BASELINE STUDY TERMS OF REFERENCE (TORS) FOR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF LANDSCAPES (SAMALA) PROJECT

1 PROGRAMME PROFILE

Project Name	Sustainable Management of Landscapes (SAMALA)
Project Goal	The overall project objective is to support the Malawi Government to address land degradation. The central objective is to contribute to the restoration of degraded landscapes and to support sustainable livelihoods in 7 selected EPAs in Mzimba, Kasungu, Ntchisi and Dowa districts (Luwerezi and Khosolo EPAs in Mzimba, Chulu EPA in Kasungu, Kalira and Chikwatula EPAs in Ntchisi, and Nachisaka and Nalunga EPAs in Dowa).
Programme Consortium Members	1. Total LandCare - TLC 2. Youth Net and Counselling - YONECO 3. International Centre for Research in Agroforestry - ICRAF
Project Outcomes	● **Specific Objective 1:** Improved catchment management with sustained land productivity ● **Specific Objective 2:** Strengthened inclusive community governance structures and local institutions for sustainable management of landscapes ● **Specific Objective 3:** Increased land tenure security and community knowledge on existing regulatory frameworks ● **Specific Objective 4:** Targeted communities have diversified and strengthened livelihoods
Beneficiary Target	24,500 Households
Location	Mzimba, Kasungu, Ntchisi, and Dowa
Project Period	5 years from 1st September, 2022 to 31st August, 2027

2 CONTEXT AND PROGRAMME BACKGROUND

Land degradation remains a serious challenge across Malawi. Most rural households are subsistence farmers with small land holdings of 0.8-1.2 hectares who are vulnerable to climate change. The majority of the smallholder farmers are unable to make the critical trade-off between immediate short-term needs and sustained use of natural resources including land. The results limit their ability to manage and adapt to climate change which has severe consequences on food security, nutrition, incomes, and access to water and energy. The results are reflected in declining crop yields and soil fertility with alarming rates of environmental degradation. In Malawi, loss of topsoil averages 29 tons ha-1 per annum with up to 100 tons ha-1 on steep hillsides. An analysis of soil erosion rates[1] in selected EPAs in Mzimba and Kasungu indicated soil erosion rates ranging from 1.07 to 10.0 tonnes/ha/year. The attendant impacts on the environment threaten the function of watersheds with far-reaching effects on agriculture and livelihoods. Forests are also experiencing a high deforestation rate estimated at 2.8% representing an annual average loss of 250,000ha of forest cover.

[1] Omuto CT and Vargas RR. 2019. Soil Loss Atlas of Malawi. 440 pp. Rome, FAO.

SAMALA project will implement interventions on sustainable land management to address land degradation in selected EPAs in Mzimba, Kasungu, Ntchisi, and Dowa districts. The project will work with local structures from the district to the community level to ensure that the challenges being faced by the communities are addressed in a participatory way, and for the sustainability of the interventions/activities. All activities will be streamlined and vetted through the District Agriculture Extension Coordination Committees (DAECC), District Executive Committees, (DEC), Area Development Committees (ADC), Area Stakeholder Panels (ASP), Village Development Committees (VDCs), Village Agriculture Committees (VACs) and other relevant structures. The project will build the capacity of local structures to enable them carry out their roles and responsibilities and to ensure that issues of land degradation are addressed. The targeted households will be trained in sustainable land and water management practices, and catchment management. The project will use an integrated catchment management approach based on the **Malawi National Guidelines: Integrated Catchment Management and Rural Infrastructure Volumes I and II**. This will entail conducting a participatory catchment evaluation and developing catchment management plans with clear lines of responsibility between the communities, project team, and other key stakeholders. Land restoration options to be considered will include soil and water conservation, organic manure application, agroforestry, and forestry through tree planting/enrichment and natural regeneration. The project will also promote natural resource and agro-based enterprises.

The proposed project design is well aligned with some of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and relevant national policies and strategies. Overall, the project aligns to SDGs 2, 5, 13, 15, and 17. Nationally, the proposed action aligns and contributes significantly to the Malawi 2063, the National Forest policy, the National Climate Change Management Policy, the Malawi's National Adaptation Programme of Action, the National Agricultural Investment Program, and the National Agriculture Policy. The project is also aligned to the Flanders Malawi 2019-2023 Country Strategy Paper (CSP) for Development Cooperation and will contribute towards domains of change No. 3: Sustainable land management enables all farmers to ensure the sustainable use of land resources and to improve the resilience of their farms, and is also very well aligned to the Mission Strategy of the Embassy of Ireland, Lilongwe 2021-2026 which also focuses on empowerment of young women, and increased food and income security.

