TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR IMPACT EVALUATION

dZi Foundation – Deep Development programming 2007-2018

The dZi Foundation seeks the services of a skilled evaluation consultant to perform an external impact evaluation of our overall community development programming to date. Since 2007, dZi has worked in a cluster of geographically isolated villages in Eastern Nepal, refining a community-driven model for poverty alleviation. After ten years of implementation, dZi has set a goal of expanding programming to reach double the number of beneficiaries. We are also committed to making necessary changes to our working methodology to ensure continued relevance and efficacy in the face of rapid social and political changes in Nepal. Better understanding the actual impacts of our approach and identifying areas of potential improvement are crucial to inform this growth.

This is the first external evaluation of dZi projects commissioned to date.

About dZi/Project Summary

dZi was established by a pair of US-based alpinists in 1998, and has focused upon supporting Nepal’s most isolated communities since this time. Over the past ten years, the organization has refined a model for locally-driven community development referred to as deep development. The objectives of the deep development approach are to increase the overall well-being of all 40,000 community members in the dZi working areas in remote Eastern Nepal, as well as ensuring the sustainable use, maintenance and continuation of completed projects after the tenure of support ends.

Projects are implemented via long-term partnerships with local communities and local grassroots NGOs. dZi partners with local NGOs and community members throughout an annual project identification, implementation, monitoring, and maintenance cycle. A typical partnership will last 8-10 years, or until a mutually established set of goals has been achieved. Annual projects vary, but include infrastructure construction (bridges, school buildings, etc), sanitation (ODF projects, toilet construction, eco-san urine recycling), agriculture and income generation initiatives. All projects are implemented and monitored using a similar modality to ensure complimentary impacts and transfer of lessons learned.

After a decade of partnerships, we are beginning to phase our support out of five local communities. We aim to better understand the actual impacts of our work in these communities, to identify challenges, and to better understand what worked and what did not. This will be used to inform our strategy for future expansion.
Our working areas are also changing rapidly in response to the Nepal Government’s decentralization of authority and the empowerment of local administrations, out-migration, and the expansion of rural roads. We seek to better understand how this changing context impacts the effectiveness and relevance of the deep development approach as well as what, if any, changes should be made. The recent consolidation of rural political units and new administrative structure will also inform our plans to scale programs for maximum impact and efficiency.

dZi measures success by tracking a series of 35 community-selected indicators of ‘prosperity’ that are updated bi-annually. These indicators are organized into seven elements – public infrastructure, environmental health, public health, community unity, wisdom/education, income/assets, and traditional culture. This framework is also used as a basis for project identification and prioritization, and helps us understand how the local context is changing – both positively and negatively – as a result of our programs.

Other indicators and tools are used to track specific project objectives and are utilized for internal reviews and donor reporting. These tools should be verified through the final evaluation, and suggestions for improvement are welcome.

**Evaluation Stakeholders**
The results of this evaluation are primarily intended for use internally by dZi staff, board members, and donors to inform improvements to the approach and plans for scaling. Results will be also shared with local partners to inspire learning. Findings and final reports will be shared with the Vitol Foundation – the funder of this evaluation – and may be posted publically on the dZi.org website or other forums. Should the consultant or dZi chose to publish the results of the evaluation in a public or academic journal, both parties reserve the right to do so with permission from the other.

**Evaluation Objectives**
The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the project’s overall:

- **Relevance** – The extent to which the completed works are consistent with the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries, especially given the changing context in the field

- **Effectiveness** – The degree to which the stated objectives of the approach have been achieved

- **Inclusion** – The extent to which the project supported the entire target population, including marginalized or isolated groups

- **Sustainability** – The extent to which the benefits from the project are likely to continue after the project is completed

- **Impact** – The long-term changes that can be attributed to project – directly, indirectly, intended or unintended.
The evaluation should assess the above with relation to two broad questions –

What significant changes – positive and negative - and achievements occurred in the lives of the beneficiaries during the project?

How can the program approach be improved and expanded most effectively?

Consultants are welcome to propose alternative questions.

In relation to this, the evaluation should explore the following sub-questions.

What?
- What have been the major outcomes of the project – both expected and unexpected?
- What changes has the project made to the quality of life for the beneficiaries?
- Who benefitted from project activities and in what ways?
- Were there any groups that benefitted more or less than other groups?
- To what extent can the outcomes identified be attributed to the project itself?
- What, if any, is the long-term change created by the project activities?
- Did other actors working with or near beneficiaries influence project outcomes? If so, in what manner?

How?
- How accurate is the strategy of the approach as expressed in the theory of change? Is it effective overall? Where are the gaps?
- Are there any considerations that should be made before replicating the approach on a larger scale?
- What overall lessons have been learned?
- How effective have the projects monitoring, management, learning and financial systems been? How can these be improved?
- How did dZi’s working relationship with our local partners effect the overall project outcomes? Are there ways this can be improved?
- How can dZi’s working relationship with local government be improved to increase project impact and reach?
- How effective will the current model be in the coming years, given the rapidly shifting political and social landscape? Are there changes that can be made to increase such?

As above, consultants are welcome to suggest alternative questions.

