



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Evidence Review and Lessons Learnt Consultancy

Enhancing Local Efforts for Vital, Transformative, and Evidence-Based Nutrition (ELEVATE Nutrition)

ACF Reference : [FR-PA-DEP-202406]

Project and Study Summary Table

Project Name	Enhancing Local Efforts for Vital, Transformative, and Evidence-Based Nutrition (ELEVATE Nutrition)
Sector	Cash and Voucher Assistance for Nutrition
Location (country region/s)	Global
Project Duration	5 years
Starting Date	October 1, 2023
Ending Date	September 30, 2028
Project Language	English
Donor & Contribution/s	USAID (through FHI 360)
Responsible ACF HQ	ACF FRANCE
Study Type	Evidence Review/Lessons Learnt/Programmatic Guidance
Study Dates	July 1 st – September 30th 2024

Acronym List

AAH	Action Against Hunger
CVA	Cash and Vouchers Assistance
CWG	Cash Working Group
ELA	Action Against Hunger's Evaluation, Learning and Accountability Unit - UK
FHI 360	Family Health International 360
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
GNC	Global Nutrition Cluster
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
MAM	Moderate Acute Malnutrition
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNICEF	United Nations' Children's Fund
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.1. Rationale for the Project

ELEVATE Nutrition is USAID’s flagship multisectoral nutrition activity that advances the local implementation of high-quality nutrition programs and policies to improve the nutritional status of women and children, particularly in the first 1,000 days. Its focus is on bridging the gap between global evidence and local implementation. A five-year cooperative agreement (October 2023–September 2028), ELEVATE Nutrition was co-designed by the Bureau for Global Health (GH); Bureau for Resilience, Environment, and Food Security (REFS); and the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), and focuses on nutrition technical priority areas across the three Bureaus. FHI 360 leads ELEVATE Nutrition with a consortium of strategic partners, including Action Against Hunger, Bixal Solutions Inc., CNFA: Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture, GEMNet-Health, and Oxford Policy Management.

1.2. Project Goal

The Elevate project has for overall objective to advance the local implementation of high-quality, multisectoral nutrition programs and policies for women and children.

Project activities fall within three Intermediate Results (IRs):

- IR1: Sustained technical leadership to improve diet quality, strengthen programming to prevent and treat wasting, shift to healthier nutrition-related behaviors and norms, and increase the effectiveness of multisectoral nutrition governance.
- IR2: Increased local capacity to apply the evidence base for nutrition programming and policies through health and food systems, including in fragile settings, in a contextually appropriate way.
- IR3: Knowledge and learning at local, national, regional, and global levels leveraged to inform the local design, implementation, and management of multisectoral nutrition programs and policies.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

2.1. Rationale for the Study

ACF Scope of Work (SoW) under the ELEVATE project include the following:

1. Leading on ELEVATE Nutrition technical assistance related to wasting management and treatment in both development and fragile settings;
2. Contributing to ELEVATE Nutrition technical assistance on food security activities, including both food and cash assistance programming ;
3. Contributing to ELEVATE Nutrition efforts build capacity, including on improved skills and management and treatment of wasting ;
4. Providing technical expertise and leadership for the development of global or country-specific tools, guides, and resources related to AAH's core focus areas ;
5. Contributing to consortium efforts to advance multisector nutrition monitoring, evaluation, research, evidence uptake, and learning, particularly in Action Against Hunger's core focus areas and
6. Contributing to broader project knowledge management and resource creation activities as relevant and necessary.

In this SOW, and in order to achieve the *Intermediate Result 1: Sustained technical leadership to improve diet quality, strengthen programming to prevent and treat wasting, shift to healthier nutrition-related behaviors and norms, and increase the effectiveness of multisectoral nutrition governance*, AAH is looking for a consultant/a team of consultants. Their objective will be to contribute to the following sub-result “*IR 1.1: Solutions to priority program and policy design and implementation challenges for diet quality, governance, SBC, and wasting identified, improved, or developed*” by conducting the following *Activity 1.1.D.2: Development of evidence-based resources on MAM supplementation through a variety of approaches*.

