

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Research Team / Research Company for the Internal Impact Assessment of LEDP Phase 1

Item	Description
Required service	Research team / research company to operationalise and conduct the LEDP Phase 1 Internal Impact Assessment
Contract type	Service Contract
Indicative assignment period	September - November 2026
Fieldwork start	No later than 30 September 2026
Contractor completion	Primary report and complete evidence package by 7 November 2026; clarification support up to 13 November 2026, if requested
Final Project IA report	Finalised by LEDP by 20 November 2026
Geographic focus	Guria, Kvemo Kartli and the Kolkheti National Park / Samegrelo-Guria intervention area, plus selected national-level respondents
Working languages	Georgian for the fieldwork; English for analytical deliverables and primary report

1. BACKGROUND

The Local Economic Development Project in Georgia (LEDP) is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and WINS Global. Phase 1 runs from December 2023 to November 2026, working in Guria, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Kvemo Kartli and at national level with relevant public institutions. The Project aims to contribute to more inclusive local economic development by strengthening local economic actors and institutions, improving access to business services, markets and finance, supporting locally driven economic initiatives, and strengthening public-private cooperation.

LEDP applies a Market Systems Development (MSD) approach, seeking to facilitate sustainable changes in the behaviour, capacities, relationships, incentives and practices of market-system actors rather than primarily delivering services directly. Its Monitoring and Results Measurement (MRM) system is aligned with the DCED Standard for Results Measurement. The Impact Assessment (IA) should therefore apply an MSD/DCED lens by tracing intervention result chains, testing key causal links and assumptions, assessing behavioural and institutional change, examining LEDP's contribution and additionality, and considering sustainability and prospects for wider/systemic change.

Phase 1 includes sector-focused interventions in Wine in Kvemo Kartli, Tea in Guria, and Tourism around Kolkheti National Park, as well as national-level work supporting the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG) to strengthen LED coordination between local and national levels.

The interventions differ considerably in maturity. While activities and outputs have largely been delivered, many result pathways have reached only output or early-outcome level. Some interventions show emerging changes in business behaviour, organisational capacity, market relationships or public-sector responsiveness, while others have not progressed as intended. The IA is therefore not expected to demonstrate mature economic impact across all interventions. Instead, it should establish the highest result level that can credibly be evidenced, explain why expected results did or did not materialise, and identify credible prospects for further results in the near future where supported by evidence. Prospective results must be clearly distinguished from results already achieved.

The IA is an internal assessment rather than an independent external evaluation. LEDP has developed the core methodology, intervention-specific assessment plans, proposed sampling, result pathways and draft data-collection tools. The selected research team/company will review and practically adjust the methodology where necessary, translate and adapt the tools into Georgian, plan and conduct fieldwork in close coordination with LEDP, analyse and

consolidate the evidence, develop case studies, and prepare a primary assessment report. LEDP will retain responsibility for the final interpretation, alignment with Project strategy and MRM evidence, and finalisation of the overall IA report.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTANCY

The overall objective is to generate credible, triangulated and well-organised primary evidence for the LEDP Phase 1 Internal Impact Assessment; provide a robust analytical basis for Project learning and accountability; and assess the level of results actually reached by the selected Phase 1 interventions, without assuming that all interventions generated outcome or impact-level change. Specifically:

- Assess changes in capacities, practices, behaviours, relationships, service provision, collective action, public-sector responsiveness, market access and early enterprise performance where these are relevant and observable.
- Assess LEDP's contribution and additionality, including what would likely have happened without LEDP, the role of other actors and contextual factors, and the strength of evidence supporting causal claims.
- Assess sustainability: whether changed practices, services, organisations, coordination mechanisms and relationships are likely to continue without ongoing LEDP support.
- Explore signs and prospects of wider/systemic change where evidence permits, while avoiding unsupported claims of scale or systemic impact.
- Analyse non-progression and failed/partially realised result pathways, including critical assumptions, institutional barriers, demand/incentive constraints and lessons for future design.
- Generate selected case studies that illustrate mature results, contribution pathways, system/institutional change or important non-progression lessons.
- Produce a complete, traceable qualitative and quantitative evidence base that LEDP can use to finalise the IA and report to the donor.

