

Terms of Reference (TOR) for Third-Party Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Support for InfraCredit's Partnership on Distributed Renewable Energy (DRE) and Productive Use of Energy (PUE) Solutions

1. Background and Context

InfraCredit is a specialized infrastructure credit guarantee institution based in Nigeria, holding a domestic 'AAA' rating from leading credit rating agencies. Established to address the financing gaps in Nigeria's infrastructure sector, InfraCredit focuses on mobilizing long-term local currency financing for viable infrastructure projects. This includes critical areas such as clean energy, transportation, water, and agro-infrastructure, with a strong emphasis on sustainable development and climate resilience. By providing credit guarantees, InfraCredit de-risks investments, enabling private sector participation in projects that might otherwise be deemed too risky for traditional lenders.

In collaboration with the Shell Foundation, a global philanthropic organization dedicated to advancing access to affordable energy, InfraCredit is spearheading initiatives to overcome financing barriers for distributed renewable energy (DRE) and productive use of energy (PUE) solutions. These initiatives are particularly targeted at underserved rural and peri-urban areas in Nigeria, where smallholder farmers (SHFs) and micro-enterprises (MEs) face significant challenges in accessing reliable energy sources.

DRE and PUE solutions encompass a range of technologies, including solar-powered irrigation pumps, cold storage units, agro-processing equipment (e.g., milling machines, dryers), and mini-grids. These assets are designed to enhance agricultural productivity, reduce post-harvest losses, and improve overall economic outcomes for SHFs and MEs. For instance, solar pumps can enable year-round farming by providing consistent water access, while cold storage can extend the shelf life of perishable goods, allowing farmers to command better market prices. The partnership's interventions aim to demonstrate tangible income effects from such access, such as increased crop yields, reduced operational costs (e.g., from diesel fuel savings), and diversified income streams through value-added processing.

This work aligns with broader national and global objectives, including Nigeria's National Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Policy, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), and SDG 13 (Climate Action), and the Paris Agreement on climate change. By fostering sustainable agriculture, expanding energy access, and promoting economic empowerment, the partnership seeks to build climate-resilient communities, reduce poverty, and contribute to Nigeria's green economy transition.

To ensure the credibility and scalability of these impacts, InfraCredit recognizes the need for independent, third-party expertise in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL). This will involve designing standardized MEL processes, overseeing data collection across multiple implementing companies (e.g., DRE/PUE asset providers and financiers), and consolidating evidence to inform policy, replication, and future investments. The MEL activities will focus on attributing income improvements directly to the interventions, while also capturing co-benefits such as gender equity, environmental sustainability, and community resilience.

2. Objective of the Assignment

The primary objective of this assignment is to engage a qualified third-party MEL firm or consultancy to deliver comprehensive, overarching MEL support for InfraCredit's partnership on DRE and PUE solutions. This support will ensure that the partnership generates robust, evidence-based insights into the transformative effects of affordable clean energy access on the incomes and livelihoods of SHFs and MEs.

Specifically, the MEL partner will:

- Design and integrate MEL requirements into the eligibility criteria and operational processes of selected implementing companies, ensuring that impact measurement is embedded from the outset.
- Establish rigorous baseline, midline, and endline assessments that prioritize quantifying income effects, while also exploring qualitative dimensions such as behavioral changes and empowerment.
- Develop and standardize asset-focused questions, frameworks, and impact assessment tools to enable consistent data collection and comparability across diverse interventions.
- Oversee data collection and quality assurance to maintain high standards of reliability, validity, and ethical compliance.
- Consolidate findings from multiple sources into coherent impact analyses, narratives, and knowledge products that can influence stakeholders, including donors, policymakers, and the private sector.

Through these efforts, the assignment will provide credible evidence on how DRE and PUE solutions contribute to household and enterprise income growth, productivity enhancements, and climate resilience. This evidence will support advocacy for scaled-up

financing, policy reforms, and replication in other regions, ultimately advancing sustainable development in Nigeria's agricultural and energy sectors.

