

Terms of Reference for Study on

Causes of Climate Vulnerability, Conflict Dynamics and Existing Local Adaptive Capacities of Climate Vulnerable *Dalit* Communities in Nepal

1. Background

Samata Foundation is a not-for-profit Nepali organization working in Nepal since 2009 to create a just society. The Foundation is a pioneer organization working for *Dalits* and other marginalized communities through conducting programs/activities on the issues of their representation, empowerment and social inclusion. It has special focus on youths and creating new generation leaders. Women's empowerment and capacity enhancement constitute one of the core elements in majority of the projects/programs implemented by the Foundation. During 12 years of establishment, the Foundation has conducted various researches, and has executed several projects/programs generating new knowledge and fulfilling knowledge gaps on socio-cultural, economic, and various other aspects of the target groups. It has worked in all the seven provinces, and has several on-going projects supported by various national/international donors/agencies.

Samata Foundation has partnered with Bangladesh office of NETZ for implementing **“Combating the impacts of Climate Change in Severely Affected Areas of Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin in South Asia”** project. This three-year transnational project, which commenced in January 2021, is being implemented in Nepal, Bangladesh and India with an overall objective of significantly increasing the economic and social resilience of the poorest population affected by the consequences of climate change in the Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin, and strengthening civil society to protect and promote the rights of marginalised groups affected by climate change. The project is implemented by Development Research Communication and Services (DRSCS) in India, and by Mahideb Jubo Somaj Kallayan Somity (MJSKS) and DASCOH Foundation (DASCOH) in Bangladesh. In Nepal, the project focuses on *Dalit* communities who are the most climate vulnerable, and economically, socially and culturally the most marginalized communities in the country. The project is being implemented in Siraha and Saptari districts of Province-2, and East Rukum and Rolpa districts of Lumbini Province. The working areas altogether consist of 16 *palikas* (municipalities/rural municipalities) - 4 *palikas* in Siraha, 5 *palikas* in Saptari, 3 *palikas* in East Rukum and 4 *palikas* in Rolpa. There are a total of 24 community-based organizations (CBOs), spread over 24 wards of the project *palikas*, formed by *Dalit* families of the respective settlements. Each CBO is led by a *Dalit* Human Rights Defender (DHRD) who is a member of the community, and is the main contact person for the project activities. In each district, a civil society organization (CSO) – a NGO – is facilitating and coordinating the project activities in the respective district (Dalit Jan Kalyan Yuwa Club in Siraha, NNDSWO in Saptari, Srijanshil Yuwa Sanjal in East Rukum, and Dalit Mahila Sachetana Kendra in Rolpa). At the central level, the project is led by a project coordinator with the guidance of a senior advisor.

The project envisions to carry out two research studies, viz., (i) Transnational study on the causes of vulnerability and conflict dynamics (project activity 4.1.2.1), and (ii) Transnational study on existing local adaptive capacities and vulnerabilities of affected communities as well as climate-related conflict dynamics in the working region (project activity 4.1.2.2). The information contained in this Terms of Reference (TOR) are for conducting these two separate research studies.

2. Rationale for the Study

Climate change is one of the most pervasive and growing threats to the world today. All countries, especially countries in the Global South, are affected by its adverse impacts including persistent drought and extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and coastal erosion, and further threatening food security, water, energy and health, and more broadly efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.

Changes in the Earth's climate and the resultant global warming has adverse impacts on the people and all living beings in the world, but due to its geophysical conditions and socio-economic challenges, South Asia is one of the regions which have been affected the most by the consequences of climate change. In the last 10 years alone, 700 million people - almost half of the region's population - have been affected by one or more climate-related disasters. The World Bank estimates that climate change could drive 62 million people in South Asia into extreme poverty over the next decade. The symptoms of climate change are multifaceted, including sea-level rise, shifts in average temperature and precipitation patterns, and increasing frequency of extreme events such as storms and droughts. These climatic changes have profound effects on societies, such as greater frequency of flooding events, more year-to-year variability in agriculture productivity, a greater demand for water (which may be more difficult to meet), and increased instances of heat-related medical problems.