3. KEY RESULTS AND INDICATORS TO BE ASSESSED

The assessment will be guided by the Project logframe, intervention result chains and sector-specific IA plans. Not every indicator is expected to be measurable for every intervention. The research team must assess indicators only where the relevant result pathway has matured sufficiently and must clearly distinguish verified achievements from emerging results, projections and expectations.

Result area / key indicator	What the IA should establish
Supported local enterprises participating in capacity-building/business support	Verify relevant participation/support pathways from Project records and focus interviews on relevance, use and change rather than recounting activities.
% of capacitated local enterprises adopting knowledge/skills gained	Establish whether supported businesses actually applied recommendations, knowledge, skills or services; what changed; evidence of application; and whether the practice is continuing.
Increased sales of supported enterprises due to differentiated/improved market access (GEL)	Collect only where a credible market-result pathway exists. Use comparable periods and distinguish records from respondent estimates. Establish the contribution pathway rather than automatically attributing all change to LEDP.
Number of supported enterprises that increased profitability	Assess only for sufficiently mature enterprise cases and where credible financial evidence/estimates are available.
Local organisations capacitated in enabling LED	Assess changes in organisational functionality, governance/coordination, member engagement, marketing/promotion, buyer engagement, advocacy, partnerships and sustainability, depending on the organisation/intervention.
Initiatives established/supported by local actors to improve framework conditions and decrease business constraints	Verify whether initiatives moved beyond activities to functioning mechanisms/services and whether they address identified constraints.

Public/institutional responses to locally identified economic constraints	Assess decision pathways and contribution in cases such as public services, financing mechanisms, regulation and investment planning; triangulate claims with the relevant public actors.
Market linkages / differentiated market access	Assess new or strengthened buyer/customer relationships, tour packages, promotion mechanisms, packaging/service access or other relevant market connections and whether they generated observable use/results.
Investment mobilisation / progression	For relevant tourism infrastructure pathways, distinguish stages such as identified, prioritised, costed, validated, submitted, under consideration, funding committed and disbursed. Do not report a plan as an investment.
Sustainability and systemic-change signals	Assess continuation without LEDP, actor incentives and ownership, replication/crowding-in or institutionalisation where observable; otherwise report prospects and constraints rather than claiming systemic change.
Unintended effects and learning	Identify positive and negative unintended changes, reasons for non-progression, and lessons relevant to future LED programming.

Given the maturity of Phase 1 interventions, IA is expected to produce strongest evidence at output and early-outcome level, with selective economic-result evidence for more mature enterprise or market cases. This limitation is an analytical feature of the assessment and should be transparently reflected in the report.

4. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

LEDP will use the contractor's primary report and evidence package to finalise, strategically align and approve the overall Phase 1 Impact Assessment report by 20 November 2026.

No.	Deliverable	Minimum content / requirements	Deadline
1	Inception, adapted tools and final fieldwork package	Short inception note; review of the Project-prepared methodology and proposed justified adjustments; final sampling/respondent approach; detailed fieldwork plan and researcher allocation; data-management, consent and recording protocol; list of outstanding information required from LEDP; Georgian translation and contextual adaptation of agreed interview guides/modules; final respondent/interview tracker; confirmed interview schedule, geographic routing and contingency/replacement plan ¹ .	28 September 2026
2	Fieldwork progress and organised data package	Majority of agreed interviews completed; updated respondent tracker showing completed interviews, cancellations and replacements; recordings where consented; rolling transcripts/detailed interview summaries; qualitative matrix populated; quantitative modules entered and cleaned; supporting evidence collected; recording/transcription status; emerging findings, evidence gaps, contradictions and outstanding verification/follow-up needs. Progress discussion with the LEDP MEAL Manager.	23 October 2026
3	Completed data collection and preliminary analysis package	All feasible interviews and targeted follow-ups completed; final interview tracker; interview recordings; full transcripts for recorded interviews; detailed named summaries where recording was not feasible; cleaned and consolidated qualitative database/matrix; quantitative tables; evidence/verification matrix; preliminary findings by sector/intervention; contribution findings; identified evidence limitations; and proposed case-	30 October 2026

