

Terms Of Reference (TOR) For A Feasibility Study On “Strengthening the Resilience Of Vulnerable Communities Through Sustainable Climate Resilient WASH Services In TA Kuntumanje In Zomba District”.

1. Introduction of Habitat for Humanity Malawi

Habitat for Humanity Malawi (HFHM) is a non-profit Christian organization dedicated to improving housing conditions in Malawi. Established in 1986, HFHM has assisted over 75,000 families through various programs such as Vulnerable Group Housing (VGH), Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Disaster Risk Reduction and Response (DRRR), and Informal Vocation Training. Focusing specifically on WASH, HFHM has delivered project interventions in diverse local contexts, including peri-urban Lilongwe, Chikwawa, Thyolo, Blantyre, Zomba, Phalombe, and Mzuzu.

2. Background of the project

Habitat for Humanity Malawi (HFHM) and Stiftung der Deutschen Lions (SDL) plan to jointly implement a new project from September 2025 to December 2029. This project will focus on the intersection of Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), livelihood, and climate resilience at community and district levels. The primary goal is to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities to climatic shocks by promoting sustainable, climate-resilient WASH services in the TA Kuntumanje area of Zomba district. TA Kuntumanje, one of eight Traditional Authorities in Zomba, has a population of 52,432 people (approximately 10,486 households), with 72% of the population being under the age of 35.

To ensure the success of this initiative, HFHM and SDL seek to engage a consultant to conduct a detailed feasibility study. This study will assess the likelihood that the planned project design and underlying theory of change can plausibly achieve the desired improvements under the existing circumstances and constraints in TA Kuntumanje. The consultant will also provide recommendations for modifications to enhance the project design's effectiveness and avoid poor investments. These Terms of Reference (TORs), therefore, outline the purpose of the feasibility study, key study deliverables and the

required consultant qualifications, experience and capacity to deliver such an assignment.

2.1 Initial Situation

WASH and Climate Change: Ensuring access to safe water is crucial for community wellbeing and quality of life. However, in recent years, climate change has posed a significant threat to Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) services and infrastructure, resulting in major setbacks in securing and sustaining access to safe and affordable drinking water and adequate sanitation for Malawi's citizens. These challenges are prevalent across Malawi, including Zomba, and disproportionately impact low-income rural communities, where many earn less than USD 2.00 per day. Extreme weather events, such as the recent El Niño, have exacerbated droughts, reducing water availability and quality, and undermining livelihood gains. Additionally, cyclone-induced flooding has become more frequent and severe disrupting livelihoods, damaging WASH infrastructure, reducing water availability, and degrading water quality, further posing health risks that threaten the health and wellbeing of communities.

Addressing these issues requires a holistic approach that integrates community and institutional resilience-building into project designs. This includes constructing resilient infrastructure and empowering communities with the tools and agency to mitigate impacts and manage resources during extreme weather events.

Livelihoods and Climate Change: Malawi's economy relies largely on rain-fed agriculture, with 80% of the population depending on it for livelihoods, notably with women constituting 70% of the agricultural labor force. Low-income communities, especially women, are increasingly vulnerable to climate disasters, necessitating livelihood programs to enhance food and income security for improved resilience and self-reliance. These communities lack adaptive capacities and access to essential climate advisory services for responsive action and planning. While droughts have broader economic impacts compared to floods, floods are frequent and cause severe disruptions to already fragile food systems. The absence of weather and climate-related information further exposes communities to economic vulnerability. In Zomba district, particularly around Lake Chilwa, rice farming and fishing are vital livelihoods,

emphasizing the need for adaptive measures and access to climate information, especially for micro-small and medium enterprises in agriculture and fisheries.

It is against this background that HFHM and SDL intend to implement a relevant, effective, efficient, coherent, sustainable, and impactful project that aims to empower rural communities in the area of T/A Kuntumanje, Zomba to achieve improved livelihoods and quality of life through sustainable climate resilient WASH services.