2.2. Objectives of the study

To address evidence needs on dietary approaches for managing MAM, including decision-making around targeting based on risk criteria, ELEVATE Nutrition will undertake multi-year efforts in multiple areas of work.

To begin, between July 2024 and September 2024:

- A consultant/team of consultants will focus on reviewing the evidence related to using cash and vouchers assistance (CVA) to enhance access to local, nutritious foods and specially formulated foods for managing MAM. Existing evidence on CVA use for potentially managing MAM (such as considering evidence inclusive of nutritional outcomes, such as being underweight, given the lack of data on MAM), drawing on experience from both development and humanitarian sectors, will be summarized into a

report that will aim to describe evidence on the ability of CVA use to achieve nutrient needs of children with MAM building off current processes.

- In parallel, to support the evidence review, the consultant/team of consultants will conduct key informant interviews with implementers regarding lessons learned, best practices, and pitfalls regarding using the CVA approach in preventing episodes of wasting and potentially for MAM management applications. They will summarize the evidence, potential program applications, and recommendations for research or programs into a final report.
- Last, as in addition to understanding evidence-based approaches to managing MAM, decision-makers also require programmatic guidance to make informed choices around the most cost-effective and appropriate activity packages, the consultant/team of consultants will lay the groundwork to support this need by meeting with WHO, UNICEF, and WFP to understand what will and will not be included in the forthcoming operational guidance and identify gaps in which ELEVATE Nutrition can collaborate. Future activities will be determined by need and may include contributions to enhanced costing methods to support better program design and decision-making.

2.3. Users of the study

Direct users: Elevate project consortium field teams, Technical and Senior Management Teams, USAID missions, other donors, ACF-IN HQs and country offices.

Indirect users: regional and local governments, ministries, UN agencies (UNICEF, WFP, WHO) and Global Clusters, INGOS, NGOs and NGO Consortiums as well as humanitarian learning platforms (such as ALNAP).

3 STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The consultant/ team of consultants will be in charge of developing the methodology, with the support of an ACF Steering Committee composed of :

- Anne-Lyse Coutin (ACF-FR) – Cash and Voucher Assistance Senior Advisor
- Helene Pasquier (ACF-SP) – Food Security and Livelihoods Senior Advisor
- Dianne Holland (ACF-US) - Elevate Senior Advisor - Wasting
- Heather Stobaugh (ACF-US) - Senior Research and learning Specialist
- Adelaide Challier (ACF-FR) - Nutrition and Surveillance Advisor

- Eva Iraizoz Dominguez (ACF-SP) - Preventive Approach Technical Advisor

This ACF Steering Committee will regularly consult with members from the GNC Cash Working Group to get inputs and feedbacks on the methodology, tools and deliverables.

3.1 Study Briefing

Prior to the study taking place, the consultant is expected to attend a series of technical briefings with ACF technical teams engaged in the project.

3.2 Literature review

The consultant/team of consultants will undertake a desk review (including grey literature) of technical and project materials, including project documents, SOPs, evaluations, progress reports and other projects outputs (such as publications, communication materials, videos, recording etc.). The consultant will be supported to collect and gather existing evidence by ACF technical teams and relevant global cluster team members (GNC, FSC), and is as well expected to look for and gather existing evidence through its own network of technical humanitarian and development workers and implementers. Methodology and tools will be developed by the consultant/team of consultants, and will be shared with the Steering Committee for inputs and final approval.

5.2 Inception Report

At the end of the desk/literature review period and before the KII take place, the consultant/team of consultants will prepare a brief inception report, that will be written in English and will include the following sections:

- Key elements of the Terms of Reference (TORs) to demonstrate that the consultant will adhere to the TORs;
- The methodological approach to the KII including a matrix in annex to specify how the consultant will collect primary data with KII, pointing out the limitations to the methodology if any and the choice of data collection tools;
- A detailed study workplan and;
- Statement of adherence to Action Against Hunger internal Policies and outline the final report format.

