northern Afghanistan</b>				
Sub-Purpose 4.1: Provide emergency shelter assistance to 400 HHs whose shelter have been partially damaged or destroyed following a sudden shock	Yes	Yes	Balkh, Herat, Kunduz, Nangarhar	Yes
Sub-purpose 4.2: Provide multi-Purpose Cash Assistance to 2,000 crisis-affected HHs following a shock	Yes	Yes	Balkh, Herat, Kunduz, Nangarhar	Yes

This project represents a focused effort to mitigate the impact of displacement and shocks on vulnerable populations in Afghanistan, leveraging past experiences and current assessments to implement effective and sustainable solutions across targeted regions.

## KEY PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

- BHA: the project's funding agency, updated with periodic reports on the status of project implementation.
- Acted: manages the implementation of all activities, responsible for reporting to the donor. Acted is also in charge of ensuring accountability to the target population, by setting up channels that the beneficiaries can use to send feedback to the organization, including the Acted Feedback Mechanism (AFM).
- NRC: involved in Purpose 2 activities (Protection)
- REACH Initiative: involved in Purpose 1 activities (Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments)
- Community leaders and representatives, local authorities and NGOs operating in the area: consulted in the implementation of the project.
- Protection beneficiaries (Purpose 2): selected by Acted and NRC through the Community Centres (CCs). Some of these beneficiaries may also benefit from activities under other purposes of the project
- Beneficiaries from Agriculture, WASH, and Shelter activities (Purpose 3): these include beneficiaries from the following activities: kitchen gardening (kit and training), shelter repair (kit and training), latrine construction (kit and training), winterization assistance, hygiene kits, hygiene promotion, water network extension.

- Shock-affected populations who received assistance under Purpose 4: these include beneficiaries who received shelter or cash assistance following negative shocks (adverse weather conditions, floods, forced return to country of origin, earthquakes, ...)
- Relevant Cluster and Working Group (WG) representatives: closely engaged by Acted throughout the life of the project to facilitate the effective coordination in Afghanistan.
- Other national or international NGOs: active in the same areas of operations as Acted, a close cooperation was maintained with them throughout the project to avoid duplication of assistance and ensure gaps' coverage.
- UN agencies / Access Working Group / NGO Forum: instances in which Acted takes part and/or coordinates with as part of its operations.

## SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

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The main objective of this evaluation is to provide Acted and the donor with an assessment of the project, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project. The evaluation should provide information that is evidence-based, credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the future decision-making processes of Acted and the donor.

The evaluation will specifically:

1. Assess the extent to which the project met planned outcomes;
2. Assess the extent to which Acted met key CHS commitments during implementation of the project;
3. Highlight lessons learnt, best practices and recommendations for improvements to feed back into current and future Acted programming in the same sectoral areas and using similar approaches to meeting their objectives.

## RESEARCH CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

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The evaluation shall use the following DAC criteria and corresponding questions. The evaluator will be able to review and revise the questions (not the criteria) in consultation with Acted country office MEAL team, as part of the inception phase of the evaluation, and as relevant.

### 1/ RELEVANCE<sup>2</sup>

The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.

Note: "Respond to" means that the objectives and design of the intervention are sensitive to the economic, environmental, equity, social, political economy, and capacity conditions in which it takes place. "Partner/institution" includes government (national, regional, local), civil society organizations,

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<sup>2</sup> All criteria definitions are extracted from the document titled "Better Criteria for Better Evaluation", released by the DAC Network on Development Evaluation in December 2019.

private entities and international bodies involved in funding, implementing and/or overseeing the intervention. Relevance assessment involves looking at differences and trade-offs between different priorities or needs. It requires analyzing any changes in the context to assess the extent to which the intervention can be (or has been) adapted to remain relevant.

The following questions should be answered:

- Was the action adequately designed to respond to the needs of the direct beneficiaries?
- Were the project methodologies and activities relevant to achieve the project objectives?
- To what extent did the project take into account the needs of different groups (girls, boys, women, men, people with disabilities, etc.)? How were gender, age and diversity considered?