3. Purpose

- Provide a sound, empirically verified basis for the project, identify and verify material assumptions and prerequisites for project success, identify risks and risk mitigation strategies
- Assess the feasibility of the project objective(s). How conducive is the context (sector, components, project regions) with regard to the projects' objective?
- Examine needs assessment document and verify project concept, identify weaknesses, and provide recommendations for optimisation
- Present project context at community, regional, and national level, including relevant baseline data
- Assess expected merit and worth of project based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) evaluation criteria
- Provide specific recommendations for the impact matrix and project activities
- Optimise the project concept, improve quality, and maximise impact and sustainability based on recommendations.

4. Specific Questions for the Feasibility Study

The consultant will have to conduct an overall review of the project concept, needs assessment and other documents to:

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical framework and project design of the planned project.

- Juxtapose the project’s planned activities against the problem analysis and determine whether the planned activities could plausibly achieve the planned improvements or address the stated problem
- Propose recommendations for modifications or adjustments to increase the effectiveness of planned activity design to address the stated problem

As part of this assignment, consultant will be required to address the following specific questions in particular following the OECD DAC Criteria and project specific thematic area. The specific questions below are not exhaustive and the Client expects the consultancy team to use their talent and expertise to expand on the specific questions, where necessary):

4.1 Specific Questions related to OEDC DAC Criteria

4.1.1 Relevance: *To what extent is the planned project doing the right thing?*

- Will the planned project approach address a key development problem or a significant developmental bottleneck in the partner country or region?
- Are the focus, priorities and objectives (approach) of the planned project clearly defined and aligned with the beneficiaries?
- To what extent do the intervention objectives and design adequately take into account the specific needs of the beneficiaries and any structural obstacles in the project region, partner/institution, or policy programs?
- Are the norms and standards of the approach compatible with those of the beneficiaries?
- Is the project designed to be conflict-sensitive (Do No Harm Principle)?

4.1.2 Coherence: *how suitable is the intervention?*

- How consistent are the planned activities with human rights principles (inclusion, participation), and any conventions or relevant standards/guidelines?
- To what extent do synergies and connections exist between the planned project and other interventions by the same stakeholder (organisation) and other stakeholders?

- What similarities or overlaps exist between the beneficiaries and projects implemented by other stakeholders in the same context? To what extent does the intervention add value and avoid duplication?

4.1.3 Effectiveness: *Which project approach is best for achieving the objectives?*

- Are the cause-effect relationships (including assumptions) plausible? What negative effects might arise?
- Is the chosen methodological approach suitable and sufficient for achieving the project objective? Are alternatives required?
- At what level (multi-level approach) do you anticipate implementing additional measures to increase effectiveness?
- How will changes be measured? What indicators (fields) are most suitable?

4.1.4 Efficiency: *Is the proposed project's planned use of funds a cost-effective method to achieve its objectives?*

- To what extent can the planned measures be implemented with the envisaged funds and personnel in the proposed time period?
- To what extent can the envisaged spending be allocated cost-effectively, and are the investments, operating expenses and personnel in proportion to the intended goals?

4.1.5 Impact (significance): *What contribution does the planned project make to achieving higher-level development policy impact?*

- What particular contribution does the project objective (outcome) make to the overall objective (impact)?
- To what extent does the planned project build structures, set examples and have a broad impact? On what levels will norms or structures be changed?

4.1.6 Sustainability: *To what extent will the positive impact remain once the project has ended (without additional external funding)?*

- How can the sustainability of the results and impact be ensured and strengthened (structurally, economically, socially and ecologically)?

- What long-term capacities will be established in the beneficiaries to enable them to continue the implemented measures independently?
- What positive changes (role behaviour, mechanisms, networks, etc) will be of long-term benefit to civil society?
- What personal risks for those implementing the project, or institutional or contextual risks, may influence the sustainability of the project? How can these be minimised?

