

# Terms of Reference – *Assessing the Impact of Digital Utilities Study: Qualitative data collection (Nepal)*

2 July 2026

## Introduction

### GSMA

The GSMA is a global organisation unifying the mobile ecosystem to discover, develop and deliver innovation foundational to positive business environments and societal change. Our vision is to unlock the full power of connectivity so that people, industry and society thrive. Representing mobile operators and organisations across the mobile ecosystem and adjacent industries, the GSMA delivers for its members across three broad pillars: Connectivity for Good, Industry Solutions and Events.

### GSMA Mobile for Development Foundation

The GSMA Mobile for Development Foundation, Inc. (“GSMA”) is a U.S. 501(c)(3) charitable organisation. The Mobile for Development team (M4D) operates at the intersection of the mobile ecosystem and the development sector. Our aim is to stimulate digital innovation and deliver both sustainable business and large-scale socio-economic impact. Our research and insights platform, in-market expertise and community of partners push forward digital innovations and implementations that empower underserved populations. To date, we have impacted the lives of over 260 million people.

## Background and overview

The GSMA Mobile for Development (M4D) Foundation, through its Innovation Fund, supports digital innovation across Asia and Africa that aim to improve access to essential services and create better livelihood opportunities for low-income and climate-vulnerable communities.

*Assessing the Impact of Digital Utilities* study will explore how access to and use of these digital solutions create meaningful changes for end users: from more reliable access to basic services and reduced time or cost burden, to a better ability to use services for daily and productive activities, and ultimately improved livelihood opportunities and environmental impact.

**Focus of this assignment:** In-country qualitative fieldwork (KIs and FGDs) with Diyalo end users and water-utility (B2B) clients in Nepal.

| Grantee | Country & sector        | Solution and end-user impact pathway                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Diyalo  | Nepal - Water utilities | A digital utility-management suite (ERP, CRM, enterprise dashboard, customer app and IoT-based monitoring) sold to water utilities. Has a B2B / B2B2C model: utilities are the paying customers and benefits reach end users indirectly through better service delivery, and directly via the customer app. |

### Guiding questions:

- To what extent, and through what pathways, do grantees' digital solutions improve end users' access to, and the reliability of water?
- How do the solutions affect end users' livelihoods - including time and cost savings, financial security, productivity, and income-generating opportunities?
- What environmental outcomes are associated with using the solution?
- Are the benefits accessible to, and experienced by, low-income, economically vulnerable, and women users, and what enables or constrains their meaningful use of the solutions?
- How do improvements at the utility level translate into changes for end users?

### Scope of work

**Division of responsibilities.** GSMA leads the overall research: research design, methodology, sampling, development of the qualitative data collection tools (KII and FGD guides), the literature review of grantee-supplied documents, data cleaning and analysis, and writing of the final grantee impact reports. GSMA will also be conducting quantitative phone surveys with large samples of end users to triangulate qualitative data collected.

The selected consultant should be Nepal-based and is expected to sense-check and provide feedback on data collection tools before fieldwork. The consultant is also responsible for qualitative fieldwork - conducting KIIs and FGDs, transcribing and translating, and handing over high-quality materials to GSMA.

Diyalo operates a B2B / B2B2C model: its WaterMark suite is sold to water utilities, and benefits reach end users both indirectly (through improved utility service delivery) and directly (through the customer app). Qualitative fieldwork must therefore engage both the water-utility clients and end-user customers, so the consultant can trace how utility-level improvements translate into end-user change.

Specifically, the consultant will:

- Review background materials provided by GSMA and Diyalo, and sense-check / provide written feedback on the GSMA-developed KII and FGD guides (clarity, cultural appropriateness, sequencing, and feasibility).
- Translate and adapt the guides into the relevant local language(s).
- Plan fieldwork logistics and recruit respondents with support from Diyalo, applying the participant criteria agreed with GSMA and ensuring the inclusion of women and economically vulnerable participants.
- Conduct 10 - 12 KIIs in total, indicatively comprising:
  - Water-utility (B2B) clients using WaterMark (10 - 12 KIIs), to understand operational changes, non-revenue-water and billing improvements, and service-delivery effects.
  - At least 2 FGDs with end-user water customers, segmented to capture relevant differences - for example by gender and/or by location or utility, with attention to women and economically vulnerable households.
- Facilitate FGDs and conduct KIIs in a gender-sensitive manner (e.g. women-only groups facilitated by a female moderator where appropriate).
- Audio-record sessions with informed consent; produce verbatim transcripts and translate them into English.
- Obtain informed consent and uphold participant confidentiality and data protection in line with GSMA requirements and applicable national law; all materials are transferred to GSMA.
- Provide regular fieldwork progress updates to GSMA.