The following sector-specific questions should also be answered (note that the list is non-exhaustive, and should be taken as reference when developing the Inception Report):

- **Community Centres** (Purpose 2): How well do community center activities align with the identified needs of the target communities? Do these centers fill a critical service and engagement gap?
- **Emergency Cash Assistance** (Sub purpose 2.2): How effective have the beneficiary selection criteria for cash assistance been in targeting the most vulnerable and meeting their immediate financial needs?
- **Kitchen Gardening Kits Distribution** (Sub purpose 3.1): How effective have the kitchen gardening kits been in meeting the nutritional and economic needs of women-headed households?
- **Sanitation Facilities Improvement** (Sub purpose 3.2): How well do the construction and rehabilitation of latrines meet the urgent sanitation needs of targeted communities?
- **Shelter Repair and Upgrade** (Sub purpose 3.3): How adequately do shelter interventions address the housing needs of the most vulnerable in terms of protection and comfort?
- **Winterization Kits Distribution** (Sub purpose 3.3): How well do winterization kits meet the climatic challenges of the target communities?
- **Shelter and Cash Assistance to Shock-affected Households** (Purpose 4): How adequately have emergency shelter and cash assistance met the immediate needs of households affected by shocks?

## 2/ COHERENCE

The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.

Note: The extent to which other interventions (particularly policies) support or undermine the intervention, and vice versa. Internal coherence addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by Acted, as well as the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which Acted adheres. External coherence considers the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context. This includes complementarity, harmonization and co-ordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.

The following questions should be answered:

- Where there complementarities, harmonisation and coordination between this project and other similar projects carried out by other actors in the same area (including to avoid duplication of efforts)?

The following are sector-specific questions that should also be answered (note that the list is non-exhaustive, and should be taken as reference when developing the full questionnaires):

- **Community Centres** (Purpose 2): How are the centers integrated with other project activities and local services, particularly in terms of gender equity and inclusivity?
- **Emergency Cash Assistance** (Sub purpose 2.2): How is cash assistance coordinated with other interventions and local economic conditions to prevent market distortions?
- **Kitchen Gardening Kits Distribution** (Sub purpose 3.1): How well does this activity integrate with broader agricultural support and gender empowerment initiatives within the project, the local communities, and Acted's general strategy in Afghanistan?
- **Sanitation Facilities Improvement** (Sub purpose 3.2): How do these efforts complement other WASH activities and align with local public health strategies?
- **Shelter Repair and Upgrade** (Sub purpose 3.3): How are shelter improvements integrated with other project components and broader humanitarian housing initiatives?
- **Winterization Kits Distribution** (Sub purpose 3.3): How is this activity coordinated with other seasonal preparedness efforts within the project and by other actors?
- **Shelter and Cash Assistance to Shock-affected Households** (Purpose 4): How does this assistance fit within the overall emergency response and coordinate with other humanitarian interventions?

### 3/ EFFICIENCY

The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.

Note: "Economic" is the conversion of inputs (funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc.) into outputs, outcomes and impacts, in the most cost-effective way possible, as compared to feasible alternatives in the context. "Timely" delivery is within the intended timeframe, or a timeframe reasonably adjusted to the demands of the evolving context. This may include assessing operational efficiency (how well the intervention was managed).

The following questions should be answered:

- Was the project managed in a cost-efficient manner (in terms of human, financial and other resources versus the results)?
- Was the action adequately monitored by Acted?
- Were beneficiaries sufficiently involved in the project implementation? Was there any feedback from beneficiaries to project implementers? How did it feed back into project implementation?
- How has the relationship been between Acted and local government authorities?
- Regarding delays, how important were they, what were the reasons for these delays, what were the consequences, and have appropriate corrective measures been implemented?