¹ The main field data collection is expected to take approximately three weeks, assuming a team of 2–3 researchers working in parallel. The exact duration and allocation of fieldwork will be agreed during inception based on the final sample, respondent availability, geographic coverage and the agreed mix of KIIs, group interviews and FGDs.

		study cases.	
4	Primary IA report, case studies and full data handover	English primary IA report covering methodology and limitations; findings by sector/intervention and result level; LEDP contribution and other contributing factors; sustainability and systemic-change signals where evidenced; non-progression and barriers; unintended effects; and key lessons. Completed case studies and full handover of all raw and processed research materials, including recordings, transcripts/summaries, qualitative database, quantitative tables and supporting evidence.	7 November 2026
5	Clarification and factual correction support	Availability to respond to questions from LEDP during finalisation; clarification of underlying evidence; correction of factual, transcription or data issues; and provision of missing supporting information where already collected. This does not constitute preparation of a second independent analytical report.	Up to 13 November 2026, if requested

5. MAIN TASKS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE ASSIGNEE

5.1 Review, Inception and Adaptation

- Review the Project's IA methodology, intervention-specific plans, result chains, relevant logframe indicators, intervention guides and available MRM records.
- Participate in an inception meeting with the MEAL Manager and relevant Project staff to clarify intervention histories, result maturity, evidence gaps and practical access issues.
- Review proposed respondent lists and sampling and recommend only necessary adjustments based on reachability, overlap, updated intervention status and evidence needs.
- Translate the approved guides into Georgian and adapt wording, sequencing and probes to the Georgian context and respondent type. The methodology and guides are not fixed scripts; practical adjustment is expected, but substantive changes to analytical questions, causal logic or sample must be agreed with LEDP.

5.2 Fieldwork Planning and Data Collection

- Prepare and manage the detailed fieldwork schedule in coordination with LEDP, including appointments, transport and logistics, and researcher allocation.
- Conduct semi-structured and in-depth Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), embedded quantitative modules, documentary verification and targeted case-study follow-up as specified in the annexed intervention plans.
- Use one interview per respondent wherever possible, activating relevant modules rather than duplicating interviews.
- Record interviews whenever possible and with informed consent. Where recording is feasible, provide the audio file and full transcript. Where recording is not feasible or consent is not provided, prepare a detailed interview summary that includes the respondent's name, organisation/role, date, interviewer, themes/questions covered, key evidence, important wording, contradictions and follow-up needs.
- Coordinate with the MEAL Manager, who may accompany selected interviews or field visits for quality assurance, learning or contextual understanding.
- Collect documentary or other verification evidence for material claims where available and clearly distinguish verified records from respondent estimates.

5.3 Data Organisation, Analysis and Case Studies

- Maintain a structured qualitative database/matrix in Excel or another agreed accessible format. At minimum it should include respondent identifier/name, organisation, role, intervention/pillar, municipality, interview date, analytical themes/questions, coded findings, contribution findings, sustainability, unintended effects, evidence references, contradictions and limitations.

- Maintain clean quantitative tables for numerical data collected through embedded modules and flag the source/quality of each important figure.
- Analyse evidence against the relevant result chain rather than only by interview question. Determine the highest result level credibly evidenced for each pathway.
- Triangulate important findings across independent respondents and/or Project/partner records wherever feasible.
- Develop case studies from the strongest cases already included in the sample. Additional interviews should be added only where necessary to verify a material result.
- Prepare consolidated findings that clearly separate verified results, plausible contribution, emerging results, expected future effects and evidence limitations.

6. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

The overall Impact Assessment methodology and detailed intervention-specific assessment plans have been developed by LEDP. These include the main assessment questions, result pathways, proposed respondent groups and sampling, interview guides, quantitative modules, scoring tools and case-study approaches. The research team is not expected to design a new methodology. Its role is to review the proposed approach from an operational and research perspective, recommend practical adjustments where necessary, translate and contextually adapt the tools into Georgian, and implement the methodology consistently and rigorously. Any substantive changes to the assessment logic, sampling or key research questions will be agreed with the LEDP MEAL Manager during inception. More detailed intervention-specific methodologies and tools are provided in the annexes.

6.1 Theory-Based and Results-Chain Assessment

Each intervention will be assessed against its specific results pathway. The analysis should reconstruct the sequence from Project facilitation and actor response through outputs, adoption/behaviour change, early outcomes and, where mature enough, business/economic or institutional/system effects. Critical assumptions and breaks in the chain should be explicitly tested.

6.2 MSD and DCED Lens

- Assess changes in market-system actors rather than treating Project activities as results.
- Examine whether local actors have adopted and own new functions, practices, services or relationships and whether incentives exist for continuation.
- Assess additionality and contribution: what LEDP specifically enabled, what would likely have happened without it, and what other actors/factors contributed.
- Where relevant, look for early signs of sustainability, replication, institutionalisation, crowding-in or wider response, but do not infer systemic change from isolated outputs.
- Use intervention result chains and DCED-style causal reasoning to test whether evidence supports each claimed link.
- Document unintended effects and changes in context/assumptions that affected intervention performance.

6.3 Attribution and Contribution Analysis / Counterfactual Reasoning

For important claimed results, respondents should be asked whether the result/change would have happened without LEDP: at the same time and scale; later; at smaller scale; probably not; definitely not; or they do not know. This should be followed by qualitative probing on what LEDP specifically contributed and what other factors contributed. Responses should be triangulated and interpreted primarily as contribution evidence rather than as a statistical counterfactual. The purpose is to establish a credible contribution story while remaining transparent about uncertainty and alternative explanations.

6.4 Sampling

The assessment will mainly use purposive sampling because the purpose is to test specific intervention pathways and explain change rather than estimate population prevalence. Small and critical respondent groups may be covered through a census. For larger groups, the sample should capture relevant variation, including municipality, actor type,

level of engagement, progression/non-progression and differing experiences. Respondent overlap should be used to reduce duplication. Indicative samples and selection criteria are provided in the annexes and will be finalised with LEDP during inception.

6.5 Data Collection Methods

- Project record review for factual implementation and monitoring information already available.
- Semi-structured KIs, group interviews and FGs with businesses, associations, public institutions, service providers, consultants, market actors and other relevant stakeholders.
- Embedded quantitative modules for selected mature enterprise/service cases, focusing on comparable-period sales, costs, profit, investment, service use, tourist flows or other relevant measures.
- Structured capacity/functionality scoring for selected organisations/mechanisms, used as supporting qualitative evidence rather than as stand-alone impact measures.
- Selective case studies and non-progression cases developed from triangulated interviews and records.

6.6 Triangulation and Evidence Quality

Material findings should be supported by at least two sources where feasible, such as an actor interview plus a record, or two independent respondents. Numerical evidence should be labelled by source and confidence (for example, record-verified, document-supported, respondent estimate or unavailable). Contradictory evidence should be retained and analysed rather than harmonised without justification.

6.7 Data Analysis

- Use thematic coding aligned with the common analytical areas and intervention-specific result chains.
- Prepare respondent-level summaries and intervention/pillar evidence matrices before drafting conclusions.
- Analyse both confirming and disconfirming evidence.
- Assess the highest credible result level reached and explain gaps between expected and observed results.
- Where economic data are available, use comparable periods and avoid aggregating figures that are not methodologically comparable.
- Identify patterns across sectors relevant to LEDP's MSD strategy, including actor ownership, incentives, sustainability, facilitation effectiveness and institutional responsiveness.
- Use AI tools where these improve efficiency or quality, provided that use is declared, controlled and verified. AI use is neither required nor discouraged; undisclosed or unverified use is not acceptable.

