Terms of Reference
for
Baseline study of Inclusive Empowerment: Advancing Rights and Dignity for Persons with Disabilities 2026-2029

1. Background

Forward Looking, an NGO working for the person with disabilities (PWDs) to improve their quality of life through education support and economic empowerment. It is implementing the **Inclusive Empowerment: Advancing Rights and Dignity for Persons with Disabilities** with grant support from Felm, Nepal from 1st April 2026 to 2029.

The project aims to contribute to improve lives of communities and individuals in Karnali Province through social and economic inclusion, through empowering communities to drive change towards just, equitable and sustainable societies. Through the interventions of this project activities, ultimately the persons with disabilities will have improved their dignified life, self-reliance and increase equal access to development benefits and services. Children with disabilities (CWDs) have increased their reach to quality education in an accessible educational institution. Persons with disabilities will have improved their socio-economic status in conducive environment to enjoy their rights. Institutional and organizational capacity will be strengthened for policy, advocacy and disability inclusive development. The project is implemented in two districts of Karnali province- 1. Rukum West and 2. Jajarkot districts. The project covers 5 municipalities in both of these districts.

The project has the following outcome and outputs;

Outcome 1. Access to Inclusive Quality Education for Children/youth with disabilities has been improved
Output 1.1: Targeted schools have improved inclusive and disability friendly learning environments through upgraded infrastructure, inclusive classroom practices, and trained teachers.
Output 1.2: Duty bearers, parents and community stakeholders have increased capacity and awareness to promote inclusive education and children's rights

2. Purpose of the assignment

The baseline study of the project will serve as the foundation for measuring progress and impact throughout the project period. It will establish the initial benchmarks for indicators such as access to inclusive education, teacher training, infrastructure readiness and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. By capturing the current situation at the start of the project, the baseline ensures that improvements like the targeted 30% increase in access to education for children with disabilities can be tracked against a clear reference point. As noted in the project matrix, “Baseline line survey conducted to set existing benchmark” is a critical step before implementation begins.

Equally important, the baseline study will help identify barriers and gaps in inclusive education and community participation. This will allow the project team to design interventions that are responsive to real needs, such as upgrading disability-friendly infrastructure, providing assistive devices or offering livelihood support to people with

disability. It will also strengthen accountability since the end-line survey and final evaluation will compare results against the baseline to determine whether targets like 75% of schools upgrading infrastructure or 500 students receiving scholarships were achieved. In short, the baseline study is both a diagnostic tool and a reference framework ensuring that the project's ambitious goals for empowerment and inclusion are measurable, realistic and evidence-based.

The specific objectives of the baseline study are:

- **Establish benchmarks**: Document the current status of inclusive education, infrastructure accessibility, teacher capacity and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities to serve as reference points for measuring progress.
- **Identify barriers**: Assess existing challenges that hinder access to education and livelihood opportunities for children and youth with disabilities, including infrastructural, pedagogical and social barriers.
- **Disaggregate data**: Collect baseline information broken down by sex, age and disability to ensure equity and inclusiveness in monitoring outcomes.
- **Inform intervention design**: Provide evidence to refine project strategies, ensuring activities like teacher training, assistive device distribution and livelihood support are tailored to actual needs.
- **Enable monitoring and evaluation**: Create a foundation for ongoing monitoring, mid-term reviews and end-line evaluations by setting measurable indicators aligned with project targets.
- **Strengthen accountability**: Ensure transparency by offering a clear baseline against which stakeholders, including local governments and communities can assess project achievements.

4. Scope of work

The consultants(s) (or consulting firms) will be responsible for designing and implementing a comprehensive assessment that captures the current status of inclusive education, infrastructure, teachers' capacity and livelihood opportunities for persons with disabilities in project municipalities. Their scope of work will include developing appropriate survey tools, ensuring data disaggregation by sex, age, and disability and coordinating with schools, local governments and community stakeholders to gather reliable information. The consultant will also be tasked with analyzing barriers to education and employment, documenting existing practices and identifying gaps that the project interventions must address.

In addition, the consultants(s) (or consulting firms) will prepare a detailed baseline report that sets clear benchmarks for all project indicators, such as school accessibility, teacher training coverage, student enrollment and completion rates and livelihood support for families. This report will serve as the foundation for monitoring and evaluation throughout the project period. The consultant will also provide recommendations to refine project strategies ensuring interventions are evidence-based and aligned with the needs of children of persons with disabilities. Ultimately, the scope will strengthen accountability and enable the project team to measure progress against realistic, well-documented starting points.

5. Evaluation Methodology

The consultant or consulting firm is encouraged to employ a mixed-methods approach to ensure both quantitative and qualitative insights. Quantitative methodologies would include structured surveys with schools, teachers, parents and children to collect measurable data on enrollment, completion rates, accessibility of infrastructure and employment opportunities for

persons with disabilities. This would be complemented by reviewing existing records such as EMIS data, school reports and government statistics to validate findings and establish reliable benchmarks.

On the qualitative side, the consultant or consulting firm is encouraged involve focus group discussions (FGDs) with parents, children with disabilities, teachers and community members to understand lived experiences and barriers to inclusion. Key informant interviews (KIIs) with local government officials, OPDs (Organizations of Persons with Disabilities), and school management committees would provide deeper insights into systemic challenges and opportunities. Participatory approaches, such as community mapping and stakeholder workshops, could also be used to ensure that persons with disabilities and marginalized groups actively contribute to shaping the baseline findings.

Finally, the consultant or consulting firm is encouraged to integrate triangulation techniques cross-verifying data from surveys, interviews and secondary sources to strengthen the validity of the study. This will ensure that the baseline not only captures statistical benchmarks but also reflects the social, cultural and institutional realities of project municipalities. By combining numbers with narratives, the study is encouraged to provide a holistic foundation for monitoring progress and guiding project interventions.

