

CARE International in Iraq

Strategy Refresh Support Consultancy.

Purpose: CARE International in Iraq is undertaking a refresh of its current Country Strategy 2022–2026 to ensure that the new strategic direction 2027-2030 remains relevant to the changing context in Iraq and aligned with the CARE 2030 Vision and the CARE Deutschland e.V. Strategy.

CARE Iraq is leading and owning the 2027-2030 strategy refresh process. The Country Office has undertaken/ is undertaking a review of progress against the current strategy, an updated context analysis, SWOT analysis, and analysis of internal and external drivers. These analyses will inform the strategic choices and priorities to be validated through the strategy process.

CARE Iraq seeks a consultant or consultancy team/ firm to provide technical and drafting support to the process. The consultant will not be responsible for defining CARE Iraq's strategic direction. Rather, the consultant will support CARE Iraq to:

1. design and conduct stakeholder consultations, analyse the findings and provide concise synthesis reports; and
2. translate the agreed strategic thinking and decisions of CARE Iraq into a coherent, concise updated Country Strategy document, including connecting the agreed strategic elements into an overall Theory of Change.

Objective: The overall objective of the consultancy is to support CARE Iraq in validating and articulating its refreshed Country Strategy by providing technical support for stakeholder consultations, analysis and strategy drafting. The consultant will, therefore, provide the analytical, facilitation and writing capacity required to document and articulate the strategy, while CARE Iraq retains ownership of the analysis, strategic choices, vision, priorities and final content.

Area of Focus: The consultancy will cover Iraq, including the Federal Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, with stakeholder consultations conducted remotely and/or in person as appropriate.

The consultancy is expected to include consultations in/relating to Baghdad, Dohuk, Ninewa, Basra and Dhi Qar, as well as relevant national, CARE Confederation and international stakeholders.

Duration: Approximately 25 working days over a period of 10 (ten) weeks

Background

CARE reopened its programming in Iraq in 2014 after a military offensive in Ninewa displaced hundreds of thousands of people into the Kurdish Region of Iraq. Together with local partners, CARE delivers humanitarian and development interventions at the intersection of climate resilience, equal rights for women and girls, protection, health, and sustainable livelihoods, providing support to the most vulnerable

populations. Between 2022 and 2026 alone, CARE's activities have reached more than 600,000 people. While the main office of CARE Iraq is in Erbil, CARE Iraq is active across multiple governorates including Ninewa, Duhok, Dhi Qar, and Basra. and holds a representational office in Baghdad. CARE is registered in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and with the Iraqi Federal Government.

CARE International in Iraq has been implementing its current Country Strategy 2022–2026 in a rapidly changing operating environment. Since the current strategy was developed, Iraq has experienced significant changes in its political, economic, humanitarian, security, climate and donor environment. At the same time, the humanitarian landscape is evolving from a predominantly displacement-focused response towards longer-term approaches to recovery, resilience, climate adaptation, livelihoods and systems strengthening.

CARE Iraq is therefore undertaking a strategy refresh to assess progress against the current strategy, review the changing internal and external context, and determine how CARE should position itself over the coming three years.

The strategy refresh is intended to ensure that CARE Iraq's future positioning responds to the needs and priorities of women and girls and other populations experiencing exclusion, reflects the evolving role of Iraqi civil society and government institutions, and is aligned with the wider strategic direction of the CARE Confederation, including the CARE 2030 Vision and CARE Deutschland e.V. Strategy as well as the international declaration and commitment such as SDGs.

Scope & Deliverables

A) Stakeholder Consultation Support

- Review the materials provided by CARE Iraq, including the progress review of the current strategy, SWOT analysis, internal and external drivers, and context analysis, and identify key questions requiring validation through stakeholder consultations.
- Develop a concise stakeholder consultation approach and tools, including tailored Key Informant Interview (KII) guides and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guides for the agreed stakeholder groups and locations. (Incl. 1 Feedback Loop)
- In consultation with CARE Iraq, refine the stakeholder mapping and consultation sample.
- Conduct and/or moderate agreed KIIs¹ with selected stakeholders.
- Ensure consultations are inclusive and sensitive to power dynamics and potential protection concerns.
- Analyze and synthesize consultation findings, identifying areas of convergence, divergence, emerging opportunities, risks and implications for CARE Iraq.
- Produce a brief synthesis of findings for each agreed stakeholder group, maximum four pages, highlighting key messages and implications for strategy.