6.8 Practical Qualitative Analysis and Case Studies

Qualitative data should be organised systematically around the common assessment themes and intervention result chains. A practical thematic coding approach appropriate to the size of the dataset is sufficient; dedicated qualitative-analysis software or formal intercoder-reliability testing is not required. The research team should maintain a consistent analytical structure and a clear link between conclusions and the underlying interview evidence.

Case studies should be developed from particularly informative cases already identified through the assessment. They may illustrate a business or market result, institutional change, public-sector response, successful collaboration, intervention adaptation, or an important case where the expected pathway did not progress. Final case selection will be agreed with LEDP based on the evidence emerging from fieldwork.

6.9 Quantitative and Economic Evidence

Quantitative information should be collected where relevant and realistically available. Actual records should be preferred where accessible; respondent estimates may be used when records are unavailable but must be clearly identified as estimates. Where selected indicators require calculations using assumptions, the calculation and assumptions should be transparent, discussed with LEDP and provided in editable Excel format. The research team is not expected to develop complex economic models.

6.10 Recording, Transcription and Use of Digital Tools

Interviews should be recorded where feasible and with respondent consent. For recorded interviews, transcripts should be provided; where recording is not possible, a sufficiently detailed interview summary should be prepared. Appropriate digital tools may be used to support transcription, translation or data organisation provided that confidentiality and data protection are maintained and researchers check outputs for accuracy. The research team remains responsible for the quality of all submitted data and analysis.

6.11 Ethics, Confidentiality and Data Protection

Participation must be voluntary. Respondents should be informed of the purpose and internal nature of the assessment, intended use of information and recording arrangements. Recording requires consent. Personal and commercially sensitive data must be securely stored, shared only with authorised research/Project staff and used only for this assignment. The report should protect confidentiality where required while the internal evidence base maintains sufficient traceability.

7. CONSULTANCY TEAM / RESPONSIBILITIES

The assignment is expected to be undertaken by a research company or a group of approximately 2-3 researchers (a different team size may be proposed where justified). The bidder should propose a realistic division of labour that allows simultaneous fieldwork, rolling transcription/data organisation and timely analysis.

Role/function	Expected responsibility
Team Lead / Senior Researcher	Inception; methodological adaptation; liaison with LEDP; fieldwork supervision; complex institutional interviews; quality assurance; analytical synthesis; case-study oversight; primary report drafting.
Researcher(s) / Interviewer(s)	Scheduling; KIIs; accurate recording/note-taking; evidence collection; transcription/summary review; coding; preliminary analysis; case-study inputs.
Data / qualitative analysis function (may be combined)	Data cleaning and organisation; coding framework; qualitative matrix; quantitative tables; evidence tracking; consistency checks and analytical consolidation.

LEDP's MEAL Manager will provide methodological oversight, approve substantive adjustments, support interpretation of intervention logic, coordinate with Project staff, and may accompany selected interviews. Sector staff will support access to Project records and respondents. LEDP retains responsibility for the final IA report and strategic interpretation.

8. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Demonstrated experience in evaluation, impact assessment, applied research, M&E/MRM or mixed-method studies in private-sector development, local economic development, agriculture/value chains, tourism, governance or related fields.
- Strong experience conducting and analysing semi-structured/in-depth qualitative interviews with businesses, public institutions, associations and service/market actors.
- Demonstrated ability to conduct theory-based/contribution-oriented analysis. Familiarity with MSD and/or the DCED Standard for Results Measurement is an advantage, but not an absolute requirement.
- Strong qualitative analysis, triangulation and evidence-based case-study writing skills.
- Ability to handle basic quantitative business/result data and maintain clean Excel or equivalent analytical datasets.
- Excellent Georgian language skills for fieldwork and tool adaptation; strong English analytical writing skills for deliverables and the primary report.
- Capacity to undertake intensive multi-region fieldwork and complete the assignment within the specified deadlines.
- For a company/team, at least one senior researcher should have substantial experience leading comparable assignments.