7. Baseline Deliverables

The consultant or consulting firm is liable for the following deliverables during the service period:

- **Inception report:** The inception report should include the detailed plan for the fieldwork, a list of persons and organizations to be interviewed/surveyed, sample and the methodology of the study.
- **Draft Report**: The draft report should be presented for review and feedback.
- **Final Report:** The final report should be submitted incorporating the feedback.
- A comprehensive dissemination / sharing of the report in Forward Looking Office.

8. Time frame of the Study

The consultant or consulting firm is expected to start the assignment from the first week of June 2026 and complete the study and submit the draft report within July 2026. The team/firm should submit a detailed schedule in the application. The consultant or firm should share the inception report to Forward looking in the first week after the signing of the agreement. Likewise, the draft report and findings should be shared with Forward Looking, and based on the suggestions and comments, the final report should be prepared.

8. Qualification and experience of the consultant(s)

The consultant should be a suitably qualified and experienced consultant or consulting firm. The consultant profile should include:

- The baseline should be led by a professional with a Master's degree in Social Science, development studies or other relevant fields.

- The consultant should have a minimum of 5 years of good experience in participatory research methods and tools. S/he should have competency in managing and organizing and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data and information.
- The consultant should have experience in the evaluation of projects related to PWDs, livelihood, education, child protection, income generation projects, and knowledge in policies, practices and available government structure in the inclusion of PWD's.
- S/he shall have the ability to design and plan the study approaches and research methodologies, including quantitative and qualitative research methods. Where feasible and proportionate, the person or team should include skills and expertise required to design, plan and conduct evaluation, potentially using experimental or quasi-experimental techniques;
- The individual or firm must be PAN/VAT registered as per the financial act of Government of Nepal.
- Consultant(s) should have a comprehensive understanding of the tools development and analytical report writing skills.
- Language capabilities: Good in English writing and local language.

9. Payment

The firms/consultants should submit the total budget in the proposal with a detailed breakdown including applicable government taxes. Forty percent of the contract amount will be paid in advance after signing of the agreement, thirty percent amount will be paid after submission of the draft report and the remaining thirty percent amount will be paid after submission of the final report.

10. Submission of Technical and Financial Proposals

The potential and interested firms/consultants must submit technical and financial proposals sharing their keenness to conduct the Final Evaluation of Forward Looking, Inclusive Empowerment: Advancing Rights and Dignity for Persons with Disabilities project in the email address info@flooking.org.np or Surya@flooking.org.np with the subject line "Application for Inclusive Empowerment Baseline Study". The deadline for the submission of technical and financial proposals is 25 May 2026. The documents required for the submission are as follows:

- The technical proposal along with the CVs of key personnel of the team.
- Organization Documents (in case of firm)
- Financial proposal
- Cover letter expressing interest and potentiality for the final evaluation.
- PAN/VAT certificate.

11. Selection and evaluation criteria for proposals

The selection of proposal will be done transparently and fairly on the basis of following criteria and weightage like:

- Technical Proposal (relevance, methodology, approach) 40 %,
- Relevant experience and qualifications of the consultant/team 25 %,
- Financial proposal (cost effectiveness and value for money) 20 %,
- Understanding of the project context and disability inclusion 10 %,
- Proposed timeline and feasibility 5 %.

Ethical Considerations, Safeguarding, and Child Protection

The baseline study must fully comply with the ethical, safeguarding and child protection policies of Forward Looking and Felm. The consultant or consulting firm is responsible for ensuring the safety, dignity and voluntary participation of all individuals, with particular attention to vulnerable groups such as children, persons with disabilities and marginalized populations.

Key principles include:

Informed Consent: All participants must give informed, voluntary consent. For minors or individuals with limited capacity, assent and guardian consent are required.

Confidentiality: All information must be kept confidential. No identifying data may be shared without prior written permission. Any use of data beyond this evaluation must be approved by Forward Looking and Felm.

Do No Harm: Consultant or consulting firm must avoid any emotional, psychological, or physical harm and ensure referrals to support services where needed.

Respect and Inclusion: All engagement must be respectful, culturally sensitive, and inclusive of persons with disabilities, psychosocial conditions, or minority backgrounds.

Safeguarding Compliance: Consultant or consulting firm must complete safeguarding orientation. Any violation of safeguarding standards will result in termination of the agreement.

Data Protection: Data must be securely collected, stored, and disposed of in line with data protection laws.

By undertaking this assignment, the consultant or consulting firm agrees to uphold these standards throughout all stages of the evaluation.

Intellectual property, Copyright and Ownership as well as use of findings

All data, reports, and materials produced during the study are the property of Forward Looking and Felm Nepal. The consultant or consulting firm may not use, share, or publish any content beyond this assignment without prior written consent.

Forward Looking and Felm Nepal reserve the right to use and disseminate the findings for internal and external purposes. Unauthorized use by the consultant or consulting firm may result in contractual or legal consequences.

Obey of Anticorruption Policy:

Forward Looking is committed to the highest standards of integrity and transparency. As part of our strict anti-corruption policy, we do not tolerate any form of bribery, fraud, or misuse of resources. All consultants and partners engaged in the final evaluation are required to adhere to FL's anti-corruption guidelines, ensuring that all activities are conducted ethically and in compliance with our core values. Any suspicion or evidence of corruption must be reported immediately. FL promotes a culture of accountability and expects all evaluation team members to uphold these principles throughout the assignment.

The tender can be rejected or the contract terminated if the contract arrangement or the implementation of the contract involve bribery or corresponding unlawful activity.