4.1.7 Initial situation and problem analysis, on macro- meso- and micro-levels

- What current problems of the beneficiaries have been identified relevant to the proposed project? Which of the causes of these problems will be prioritised and addressed in the project?
- What existing local potential, structures (institutions, networks, umbrella organizations etc.) and social mechanisms can be built on? What gaps have been identified in the system?
- Are there any approaches or results from previous development measures? If yes, how can they be extended?
- What other circumstances, for example conflict dynamics, must be taken into account in the context of?

4.1.8 Local project partner in the partner country

- Which organisation(s) have been selected as local project partner(s), and why? Who suggested the idea for the project? How will you improve the local project partner's ownership?
- Do any formal agreements exist between the stakeholders? To what extent have existing agreements between stakeholders been formalized?
- Are the partners' resources and strengths, both individually and at an organizational level, well understood?
- What relevant professional, methodological and political competencies, both at an individual and an organizational level, will be further developed?

4.1.9 Beneficiaries and other stakeholders (on a micro-, meso- and macro-level)

- How are the direct beneficiaries selected, and by whom? What criteria exist for selecting these beneficiaries?
- What is the composition of each beneficiary? How homogeneous or heterogeneous are the beneficiaries with regard to factors such as gender, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, language, and capacity, and to what extent must the project take this into account?
- What potential does each beneficiary have for self-help? How well are the beneficiaries equipped for self-help? How can local problem-solving capabilities be improved
- Do the beneficiaries and other stakeholders have a common understanding of the problems, prioritizing process and objectives of the project? Do the interests of other stakeholders align? Do any conflicts of interest exist?
- How strong is the various stakeholders' support for the project, for example, in terms of their own contribution? In what ways might they influence the project?

4.2 Specific Questions related to Project-Specific Thematic Areas

4.2.1 Stakeholders

- Do the key stakeholders for hardware investment activities (communities, water point committees etc) fulfil the following criteria:
 - Not-for profit entities (project outputs must not benefit for-profit entities!)
 - Can guarantee appropriate and sustainable long-term operation of infrastructure created in the project, in line with the project's goals and objectives
 - Can guarantee inclusive, non-discriminatory, equitable, and affordable access to project outputs and outcomes in the long run, in line with the project's goals and objectives
 - Can guarantee that any infrastructure created in the project will be built on publicly owned land and both the land and the infrastructure will remain in public, not-for-profit ownership for the long run

- There are adequate provisions in place for the democratic control of the assets (explain what these are and make recommendations for feasible improvements, if any)
- Are marginalised communities involved in the project activities e.g. youth, women or people living with disability?
- What measures will be necessary to ensure the fulfilment of the criteria in the above point?
- What measures will be necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of other outputs and outcomes (e.g., newly established or strengthened community structures, new skills and knowledge transferred in the project, behavioural change)?

4.2.2 WASH technology

- Does the proposed WASH technical designs fulfil the following criteria:
 - Aligned with national policy or guidelines
 - Moderate to high likelihood of being adopted by communities or government institutions
 - Replicability in terms of technology, materials, and cost or any other factor which should be determined by the consultant
 - Reliable in terms of ease of both use and maintenance
 - Affordability of maintenance services including desludging
 - Design has taken into consideration climate resilience
 - Design has taken into account local water sources (groundwater, rainwater or streams available, how much capacity, what quality)
 - Minimal to negligible impact on the natural environment including groundwater and other water sources
 - Collect water (ground and surface) water levels, transmissivities, water quality, etc and help identify suitable places with good recharge.
 - In terms of water quantity or even the environment. Conduct a quick check on the hydrological/hydrogeological studies could also help reduce fears of water quality. If some risks are identified in relation to water quality, a

plan on mitigation including what equipment needs to be looked into /budgeted to treat water or resolve the identified risk.

- Cost implication: for any water technology identified, conduct hydrological/hydrogeological studies which can determine the cost implications including mobilization cost.
- Look into any and recommend any environmental and social impact assessments be done before water wells/boreholes are drilled or rehabilitated.
- What measures will be necessary to ensure the fulfilment of the criteria in the above point i.e. technologies recommend or any preferable alternatives to the proposed WASH technologies?