3. Scope of Work

The MEL partner will undertake a comprehensive set of tasks to deliver high-quality MEL support. These tasks are organized into core areas, with an emphasis on collaboration, standardization, and evidence generation. The scope is designed to be adaptive, allowing for adjustments based on emerging partnership needs while maintaining methodological rigor.

3.1 MEL Framework Development and Standardization

- Conduct a thorough review of existing partnership documents, including logic models, theories of change, partnership agreements, and any preliminary data or pilot studies from InfraCredit, Shell Foundation, and implementing companies.
- Develop a comprehensive MEL framework that outlines key performance indicators (KPIs), data sources, collection methods, and evaluation questions. This framework should align with international standards such as the OECD-DAC criteria for evaluation (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability) and the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCED) standard for results measurement in private sector development.
- Clearly articulate the different layers of the impact chain, distinguishing between InfraCredit's role as a credit guarantor, the intermediary role of implementing companies, and the end-customer outcomes for smallholder farmers and micro-enterprises. The framework must be explicit about what can be reasonably attributed to the intervention versus what constitutes a contribution to a broader systemic change. Bidders should demonstrate their understanding of and approach to managing attribution at each layer of the results chain.
- Standardize MCE frameworks across selected companies to facilitate aggregation and comparison. Common indicators may include: percentage change in household/enterprise incomes, improvements in crop yields or production volumes, asset adoption rates, cost savings from energy transitions (e.g., fuel expenditure reductions), and reductions in post-harvest losses.
- Develop bespoke asset-focused questions for surveys and questionnaires. For example: "How has the solar pump affected your irrigation frequency and crop output?" or "What portion of your income increase do you attribute to the cold

storage unit, and why?" These questions should cover asset types, usage patterns, maintenance challenges, and direct income attribution.

- Ensure the framework incorporates gender-disaggregated data, environmental metrics (e.g., carbon emissions avoided), and inclusion of vulnerable groups (e.g., women-headed households, youth entrepreneurs).
- Ensure explicit alignment with Shell Foundation's Impact Measurement C Management (IMM) Strategy, including its embedded thematic frameworks on women's economic empowerment, resilience, and quality of life. These frameworks are currently under development and will be shared with the selected MEL partner at the time of onboarding. The MEL partner should demonstrate flexibility and willingness to integrate these frameworks as they are finalised, and should propose an adaptive approach to incorporating funder-specific IMM requirements into the overarching MEL design.

3.2 Baseline, Midline, and Endline Design and Oversight

- Design rigorous baseline studies to capture pre-intervention conditions, midline assessments for mid-term progress, and endline evaluations for final impacts. Employ quasi-experimental methods where randomized controlled trials (RCTs) are infeasible, such as treatment vs. comparison groups, propensity score matching, or difference-in-differences approaches.
- Define assessment timing in close consultation with InfraCredit and selected companies. Given that companies are at different stages of deployment, assessment schedules must be tailored per company rather than applied uniformly across the portfolio. Suggested timelines include: baseline before or within 3-6 months of asset deployment to establish initial conditions; midline at 12-24 months to track intermediate outcomes; and endline at project closure or 36-60 months post-deployment to assess sustained impacts. The MEL partner should explicitly account for the fact that income effects – particularly at the household level – may take time to materialise, given InfraCredit's distance from end customers and the multiple intermediary layers between capital deployment and end-user outcomes. Assessment designs should reflect this with realistic expectations for when meaningful change becomes observable.
- Develop detailed data collection tools, including quantitative surveys (e.g., structured questionnaires on income metrics), qualitative methods (e.g., key informant interviews, focus group discussions with SHFs and MEs), and asset verification protocols (e.g., site visits to confirm asset functionality and usage).

- Prepare data analysis plans that specify statistical methods for attributing income effects, such as regression analysis to control for confounding factors (e.g., market prices, weather variations) and qualitative thematic analysis for narrative insights.