The inception report will be discussed and approved by the Steering Committee in Action Against Hunger and shared with stakeholders.

5.3 Key Informants Interviews

The consultant/team of consultants will conduct a series of key informant interviews, with implementers regarding lessons learned, best practices, and pitfalls regarding using the CVA approach in preventing episodes of wasting and potentially for MAM management applications. Methodology and tools will be developed by the consultant/team of consultants, and will be shared with the Steering Committee for inputs and final approval.

5.4 Stakeholders workshop

As in addition to understanding evidence-based approaches to managing MAM, decision-makers also require programmatic guidance to make informed choices around the most cost-effective and appropriate activity packages, the consultant/team of consultants will lay the groundwork to support this need by meeting with WHO, UNICEF, and WFP to understand what will and will not be included in the forthcoming UN operational guidance and identify gaps in which ELEVATE Nutrition can collaborate.

5.5 Study /State of Evidence Report

The evaluation report shall follow the following format and be written in English:

- **Cover Page**
- **Summary Table**
- **Table of Contents**
- **List of acronyms**
- **Executive Summary** must be a standalone summary, describing the main findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations. This will be no more than 2 pages in length
- **Background Information**
- **Methodology** describes the methodology used, provide evidence of triangulation of data and presents limitations to the methodology
- **Findings** includes overall assessment of the project against the evaluation criteria, responds to the evaluation questions, all findings are backed up by evidence, cross-cutting issues are mainstreamed and; unintended and unexpected outcomes are also discussed
- **Conclusions** are formulated by synthesizing the main findings into statements of merit and worth, judgements are fair, impartial, and consistent with the findings
- **Lessons Learnt and Good Practices** present lessons that can be applied elsewhere to improve project performance, outcome, or impact and; identify good practices: successful practices from those lessons which are worthy of replication; further develop on one or more specific good practice to be showcased
- **Recommendations** should be as realistic, operational and pragmatic as possible; that is, they should take careful account of the circumstances currently prevailing in the context

of the action, and of the resources available to implement it both locally. They should follow logically from conclusions, lessons learned and good practices. The report must specify who needs to take what action and when. Recommendations need to be presented by order of priority

- **Annexes** should be listed and numbered and must include the following: Good practice document, list of documents for the literature review, list of persons interviewed, data collection instrument, TORs

The whole report shall not be longer than 30 pages, 50 pages including annexes. The draft report should be submitted no later than 10 calendar days after the last interview and 15 days before the end date of the consultancy contract. The final report will be submitted no later than the end date of the consultancy contract.

5.6 Debriefing with relevant stakeholders

The consultant/team of consultants should provide a debriefing with the relevant stakeholders (including ACF and other consortium members) on her/his draft evaluation report, and on the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study. Relevant comments should be incorporated in the final report.

6 KEY DELIVERABLES

The following are the study outputs the consultant/team of consultants will deliver to the ACF Steering Committee :

Outputs	Deadlines
Inception Report	<i>July 10th 2024</i>
Stakeholders workshop	<i>September 10th 2024</i>
Draft Evaluation Report	<i>September 15th 2024</i>
Final Evaluation Report	<i>September 30th 2024</i>

All outputs must be submitted in English and under Word Document format.

The quality of the inception report and the final report will be assessed by the ACF Steering Committee.

The consultant is expected to follow the format, structure and length as defined in the ToR.

7 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND WORKPLAN

These study TORs have been developed in a participatory manner, by ACF-IN team based on ELEVATE project documents.

The consultant will directly report to the ACF France CVA and Social Protection Technical Referent. The consultant will submit all the study outputs directly to ACF Consultancy Steering Committee. The ACF Spain Preventive Approach Technical Advisor will do a quality check (ensure required elements are there) and decide with the Steering Committee whether the report is ready for sharing. The ACF France CVA and Social Protection Technical Referent will forward a copy to key stakeholders for comments on factual issues and for clarifications. The ACF France CVA and Social Protection Technical Referent will consolidate the comments and send these to the consultant by date agreed, or as soon as the comments are received from stakeholders. The consultant will consider all comments to finalize report and will submit it to the ACF France CVA and Social Protection Technical Referent who will then officially forward to relevant stakeholders.