2.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE CONSORTIUM MEMBERS

2.1.1 TOTAL LANDCARE (TLC)

TLC is a registered non-governmental organisation founded in 1999. With its headquarters in Malawi, TLC is also registered and operating in Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia, each with fully constituted Boards of Trustees.

TLC's mission is to transform the livelihoods of rural households from subsistence to prosperity and self-reliance. Achieving this goal involves building the capacity of organised groups of farmers and cooperatives to integrate sustainable agricultural and natural resource practices with initiatives to strengthen livelihoods and value chains linked to micro-finance and markets. The ultimate aim is to increase farm productivity, diversification, profitability and resilience with lower input costs and sound management of the landscape for current and future generations.

TLC boosts vast experience in capacity building and development of participatory local governance structures with communities to improve the conservation, biodiversity and sustainable management of natural resources on communal and public lands. It also has experience in participatory extension approaches to integrate sustainable agricultural and NRM practices with market-led value chains to increase food security, nutrition, incomes and resilience to climate change. Over the years TLC has supported forming, strengthening and training farmer organizations (FOs) with links to markets and off-takers for selling produce

while attracting investment from the private sector to expand their businesses, and increasing access to micro-finance for FOs through Village Savings and Loan groups (VS&L), contracts with off-takers, and loans from Commercial Banks. TLC has pioneered the development, testing and promotion of sustainable agricultural and NRM practices suited to different agro-ecological zones based on farm level results such as:

- Crop diversification with emphasis on drought tolerant varieties as well as high value food and cash crops integrated with climate smart practices such as natural tree regeneration on farm, agroforestry and conservation agriculture.
- Irrigation of high value food and cash crops with solar systems, drip kits, stream diversion and treadle pumps tailored to match the resources available, terrain and farmer capabilities to increase food security, nutrition, incomes and climate resilience.
- Integrating livestock into farming systems to increase incomes and animal protein in the diet while reducing risks and vulnerability to climate change from over-reliance on rain fed farming.
- Promotion of animal draft power and small-scale mechanization with local entrepreneurs and agro-dealers.
- Integrated watershed management and sustainable use of natural resources to restore and build ecosystem resilience.
- Development and management of sustainable models to manage commercial forest plantations.
- Design and use of the TLC rocket stove, a durable cook-stove registered with the UN CDM and used by 200,000+ households in Malawi alone. With a wood savings of 65% vs. open fires, it has immediate impacts on deforestation and saves enormous time and labour by women and girls to find, cut and carry wood far from the household. The results greatly lower the burden on women and girls for this labour intensive task while reducing the risks of injury and assaults.

2.1.2 YOUTH NET AND COUNSELLING (YONECO)

YONECO is a youth-focused and women-serving non-governmental organization formed and registered in 1997. It is registered under the Trustees Incorporation (1962) Act, Non-Governmental Organisations (2001) Act and is also a member of Council for Non-Governmental Organisation in Malawi (CONGOMA). YONECO's contribution to world development is enshrined in supporting the realization of a self-reliant, healthy, empowered, resilient and inclusive society that respects democratic values and principles (**Vision**). YONECO is committed to empowering youth, women and children, promoting good health, human rights and democratic society, adapting and mitigating the impact of climate change and conducting research for evidence based programming and advocacy (**Mission**).

Youth and women empowerment is a central component in **YONECO** programming for delivering direct benefits to rural households and local rural communities through attainment of economic independence, as well as the reduction of their vulnerabilities to gender-based violence, gender inequalities and negative social norms. YONECO, existing for 25 years, has worked towards offsetting existing gender inequalities and pre-existing vulnerabilities, limited participation and empowerment of youth and women to cater for physical, social and economic well-being for youth and women. YONECOs' innovation on communication, outreach and advocacy will help to support engaging and empowering communities especially youth and women on sustainable land management, environmental management and conservation.

YONECO thrives on innovative programmes and strategies aimed at reaching vulnerable youth, women and children in Malawi, offsetting existing gender inequalities and pre-existing vulnerabilities, limited participation and empowerment of youth and women. The organization harnesses innovations to bring value to programming through community mobilization and

communication using the **Tithandizane National Helpline Services** providing toll-free call in services on 116, 5600, 6600 and 393, and **YONECO National Radio Station,** with listenership of over 4.9 million people, channelling for participation and contribution from youth and women. On average, 320 youth and women participate daily in the radio programs via phone-in and SMS, translating into direct engagement with at least 116,800 young people and women annually.

