

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR A SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL AND HOUSEHOLD DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND VULNERABILITY IN THE BAHAMAS

1. BACKGROUND

1.01 The Commonwealth of the Bahamas, a Small Island Developing State in the wider Caribbean Region, faces significant vulnerability to multiple hazards, especially hurricanes, due to its geographic location, physical environment, and other socio-economic factors. Since 2015, the country has endured the impacts of four major hurricanes: Joaquin (2015), Matthew (2016), Irma (2017), and Dorian (2019) have inflicted damage and losses. These events have resulted in losses exceeding USD4.2 billion with Hurricane Dorian alone accounting for USD3.2 billion in damages across sectors like housing, education, health, physical infrastructure, tourism, and fisheries. Such financial losses seriously challenge The Bahamas' efforts to achieve various Sustainable Development Goals.

1.02 Priority 3 of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) Climate Resilient Strategy 2019-2024 recognises the importance of strengthening Borrowing Member Countries' capabilities for mainstreaming and implementing climate risk management via capacity-building initiatives, strengthening administrative and legislative frameworks, and public education and awareness. The Disaster Resilience Improvement Project (DRIP) for The Bahamas funded by CDB aims to bolster the institutional capacities and disaster emergency response strategies of the Disaster Risk Management Authority (DRM Authority) while enhancing resilience and livelihoods by assessing preparedness and vulnerability across the country. Further, this technical assistance (TA) intervention will ensure that components consider knowledge transfer mechanisms to local practitioners and technocrats.

1.03 Furthermore, CDB's, through its Disaster Management Strategy and Operational Guidelines and Gender Equality Policy and Operational Strategy, recognises that disaster risk management policies must be socially-inclusive and gender-responsive to effectively address the diverse needs of affected populations. Social inclusivity ensures that marginalised groups—such as women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities—are actively involved in the planning and implementation of disaster risk management interventions. This participation helps identify vulnerabilities and resilience strategies that might be overlooked. Additionally, a gender-responsive and socially inclusive approach acknowledges the differential impacts of disasters and that different communities have unique cultural practices, communication styles, and coping mechanisms. Ultimately, such an integrated approach not only improves the efficacy of disaster management functions but also strengthens social cohesion and resilience in the face of future crises. Therefore, this consultancy must ensure gender mainstreaming and social inclusivity during all stages of the project cycle.

1.04 Following Hurricane Dorian, the disaster management framework in The Bahamas underwent significant changes. The Government of The Bahamas established the Disaster Reconstruction Authority (DRA) and the Ministry of Disaster Preparedness, Management, and Reconstruction in response to this catastrophic event. In 2022, the passage of the Disaster Risk Management Act prompted an expansion and reorganisation of the nation's disaster risk management program, leading to the establishment of the DRM Authority in 2024 through the merger of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the DRA, repealing their respective legislation to prioritise the mandates of the DRM Act (2022). While the DRM Authority is making considerable progress in implementing the Instruments of the National Disaster Risk Management Policy, the Authority still requires further support in change management processes, implementing the Policy Instruments, and fortifying its national disaster operations procedures through a strategic institutional agenda and disaster emergency contingency planning.

1.05 To strengthen disaster resilience in The Bahamas, the CDB has allocated grant funding to provide

TA for the implementation of DRM policy and improving DRM practices and strategies in The Bahamas through the DRIP. This consultancy will support the DRIP by undertaking a gender-responsive and socially inclusive assessment of individual and household disaster preparedness and vulnerability in The Bahamas.

2. OBJECTIVE

2.01 The objective of the consultancy is to determine and analyse the strengths and weaknesses of Bahamians and residents in their anticipatory preparedness actions for and vulnerability to natural hazards in The Bahamas. This assessment aims to understand and support behavioural interventions, targeted training, community engagement initiatives, education programmes, national public awareness campaigns related to disaster preparedness and disaster management activities. The recommendations that arise from this assessment should be primarily based on the analysis undertaken by the consultancy firm.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES

3.01 This assessment should have a sufficiently representative sample size and accurately reflect the demographic composition of The Bahamas. Only Bahamians and residents over the age of 18 will participate in this study. The assessment should ascertain details related to individual and household preparedness, physical and mental health dimensions, social capital (networks of relationships among individuals or groups), housing conditions, information and internet access, economic stability and resources, transportation and mobility, psychological/psychosocial resilience, geographic considerations, risk perception, and disaster experience. Further, it is essential to gather nuanced data on how Bahamians consume information related to disasters and climate change and their view on the work of disaster management institutions to ensure best practices in reaching and communicating essential and relevant hazard information to the public.

3.02 The tasks will include, but are not limited to:

Activity 1: Desktop review and research brief

Conduct a desktop review of various studies in The Bahamas and similar territories, including research on individual and household disaster preparedness, vulnerability, poverty and income, and gender and social considerations relevant to the consultancy objective. Further, interviews and discussions should be held with the DRM Authority to support the development of a research brief. The contracted Firm will submit the research brief to the DRM Authority.

Activity 2: Research Methodology

Design a sampling methodology after developing a research brief. The sample should comprise of Bahamians and residents across the inhabited islands and cays, over the age of 18. The sampling frame and methodology should be designed using the most recent Census data; in the absence of recent Census data, this should be designed using other reliable methods. The final sample will be selected using a probability sampling strategy to the extent feasible. A sufficiently representative sample size should be surveyed. The Firm should budget for data collection.