The consultant's engagement concludes with the handover of fieldwork materials and a short fieldwork summary, followed by a debrief with GSMA.

## Outputs and deliverables

- Inception note with a fieldwork and recruitment plan, including translated KII and FGD guides and the participant sampling / quota plan.
- Completed fieldwork: 10 - 12 KIIs and at least 2 FGDs, per the agreed respondent mix.
- Audio recordings of all sessions (collected with informed consent).
- Verbatim transcripts in the original language and accurate English translations.
- Field notes capturing context, group dynamics, and emerging observations.
- A short fieldwork summary (process, participation, and any issues or limitations), and a debrief session with GSMA.

## Indicative timeline

The supplier's active engagement runs from onboarding through to data handover; subsequent cleaning, analysis, and reporting are undertaken by GSMA.

| Activity                                                                                  | Indicative timing         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Contracting, onboarding and inception meeting with GSMA and grantees                      | August 2026               |
| Sense-check and feedback on GSMA KII / FGD guides; translation and adaptation             | August 2026               |
| Respondent recruitment and scheduling (with Diyalo support)                               | September 2026            |
| Fieldwork: 10 - 12 KIIs and at least 2 FGDs                                               | September – December 2026 |
| Transcription and English translation                                                     | September - December 2026 |
| Handover of recordings, transcripts, field notes and fieldwork summary; debrief with GSMA | End of December 2026      |

## Required experience and qualifications

- Based in Nepal, with the right to work and conduct fieldwork locally.
- Demonstrated qualitative fieldwork experience (KIIs and FGDs) in Nepal, ideally in water / WASH, utilities, including engagement with institutional respondents.
- Strong Nepali facilitation and verbatim transcription / translation capacity.
- Experience engaging low-income, rural, and women respondents, with strong gender-sensitive facilitation skills.

- Sound research-ethics and data-protection practice, including informed consent and secure handling and transfer of personal data.
- Ability to deliver high-quality, accurate transcripts and translations to agreed deadlines.

**Proposals should include a separate technical and financial proposal:**

**Technical proposal**

1. A short (1 page) statement of suitability and highlight recent relevant and in-country experience.
2. A short (1-2 page) discussion of the approach to KIIs and FGDs (with Diyalo support) transcription and translation approach, quality control and risk mitigation measures.
3. Detailed CV of the consultant.

**Financial proposal**

1. Detailed fieldwork costs.
2. Professional fees rates (per day in GBP).
3. Total project cost (GBP), without VAT<sup>1</sup>.
4. The Respondent's Total Price is inclusive of all costs, insurances, fees, costs, expenses, liabilities, obligations, risks, and all financial requirements for the performance of Services and provision of Deliverables.
5. Any charge not stated in this Proposal, which extends above to the Total Price, is not permitted.

Due to GSMA compliance requirements, exact project budgets cannot be provided at this stage. You are, however, able to provide a few implementation/budget options that can help us assess value for money and we can align our project scope to the relevant budget after a consultant has been selected.

**Proposal assessment and selection Process**

The proposal will be scored on the following set of criteria:

| Criteria                                                      | Importance                                                                                                                                                                 | Weighting |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Cost                                                          | Proposal's value for money                                                                                                                                                 | 20%       |
| Quality                                                       | Quality of the KII/FGD approach and gender sensitive facilitation outlined in the proposal, including degree to which it addresses key risks anticipated and data quality. | 35%       |
| Bidder's capacity to manage the project on time and on budget | Demonstrated experience of running in-country KIIs and FGDs ideally in the relevant sector, and ability to manage the project on time and on budget.                       | 30%       |
| Relevant experience                                           | Bidder's experience in successfully conducting similar projects                                                                                                            | 15%       |

<sup>1</sup> GSMA Foundation Inc is a US registered 501(c)(3) charity and is exempt from VAT.

- Proposals are to be submitted no later than 29 July 2026 to Daisy Macaskie ([dmacaskie@gsma.com](mailto:dmacaskie@gsma.com)) and James Karanja ([jkaranja@gsma.com](mailto:jkaranja@gsma.com))
- Please send clarification questions to James Karanja and Daisy Macaskie by 18 July. Responses to clarification questions will be shared by 22 July. If you would like to be included on this mailing list, please confirm your interest before this date.

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