3.3 Oversight of Implementation by Selected Companies

- Provide hands-on technical assistance to implementing companies, including training for company staff and enumerators that covers both the rationale for impact measurement and the practical mechanics of data collection. Training must address why impact measurement matters – including how it strengthens business models, builds investor confidence, and generates evidence for scaling – and how impact thinking should be embedded from the outset of operations rather than retrofitted at reporting time. This should be complemented by piloting of data collection instruments in field settings and troubleshooting support during rollout.
- Monitor and quality assure data collection processes through field supervision, random data audits, and compliance checks with ethical standards (e.g., informed consent, data anonymization, adherence to Nigeria's Data Protection Regulation).
- Ensure all activities align with the standardized MEL framework, identifying and addressing any deviations through corrective action plans or capacity-building sessions.

3.4 Data Consolidation, Analysis, and Reporting

- Consolidate raw data from multiple companies into a unified dataset, using secure data management platforms to handle integration challenges (e.g., varying formats or scales).
- Conduct in-depth impact analysis, combining quantitative techniques (e.g., econometric modeling to estimate causal effects) with qualitative synthesis to explore mechanisms behind income changes, such as productivity gains or market access improvements. Additional outcomes to analyze include gender impacts (e.g., women's time savings), resilience to climate shocks, and environmental benefits.
- Produce coherent narratives, reports, and visualizations, such as interactive dashboards (using tools like Tableau or Power BI), case studies of successful SHF transformations, and infographics for stakeholder communication.
- Facilitate learning sessions, workshops, or webinars with InfraCredit, Shell Foundation, and other stakeholders to discuss findings, derive actionable insights, and recommend program adjustments.

3.5 Additional Responsibilities

- Integrate MEL requirements into company eligibility criteria, such as mandating commitments to baseline data collection as a condition for partnership inclusion.
- Advise on ethical considerations, including obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals where necessary, ensuring gender-sensitive approaches, and prioritizing inclusion of marginalized groups (e.g., ethnic minorities in rural areas).
- Support knowledge dissemination through the development of policy briefs, participation in learning events, and contributions to publications on DRE/PUE impacts in Nigeria.
- Build the impact management capacity of implementing companies, going beyond data collection to support them in integrating impact into their business models. This includes facilitating the development of clear customer segmentation, theories of change, and pathways to impact, and embedding a focus on measurement from the outset of operations rather than as a compliance add-on.

4. Deliverables

The MEL partner is expected to produce the following deliverables, all in English, professionally formatted, and of high quality suitable for internal use and potential public dissemination (with InfraCredit's approval):

- **Inception Report:** Including a detailed work plan, refined MEL framework, indicator matrix, and risk mitigation strategies - submitted within 4-6 weeks of contract commencement.
- **Standardized MEL Toolkit:** Comprising the overall framework, survey tools, asset-focused questions, data collection protocols, and analysis plan - delivered within 2-3 months.
- **Baseline Study Design and Oversight Report:** Detailing methodology, findings, and recommendations - per agreed timing.
- **Midline Assessment Report(s):** Comprehensive mid-term evaluations with interim impact insights - per agreed timing.
- **Endline Assessment Report(s):** Final evaluations assessing long-term outcomes - per agreed timing.

- **Consolidated Impact Analysis Report and Narrative Summary:** Including an executive summary, key findings, visualizations, and recommendations for scaling - at partnership end or as specified.
- **Quarterly Progress Updates:** Brief reports on activities, challenges, and milestones.
- **Ad-Hoc Technical Support Notes:** As needed for specific issues or queries.
- **Final Close-Out Report:** Summarizing lessons learned, best practices, and suggestions for future MEL in similar initiatives.

All deliverables will be reviewed and approved by InfraCredit, with revisions incorporated as required.