Further to this, a survey should be designed. This survey should reliably measure dependent and independent variables (e.g., household and individual preparedness, physical and mental health, social capital/networks, housing conditions, information and internet access, economic resources and stability, transportation and mobility, psychological/psychosocial resilience, geographic considerations, risk perception, and disaster experience).

The contracted Firm will submit the sample size design, intended field protocol, ethical and personal data protection concerns and mitigation measures, survey instrument, and a data management plan to the DRM

Authority. This research methodology should identify clear mechanisms that ensure the participation of vulnerable populations and demographics and adequate gender representation.

Activity 3: Focus Groups

Preparation of three to five focus group sessions (with at least two on the Family Islands) to explore the attitudes, knowledge, and perceptions of Bahamians with respect to household and personal vulnerability, responsibility for disaster preparedness and surrounding needs, and perceptions to the role and functioning of the DRM Authority and other key actors in DRM in The Bahamas. The focus group sessions should be used to test the survey questions. The questions to be asked and the proposed methodology should be shared with the DRM Authority for acceptance.

A completed report on the focus group findings should be submitted to the DRM Authority for sharing and acceptance and should also be tied into the final report of the consultancy.

Activity 4: Survey Administration

This activity will include:

- (a) Data collection from an identified sample:
 - (i) To the point that it is realistic, efforts should be expended to maintain a list of all households that were effectively contacted and those that were not.
 - (ii) The list must also include information organised by location. This list is subject to ethical, anonymity and confidentiality requirements, and any personal data management legislation in The Bahamas. The official liaison from the DRM Authority may request copies of the completed questionnaires collected by the contracted Firm to verify this information. The Firm is responsible for providing all the documentation necessary for this process. The Firm shall ensure that the rules and regulations of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas' Research and Permitting System are adhered.
 - (iii) Questionnaires will be administered through trained enumerators and the Firm is responsible for the enumerator training.
- (b) Processing the questionnaire for data entry and ensuring that the information collected is of the specified quality.
- (c) Protection of confidentiality of survey respondents.
- (d) All interviewers should receive strict instructions about the importance of maintaining confidentiality, especially if sensitive, personal information is shared.
- (e) No full names should be included on the questionnaires. Instead, unique codes should be used to distinguish questionnaires. In all further analyses, the codes should be used to distinguish questionnaires.
- (f) Participants should be informed and assured of anonymity and confidentiality procedures as part of the consent process, and how the information they provide will be used and by whom. These participants should be entitled to conclude the interaction at any time during administration of the questionnaire.

- (g) Upon receipt of the dataset, data analysts will agree not to make any attempt to discern an individual's identity or to reveal an individual's identity.

Activity 5: Data Entry, Cleaning, Analysis, Management and Reporting

Preparation of one clean and anonymised dataset should be delivered to the DRM Authority in SPSS and Excel formats with variable labels and codebooks included.

A completed report on the survey's findings should be submitted to the DRM Authority for sharing and acceptance. This Report should include an estimate of the number of vulnerable persons based on a developed profile and the parameters for this vulnerability should be detailed.

Activity 6: Recommendations

Preparation of recommendations based on the findings of the Report to:

- (i) support the development of behavioural interventions and shifting of cultural and social perceptions toward disaster and climate risks such as targeted training, community engagement, education programmes, mass evacuation planning and national public awareness campaigns; and
- (ii) support the protection of vulnerable populations in all phases of disaster risk management.

Activity 7: Final Report and Workshop

Preparing a Final Report that (1) provides context for the research project; (2) shares the results of the survey and focus groups; and (3) states a conclusion and identifies recommendations. The Firm shall present the results to all relevant stakeholders and should have a summary for decision-makers.

4. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

4.01 The Consulting team shall comprise of, at minimum, the following professionals:

Key Expert 1: Disaster Risk Management Specialist

- (a) Education: An advanced university degree in disaster management, environmental management, sustainability, engineering or a related field.
- (b) Experience: At least seven years' experience in supporting disaster management entities with proactively responding to, recovering from and preparing for disasters. Preference will be given to experience with research projects in the areas of disaster risk management.

Key Expert 2: Social and Gender Specialist

- (a) Education: An advanced university degree in sociology, gender studies, international development or any related field.
- (b) Experience: 7-10 years' experience in gender-related work and working with vulnerable populations.

Key Expert 3: Statistician or Data Scientist

- (a) Education: An advanced university degree in mathematics, statistics, data science, or any related field.
- (b) Experience: 7-10 years' experience in conducting research. Preference will be given to experience in the Caribbean.

5. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND DELIVERABLES

5.01 The Consultant will be required to deliver the following in a timely manner, and payment will be based on approval and acceptance of the deliverables:

- (a) Research Brief (one month after kick-off meeting).
- (b) Research Methodology (two months after kick-off meeting).
- (c) Launch of Focus Groups and Survey Testing (three months after kick-off meeting)
- (d)
- (e) Launch of Survey (five months after kick-off meeting)
- (f) Focus Group Findings (five months after kick-off meeting).
- (g) Report on Survey and Recommendations (eight months after kick-off meeting).
- (h) Final Report (ten months after kick-off meeting).

5.02 The DRM Authority will assign a Project Coordinator (PC), and the Consultant Firm will report to that PC and the Project Lead from the DRM Authority. The Firm may also be required to present to the Project Steering Committee and the DRM Authority Management Team.

6. DURATION

6.01 The Firm will be contracted to deliver these services over a twelve-month period. This timeframe should provide sufficient time for project delay considerations such as conducting data collection and focus groups, and consultation with the DRM Authority in the peaks of the Atlantic Hurricane Season.