



Deepening Decentralisation and Non State Actors Project

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Study of the impact of the current gender framework on the position of rural women in Lesotho

1. Background and Context

The Lesotho Council of NGO's is umbrella body for civil society organisations in Lesotho, the organisation was established with the objective to provide supportive services to the NGO community in Lesotho through networking, leadership, information dissemination, capacity building, coordination, advocacy and lobbying, and representation when dealing with the international community and government.

LCN is implementing a project titled Deepening Decentralisation and Non State Actors with support from European Union. The overall objective of the project is to enhance participation of Non State Actors (NSAs) in contributing to poverty reduction at community level. The project is aimed at promoting constructive engagement in local government as a way of improving accountability and transparency. In a democratic country like Lesotho, it is expectation of every citizen to participate in any development decisions that are meant to address poverty or any matter that can ultimately affect their life. Democracy has a meaning to ordinary public only if it delivers on its promises. It has been noted that in most democracies focus has been on political freedom. However issues related to service delivery have been lagging behind.

The enactment of the Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act of 2006 was very important to the social, economic and political relations between men and women in Lesotho. The result of the Act was to uplift the status of women in marriages, to that of equals and give them more say over acquisition and disposal of family assets. Women in Lesotho have a long history of being de facto heads of households and

carrying the primary responsibility for most economic decisions in the home. However, they are also the majority of victims of property grabbing and other forms of economic crimes that threaten their ownership of property and other assets. In the political sphere, reservation of seats in some electoral divisions for women candidates only, was the first positive discrimination intervention by the government of Lesotho that favoured women's political advancement. However, while the result of the intervention was to increase the number of elected women at local government level, it has not transformed the forms and outcomes of political participation for women, even though they are in the majority in terms of political party participation. It has also not resulted in transformation of political trends at the national level.

At the social, Lesotho society has turned more conservative in the past decade. This is often seen in social attitudes that support and reinforce the subjugation of women, even with their own support. It has become increasingly more acceptable for women to be asked to dress in specific ways when attending a burial or be barred from the burial, while there are no corresponding requirements for men. As Lesotho has extended democratic government to the local level, through local government, the trappings of traditional rule, which is not known for promotion of the rights of women, inclusive and democratic governance, have expanded alongside the democratic governance structures, sometimes extending its influence over their practices.

2. Purpose of assignment

To engage a short-term consultant as specified above, to conduct a study that probes the impact of the development of policies in the area of gender and women's rights and the impact of these policies on i) the social, economic and political position of women in the rural areas ii) gender relations between men and women and boys and girls in the rural areas, especially in terms of their access to services and livelihood strategies. The specific policies and Laws to be considered are: The Gender and Development Policy; Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act; Local Government Act 1997 as amended; the SADC Gender and Development Protocol; the CEDAW and other instruments and covenants to which the Government of Lesotho is party.

The research will specifically look at the lack of political and economic power of women in the rural areas even as women continue to be represented in good numbers in local councils; Consider the impact of the reservation of seats for women in local government, during the first local government election, and its impact; Map the relationship between specific livelihoods for women, their level of education and access to services; and Make recommendations on the opportunities availed by decentralization of

government to more effectively promote the economic and political empowerment of rural women, by both government and civil society.

3. Specific Objectives

- a) Identify the impact of the current gender framework on relations between men and women in the rural areas;
- b) Propose potential programmes or interventions that can be implemented to bring about equity between men and women in rural areas;
- c) Propose areas where government and civil society can work together to strengthen either the provisions; the implementation; or the outcomes of interventions arising from the current policy framework; and
- d) Develop a set of recommendations that can be used specifically at local government level to promote meaningful political participation of women, through programmes or development of structures, and investment of money in areas that promote improved livelihoods and skills for both women and men.

4. Key Deliverables

- Report indicating the mentioned specific objectives (2 hard copies) and a soft copy in a form of a disc.

5. Location of the assignment

The assignment will be implemented in the 2 Community Councils of the mentioned districts; Leribe, Botha Bothe, Mokhotlong, Mhaleshoek, Mafeteng, Maseru. (12 Community Councils in total).

6. Time frame of the assignment

2 months (June and July)

7. Reporting

The Consultant will report to the Programs Director but will work directly with Women and Children's Commission Coordinator. The table below summarises reports that shall be submitted by the consultant and timeframes for submission of such report.

Submission	Timeframe
Inception Report with incorporation of a detailed work plan	Within 5 days of contract commencement
Draft report of the activity	After 6 weeks of the contract commencement
Final Report	5 days before contract close out

8. Requirements

Consultant must produce:

- Technical proposal that outlines methodology and work plan.
- Financial proposal.
- Curriculum vitae

9. Consultant Profile

Consultants should possess the following attributes:

- Relevant post-graduate degree,
- Demonstrate massive experience in conducting similar research
- At least five years practical experience in development with particular emphasis on the NGO sector and local community structures.

10. Payment schedule

- 30 % of the contract amount shall be paid upon submission of inception report.
- Another 30% shall be paid upon submission of the draft report
- And the 40% of the contract amount shall be paid upon submission and approval of the final report