

Call for Proposals

**Baseline Assessment for
Sustainable Actions for
Ecosystems Restoration in
Pakistan (SAFER Pakistan) Project**

ToR

1. Background

The **International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)**, in partnership with **UNICEF Pakistan** and **UN Women Pakistan**, is implementing the Adaptation Fund–supported project “**Sustainable Actions for Ecosystems Restoration in Pakistan (SAFER Pakistan)**”.

Pakistan is one of the world’s most climate-impacted countries, ranked first in [German Watch’s Long-Term Climate Risk Index 2025](#). The South Asian country grapples with recurrent climate-induced crises, including heatwaves, droughts, floods, and food shortages. The pressing imperative for Pakistan lies in enhancing adaptive capacity, resilience, and reducing vulnerability to these shocks. The Indus River is central to this challenge, playing a pivotal role in South Asian economies. Additionally, women and children are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. As climate change brings a greater frequency and intensity of drought, floods, heatwaves, air pollution and disease, it is critical to prioritise positioning women and children at the centre of climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

To address this, the SAFER Pakistan project aims to reduce the vulnerability and increase the adaptive capacity of communities across the Indus Basin through the following six thematic components:

1. Cryosphere risk reduction
2. Springshed revival and management
3. Groundwater management and resilient community water services
4. Ecosystem-based adaptation (wastewater treatment)
5. Surface water conservation
6. Adaptive capacities and empowered communities for climate resilience

Each component is subdivided into two/three distinct output categories:

- 1. Knowledge gap filling, or ground-truthing** ensures contextual appropriateness of the individual adaptive measure and includes communities in deploying the solutions and ensuring their sustainability.
- 2. Community-level interventions** that increase community member’s adaptive capacity, with a focus on gender and youth inclusion.
- 3. Institutional changes** or advocacy thereof, co-developed with local authorities to support the scaling up of the successful adaptive strategies and practices at the local and provincial level.

A **robust Baseline Assessment** is essential to establish the status of project indicators, inform implementation planning, and provide a benchmark for monitoring progress, and

evaluation. This assessment at the beginning of the project will establish a reference point for future comparisons. It will involve systematically collecting and analysing data related to key indicators, performance metrics, and contextual factors relevant to the project's outcomes. This will provide a benchmark against which progress towards outcomes and outputs of the project's interventions can be measured over time, enabling effective monitoring and evaluation throughout the project cycle.

2. Purpose of the Baseline Assessment

The overall purpose of this consultancy will be to:

- Co-design with the ICIMOD SAFER Project Management Team and SAFER partners to carry out a **comprehensive Baseline Assessment** covering all six project components (listed under section 1 of this ToR) and target areas in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and Sindh provinces in Pakistan to understand current conditions, identify existing challenges, and measure the status quo (conflict-risks) before any interventions or initiatives are implemented.

This will entail the following from the consultancy firm:

- A thorough review of the Results Framework to determine priorities for baseline data collection.
- Elaborate on key definitions (impact, outcome and outputs) in SAFER Results Framework that frame the next steps for baseline assessment surveys (e.g. community, households, community members etc).
- Develop baseline data collection tools, sampling plans, stakeholder consultation guides, data-entry templates and analysis protocols.
- Lead the process of data collection (quantitative and qualitative), ensuring gender-, age- and vulnerability-disaggregated information.
- Identify and assess if there are any other pre-existing interventions and sites by government, ICIMOD, UNICEF, UN Women and other actors which are similar to this project, to allow for the avoidance of duplicate efforts or the ability to leverage these initiatives, as appropriate.
- Analyse data to establish baseline values for each indicator in the project's results framework.
- Present the findings at an Inception Workshop in Pakistan, early September 2025.
- Produce clear, actionable and data driven recommendations for refining project outcomes/outputs/targets and activities, ensuring equity-focused interventions, as appropriate.

3. Process and Stages

The process will require the submission of a full proposal, at this stage, as the baseline assessment is highly time sensitive:

Full Proposal (for shortlisted consultancy firms or team of consultants)

Applicants should submit a full proposal to undertake the SAFER project's baseline assessment, which outlines comprehensively:

1. An understanding of the assignment
2. All team members' qualifications and relevant experience
3. Detailed methodology and sampling plan
4. Final report structure and presentation
5. Full, itemised budget
6. Proposed work plan and corresponding timeline

The call for bids is open to both national and international consultancy firms with a strong track record and established presence in Pakistan. The selected firm or team of experts will then be required to submit an **Inception Report**, followed by implementation of the study, under **ICIMOD's oversight and quality assurance system as the SAFER project's Implementing Entity**.