The following are sector-specific questions that should also be answered (note that the list is non-exhaustive, and should be taken as reference when developing the full questionnaires):

- **Community Centres** (Purpose 2): What is the efficiency of the process in maintaining and establishing new centers in terms of resource allocation and time management?
- **Emergency Cash Assistance** (Sub purpose 2.2): How timely and cost-effective is the cash disbursement mechanism?
- **Kitchen Gardening Kits Distribution** (Sub purpose 3.1): How efficient is the distribution process of the kits, including the provision of adequate training and resources?
- **Sanitation Facilities Improvement** (Sub purpose 3.2): How cost-effective and timely is the distribution and construction process for sanitation facilities?



- **Shelter Repair and Upgrade** (Sub purpose 3.3): How optimally are resources used in the selection and execution of shelter repairs and upgrades?
- **Winterization Kits Distribution** (Sub purpose 3.3): How timely and efficiently are vulnerable households identified and provided with kits?
- **Shelter and Cash Assistance to Shock-affected Households** (Purpose 4): How efficient is the process in identifying and aiding eligible households post-shock?

The evaluator shall analyze the efficiency of project management arrangements and duly justify any issue. Factual statements on the quality and quantity of inputs shall be provided, delays should be measured by means of comparison with the latest update of the planning. Any significant deviations shall be analyzed. Conclusions on cost efficiency of outputs shall be drawn.

#### 4/ EFFECTIVENESS

The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.

Note: Analysis of effectiveness involves taking account of the relative importance of the objectives or results.

The following questions should be answered:

- Were the expected results progressing as anticipated? Is the quality of outputs satisfactory according to the planned situation?
- To what extent were the risk mitigation described in the project proposal, in addition to unforeseen risks, addressed during project implementation?

The following are sector-specific questions that should also be answered (note that the list is non-exhaustive, and should be taken as reference when developing the full questionnaires):

- **Community Centres** (Purpose 2): Have the centers achieved their objectives in increasing community engagement and service access?
- **Emergency Cash Assistance** (Sub purpose 2.2): What impact do cash grants have on improving the living conditions and reducing vulnerabilities of beneficiary households?
- **Kitchen Gardening Kits Distribution** (Sub purpose 3.1): Are the kits effective in improving food security and generating income for recipients?
- **Sanitation Facilities Improvement** (Sub purpose 3.2): What is the current satisfaction level among new latrine users, and are there any early changes in health indicators?
- **Shelter Repair and Upgrade** (Sub purpose 3.3): What improvements in living conditions and safety have been achieved for beneficiaries?
- **Winterization Kits Distribution** (Sub purpose 3.3): Are the kits adequate in protecting beneficiaries from harsh winter conditions?
- **Shelter and Cash Assistance to Shock-affected Households** (Purpose 4): What impact do shelter and cash assistance have on providing safe housing and covering immediate recovery needs, respectively?

The evaluator's focus should be on outputs' and outcomes' delivery and quality (not activities); he/she is expected to explain any causes of deviations and the implications thereof. The level of achievement of results should be assessed as reflected by indicators covering the specific objective (outcome), providing a transparent chain of arguments.

## 5/ IMPACT

The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

Note: Impact addresses the ultimate significance and potentially transformative effects of the intervention. It seeks to identify social, environmental and economic effects of the intervention that are longer term or broader in scope than those already captured under the effectiveness criterion. Beyond the immediate results, this criterion seeks to capture the indirect, secondary and potential consequences of the intervention. It does so by examining the holistic and enduring changes in systems or norms, and potential effects on people's well-being, human rights, gender equality, and the environment.

Also note that, being this a midterm evaluation, the evaluator is expected to only measure early and expected impacts, as little time has elapsed since the beginning of some activities' implementation.

The following questions should be answered:

- What evidence is there that the project contributed to the achievement of its overall objective?
- What, if any, were the unintended impacts of the project intervention, both positive and negative?