9. TIME FRAME AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

The research team/company will begin the inception, methodology review and tool adaptation process immediately after contracting. The inception adapted tools and final fieldwork package must be completed by 28 September 2026, with main data collection starting no later than 30 September 2026.

The research team/company must complete data collection and preliminary analysis by 30 October 2026 and submit the primary IA report, case studies and complete data package by 7 November 2026. If requested, the team will remain available for factual clarification and correction until 13 November 2026. This will allow the LEDP team sufficient time for final analysis, strategic alignment and completion of the final Impact Assessment report by 20 November 2026.

The indicative schedule below will be adjusted after the contract signature. The payment will be made per milestone based on submission and acceptance of respective deliverables. The payment will be disbursed based on an invoice via bank account transfer in GEL calculated in accordance with the official exchange rate of the National Bank of Georgia on the payment day within a maximum of 10 working days from the date of the signed Delivery-Acceptance Act.

Period / date	Milestone
Immediately after contracting	Document review, inception, methodology adjustment, translation/adaptation of tools and fieldwork planning
28 September 2026	Inception, adapted tools and final fieldwork package completed
No later than 30 September 2026	Main data collection starts
23 October 2026	Fieldwork progress and organised data package submitted; majority of agreed interviews completed
30 October 2026	Data collection completed and preliminary analysis package submitted
7 November 2026	Primary IA report, case studies and complete data handover submitted
Up to 13 November 2026, if requested	Factual clarification and correction support
20 November 2026	<i>Final IA report completed by LEDP</i>

10. LOGISTICS AND SUPPORT PROVIDED BY LEDP

- LEDP will provide the detailed IA methodology and methodological annexes, intervention guides/result chains, relevant logframe/MRM information, available Project/partner records and respondent/contact lists.
- LEDP will support introductions to key partners/respondents where needed; the research team remains responsible for detailed scheduling and fieldwork management.
- LEDP will brief the research team on the intervention history and known evidence gaps during inception.
- The MEAL Manager and/or relevant Project staff may accompany selected interviews.
- The research team should include all necessary professional fees, field travel, communication, recording/transcription, data management and related operational costs in its financial proposal.

11. REPORTING, DATA HANDOVER AND QUALITY REQUIREMENTS

- All deliverables will be submitted electronically to the LEDP MEAL Manager in agreed editable formats.
- The primary report will be in English. Georgian interview guides and Georgian transcripts/summaries will be submitted in Georgian; analytical matrices should use English or bilingual labels sufficient for Project use.
- All recordings, transcripts, detailed summaries, quantitative tables, qualitative matrices, evidence files and case-study source materials generated under the assignment must be handed over to LEDP.
- All data/products generated are the property of LEDP/HELVETAS and may not be reused or shared without authorisation.

- Fabricated, reconstructed or unsupported data are not acceptable. Missing evidence must be clearly marked as unavailable.
- Any methodological deviation, respondent substitution, non-response or major limitation must be documented.
- The research team must maintain a clear audit trail between the primary report findings and the underlying evidence.

12. APPLICATION / PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

- Concise technical proposal demonstrating understanding of the internal IA, MSD/DCED lens and the role of the research team in operationalising rather than independently redesigning the Project methodology.
- Detailed draft work plan showing how inception, translation/adaptation, fieldwork, transcription/data organisation, analysis and reporting will be completed within the deadlines (as part of the proposal).
- Proposed team composition, responsibilities and CVs of all key researchers.
- Examples/references from comparable evaluation/research assignments.
- Financial proposal, including all relevant fieldwork/operational costs related to the assignment implementation.
- Confirmation of availability to begin immediately after contracting, start fieldwork no later than 30 September and submit the primary report/full data package by 7 November 2026.

13. ANNEXES TO BE PROVIDED BY LEDP

The detailed methodology, intervention-specific sampling, assessment pathways, respondent categories, interview guides, quantitative modules, scoring tools, case-study approaches and requested evidence will be provided at inception together with project documents and records. These annexes form the methodological starting point for the assignment and will be reviewed with the selected research team during inception.