4. Scope of Work

The selected firm/team will:

- Design the baseline assessment framework in line with the SAFER Results Framework and in collaboration with the ICIMOD Project Management Team and SAFER partners
- Develop survey instruments, sampling strategies, and qualitative/quantitative tools
- Conduct data collection in relevant locations Gilgit-Baltistan, KP, and Sindh provinces
- Disaggregate data by gender, age, and vulnerability
- Map existing and overlapping interventions
- Analyse data and report baseline values against project indicators
- Make strategic recommendations for target refinement and equity-focused implementation
- Present findings to ICIMOD, partners and stakeholders at the Inception Workshop
- Manage finalisation of the report and necessary adjustments following Inception Workshop discussions, which will inform the draft and final baseline assessment report.

5. Methodology and Approach

The baseline assessment should use the best available approaches, methods and tools whether, field or digital (listed below) to gather key indicator data, as deemed relevant and appropriate for the SAFER project objectives. A mixed-survey approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews will be employed. Quantitative data will be collected through structured questionnaires targeting households and communities. For

geographical details of the physical interventions, please refer to Tables 2, 3, and 4, as well as Annex 6 of the SAFER project document. Qualitative data will be gathered via focus group discussions and in-depth interviews to capture nuanced insights and contextual factors. The proposal should have proposed methodology with clear data collection methods, sample size, data quality assurance, data analysis mechanism with proper visualization, data transformation and reporting ensuring a comprehensive baseline study. Adherence to data privacy and informed consent protocols is non-negotiable. The detailed methodology proposition should be explained in the full technical proposal and aligned with international best practices for climate-resilience baseline studies.

6. Reporting and supervision

The consultants will report to the ICIMOD Evaluation Specialist and will be closely working with SAFER Coordinator at ICIMOD for administrative matters.

7. Deliverables & Timeline

Deliverable	Description	Timeline
Full proposals received	Due date for receiving requests for full proposals: July 14, 2025 (12pm Nepal Standard Time)	July 14, 2025
Proposals assessed	Selected firm notified	July 17, 2025
Inception meeting	First (inception) meeting held with selected firm/team of experts to clarify expectation and sharp deadlines	July 18, 2025
Inception Report & tool development	Produce detailing methodology, key definitions, tools (pre-test and finalise), work plan, sampling plan and sample size, stakeholder engagement strategy, data-collection schedule and draft questionnaires, interview guides, and data-entry templates.	July 23, 2025
Inputs provided on the inception report	SAFER Pakistan partners provide inputs on the inception report	July 25, 2025
Finalize inception report	Selected firm finalizes inception report after incorporating inputs received from SAFER Pakistan implementing partners	July 28, 2025
Operational arrangements	Selected firm makes necessary operational arrangements	July 30, 2025
Field work (data collection) initiated	Mobilise survey teams, oversee fieldwork with full quality control and ethical compliance (informed consent, data privacy). Present initial findings and recommendations to the	July 31, 2025

	Project Management Team. Complete data collection and stakeholder mapping	
Preliminary Findings Workshop	Presentation to ICIMOD, UNICEF, UN Women, possibly other stakeholders, as agreed by ICIMOD	September 1, 2025
Draft Baseline Report	Deliver a full draft (including raw data annexes, indicator tables, and methodological appendices). Share all cleaned data, tables, and transcripts.	September 2, 2025
Inputs provided on draft baseline report	SAFER Pakistan partners provide inputs on the draft baseline report	September 5, 2025
Final report, and presenting baseline findings	Incorporate feedback and submit the final report in both hard and electronic versions, with all final data collection tools, cleaned data sets, transcripts of the FGDs and KIs, photographs, Project based indicators value table, etc.	September 8, 2025

9. Qualifications & Experience

The consultancy firm/team should have the following experiences and formal qualifications:

- Proven experience in co-designing, coordinating and undertaking baseline/ evaluation/ assessments for at least eight years in the areas of rural climate resilience and adaptation projects in South Asia.
- Strong track record of data collection and data management preferably for International Organisations.
- Proficiency and extensive experience in qualitative and quantitative research methods.
- Excellent knowledge, experience and expertise in analysing and assessing gender and social inclusion issues and projects, with strong awareness and assessment experience on inclusion.
- Proven track record in baseline, needs-assessment, or evaluation in climate-resilience, or water, sanitation and hygiene sectors.
- Experience of assessing Adaptation Fund funded projects would be highly desirable.
- Familiarity with the context in Pakistan's mountainous regions is an advantage.

10. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Weight
Technical Proposal	(70%)
Experience of consultancy firm	25%

Methodology and detailed work plan – aligned to ToR	30%
Team qualifications and experience ¹	15%
Financial Proposal	(30%)
Value for Money	30%

9. Application Process

Interested consultancy firms or team of consultants are invited to submit a full proposal (Technical and Financial separately) in Arial 12pt **[July 14, 2025, by 12pm Nepal Standard Time]**. Applicants are invited to submit a full proposal for the Baseline Assessment and must provide the following documents and details, as listed below. Proposals will be reviewed based on the criteria outlined in the ToR, with an emphasis on technical quality, relevant experience, and value for money.

1. Cover letter expressing: (max 2 pages)

- Interest in the assignment and rationale for applying (linked to technical capabilities and possible contextual knowledge and/or experience)
- Individual/team/organisational capacity and relevance of experience
- Confirmation of ability to travel and meet proposed timelines, including how the tight timeline will be adhered to
- Contact person for follow up discussion on proposal.

2. Full technical proposal (Max 10-15 pages)

The proposal should showcase and include the following key dimensions:

- An understanding of the assignment:** specifically, the SAFER project's six thematic components and goal. In addition, the importance of baseline assessments for project management, implementation and learning.
- Your proposed methodology and approach based on information in this TOR and additional documents (SAFER project doc and Results Framework):**
 - This should include your suggestions for a sampling strategy, disaggregation plan and your rationale for both.

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Team lead: At least master's degree in social sciences in a related discipline with a minimum of 8 years of professional experience in conducting baseline studies using mixed-method approaches.

Co-lead: At least master's degree in social sciences in a related discipline with a minimum of 6 years of professional experience in conducting baseline studies.

Data analyst: At least master's degree in social sciences in a related discipline with a minimum of 5 years of professional experience in qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

Enumerators: At least bachelor's degree in social sciences in a related discipline with a minimum of 2 years of professional experience in conducting surveys and data collection.

- What mixed methods you will apply (qualitative and quantitative) with outlines of your proposed data collection tools.
- Your ethical protocols (e.g. how you will manage and ensure informed consent, data privacy, etc.).
- How you will ensure gender, youth and inclusion sensitivity.
- How you will integrate existing datasets and other relevant evidence to ensure this is leveraged and integrated into project learning.

c) A detailed work plan and corresponding timeline:

- A Gantt chart or similar visual timeline for the baseline assessment will be needed to ensure it aligns with the tight timeframe of delivery.
- A narrative or table speaking to the phasing of the work with a detailed breakdown of deliverables against suggested deadlines.

d) A quality assurance plan

- Details on your data validation mechanisms.
- Risk mitigation strategies to ensure the delivery of the baseline assessment to requirements, of quality, and on time. This will include identifying potential security, contextual, logistical or data-related issues and what your mitigation strategy would be.

e) Consultant/team or organisational experience to date:

- A team or organisational profile, highlighting relevant experience.
- A list of similar completed assignments, with descriptions and any available links to reports.
- Curriculum Vitae of all those participating in the assessment.
- If applying as part of a team or as a consultancy firm, a detailed breakdown of team structure, roles and responsibilities, availability and level of effort.

3. Financial proposal:

Itemised budget with clear breakdowns using prescribed template:

- Personnel costs (daily rates)
- Travel and logistics
- Data collection tools and enumerator fees
- Data analysis and report production
- Administrative overheads (if any)
- Contingency (if any)

Include a brief budget narrative explaining cost assumptions and rationale.

4. Supporting documents:

- Firm registration certificate. Tax clearance, last three years audit report, CVs of all consultants/experts, such as team leader, co-lead, and other experts.
- Declaration of ethical compliance and data protection protocols.
- Statement of absence of conflict of interest.

- Reference letters from previous clients (UN, donors, and governments preferred).
- Previous work samples (unclassified)

5. Submission guidance:

- Format: Portable Document Format (PDF) with technical and financial proposals should be submitted as separate attachments.
- Submission: Submissions should be emailed to: [**Consultancy.int@icimod.org**].
- The Email subject line: **"Full Proposal: Baseline Assessment – SAFER Pakistan"**
- **Deadline for submission: [July 14, 2025, 12pm Nepal Standard Time]**

For any technical queries with regard to this RFP please contact: ieu@icimod.org

Annex

SAFER Project Document and SAFER Project Results Framework

To be found here: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/project/sustainable-actions-for-ecosystems-restoration-in-pakistan-safer-pakistan/>