Indicative stakeholder groups:

- Government institutions and relevant public authorities
- Donors and other resource partners
- CARE Confederation / CARE members
- Partner and civil society organizations
- Project participants/population served

¹ With coordination with the consultant/ consultancy team, CARE Iraq team will lead the data collection for FGDs and will share key findings with the consultant to proceed with analysis.

The consultant will interview 20 representatives from the institutions listed above. This estimate should be used by consultants for budgeting and pricing purposes. The final number and composition of interviewees will be agreed during the inception phase, taking into account the consultancy timeframe and emerging requirements. For the FGDs, CARE will take the lead in conducting the Eight FGDs, with coordination and support from the consultant.

B) Updated Country Strategy document

Based on materials and strategic decisions provided and validated by CARE Iraq, the consultant will:

- Consolidate and structure the existing analysis and agreed strategic decisions into a coherent updated CARE Iraq Country Strategy.
- Draft the strategy narrative in clear, concise and accessible English.
- Ensure coherence between context analysis, stakeholder findings, strategic choices, priority populations, geographic focus, strategic pillars and intended results.
- Articulate the Theory of Change, connecting the strategic elements already defined and agreed by CARE Iraq., thus, the consultant will not determine the strategic choices or vision independently.
- Integrate relevant alignment with the CARE 2030 Vision and CARE Deutschland e.V. Strategy, based on materials provided by CARE.
- Facilitate the incorporation of CARE Iraq's feedback through two structured review rounds.
- Submit a final draft strategy incorporating agreed feedback.

Deliverable #	Expected Deliverable	Indicative timing
1	Inception and agreed workplan: Inception note and agreed workplan, incl. consultation approach and stakeholder mapping Description: An inception report outlining the consultant's understanding of the assignment, review of the current CARE Iraq strategy, proposed methodology, stakeholder mapping, consultation approach, workplan, timeline, milestones, and deliverables. Note: CARE Iraq will provide relevant background and supporting documents to inform the inception phase. Minimum Acceptable Standard • Demonstrates understanding of the assignment and current strategy. • Includes a review of the existing strategy and key lessons learned. • Identifies key stakeholder groups. • Provides a consultation approach and methodology. • Includes a realistic workplan with timelines and milestones. • Reflects alignment with the agreed consultancy timeframe.	Week 1
2	Stakeholder consultations:	Week 2

	KII and FGD tools, tailored to agreed stakeholder groups Description: A set of KII and FGD tools customized for the identified stakeholder groups and aligned with the strategy development objectives. Minimum Acceptable Standard • Includes interview and discussion guides for each stakeholder category. • Covers strategic priorities, context analysis, organizational positioning, and future opportunities. • Integrates equal right for women and girls, inclusion, and climate resilience considerations. • Approved by CARE Iraq before data collection begins.	
3	Consultation analysis and synthesis: Completed stakeholder consultations and analysis Description Completion of all agreed stakeholder consultations, including KIIs and FGDs, and preparation of a consolidated analysis of findings. Minimum Acceptable Standard • Consultations completed with the agreed stakeholder groups. • Findings documented and analyzed. • Key themes, opportunities, risks, and strategic implications identified. • Analysis reflects diverse stakeholder perspectives.	Week 2 – 4
4	Care Strategy validation workshop: Completed workshop notes and validation/decisions regarding geographical locations, thematic areas, and objectives Description Facilitation of a CARE Iraq Strategy Validation Workshop to review key findings, validate strategic priorities, and build consensus on the future strategic direction, including geographical focus, thematic priorities, strategic objectives, and organizational positioning. Minimum Acceptable Standard • Workshop conducted with agreed participants. • Workshop agenda and facilitation materials prepared in advance. • Key findings and strategic options presented for discussion. • Validation and decisions documented regarding: 1. Geographic focus areas.	Week 5