4.2.3 Project Objectives, Logic and Activities

- After using the PESTEL model (Political, Economic, Social, Technology, Environmental, and Legal) to analyse the external factors that may affect the project success and sustainability, will the project effectively address the following parameters.
 - *Technical aspects:* Have the infrastructure development works taken into consideration hydrogeological, hydrological or engineering standards of construction? Is the WASH infrastructure designed to withstand the impact of natural disasters e.g. flooding, earthquakes etc? Is the waste by products from the WASH infrastructure, e.g. wastewater or faeces, recycled or safely reused for economic benefit, where necessary? Has the project made interlinkages between these models and identified who will benefit?
 - *Sustainability aspects:* Will the project proposal clearly stipulate sustainability measures during project inception, implementation and after project closure? Are these measures realistic to enable replicate or adoption by the local stakeholders? Are the following stakeholders willing to contribute, whether financial or materially, to the project: Target community, TA and district, existing community structures and institutions.

- *Coordination:* Will the project help to elaborate how key stakeholders (traditional leaders, NGO partners, authorities) can coordinate to sustain the project? What similar activities are being implemented within the same context or other contexts and what has been their track record for success? In addition, will the project address how coordination will be enhanced beyond the project timeline? Are these suggestions likely to be effective?
- *Advocacy:* Will the project help to promote advocacy strategies which will help to scale the approaches beyond district level? Are there any risks related to any conflicts between water needs for drinking water/household water and agriculture? Could these conflicts negatively impact the project? Recommendations for mitigation strategies?

4.2.4 Community Resilience and Livelihoods

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of existing structures or approaches at community level structures related to disaster response, risk management and disaster resilience? Do the project activities address these strengths and weaknesses?
- Does the project identify linkages with other agencies' (government, international organisations and NGOs) working in flood response, risk management and resilience building to ensure complementarity and synergy?
- What are the approaches that could improve community-based flood risk management strategies? Does the project include these approaches?
- What are the barriers and/or enablers for people to adopt climate resilience strategies? What recommendations would the consultancy team suggest for communities to overcome the barriers or leverage the successes?
- Is the existing early warning system in the area effective? Can the local stakeholder maintain or manage the early warning system? Have these factors for effectiveness, or lack thereof, been considered with the project design?
- What current catchment management efforts that could reduce soil erosion, landslides, and effects of floods? What catchment management methods are ideal for the Zomba context?

- Are there are livelihood improvement programming or community resilience building activities that could be ideal for the Zomba context, but have not been included in the project design? what makes these models more effective than what has been proposed?

5. Methodology

- Review relevant internal and external documents (see section 3.4.1 below) and conduct desk research to identify relevant data, strategies, regulations, policies, best practice, appropriate technologies, lessons learnt from other projects and other relevant information
- Collect necessary primary data, while ensuring appropriate protection standards for respondents i.e. safeguarding ethics. The consultant is at liberty, but not limited to using to using the following participatory data collection methods.
 - i. key-informant interviews
 - ii. Focus group discussions
 - iii. Household surveys
 - iv. Engineering/topographical surveys including hydrogeological surveys
 - v. Community Workshops and Participatory Appraisals
 - vi. Review of climate resilient WASH technological designs
 - vii. Business modelling and market demand analysis
 - viii. Collection of geospatial, climate or hydrological data
- Verify the established baseline data, examine intervention logic, goals, objectives, targets, and indicators, planned activities, sustainability strategy, risks and assumptions, and financial projections.
- Consult other relevant stakeholders doing similar work to determine the successes, challenges and lessons learned that could inform the design or modification of the project
- Form an opinion on feasibility of project and quality of concept, explain strengths and weaknesses, and make recommendations for improvement and optimisation.