The following are sector-specific questions that should also be answered (note that the list is non-exhaustive, and should be taken as reference when developing the full questionnaires):

- **Community Centres** (Purpose 2): What are the broader effects of these centers on community cohesion, resilience, and individual empowerment?
- **Emergency Cash Assistance** (Sub purpose 2.2): What are the medium-term effects of cash grants on the economic stability and well-being of beneficiaries?
- **Kitchen Gardening Kits Distribution** (Sub purpose 3.1): What are the broader impacts on women's status, household nutrition, and local food systems, considering the recent start of this activity?
- **Sanitation Facilities Improvement** (Sub purpose 3.2): Considering the early stage of this activity, what broader health impacts are expected in the community?
- **Shelter Repair and Upgrade** (Sub purpose 3.3): Given the early stages of this activity, what broader implications for community stability and beneficiary resilience are anticipated?
- **Winterization Kits Distribution** (Sub purpose 3.3): What are the extended effects of the kits on the living conditions of beneficiaries beyond the colder season?
- **Shelter and Cash Assistance to Shock-affected Households** (Purpose 4): What are the medium-term effects on the resilience and recovery of affected households, including any unintended social or economic consequences?

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

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### 1. ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The evaluation will be based on the findings and factual statements identified from review of relevant documents including the project document, interim report to the donor, monthly Program Manager report, in addition to the technical reports produced by the project and the different promotional materials. A list of the above reports will be shared with the evaluator before the beginning of the mission. The mission will also undertake field visits and interview the stakeholders including the target

beneficiaries, government officials, etc. Participation of stakeholders in the evaluation should be maintained at all the times, reflecting opinions, expectations, and vision about the contribution of the project towards the achievement of its objectives. With this in mind, the evaluation's data collection will be conducted primarily in Dari and Pashto. The evaluation will rely on mixed methods data collection and analysis:

### Qualitative data collection

Most evaluation questions will be answered in the form of key-informant interviews and panel discussions with key stakeholders (e.g., community leaders, local government actors, humanitarian partners, Acted staff). Sample data collection with key stakeholders will be purposive based on their knowledge of the project and availability. Approximately, 50 to 60 stakeholders will be targeted. Focus group discussions should also be organized where relevant either with randomly selected beneficiaries (locations will be randomly sampled, and beneficiaries randomly sampled from beneficiary lists in these locations) or by purposefully gathering groups from whom feedback is required. Estimated 50 focus group discussions, with six to eight beneficiaries in each one and gender disaggregated are expected. Naturally, proportionally more focus groups should be dedicated to those activities that have reached a higher number of beneficiaries at the time of the evaluation. These estimates should be refined as part of the evaluation inception period upon coordination with Acted. The evaluation team leader and members will be responsible for collecting and analyzing the qualitative data, in addition to reporting on it.

### Quantitative data collection

Most of the MEAL data collection during project implementation is quantitative in nature and will cover all beneficiary groups, including at the household and community levels. Depending on the results of the MEAL data collection and according to the evolution of the project, additional quantitative data collection could be included at the final evaluation stage to investigate particular points of interest on specific sub-groups of beneficiaries. Avoiding duplication to alleviate the surveying burden on beneficiary populations will nonetheless be critical. The sampling strategy will be a simple random approach.

The existing quantitative & qualitative data collected by Acted and its partners that will be made available to the evaluator will include but not be limited to:

Result name	MEAL surveys and reports
<b>Purpose 2:</b> Establish community-led protection and information pathways, coordination systems, service delivery platforms and referral mechanisms in areas of informal settlements to promote inclusive and integrated service provision, while providing tailored emergency protection assistance	
Sub purpose 2.1: Provide community-led protection and information pathways and coordination mechanisms, and improved referral mechanisms.	Baseline report
Sub purpose 2.2: Provide immediate protection assistance and protection trainings to 4,180 HHs, information, counselling, and legal assistance to 7,591 beneficiaries.	Baseline report
<b>Purpose 3:</b> Deliver effective, integrated, and multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance and access to basics services for 66,200 displacement-affected individuals (9,457 HHs), including women-headed HHs, living in or nearby ISETs in Herat, Mazar, Kunduz and Jalalabad and provide shelter assistance to 2,800 shock-affected individuals.	