Nepal is one of the most climate change vulnerable countries in the world. The climate impacts are more profound due to the country's mountainous topography and its abrupt ecological and climatic transitions, combined with a low level of development and a reliance on natural resource-based livelihoods and embedded poverty. Nepal has already experienced the impacts of climate change including changes in temperature and precipitation which range from drought in *Tarai* region, to melting glaciers, to reductions in snowfall that impact livelihoods, tourism, and ecology in the mountain regions, to changes in the amounts and intensity of rainfall contributing to floods and landslides in the mid-hills and downstream. Nepalese lives and livelihoods are at high risk from these impacts that include reductions in agricultural production, food insecurity, damaged infrastructure, and reduced water supply, among many. Floods, landslides and drought are principal climate hazards in the country. More than 80% of property loss due to disasters is attributable to climate hazards, particularly water-related events such as floods, landslides, and glacier lake outburst floods (GLOFs) that displace people, and destroy homes, farmland, and other essential infrastructure. The Nepal vulnerability and risk assessment (VRA) report 2021 stated that on average Nepal loses 647 lives and sustains economic losses of over NPR 2,778 million each year due to climate-induced disasters.

While climate change has affected everyone, its impacts are different to different sect of people in Nepal. The *Dalits* and other marginalized communities, who have less resilience capacities and resources, are victimized the maximum, and their plight to adapt to climate change, recover from climatic shocks and stresses, and access rescue and relief amenities during the climatic disaster are largely unaddressed. *Dalits* are more vulnerable to both natural and human-made disasters compared to non-*Dalits* due to their marginalized social position; the location of their homes, usually in marginal lands in the periphery of settlements; their vulnerable occupations, such as rubbish and sewage disposal, casual farm labour; and the nature of their housing – *Dalits* often have little or no land rights.

3. Objectives of the Assignment

Although it has been widely realized that *Dalits* have suffered the most from climate change in Nepal, there is only a little evidence to support this premise. There is grossly a lack of reliable facts and figures to justify that casteism in Nepal has resulted differential climatic impacts on various social groups. In order to fulfill the knowledge gaps, Samata Foundation vows to undertake researches that will focus on climate specific economic, social, and cultural (ESC) rights of these excluded social groups, and adequacy of existing legal/policy provisions/frameworks and institutional structures to address the issues of climate injustice which these voiceless poverty stricken social groups are confronted with in their day-to-day lives. As a step towards this endeavor, and in accordance with the mandate of the NETZ's on-going **“Combating the impacts of Climate Change in Severely Affected Areas of Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin in South Asia”** project, this terms of reference (TOR) has been developed to seek consultancy services for studies on (i) the causes of vulnerability and conflict dynamics, and (ii) existing local adaptive capacities and vulnerabilities of affected communities as well as climate-related conflict dynamics in Nepal.

These researches will furnish reliable facts, figures and information to various stakeholders including the government agencies, and the findings will be utilized for policy formulation/refinements and evidence-based informed advocacy for climate justice and the rights of marginalized people, especially *Dalits* from both Hill and *Madhesh* regions.

Overall, this consultancy aims to research and document the experiences and perspectives of *Dalit* communities at grass roots level in Nepal with regard to climate change and climate justice, and share the findings with relevant policy makers and the public at local and national levels. The tasks will include (i) developing questionnaires for household level surveys, and checklists for key informant interviews and focus group discussions, (ii) collecting data/information from the selected stakeholders/locations/communities, (iii) carrying out analysis of data/information collected from field, and (iv) findings as two separate research studies

The specific objectives are:

- Carry out a study on the causes of vulnerability and conflict dynamics
- Conduct an assessment of existing local adaptive capacities and vulnerabilities of affected communities as well as climate-related conflict dynamics
- Analyse the climate justice situation of *Dalit* communities with respect to the services delivered by state and non-state actors to the common public.
- Carry out a stakeholder analysis and examine the role of state and non-state actors within these causal complexes and conflicts
- Produce and disseminate information, education and communication materials on the effects of climate change on marginalized groups and possible strategies to strengthen their resilience
- Prepare an influence map and corresponding action plans for local, national and transnational advocacy works.
- Prepare advocacy strategy visible through concrete measures at the local and national level
- Present and discuss the results of the study and option in seminars at province and national levels.

4. Description of the Assigned Tasks

4.1 National study on the causes of vulnerability and conflict dynamics: The consultants will investigate the underlying cause of vulnerabilities to climate change with a focus on marginalized communities – the *Dalits* in Nepal.

4.2 National study on existing local adaptive capacities and vulnerabilities of affected communities as well as climate-related conflict dynamics:

This study will analyze the climate change induced risks (rapid and slow onset), climate change trends and scenarios, hazards and impacts of climate change in project areas. The study will also analyze the exposure, vulnerability and local adaptive capacity of marginalized communities.

