

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **MONITORING, EVALUATION, REPORTING, AND LEARNING (MERL) CONSULTANCY**

#### **1. Background:**

The GLSCR (Giyani Local Sustainable Climate Resilient Programme) is a community-led and LED (Local Economic Development) initiative aimed at demonstrating climate adaptive responses and solutions for improved water utilization in the Giyani Municipal area. The program, funded by the Government of Flanders, is led by the Water Research Commission in partnership with Tsogang Water and Sanitation (Tsogang), Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD), and the University of the Western Cape (UWC).

#### **2. Objective:**

The objective of this consultancy is to support the GLSCR in establishing and implementing a robust Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, and Learning (MERL) framework that promotes reflection, learning, and evidence-based decision-making throughout the program duration. The MERL consultant will provide technical expertise, guidance, and support to ensure effective monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and learning processes are in place.

#### **3. Scope of Work:**

The MERL consultant's responsibilities will include, but are not limited to, the following:

##### **a. Develop a comprehensive MERL framework:**

- Collaboratively develop a Theory of Change (ToC) that captures the logic, assumptions, uncertainties, and research needs of the program.
- Identify and define indicators aligned with the ToC, encompassing output, outcome, and impact levels.
- Ensure the manageable number of indicators to facilitate practical data collection, analysis, and reflection.

##### **b. Monitoring:**

- Design and implement a monitoring plan that includes both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.
- Review programme logical framework, determine indicators of success and support monitoring thereof.
- Determine appropriate forms of evidence in support of each indicator.
- Set baseline against which to assess the overall programme and the research areas.

- Collect and synthesize data on various aspects, related to water quality, water usage, groundwater levels, system maintenance, costs, benefits to households/farms, stakeholder involvement, social impacts, livelihood impacts, and environmental impacts.
- Engage stakeholders in data collection, sense-making, and planning for continuous improvement.

c. Evaluation:

- Facilitate regular and informal reflection activities involving project teams and all stakeholders to evaluate progress, outcomes, and impacts.
- Conduct periodic formative evaluations using household surveys, interviews, or other appropriate methods.
- Analyse qualitative monitoring data to extract key insights, lessons learned, and emerging findings.
- Undertake midterm review to inform implementation and summative evaluation at the end of the program to assess achievements, challenges, and recommendations.

d. Reporting:

- Develop reporting processes that cater to the needs of communities and stakeholders beyond funders' requirements.
- Define reporting contributions, timelines, and formats within the MERL framework.
- Utilize reporting templates and visual aids, such as photos, to enhance communication and understanding.
- Ensure timely and comprehensive reporting that highlights progress, challenges, and key findings.

e. Learning:

- Facilitate and document ongoing learning processes throughout the program, involving both project implementers and beneficiaries.
- Track and analyse learnings from monitoring, evaluation, and other activities.
- Allocate resources for documenting, sharing, and disseminating learnings at appropriate intervals, platforms and through suitable channels.

f. Planning and Adaptive Management:

- Ensure close integration of the MERL system with program planning and decision-making processes.
- Align reporting and monitoring timelines to inform planning and adaptive management.
- Foster regular communication and collaboration between MERL and management personnel.

#### 4. Deliverables:

The MERL consultant will be expected to deliver the following outputs:

1. Collaboratively developed Theory of Change (ToC) capturing program logic, assumptions, and indicators.
2. Develop assessment framework, establish baselines, and develop monitoring plan and data collection tools, including quantitative and qualitative approaches.
3. Regular monitoring reports analysing progress, outcomes, and qualitative insights.
4. Formative evaluation reports presenting findings, lessons learned, and recommendations.
5. Summative evaluation report assessing achievements, challenges, and program impact.
6. Reporting templates and visual aids (info graphics) for effective communication.
7. Documentation of learnings, best practices, and case studies throughout the program.
8. Final Report with final design outlay for publication for the key audiences.

#### 5. Duration:

The consultancy will be for a period of twelve (12) months.

#### 8. Budget:

All-inclusive budget of R480 000.00

#### 9. Skills

The primary MERL evaluator or team must have a good understanding and experience of theory of change and MERL frameworks.