5.1.1. List of internal documents for consultant's review:

- Needs Assessment Report
- Project Concept/Project Plan
- Current WASH project proposal and reports
- Current DRRR project and report
- Current DRRR strategy for HFHM

5.2. Relevant external documents identified by The Client for Desk Research:

- District documents including Social Economic Profile, District Strategic Investment Plan, District Development Plan, Zomba Disaster Risk Management Plan and Zomba Contingency Plan
- National policy, strategy and planning documents including 10-year Implementation Plan of Vision 2063, National Water Policy, National Sanitation Policy, Environmental Policy, Water Resources Master Plan, Water Resources Act and National Resilience Strategy,

6. Key Deliverables

- Inception report, including methodology with proposed data collection instruments.
- Presentation of preliminary results in preliminary report format and PPT, to be delivered after data collection has been completed.
- Discussion of preliminary report with the Client to determine any necessary adjustments.
- Report with detailed work plan with annexes (see table of contents attached as Annex I below, maximum of 30 pages (excluding annexes))
- Closing presentation (i.e. PPT summary and soft-copy study to be shared in advance and then discussed in a one-on-one meeting)
- Final versions of report and PPT including adjustments as discussed in closing presentation

Expected workload and timeline

- The Client estimates that the consultancy can be delivered in 15 total working days (including all workdays of all team members, but not including weekends).
- The consultancy shall be delivered 15 working days from the effective date i.e. the date when the contract will be signed between the Client and the Consultant.

7. Consultant profile

The feasibility study will be conducted by an independent consultant who will work in close collaboration with the Client or their representative. Primary stakeholders must be involved in conducting the feasibility study to best assess the inclusiveness and appropriateness of the proposed project components, given the existing circumstances in TA Kuntumanje.

The consultant should have the following attributes among others.

- a) Independence from The Client, also certified by a statement from the consultant. Any former, planned or existing business relationship, or familial relations to the third degree (including aunts, uncles, and cousins) between the consultant or the consulting team and the Client's employees or officers must be declared and communicated to BMZ before the contract is awarded.
- b) The consultancy team **MUST** have 2 experts with these qualifications to qualify:
 - i. MA/MSc or higher in Disaster Risk Management or any related field
 - ii. MSc or higher in Hydrogeology/WASH Engineering or a related field
- c) The lead consultant shall have a minimum of 10 years' experience of conducting feasibility studies of, evaluating, or implementing projects in WASH within the Malawian context
- d) The consultancy team must have and provide active contact details for at least three professional references from reputable NGOs, public agencies, or donors who can verify that the consultancy team has undertaken and delivered previous similar work to the satisfaction of other clients. Preference will be given to consultants who will provide evidence of previous work for review by the Client.

- e) At least one member of the consultancy team shall have a minimum of 3 years' experience of assessing projects based on the OECD DAC evaluation criteria

Annex I: Table of Contents for consultant's final report (30 pages max)

- 1) Executive Summary
- 2) Purpose and Use of Feasibility Study
- 3) Methodology
- 4) Participation of target community and stakeholders in the development of the project, buy-in of target community and stakeholders
- 5) Initial situation and problem analysis on community-, city-, province-, and national level
(Which current problems of the target groups have been identified and are relevant in the project design? Which of the causes are prioritized and addressed in the project? Which local potentials, existing structures (institutions, networks, umbrella organizations and others) and social mechanisms can be built upon?)

Which gaps in the system have been identified? Are there approaches and results from previous development interventions? If so, how will they be built upon? What other framework conditions, for example conflict dynamics, must be considered in the context of the planned project?)

- 6) Assessment of Principal's readiness to implement a project, what strengths justify Principal's role as implementing agency, what previous experience exists, are learnings from previous projects incorporated into project concept adequately? Are there any weaknesses that Principal needs to address before or during project implementation? Please provide specific recommendations.

7) Findings

- a. Fitness of Principal to implement the project

(Who initiated the project idea? To what extent are existing agreements between stakeholders formalized? Are there formal agreements between actors? What are the available resources and strengths of the partner known individually and at the organizational level? Which relevant technical, methodological, and political competencies should be further developed individually and at the organizational level?)