The ACF France CVA and Social Protection Technical Referent will benefit from the support of the other technical members of the ACF Consultancy Steering Committee for the review and validation of all outputs.

7.1 Tentative workplan

NOTE: Consultant(s) are expected to work 6 days a week (either Sundays/Fridays or whatever day the field office has off will not be paid) during their consultancy contract.

Activities	Planned Consultant Working Days
Briefings with ACF Steering Committee and other relevant technical ACF Stakeholders	1,5
Methodology design, evidence / desk review, preparation of KII tools and methodology and prepare <u>Inception Report</u>	17
KII with implementers	5
Stakeholders Workshops (WHO, UNICEF, WFP)	1,5
Debriefing with ACF Steering Committee	1
<u>Draft Report</u>	7
Action Against Hunger: Quality check and initial review by Steering Committee	NA
<u>Final report</u> on the basis of stakeholders, ACF Steering Committee, and FHI 360 comments	2
Total:	35

7.2 Profile of the consultant

The study will be carried out by a consultant/team of consultants with the following profile:

- Experience in Nutrition/Food Security sector with particular experience on CVA for Nutrition outcomes
- Technical background in Nutrition (MAM/CMAM), Food Security
- Significant field experience in the evaluation of humanitarian / development projects in CVA and Nutrition/Food Security;
- Relevant degree / equivalent experience related to the study to be undertaken;
- Significant experience in coordination, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programs;
- Good communications skills and experience of workshop facilitation;
- Ability to write clear and useful reports (may be required to produce examples of previous work);
- Fluent in English; French would be an asset
- Ability to manage the available time and resources and to work to tight deadlines;
- Independence from the parties involved.

7.3 Application procedure

All applications should be sent electronically to: acoutin@actioncontrelafaim.org with attachments in pdf and a subject line: "Elevate _ Evidence Review Consultancy", before **28th of June 2024**

Note: As part of the Consultant selection process, the best five candidates will be subjected to an interview process, as may be required by the Supply Chain and Core Technical Teams, to inform the final decision on the award of the Contract.

7.4 Evaluation of applications

The evaluation of the applications by an internal team comprising of the technical team and project manager will be conducted. Internal evaluation criteria and selection procedures from Action Against Hunger and the project will be applied.

The selection criteria used are the following:

Technical evaluation criteria	Point
(i) Quality of the approach / adherence to the ToR	30
(ii) Specialized experience, technical competence and knowledge	20
(iii) Quality of the proposed methodology	40
(iv) A realistic and affordable budget- Weighted Average	10
TOTAL:	100

Immediate exclusion criteria

- Technical offer missing
- Incomplete documentation;
- Lack of methodological note and or budget;
- Lack of previous relevant experience.

Rating of financial offers

Financial offers will be rated on scale from 0-10 based on the completeness and clarity of the information and on the apparent cost-effectiveness of the proposed action vis-à-vis the expected costs. The score is attributed by weighting every total budget against the most affordable financial proposal received, in order to include a comparative element in the final score.

8 LEGAL AND ETHICAL MATTERS

The ownership of the draft and final documentation belong to the agency, the prime (FHI 360) and the funding donor exclusively. The document, or publication related to it, will not be shared with anybody except Action Against Hunger before the delivery by Action Against Hunger of the final document to the prime (FHI 360) and the donor.

Action Against Hunger is to be the main addressee of the study and its results might impact on both operational and technical strategies. This being said, Action Against Hunger is likely to share the results of the study with the following groups:

- Donor(s)
- Governmental partners
- Various co-ordination bodies

For independent studies, it is important that the consultant does not have any links to project management, or any other conflict of interest that would interfere with the independence of the study.

8.1 Intellectual Property Rights

All documentation related to the Assignment (whether or not in the course of your duties) shall remain the sole and exclusive property of the Charity.

9 ANNEXES TO THE TORs

Elevate Project Work Plan (FY2024 Q3-Q4)