	2. Thematic priorities. 3. Strategic objectives. 4. Key assumptions and risks. 5. Workshop report and meeting notes submitted. 6. Clear record of decisions, recommendations, and agreed next steps.	
5	Agreed strategy framework and theory of change Description Development of an agreed strategic framework and Theory of Change reflecting the outcomes of consultations, organizational analysis, and the strategy validation workshop. Minimum Acceptable Standard • Strategic goal and objectives clearly articulated. • Strategic pillars and priority areas defined. • Theory of Change demonstrates logical pathways from interventions to intended outcomes and impact. • Assumptions, risks, and enablers identified. • Climate resilience, inclusion, and equal right for women and girls are integrated throughout. • Framework reviewed and endorsed by CARE Iraq leadership as the basis for the final strategy document.	Week 5 - 6
6	First draft of updated CARE Iraq Country Strategy (2027-2030) Description A complete first draft of the CARE Iraq Country Strategy (2027-2030), informed by document review, stakeholder consultations, organizational analysis and positioning, and strategic discussions. Minimum Acceptable Standard The guiding document will be shared with consultant however, the draft should include, at minimum: • Executive summary. • Context and situational analysis. • Review of lessons learned from the current strategy (SWOT Analysis outcome). • Strategic vision and objectives. • Theory of change or strategic framework. • Strategic priorities and programmatic focus areas. • Climate resilience and adaptation considerations. • Equal rights for women and girls and inclusion considerations. • Partnerships and influencing approach. • Implementation considerations. • Monitoring, learning, and accountability considerations.	Week 7 – 8

	Assumptions, risks, and mitigating factors.	
7	CARE review and feedback	Week 9
8	Revised/final draft following two CARE Iraq feedback rounds Description: A final, revised Country Strategy incorporating feedback from CARE Iraq leadership, staff, and relevant stakeholders through two formal review rounds. Minimum Acceptable Standard - All substantive feedback addressed and integrated. - Clear explanation provided for any recommendations not adopted. - Final strategy is coherent, evidence-based, and aligned with CARE's strategic framework. - Professional formatting and presentation. - Ready for validation and approval by CARE leadership.	By end of Week 10

The final strategy document is expected to be concise and strategic, with the final structure and length agreed with CARE Iraq at inception.

Timing and Duration

The timeframe of the consultancy can extend over a period of approximately ten weeks. The consultancy should commence in September 2026, and the final draft strategy being delivered by November 20, 2026.

Terms of Payment

Payment will be made in three instalments, linked to the approval of deliverables by CARE International in Iraq, as follows:

30% – upon submission and approval of Deliverables 1, 2 and 3 (inception note, agreed workplan, and KII/FGD tools, completed stakeholder consultation analysis) – by the end of Week 4.

30% – upon submission and approval of Deliverables 4, 5 and 6 (completed validation workshop, strategy framework and theory of change and First draft of updated CARE Iraq Country Strategy) – by end of Week 8.

40% – upon submission and approval of Deliverables 6 and 8 (first draft and revised/final draft of the updated Country Strategy) – by end of Week 10.

No payment will be released for deliverables that have not been reviewed and formally approved by CARE Iraq. Invoices with proper breakdown always required for each payment.

No-Cost Extension (NCE)

The consultancy operates under a tight and firm deadline, and the final draft strategy must be delivered by November 20, 2026. No extension of the consultancy period is automatic or assumed.

A No-Cost Extension (NCE) will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and requires the prior written approval of CARE International in Iraq before the original end date.

Any NCE request must be submitted in writing at least five (5) working days in advance of the contract end date, with a clear and documented justification for the delay.

Requests submitted after the contract end date, or without clear justification, will not be accepted.

An approved NCE extends the timeframe only; it does not increase the contract value, daily rates, or number of working days.

Responsibilities

Responsibility of Consultant:

In consultation with CARE International in Iraq the consultant is responsible for:

- Provide the technical and drafting capacity required for the agreed scope.
- Facilitate and analyze stakeholder consultations.
- Clearly distinguish between evidence/findings and CARE Iraq's strategic decisions.
- Draft and structure the strategy based on CARE Iraq's agreed direction.
- Ensure coherence across the different elements of strategy and articulate the Theory of Change.
- Maintain regular communication with the designated CARE Iraq focal point.

Responsibility of CARE International in Iraq

- Own and lead the overall strategy process and strategic decision-making.
- Provide the consultant with relevant existing materials, including the current strategy, progress review, SWOT, context analysis, internal/external driver analysis and relevant CARE strategies and guidance.
- Provide the CARE Deutschland e.V. Strategy and relevant CARE 2030 materials to ensure alignment.
- Define and validate the strategic choices, priority populations, geographic priorities, strategic pillars and Vision.
- Identify and approve stakeholder groups and consultation priorities.
- Facilitate introductions and assistance in providing contacts for agreed stakeholders.
- Review and validate consultation tools and deliverables in a timely manner.
- Provide consolidated feedback on strategy drafts.
- Nominate one focal point who will coordinate the consultancy and provide consolidated direction and feedback.