2.1.3 INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN AGROFORESTRY (ICRAF)

ICRAF with its Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, operates six regional programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America and conducts research in 33 countries around the developing world. ICRAF's work is primarily delivered through the six regional programmes supported by Nairobi-based laboratories and technical units. ICRAF's global team of science, research, development, institutional and resource professionals seek to better combine the science of discovery with the science of delivery – in essence, connecting better the research/science with development. Achieving 'greener' and better governed landscapes is what ICRAF is uniquely able to do – developing systems that combine more productive trees with more resilient and profitable agricultural systems based on sound understanding of the health of the soil, land and people.

ICRAF has been implementing agroforestry, food security, forest and land restoration programmes in Malawi for more than three decades, promoting agroforestry technologies and approaches based on evidence of what works in specific contexts which is critical for scaling. As a-research for development organisation ICRAF works in partnership with other organisations and collaborates closely with government departments which provides a pathway to influencing policy and creation of enabling conditions for project implementation and scaling of options.

ICRAF promotes agroforestry technologies to ensure sustainable farming practices which ensure increased resilience of rural communities in the long-run, especially in the face of climate change. The various practices have been responsive and adaptable in nature, to respond to both short- and long-term environmental change and events. Agroforestry enables farmers to adapt to land use changes while managing land degradation for sustained land productivity. By integrating tree crops in crop systems farmers have experienced increased soil and crop productivity. ICRAF has demonstrated that agroforestry systems protect and conserve biodiversity, soil, water, wildlife habitats and other natural resources.

2.2 THE PROGRAMME STRATEGY AND RESULTS FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the project is to support the Malawi government in addressing land degradation. The objective is directly related to the Flanders Malawi 2019-2023 Country Strategy Paper (CSP) for Development Cooperation and will contribute towards domains of change No. 3: Sustainable land management enables all farmers to ensure the sustainable use of land resources and to improve the resilience of their farms. The project is also very well aligned to the Mission Strategy of the Embassy of Ireland, Lilongwe 2021-2026 which also focuses on empowerment of young women, and increased food and income security.

2.2.2 PROGRAM/PROJECT SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The central objective is to contribute to the restoration of degraded landscapes to support sustainable livelihoods in 7 selected EPAs in Mzimba, Kasungu, Ntchisi and Dowa districts (Luwerezi and Khosolo EPAs in Mzimba, Chulu EPA in Kasungu, Kalira and Chikwatula EPAs in Ntchisi, and Nachisaka and Nalunga EPAs in Dowa). The project will focus on: 1) Improving catchment management with sustained land productivity; 2) Strengthening inclusive community governance structures and local institutions for sustainable

management of landscapes; 3) Increasing land tenure security and community knowledge on existing regulatory frameworks; and 4) Diversification and strengthening of livelihoods.

SAMALA project will be guided by sustainable land management (SLM) principles of; a) land-user-driven and participatory approaches, b) integrated use of natural resources at ecosystem and farming systems levels, c) multi-level and multi-stakeholder involvement, and d) targeted policy and institutional support, including development of incentive mechanisms for SLM adoption and income generation at the local level.

2.2.3 RESULTS

The central objective of the project will be achieved through the following four interlinked Strategic Objectives/Outcomes;

- **Specific Objective 1:** Improved catchment management with sustained land productivity
- **Specific Objective 2:** Strengthened inclusive community governance structures and local institutions for sustainable management of landscapes
- **Specific Objective 3:** Increased land tenure security and community knowledge on existing regulatory frameworks
- **Specific Objective 4:** Targeted communities have diversified and strengthened livelihoods

2.2.4 BENEFICIARIES AND TARGET GROUPS

The project will target a total of 24,500 farming households, 7,000 in Mzimba, 3,500 in Kasungu, 7,000 in Ntchisi, 7,000 in Dowa. Out of the total targeted farmers, 60% will be women while 40% will be youth. The project will also include people living with Albinism, Disability, HIV and AIDS, and other marginalized groups among the targeted population.

In addition, the project will target community local governance structures (ADCs, VDCs, VNRMCs), especially those involved in natural resource use and management, and other local governance structures, community based organizations (CBOs) as secondary beneficiaries of the project. The project will benefit these structures by building their technical and governance capacities based on gaps identified through organizational capacity assessments. The project will work with about 49 VDCs, 49 VNRMCs and approximately 147 Village committees during the implementation period.