Subsequently, the study will analyse conflict dynamics in the context of climate change (e.g. local resource conflicts or conflicts resulting from corruption in state disaster relief). The study will also include a stakeholder analysis that examines the role of state and non-state actors within these causal complexes and conflicts. On this basis, an influence map and corresponding action plans for local and national advocacy work will be developed.

This study will assess the existing social structures and conditions of diverse groups and their specificities leading to differential impacts. The special role of women in relation to their disproportionately high disadvantage and vulnerability to the consequences of climate change, but also their potential role in addressing the causes of vulnerability and implementing appropriate advocacy strategies, will be a cross-cutting theme of the studies. The results of the studies will be processed and published in order to be available to national governmental and non-governmental institutions. The results will also be made visible through concrete measures at the local and national levels.

4.3 Analyse the situation of climate justice: Data from a conducted climate vulnerability and capacity analysis (CVCA) and the studies produced (4.1 and 4.2) within the framework of this program form a comprehensive evidence base on the situation of marginalized groups in the context of climate change and on climate-related conflicts. On this basis, various analyses and three policy briefs will be published. Each analysis report and policy brief will focus on a specific topic in the field of climate change, e.g. impact of climate change on women, children and senior citizens of Dalit communities, coping strategies adopted by Dalit communities to address the adversities of climate change, Implications of climate change on economic, social and cultural rights of Dalit communities. They will also make concrete recommendations for improved implementation and reform of relevant laws and policies that can strengthen resilience and protect and promote marginalized groups. The reports and the respective policy recommendations will be presented and discussed at dialogue meetings with political decision-makers at local and national level.

4.4 Produce and disseminate IEC materials: To make visible the effects of climate change on marginalised groups and possible strategies to strengthen resilience, topic-specific information, education and communication (IEC) materials will be produced. These will be used in a targeted manner, e.g. within the framework of training courses, meetings of CSOs and meetings between CSOs and authorities and will be made available to the general public at public events. The partner NGOs of the programme will also disseminate the materials via

their websites and to school libraries and journalists and make them available to civil society actors and authorities in Nepal.

4.5 Present and discuss the results of the studies and option: The consultants will present and discuss the respective national results of the studies conducted (4.1 and 4.2) and their implications in a province level and national level seminars. In addition to political decision-makers, representatives of civil society, the press and scientific institutions, representatives of CSOs - including people from marginalised groups who are particularly affected by the consequences of climate change – will take part in the seminars and contribute their perspective. In addition to providing a space for analysing the situation with regard to the effects of climate change, the seminars will also highlight and jointly reflect on the potential for action strategies by governmental and non-governmental actors. The seminars bring the demands of local and provincial CSOs into the national discourse and thus ensure linkage from local to national level.

5. Scope of Work

- The studies will focus on *Dalit* communities who are the most climate vulnerable people in Nepal
- The studies will be carried out in Lumbini Province and Province 2, specifically in Rukum East and Rolpa districts, and Siraha and Saptari districts.
- The municipalities and rural municipalities (*palikas*) which constitute the working areas of the program will be the working area for the research.
- The community-based organizations (CBOs) and the Dalit Human Rights Defenders (DHRDs) will be the key persons to provide, collect and share the research related grass roots level information, data, facts and figures

6. Methodology

Studies will be conducted to generate further evidence base for the development of an impact strategy and for the definition of concrete advocacy goals and policy recommendations. A comprehensive commonly agreed standard methodological framework for the research will be developed, building on national and international successful concepts and practices. The total duration for the research will be six months, with some involvements of the consultants in the third year for presentation of research findings in the third year of the project. The research entails an inception phase, a detailed assessment phase and a final reporting phase. Details of tasks under this assessment are described below:

6.1 Inception Phase: The research study will start with an inception phase. This phase will undertake a rapid review of (a) available information on causes of climate vulnerability, conflict and climate justice in the context of Nepal and beyond, and existing local adaptive capacities and opportunities for the climate vulnerable *Dalit* communities in the specific region. Based on preparatory research on the issues, the consultant(s) will then develop a standard methodological framework to achieve research objectives defined in this ToR. The total duration of this inception phase will be four weeks and the expected deliverable will be the inception report that shall include but not limited to: conceptual framework, research questions, detail approach and methodology (data collection method and tools), sample areas, sampling method, preliminary lists of appropriate references that will be reviewed for the study, and Table of Content (ToC) of the research studies that briefly specifies contents for

each heading and sub-headings. The inception phase will end upon the finalization of inception report after incorporating comments from NETZ.