Sub-purpose 3.1: Improve food security for 2,400 women-headed HHs, through HH-level agricultural assistance.	Baseline report, Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDMs), On-Site Monitoring (OSMs)
Sub-purpose 3.2: Provide access to safe drinking water for 25,600 vulnerable individuals, improved sanitation facilities for 600 HHs, and improved hygiene practices for 8,000 beneficiaries.	Baseline report, OSMs
Sub-purpose 3.3. Improve settlement-level living conditions for 16,800 individuals, access to adequate and safe shelters for 600 HHs and provide winterization assistance for 400 HHs.	Baseline report, OSMs
<b>Purpose 4:</b> Provide for an emergency, flexible and mobile response to immediate humanitarian needs of individuals affected by sudden shocks, natural hazards, throughout Northern Afghanistan	
Sub-Purpose 4.1: Provide emergency shelter assistance to 400 HHs whose shelter have been partially damaged or destroyed following a sudden shock	RNAs
Sub-purpose 4.2: Provide multi-Purpose Cash Assistance to 2,000 crisis affected HHs following a shock	OSMs, PDMs, Rapid Needs Assessments (RNAs)

## 2. LIMITATIONS

- **Project Delays:** Delays in the implementation of certain project activities might limit the availability of complete data for evaluation. These delays can affect the evaluator's ability to assess the full impact and effectiveness of interventions, as some initiatives may not have progressed sufficiently to yield measurable outcomes.
- **Data Collection Restrictions:** The current regulatory environment in Afghanistan imposes significant restrictions on data collection efforts, particularly concerning the engagement with women beneficiaries. These restrictions can hinder the evaluator's ability to gather comprehensive and gender-disaggregated data, crucial for assessing the project's impact on different demographic groups.

## SCHEDULE

This assignment is expected to begin by 1st of May until 15th of July. Bidders should provide an evaluation workplan detailing the number of working days required per evaluation activity (see below table).

Evaluation activities	Suggested Schedule
Review of program activities, implementation policies and reporting mechanisms, based on available documentation	To be filled by bidders
Development of an Inception Report, outlining the methodology for data collection and analysis	To be filled by bidders
Data collection	To be filled by bidders
Analysis of program performance based on the above-listed DAC criteria and the corresponding research questions listed above	To be filled by bidders
Drafting of the midterm evaluation report and factsheet	To be filled by

	bidders
Finalization of the midterm evaluation report and factsheet, taking into account Acted comments on its quality and accuracy.	10 days

The evaluator will be expected to meet weekly with Acted management staff to provide updates on the evaluation timeframe. This can be done either by phone or in person.

## DELIVERABLES

The following deliverables should be provided to Acted's MEAL Manager in Afghanistan, who will then circulate them to the relevant Acted departments and partners for feedback.

All deliverables should be in electronic version, Word/Windows compatible format and in English.

Deliverables	Deadline
Inception Report	No later than 15 <sup>th</sup> of May 2024
Drafts of Midterm Evaluation Report and Factsheet	No later than 30 <sup>th</sup> of June 2024
Final versions of the Midterm Evaluation Report and Factsheet	No later than 15 <sup>th</sup> of July 2024

For all deliverables, the external expert is expected to underline factual statements using evidence, and to comment on any deviation.