3 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM BASELINE

The Baseline study is intended to provide social, economic and environmental data at the beginning of the project. SAMALA Baseline study will be completed as part of project start-up activities, with local stakeholders, to measure the status of all indicators and to understand the starting point of key elements of the work and intervention against which later progress will be measured. This will enable project indicators at output and goal/outcome level to be measured and tracked, but also understand the prevailing conditions in the program environment.

SAMALA project has just been launched, adaptations and minor changes of outcomes and indicators might occur. The consultant will therefore be expected to review the logical framework for the project and propose re-definition, removal, or inclusion of the indicators as appropriate, including providing suggestions on the most appropriate units of measure for each indicator.

The consultant will work closely with the SAMALA Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL), and Programming Teams from the consortium organizations on the expected result areas, and will report directly to the MEL Team of SAMALA consortium. The baseline

information is primarily aimed at the programme staff, partners and stakeholders who will use it for tracking and measuring progress over time as a result of the planned interventions.

3.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE TASK

a. Produce baseline values, benchmarking, for key programme indicators at impact, outcome and output levels in line with the SAMALA Program Results Framework.

b. Assess the current methodologies for climate resilience, agriculture, and natural resource management for the farming households in the targeted districts.

c. Assess the productivity and diversification of climate adaptive agriculture interventions adopted and used by farming households in the targeted districts.

d. Assess the profitability of cash crops through the availability and access to markets in the targeted districts.

e. Assess the improvement on gender equality in the division of production work associated with the production of different value chains, control of agriculture proceeds, and inclusion in governance of natural resource management.

f. Assess the policy and regulatory environment guiding the agriculture, climate resilience, natural resource management, and land tenure security sectors in Malawi.

4 METHODOLOGY

It is expected that the Consultant will use a mixed methods approach to utilize both qualitative and quantitative means in data collection, analysis and interpretation. The Consultant will be expected to explain the sampling methodology deployed, the sample size, and how findings of the Baseline study can be generalized and applied to the target population; develop data collection tools and a systematic methodology for data collection; and use data analytical techniques and analyse data for the baseline study. The Consultant should also recommend mechanisms for tracking progress of project implementation including sources of information and the means of verification. The Consultant findings should include the following through: -

a. **The socio-economic characteristics:** The Consultant is expected to expose the baseline socio economic characteristics of the households in the project implementation areas. These include household food security levels, sources of livelihoods, household income levels and the sources of income, nature and types of on-farm and off-farm businesses, household access to markets, household access to agriculture extension services, and social inclusion.

b. **Demographic data:** In the baseline report, the Consultant will include household demographic information, including age, gender, education levels, family sizes, land holding sizes and marital status. All data collected must be sex disaggregated.

c. **Farming systems:** The Consultant is expected to produce baseline information/status in relation to common farming practices, common types of crops grown, common livestock classes reared, yield levels for main crops, level of alternative energy sources, reforestation, agroforestry practices and technologies and other relevant characteristics.

d. **Governance of natural resource management:** The Consultant is expected to provide information on the status of different governance structures/systems for management of natural resources, both land and forests, including their roles and capacities. Inclusions of women and youth and their roles should also be unearthed.

e. **Key stakeholders:** The consultant will list all the key stakeholders in the sectors relevant to the project including areas where they operate. This will include service providers in extension, policy formulation, advocacy, input supply, National Task Forces including membership, and players in research with any on-going work or published materials that would be useful to the harmonized programme.

5 TIMELINES AND DELIVERABLES

The assignment shall run for a maximum period of **35 (thirty-five)** days. At a minimum, the Consultant is expected to update the SAMALA Consortium MEL and Programming Teams on progress of work as outlined below:

5.1 INCEPTION REPORT

The Consultant shall submit, within **7 (seven) days** after award of contract**, three (3) hard** copies and **one (1) electronic** copy of an Inception report to TLC for review and comments by SAMALA MEL and Programming team. The report shall be comprehensive, clear and concise, demonstrating the understanding of the Terms of Reference (ToRs) and the subsequent assignment approach that sets out the methodology, strategy, proposed data collection instruments and timeline of activities. The Consultant shall incorporate comments into the inception report before the implementation of the assignment.

5.2 PRELIMINARY FINDINGS PRESENTATIONS

Following the field visit, the Consultant shall prepare a short presentation of the initial findings, including at least **two (2)** case studies, and tentative conclusions and recommendations. The presentation will be used to debrief the SAMALA MEL and Programming team and other relevant parties, to identify and address any misinterpretations or gaps.