5. Timeline

The assignment is anticipated to cover the full partnership cycle, estimated at 3-5 years, depending on the scale and duration of DRE/PUE implementations. Key phases include:

- **Initial Phase (Framework and Baseline Setup):** 6-12 months from contract start, focusing on design and early data collection.
- **Ongoing Oversight and Reporting:** Continuous throughout the implementation period, with regular monitoring and midline assessments.
- **Final Consolidation:** Within 6 months following endline data collection, culminating in the consolidated impact report.

The exact timeline will be finalized in the inception report, accounting for variables such as asset deployment schedules and external factors (e.g., seasonal agricultural cycles). Flexibility will be maintained to accommodate delays, with extensions subject to mutual agreement.

6. Qualifications and Requirements

The selected MEL firm or consultancy must demonstrate exceptional expertise and capacity to deliver this assignment effectively. Minimum requirements include:

- A proven track record of at least 8-10 years in MEL for development projects in agriculture, energy access, or related sectors, preferably in Nigeria or sub-Saharan Africa. This should include hands-on experience in impact assessments for smallholder agriculture, PUE interventions, or clean energy financing.

- Strong expertise in quasi-experimental and impact evaluation designs, mixed-methods research (quantitative and qualitative), and advanced data analysis. Proficiency in statistical software such as Stata, R, SPSS, or similar is essential, with experience in methods like difference-in-differences, instrumental variables, or randomized evaluations.
- Demonstrated experience collaborating with private sector partners (e.g., energy companies, agro-processors), financial institutions, or credit guarantee facilities, including adapting MEL to commercial contexts.
- In-depth understanding of clean energy and PUE interventions, smallholder farming dynamics, and income-focused metrics (e.g., net farm income, return on investment for assets).
- Team composition: A lead MEL expert with a PhD or Master's degree in economics, development studies, statistics, or a related field; field coordinators experienced in rural data collection; data analysts skilled in quantitative modeling; and enumerators familiar with Nigeria's rural contexts, including cultural sensitivities.
- Capacity for multi-stakeholder coordination, including managing partnerships with donors, governments, and communities. Experience with ethical research practices, such as obtaining IRB or ethical clearances, is preferred.
- Fluency in English is mandatory; knowledge of local Nigerian languages (e.g., Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo) is an advantage for field work.

The firm must also commit to diversity in team composition, including gender balance, and adherence to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles.

7. Reporting and Management

- The MEL partner will report directly to InfraCredit's designated focal point, such as the Head of Development Impact and Transaction Lead, with dotted-line accountability to Shell Foundation representatives.
- Regular coordination meetings will be held (e.g., monthly or quarterly) to review progress, address challenges, and align on priorities. These may be virtual or in-person, as appropriate.
- All data collected, analyses, reports, and intellectual property generated under this assignment will remain the property of InfraCredit and its partners, with usage rights governed by the contract. The MEL partner must ensure data security, confidentiality, and compliance with relevant laws.

InfraCredit will provide overall project management, including facilitating access to implementing companies and partnership documents.

8. Submission Requirements

Interested firms or consultancies are invited to submit proposals that demonstrate their suitability for this assignment. Submissions should include:

- **Technical Proposal:** A detailed description of the proposed approach, methodology (including sampling and analysis techniques), work plan with milestones, and team structure with CVs of key personnel.
- **Examples of Similar Assignments:** At least 2-3 references from relevant past projects, including contact details for verification and brief case studies highlighting outcomes.
- **Financial Proposal:** A breakdown of costs, including daily rates for team members, total budget (covering personnel, travel, field expenses, software, and overheads), and any assumptions (e.g., exchange rates, inflation adjustments). The budget should prioritize value for money.
- **Company Profile and Legal Documents:** Overview of the firm's history, capabilities, registration certificates, tax compliance, and any relevant certifications (e.g., ISO for quality management).

Proposals should be submitted on or before the submission deadline of 30th June 2026.

InfraCredit reserves the right to negotiate terms, request clarifications, or reject proposals. The award will be based on a combination of technical expertise (70% weighting) and financial value (30% weighting), ensuring the selected partner offers the best overall value for money. Shortlisted firms may be invited for interviews or presentations.