### INCEPTION REPORT

The inception report shall include the following elements:

- Detailed description of the methodology for the evaluation
  - o Data collection methods
  - o Data collection tools
  - o Sampling
  - o Approach to quality control
- Data analysis methods
- Justification for revising the Evaluation Questions (if relevant)
- Detailed workplan
- Analysis of anticipated limitations and mitigation measures

### FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

The evaluator shall use Acted's Final Evaluation Report template (to be provided at the beginning of the evaluation), including the following elements:

<b>Executive summary</b>  (2 pages max)	Should be tightly drafted, and usable as a free-standing document. It should be short, not more than 2 pages. It should focus on the main
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	<p>analytical points, indicate the main conclusions, lessons learned and specific recommendations. Specific guidance on how to develop the Executive Summary will be provided at the beginning of the evaluation.</p> <p>Note that this section of the template also contains an overview scoring table that should be filled by the evaluator in a consistent and sound manner.</p>
<b>Project synopsis</b>  <i>(this section should not exceed 1 page in length)</i>	<p>The project synopsis serves as an introduction and provides background information. It therefore includes a short text on the objectives of the project and issues to be addressed by it, a description of the target groups and a summary of its intervention logic, including the indicators at the three levels of the intervention logic: overall objective/impact, specific objective/outcome, outputs. The synopsis does not include appreciations and observations on issues related to the project implementation.</p>
<b>Methodology</b>  <i>(this section should not exceed 1 page in length)</i>	<p>The methodology section should detail the tools used in the evaluation; locations, sample sizes, sampling methodology, tools used, dates, team composition, limitations faced and other pertinent facts.</p>
<b>Findings</b>  <i>(max. 2 pages per DAC criteria)</i>	<p>The findings section should present the results of the evaluation in an objective and non-judgmental way that gives an honest portrayal of the project.</p> <p>Included in the findings should be a discussion of how well the project achieved each of the above-listed DAC criteria.</p> <p>The evaluator shall highlight the most important findings relating to the performance of the project and elaborate on them in detail while also pointing out any critical issues and/or serious deficiencies. Findings shall be accurate, concise and direct. They must be based on and coherent with their answers to the evaluation questions.</p> <p>The evaluator is expected to provide a self-sustaining explanation of their assessment which must be understandable by any person unfamiliar with the project while at the same time providing useful elements of information to the stakeholders. The evaluator should avoid the following weaknesses: not evidence based, lack of technical content (e.g. experts provide an analysis which does not take into account the state of the art of knowledge in a given sector or topic).</p> <p>Full source details (including file name, page numbers...) are always to be included.</p>
<b>Conclusions, Lessons Learned, Best Practices, and Recommendations</b>  <i>(max.3 pages)</i>	<p>These should be presented as a separate final chapter. Wherever possible and relevant, for each key conclusion there should be a corresponding recommendation. The evaluator shall set out the main conclusions and recommendations based on the answers given to the evaluation questions and which are summarized in the findings section.</p> <p>Recommendations should be as realistic, operational and pragmatic as possible and drafted in a way that the stakeholders to whom they relate are clearly identified. Recommendations are derived from the conclusions and address issues of major importance to the performance</p>

	<p>of the project. They must take in consideration applicable rules and other constraints, related for example to the context in which the project is implemented. They must not be phrased in general terms but constitute clear proposals for solutions and they target the most important issues rather than minor or less relevant aspects of a project.</p> <p>Through conclusions, lessons learned, best practices and recommendation, the evaluation will generate knowledge and support accountability to beneficiaries, the donor, Acted and the overall humanitarian community. It will provide information on the processes or activities that Acted implemented to develop insights, knowledge, and lessons from past experiences so as to improve current and future performance.</p>
<b>Annexes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms of Reference of the evaluation</li> <li>• Assessment tools used (questionnaires, checklists, scoring grids, etc.)</li> <li>• List of persons (job titles only, no names)/organizations consulted</li> <li>• List of literature and documentation consulted</li> <li>• Other technical annexes (e.g. statistical analyses and other pertinent elements, graphs, etc.)</li> </ul>

For consortium and/or multi-country projects, a single project-wide report should still be produced, with agency-specific and/or country-specific findings clearly identified.

## FEEDBACK ON DELIVERABLES

Please note that both inception and final reports are subject to Acted's approval before they are considered as final deliverables and corresponding milestones payment can be released.