2. Provide recommendations for continued project interventions and scale-up
Learning from this evaluation should inform plans for expansion and improvement of the approach. Recommendations for adaptation or modification of program methodologies,
strategies or approaches to better meet the changing needs of our local partners are very welcome.

Methodology

The evaluation should consist of:

a) Document review/familiarization with the subject
Review of existing internal and external documentation necessary to understand the project approach and context of the evaluation. This will include existing monitoring and evaluation data and reports completed by dZi, internal documentation and policies, donor reports and other data from dZi or secondary sources. Consultants may also choose to interview dZi staff members, donors, or other agencies working in similar areas/sectors to better understand the approach and the context in which evaluation feedback will be applied.

b) Development of evaluation approach, data collection strategy and methods
The consultant should finalize the evaluation strategy and overall logistics for data collection. dZi welcomes mixed methodologies, especially participatory methods that focus on sharing data with project stakeholders directly.

This should include:
- A detailed timeline and workplan, including travel itinerary
- Description of overall evaluative approach and scope
- Key interview questions
- Data collection framework and tools
- List of stakeholders to be consulted

dZi will leave room for discretion when determining which stakeholders will be consulted and overall sample size of participants. Given the vast number of project beneficiaries (40,000+) it is crucial that evaluation methods reach a representative sample of community members and that special effort is made to reach marginalized or isolated groups. Stakeholders should include community members, dZi field staff, dZi NGO partners, local government representatives, and wider stakeholders as relevant.

c) Meeting with dZi to discuss implementation
The consultant should contact dZi immediately prior to beginning fieldwork to ensure smooth implementation of the evaluation. As travel to and between dZi project areas is difficult, dZi will arrange transportation and travel logistics for the consultant.

d) Field visit(s)/Data collection
Field visits will take place in dZi partner communities in Solukhumbu, Khotang and/or Bhojpur districts in eastern Nepal. Visits are expected to take between 15-20 days and will require rough travel – often on foot – and staying in local accommodations. Data collection
should include time spent with dZi representatives in Kathmandu and any remote interviews.

e) Provide a debrief to dZi
Shortly after the completion of field work the consultant should present preliminary findings and recommendations via group discussion or presentation.

f) Submit a draft evaluation report
The draft report must be submitted to dZi for review within 4-6 weeks of the completion of field work and should not exceed 25 pages in length. Content should follow the guidelines indicated in this document.

g) Submit a final evaluation report
The final report must be submitted within 3 weeks of receiving feedback from dZi stakeholders, and should incorporate such where relevant.

Deliverables

Deliverables should include the following:

- An inception report including:
  - A summary of the evaluation methodology and techniques that includes workplans, itinerary, data collection methodologies, stakeholders consulted, sampling framework, qualitative and quantitative protocols for data collection and analysis etc.
  - Explanations of any expansion or improvements to the overall scope of the evaluation
- Presentation of preliminary findings
- Draft evaluation report written in English that meets the requirements below
- An electronic copy of all final data (qualitative and quantitative) collected
- Final evaluation report

The structure of the report should include the following:

- Executive Summary
- Brief background/context
- Brief summary of methodology
- Main findings of the evaluation
- Recommendations for future consideration

In order to ensure that the consultant has the necessary support to perform the evaluation, dZi commits to provide the following:

- Access to internal files including donor reports, monitoring and evaluation data, and internal documents
- Access to dZi staff, board members, partner organizations, stakeholders and donors
- Timely feedback and support to the consultant throughout the project
Logistical support to make the field visit successful. This includes support with transportation to the field, itinerary preparation, logistics, troubleshooting, and introductions to stakeholders when needed.

**Schedule of Activities:**
TBD

**Contract and reporting details:**

**Type of contract.** The consultant will be given a fixed-price contract to include all of the activities and deliverables listed above, and travel to Kathmandu if necessary. dZi will cover all local transportation, logistics for travel to project sites, and in-country accommodations.

The consultant will be expected to travel to and between our remote project sites, including possible travel on public transportation over extremely rough terrain, and multi-day travel on foot over steep trails. Accommodations in the field will be rough and will likely involve camping or sleeping in local homes.

**Reporting.** The consultant will report to the dZi Executive Director directly. For troubleshooting or issues that arise during fieldwork, including local logistics, the consultant will report to the dZi Deputy Country Director in Nepal.

**Desired qualifications and experience.** Preference will be given to applicants with the following:

- Proven experience with project evaluations and qualitative data collection – including at least 5-10 years of experience in carrying out evaluations
- Demonstrated experience in the poverty alleviation and community development sector
- Experience traveling and working in remote and mountainous areas, preferably in Nepal
- Ability to produce well written and insightful reports in English
- Ability to speak and understand Nepali is a strong advantage

Proposals should be no longer than 5 pages excluding CVs, budgets and work samples. Proposals must include:

- Up-to-date CVs of all team members
- Short cover page detailing how the candidate meets the required qualifications, skills, and experience
- Comments on these ToRs, including propositions for improvement and a short description of the evaluation spirit and philosophy of the consultant
- A short description of the evaluation approach, activities, and estimated timeline
- Detailed budget – including daily rates for team members and international travel costs
- An example of previous work completed on a similar assignment

Please submit all proposals to evaluation@dzi.org no later than July 15, 2019. Any questions or requests for further information should be directed to ben@dzi.org.