5.3 BASELINE DRAFT REPORT

Building on the debrief and feedback received from the presentation of Preliminary Findings, the Consultancy team shall, within **25** (thirty) days of signing the contract, submit to TLC **three (3) hard** copies and **one (1) electronic** copy of a draft Baseline report for review by the SAMALA MEL and Programming team and other relevant parties.

5.4 FINAL BASELINE REPORT

Within **35 (thirty-five)** days of signing the contract the consultant shall submit to TLC **five (5)** copies and **one (1) electronic** copy of the final Baseline report. The final report shall take into account all the comments and feedback on the draft report. At a minimum, the report shall include; table of contents, list of acronyms, executive summary, introduction, baseline context and purpose, baseline framework and methodology, findings, case studies, conclusions and recommendations. Annexes should include the TORs, inception report, Project Results Framework with baseline values from the baseline survey, list of documents reviewed, list of persons interviewed or consulted, data collection instruments, and the Consulting team members.

5.5 BASELINE REPORT POWERPOINT PRESENTATION AND BRIEF

Alongside the Final Baseline report, the Consultant shall prepare and submit a **PowerPoint** presentation and two-page **Baseline Brief** to facilitate sharing of the key findings, conclusions and recommendations. The Brief will include project information; baseline

background (baseline purpose, team members, implementation timeframe, methodology); and baseline results: key findings, conclusions, and key recommendations.

6 RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 CONSULTANT

The Consultant will be responsible for fulfilling the following major tasks:

a. Assembling and leading the Baseline Study team.
b. Reviewing all the secondary information sources and other related project documents.
c. Designing the Baseline Study work plan and methodology, and sharing and agreeing upon it with SAMALA consortium members before commencement of the actual work.
d. Developing and agreeing with SAMALA consortium members on Baseline Study data collection tools (e.g. Household survey, FGD and KII questions, etc.).
e. Training enumerators and pretesting the Baseline Study tools, leading on field testing of the tools, and incorporating necessary changes from field testing into the tools.
f. Field work for data collection (FGDs, KIIs, visits, observation etc.).
g. Data analysis.
h. Preparing the Baseline report using appropriate tables, graphs and other formats and presenting the quantitative and qualitative results benchmarked with expected indicators.
i. Sharing and presenting the draft Baseline Study report to SAMALA Consortium members for feedback.
j. Presenting the Baseline Study final report as per received feedback.
k. Submit Baseline data set in SPSS or Stata format.

6.2 SAMALA PROJECT CONSORTIUM

Responsibilities of SAMALA Project will be as follows:

a. Compile and make all needed documentation available for the consultants.
b. Arrange meetings with concerned parties in the target areas.
c. Give feedback and approve the deliverables described in this TOR.

6.3 BUDGET AND PAYMENT PROCEDURE

The Consultant shall prepare a budget and include all costs required to carry out the Baseline Study. Fee payment for the consultant will be made as follows:

- 40% advance payment after signing the contract
- 60% upon final acceptance of the final deliverable

7 REQUIRED EXPERTISE AND QUALIFICATIONS

The Consultant must be a suitably qualified team of individuals or consulting firm with the following qualifications.

a) The team must include holders of an advanced degree in Development Studies, Nutrition, Economics, Agriculture Economics, Agribusiness, Land Management/Administration, Statistics, and other relevant qualifications.

b) More than 7 years of progressive knowledge and practical experience in conducting baseline studies and evaluations. Quantitative and qualitative statistical analysis skills are essential.

c) Experience in using digital data collection tools such as Open Data Kit (ODK) and Kobo.

d) Experience in conducting Baseline studies of similar projects funded by development partners in Malawi is an added advantage.

e) Documentation/report writing skills are vital.

f) Clear understanding of the Malawi smallholder farmer agriculture, climate change, and land tenure security policies and regulatory environment is required

8 METHOD OF APPLICATION

Interested applicants, firms or individuals, should submit technical and financial proposals including consultants' CVs, work plan and timelines, and a copy of a report of similar consultancy previously conducted to the address below by **2nd March, 2023.**

Applications should be clearly labelled **"SAMALA Baseline Study"** on the submission envelope**.** Late applications will automatically be disqualified, and only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. **Note: Applications via email will not be considered.**

The Internal Procurement Committee

Total Land Care

Area 12, Plot No. 12/520

P.O Box 2440

Lilongwe

9 DISCLAIMER

TLC is not responsible for the security, medical care, terminal or other benefits apart from those specified in this contract. In case of injury or death arising from a motor vehicle accident, the Consultant will be covered through comprehensive motor vehicle insurance.