Upon submission of the draft inception report / draft midterm evaluation report by the evaluator, Acted will formulate comments as well as indicate any factual errors.

Comments will be formulated on the basis of the Inception Report and Midterm Evaluation Report Quality Control Checklists that will be provided to the evaluator at the beginning of the evaluation.

For the draft midterm evaluation report, evaluators are informed that Acted will provide an opinion on the quality of the evaluation report and each of its components (synopsis, methodology, findings, conclusions and recommendations, and annexes), which should be taken into account by the evaluator. For each recommendation, Acted will also state to what extent (Yes, Partially, No) it agrees with the recommendation and accurately reports the opinion of the consulted stakeholders.

All comments should be considered by the evaluator before the two reports are considered completed. The evaluator shall take note of these comments and decide whether or not to revise the reports and, where appropriate, succinctly explain why comments cannot be taken into account. The revised version should clearly highlight all changes made.

## EXPERTISE REQUIREMENTS

The evaluator should have the following background:

- Experience in project Monitoring and Evaluation, in particular Emergency response and Multi-sectorial humanitarian projects.
- Strong knowledge and/or demonstrated experience in designing and conducting similar monitoring and evaluation activities in insecure contexts is required.
- Excellent knowledge of the Afghan context, especially in terms of security and culture, is required.
- Strong analytical skills and ability to clearly synthesize and present findings.
- Excellent written and oral English essential
- Excellent written and oral Dari and Pashto

The evaluator shall identify a focal point for communication and reporting purposes, with appropriate skills and experience. At the briefing session, the focal point should submit a full contact list of all those involved in the evaluation.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

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The evaluator is requested to include the following in the application:

- CV(s) of the personnel deployed (including field team, if relevant)
- Organogram of the team structure (if relevant)
- Sample from previous work (max. 10-20 pages) from at least 2 separate projects
- Technical Proposal including a detailed methodology and work plan
- Detailed Financial Proposal (cost effective and showing unit costs)

Please note that the evaluator will have to comply with all government rules and will be responsible for personal government income taxes.

By undertaking this assessment, evaluators are expected to abide to humanitarian principles and to ensure the confidentiality of the data collected. It is also demanded that evaluators follow at all times Acted's Security Plan and Code of Conduct.

All data collected as part of this evaluation will remain Acted's property. By the end of the midterm evaluation, the external evaluator shall submit all Acted-/project-related documentation back to Acted management. The Final External Evaluation Report produced under the present contract shall not be shared externally without Acted's prior written approval.

It is the responsibility of the evaluator to budget for a translator (if required), as well as a medical / health / repatriation insurance.

Acted will not take the responsibility of the transportation, access, accommodation and food-related expenses. It is the sole responsibility of the evaluator to take the appropriate measure to insure access and lodging of the team on the field.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, Acted cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility and selection of bidders. Acted has no obligation to provide clarifications on the call for tender; should Acted decide to provide additional information, it will be published to be available to all potential bidders.



## APPLICATIONS' SCORING

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Applications will be scored on the following criteria:

I. Technical Proposal		70pts
a.	Technical skills of personnel deployed (CVs, organizational structure of the team, experience in conducting similar final evaluations - similarity to the evaluation criteria, project and covered area will be scored equally)	35pts
b.	Context specificity /relevance of Methodology and work plan	20pts
c.	Sample from previous work	15pts
II. Financial Proposal		30pts
TOTAL		100pts

Any offer submitted after the deadline will be automatically rejected. Any missing document will lead to the direct disqualification of the applicant.

Offers that do not comply with the overall length and deadline of the assignment (as provided above), do not include field visits and/or do not plan to assess each of the above-listed DAC criteria will be disqualified.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the instructions listed in the Terms of Reference may lead to the rejection of the bid.

Clarifications will only be requested by Acted to bidders when information provided is not sufficient to conduct an objective assessment of the submitted offer.