

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Title: Independent Technical Consultant to Support Review of Baseline Study Bids

The project: CAFE-CIRCLE: Circular Solutions for Coffee MSMEs in Son La Province

Location: Remote, with meetings as required

Duration: Approximately 5 working days during the baseline procurement evaluation period

Reporting to: CARE procurement and MEAL Advisor

1. Project background

CAFE-CIRCLE supports coffee MSMEs in Son La to minimise environmental impacts, improve resource efficiency and adopt circular economy practices. The project will commission a baseline study and integrated stocktaking exercise to establish starting values, map enterprise practices and readiness, and guide technical, financial and policy interventions.

CARE requires independent technical support to ensure that proposals submitted for the baseline assignment are assessed consistently and against the approved Terms of Reference and procurement criteria. The consultant will provide evidence-based technical advice to CARE's authorised evaluation panel. The consultant will not replace the panel, make the final award decision, communicate independently with bidders or negotiate contract terms.

2. Objectives of the assignment

Provide an independent and consistent technical assessment of all eligible baseline proposals:

- Assess the credibility and feasibility of bidders' methodology, sampling, environmental measurement, gender and inclusion approach, staffing, workplan and quality assurance.
- Identify material gaps, technical risks and clarification questions for shortlisted or leading bidders.
- Suggest technical questions for the interview or for the technical proposal clarification of the short-listed bidders.

3. Review principles

- **Independence:** assess bids only against the approved criteria and submitted evidence and disclose prior relationships immediately.
- **Consistency:** apply the same interpretation, evidence threshold and scoring to every bidder follow CARE the procurement instruction and principles.
- **Traceability:** every score must have a concise rationale linked to bid content or a clearly stated omission.
- **Confidentiality:**
 - Use only CARE approved channels and devices or appropriately secured storage for receiving, reviewing and returning documents.
 - Do not copy, disclose, reuse or retain bidder intellectual property or personal data beyond the assignment.
 - Do not contact bidders, accept gifts or favors, or discuss future work with bidders during the process.

4. Methodology and scope of the assignment

The assignment will use a structured, criterion-based review process. The consultant should:

- Review and provide inputs for the final baseline TOR
- Review consolidated MEAL framework, proposal, procurement instructions.
- Participate in a calibration meeting to agree interpretation of criteria, scoring scale.
- Independently read each application.
- Complete a scoring sheet with criterion scores, evidence-based comments, strengths, weaknesses, risks and clarification need:
 - Assess whether proposed sampling and fieldwork can generate credible enterprise-level results and support endline comparison.
 - Assess the technical credibility of circular economy, wastewater, water-efficiency and environmental measurement methods, including verification and estimation assumptions.
 - Assess quantitative and qualitative analysis, data quality, reproducibility, ethics, safeguarding, privacy and gender/ethnic minority inclusion.
- If requested, support structured clarification interviews and update the technical advisory note based on documented responses.

5. Key deliverables and working days

Deliverables	Days	Tentative timeframe
Document review: TOR, procurement instruction and principles, project documents	2	Start of assignment
Individual technical scoring sheet for each bidder	3	According to bid count
Fulfill the scoring sheet with details		
Clarification/interview questions		
Total	5	

Note: The consultancy is tentatively planning happen in the last week of October, 2026. Deadlines may be adjusted according to the final number of eligible proposals, but any change must be agreed in writing with CARE.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Consultant

- ✓ Conduct an independent, thorough and timely technical review using CARE's approved templates, follow the principles of confidentiality, independency and disclose any conflict of interest.
- ✓ Return or securely delete all procurement materials when instructed by CARE.

CARE

- ✓ Provide the approved TOR, criteria, eligible bids, procurement instructions and evaluation timetable through an authorised secure channel.
- ✓ Clarify procedural questions and consolidate panel communication.
- ✓ Retain responsibility for eligibility decisions, approved scores, financial evaluation, due diligence, bidder communication and final selection.

The contract will be deliverables-based. Final payment will be contingent on CARE's acceptance of complete, timely and professionally documented outputs.

7. Requisites for consultants presenting a proposal

Interested candidates should submit the following documents in English, clearly stating the title of the Terms of Reference before 16:00, 14th October 2026

- Updated CV and confirmation of availability across the expected evaluation window.
- Daily rate and total estimated professional fee, with taxes clearly stated.
- An example of related works demonstrating consultant technical experiences to the areas of consultancy
- Contact details for references.
- A preliminary declaration of interests, confidentiality commitment and disclosure of any prior relationship with CARE or potential bidders.

8. Evaluation criteria for selection of the consultant:

Administrative eligibility and technical evaluation criteria	Description
Administrative eligibility: CARE due diligence	Pass/fail: The consultant/firm must pass CARE's due diligence and must not be subject to exclusion or ineligibility under CARE requirements.
Administrative eligibility: conflict of interest	Pass/fail: Disclosure of any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest. Previous experience with CARE is not required and does not receive additional technical marks.
Administrative eligibility: legal and tax status	Legal status - Evidence of Tax Compliance Certificate for firms - TIN Certificate for Individual Consultants (Yes / No)
Understanding the assignment	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the strategic-review purpose, the project's stage of implementation, public-facing sensitivities, the three outcome areas, and the need to assess contribution pathways rather than overstate achieved results. (20 marks)
Relevant background and experience	Demonstrated relevant background and/or experience related to coffee industry, environment and circle economy. (40 marks) Experience with INGOs, bilateral donors or UN agencies is an advantage. (10 marks)
Quality of relevant work samples	Quality, analytical depth, clarity and usability of one or more relevant evaluation or strategic-review reports. (15 marks)
Financial proposal	Reasonableness, completeness and value for money of the financial proposal, with clear alignment between costs, level of effort and deliverables. (15 marks)

Copyright and intellectual property rights:

All documents are intellectual property of CARE International in Vietnam. The Consultant shall not

publish, disclose, or use any project output or confidential data outside this assignment without prior written consent from CARE. All outputs must comply with EU visibility requirements.

CARE is an equal opportunity employer committed to a diverse workforce. Women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

Thanks for your interest in CARE! We are committed to each other and to the protection of the people we serve. We do not tolerate sexual misconduct within or external to our organisation and imbed child protection in all we do. Protection from sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse and child protection are fundamental to our relationships, including employment, and our recruitment practices are designed to ensure we only recruit people who are suitable to work with other staff and the people we serve. As well as pre-employment checks, we will use the recruitment and reference process to ensure potential new consultant/supplier understand and are aligned with these expectations. To find out more, please contact the Human Resources Team Leader.