6.2 Detailed Assessment Phase: The detailed assessment phase includes data collection (primary & secondary), review, analysis and reporting as per the scope of work stipulated in this ToR. The analysis will cover learning from the field to analysis of subnational/national mechanisms and framework related to climate change. The focus of the research will be more on quality. However, both qualitative and quantitative methods will be used to collect the information. The field visits and participatory methods for community level interactions considering caste, gender, age and social diversities and perspectives, discussion with the civil society organizations (including advocacy organizations and networks), local political parties, development workers, consultation with experts and other stakeholders, shall be carried out in close consultation with the NETZ team. The total duration of this phase will be 4 months and the consultant team will submit a detail draft report and other deliverables as indicated in section 6 to NETZ for further comments and feedbacks.

6.3 Final Reporting Phase: Final reporting phase will last for one month. This phase includes the finalization of all the deliverables incorporating the comments and feedbacks from NETZ. This final phase will end upon the submission of all the final deliverables (electronic copy only) as mentioned in section 6 of this ToR to Samata Foundation.

7 Deliverables

1. An Inception Report highlighting the methodology and work plan.
 2. A national study on causes of climate vulnerability and conflict dynamics of Dalit communities in Nepal
 3. A national study on existing local adaptive capacities and vulnerabilities of affected communities as well as climate-related conflict dynamics.
- The both study reports will have a maximum length of 50 pages; additional documents shall be included in the Annex. The reports should minimum cover the data analysis, study findings, and recommendations. The consultant/s shall write the report in English and cover the objective and tasks (3 and 4).
4. Develop seminar paper to present the results of the study and options for action at national and international level.
 5. Policy briefs –3 Nos. on specific topics in the field of climate change for policy dialogue at national level. The policy briefs will be identified from the studies assignment and CVCA report.

8. Team Compositions and Requirements

The Consultant team shall comprise of two team members: a principal investigator and a researcher. The principal investigator will be overall in charge of the research. He/she shall be responsible for ensuring that the assessment is correctly designed, implemented and reported and ensure the timely submission of deliverables including development and finalization of the methodological framework while the researcher will be responsible to undertake the research tasks and their analysis under the guidance of the principal investigator. Both are responsible for accommodating and responding to the edits and suggestions of the reviews of multiple drafts and deliver a final draft approved by NETZ. The principal investigator should hold a Ph. D. or an equivalent degree in relevant field with expertise in social inclusion and

climate change. He/she should have at least 10 years of professional experience in climate/social inclusion projects/programs development/implementation, national/international research, exposures and familiarity with national/international issues and perspectives on climate change, climate justice, and policy analysis. The researcher should have a Master Degree in relevant field with at least 5 years of experience or a Bachelor Degree in relevant field with at least 7 years of experience on conducting social inclusion and climate change related researches, quantitative and qualitative data analysis, and report writing.

9. Timeframe and tentative time table

The time frame for the study comprises 30 working days for the lead researcher and 90 working days (approx. 3 person months) for the researcher spread over 7 months from June to December 2022. The date/duration for different tasks are given in table below.

S. No.	Tasks	Date	No. of Days		Responsible
			Lead Researcher	Researcher	
1	Review of key documents	2nd week of June	2	6	Consultant/s
2	Develop methodological framework, questionnaires, checklists	2 nd – 3 rd week of June	2	10	Consultant/s
3	Prepare inception report	4 th week of June	2	3	Consultant/s
4	Orientation Enumerators	1 st week of July	1	5	Consultant/Samata
5	Execution of field work	2 nd week of July – 4 th week of October	6	30	Consultant/Samata
6	Data entry	August-October		18	Consultant/s
7.	Data analysis	November	7	10	Consultant/s
8.	Report writing	November 3 rd - December 2 nd week	7	8	Consultant/s
9.	Preparing policy briefs	December 3 rd - 4 th week	3		Consultant/s
10.	Preparing seminar paper	December 4 th week	1		Consultant
Total		June to December	30 person days	90 person days	Consultant/s

10. Management of the Study

The Program Director of Samata Foundation will be overall responsible for the management of the study. The Project Coordinator of the Project will be responsible for the day-to-day management, supervision and monitoring of the tasks.