- b. Target groups and stakeholders

(How and by whom are the direct target groups selected based on which criteria? What is the composition of the respective target groups? How homogeneous or heterogeneous are the target groups regarding factors such as gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, language, capacities, and to what extent must the project take this into account? What self-help potentials do the respective target groups have? How can local problem-solving capacities be strengthened? Do the target groups and other actors have a common understanding of the problems, prioritization, and objectives of the project? Are there convergences or conflicts of interest between other actors? How strong is the support, and what

contributions are different actors willing to make to the project? What is their ability to influence the project?)

- c. Evaluation of the planned project according to OECD DAC criteria
(How is the project likely to perform on the criteria of Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability)

C.1 Relevance: Are the planned project activities appropriate for addressing the problem?

(Does the project approach address a key development problem or constraint in the partner country or region? Is the approach in line with the needs of the target groups? What changes are planned to have been accomplished by the project after it has been completed?)

C.2 Effectiveness: What is the most suitable project approach to achieving the objective

(Are the measures and the chosen methodology suitable for reaching the project objective? Should activities be planned at the meso and/or macro level (multi-level approach) to make the project more sustainable? Will use be made of synergies with interventions supported by other donors or programs? What measures does the study recommend with a view to achieving objectives? What impact logic/impact hypothesis should the project be based on? What could a meaningful logical framework look like, including suitable and informative indicators (presentation of a first rough draft of indicators and baseline data)? Who will monitor impacts? When? At what intervals? (Impact monitoring))

C.3 Efficiency: Can the objectives be achieved in an economically efficient way through the planned project?

(What financial, institutional, and human resources will be needed? Will it be possible to implement the planned measures within the time allocated for the project and based on the resources that are planned? Will it be possible to achieve the desired impacts, and will all that be possible in an economical and efficient manner (in terms of cost benefit ratio)?)

C.4 Significance / overarching development impact: Will the project help achieve broader development impacts?

(Which objectives and impacts derived from the problem/needs analysis are to be achieved, and for what target groups? To what extent will the project have a structural impact, to what extent can it serve as a model, and to what extent will it have a broad-based impact? Would it be advisable to pursue a multi-level approach (micro, meso and macro levels) to increase significance and effectiveness? To what extent have aspects relating to gender sensitivity, inclusion of persons with disabilities, cultural sensitivity, conflict sensitivity and human rights been incorporated in the project's objectives?)

C.5 Sustainability: Will the positive impact last after the project has been completed (without further external support)?

(How can sustainability of results and impacts be ensured and reinforced (in institutional, economic, social, and environmental terms)? What are the roles and responsibilities of governmental and/or civil society institutions? To what extent will the project be able to build on local potential, institutions, and procedures? What measures and instruments are best suited to harness and strengthen local ownership and initiative, participation, and capacity? Which socio-cultural barriers may impede the planned approach, and how can they be overcome? What negative consequences and impacts might result from project implementation?)

C.5.1 Risk Analysis: *To what extent will it be possible to consider and address these risks in the project/project concept (e.g., Do No Harm approach, conflict-sensitive impact monitoring, etc.)? What risks are involved in project implementation (personal risk for those implementing the project, institutional and reputational risk, contextual risk)? How can they be minimized?)*

8) Recommendations

(What concrete suggestions can be made or incorporated into the project concept in the specific context based on the main findings and the evaluation according to the DAC criteria? E.g.: Which components, if any, are missing in the project concept in order to make the cause-effect relationships more coherent and to

sustainably achieve the planned objectives? Which planned components are not suitable or may have negative effects, and for what reasons? Which assumptions of the cause-effect relationships are viable? Which findings and project-relevant data from the study are suitable for inclusion in the project logic (impact matrix of the project application)? What are the recommendations for possible indicators for impact monitoring and data collection?)

9) Annexes

- I. Stakeholder analysis with contact persons and contact information
- II. List of surveys, interviews, and focus groups discussions conducted by consultant
- III. Risk matrix
- IV. Detailed survey results
- V. Summaries of interviews and focus group discussions
- VI. Map of project area with points of relevance marked
- VII. Calculations for full-life-cycle costings of infrastructure, expected revenues and sustainability
- VIII. List of documents and other sources used