Reporting lines

The consultant or consultancy team will report to the CARE International in Iraq staff mentioned below:

Iqbal Hamad, Senior Technical Advisor for Climate Resilience and Adaptation/ Strategy Update Focal Point, CARE Iraq

Qualifications & Preferred Skills

Education:

Required: University degree and relevant work experience in organizational/country strategy development and strategic writing.

Preferred: Degree in a relevant field (Social Science, Developmental Studies or other comparable subject) and relevant work experience in organizational/country strategy development and strategic writing.

Professional qualifications required:

- Demonstrated experience designing and conducting qualitative stakeholder consultations, including KIIs and FGDs, and analyzing qualitative data.
- Strong understanding of the Iraq context, including relevant political, socioeconomic, humanitarian, inclusion and development dynamics.
- Knowledge of climate resilience and/or climate adaptation in Iraq is required.
- At least 10 years of experience working with international NGOs and/or the humanitarian/development sector.
- Ability to synthesize complex analytical material and translate it into concise, strategic and accessible writing.
- Strong facilitation, analytical and communication skills.
- Fluency in English and Arabic is required; Kurdish is highly desirable.
- Ability to work effectively in a hybrid/remote setting and manage agreed deliverables independently.
- Experience with qualitative data analysis software is desirable, where relevant to the proposed methodology.
- Excellent knowledge of MS Office (especially Excel, PowerPoint and word) and/ or any other communication platforms.
- Ability to travel independently to various governorates across Iraq/KRI as required by the assignment.

Safeguarding

The consultant must comply with CARE's policies on safeguarding. Any breaches may result in the termination of the contract.

Data Protection

The consultant shall maintain strict confidentiality and comply with CARE's data protection, safeguarding, and information security requirements throughout the assignment. All information and data collected or accessed shall be used solely for the purposes of the consultancy, with informed consent obtained where personal information is collected. Personal and sensitive data must be securely stored and protected from unauthorized access, and any data breach, loss, or unauthorized disclosure must be reported immediately to CARE. All raw data, materials, reports, and deliverables produced under the assignment shall remain the property of CARE and may not be used or shared without prior written authorization. Upon completion of the assignment, all project-related data shall be returned to CARE or securely destroyed as instructed.

How to apply

The offer should consist of the following:

- Capacity statement (max. 2 pages) that outlines relevant expertise according to the ToR, proposed approach and availability,
- Technical proposal that should at least include the following (max 8 pages):
 - **Understanding of the Assignment**
 - **Proposed Methodology and Approach**
 - **Workplan and Level of Effort**
 - **Consultant/Team Composition and Roles**
- **Risks, Assumptions and Dependencies**

- Financial proposal indicating the proposed daily rate(s), number of working days and any anticipated additional costs.
- CV(s) of the proposed consultant(s), highlighting relevant experience in strategy development, qualitative research/consultation, Iraq and humanitarian/development programming.
- **Samples of Previous Work** At least **one or two samples of relevant previous work**, preferably organizational or country strategies, strategic planning documents, Theory of Change documents, strategic reviews, or similar assignments led or substantially contributed to by the consultant. Where documents are confidential, applicants may provide appropriately redacted versions or links to publicly available documents.
- Two relevant references from comparable assignments.
- Contact details (name, email, phone number).

Kindly submit your offer via E-mail **only** to: Offers@care.de. Subject: **“Application: Strategy Refresh Consultancy”**

Women candidates and Iraqi National candidates are strongly encouraged to apply; international candidates are also welcomed to apply.

Deadline for submitting offers is **September 9th, 2026, 23:59 CEST**. Please note that only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

For any additional information, please submit your questions to: Offers@care.de. They will be forwarded to the relevant contact persons.

Selection Criteria

Consultants will be evaluated against the specified selection criteria. A minimum overall score of 70% is required to qualify for selection, proceed to contract award, and enter into contracting discussions with CARE Iraq.

Criteria	Description	Maximum Points
1. Qualifications, Relevant Experience and Contextual Expertise	- Relevant academic qualifications and at least 10 years of professional experience in organizational/country strategy development, strategic planning, qualitative research, and/or the humanitarian and development sector. Demonstrated experience supporting similar strategy development or strategy refresh assignments, conducting stakeholder consultations, and working in Iraq or comparable contexts. Demonstrated knowledge of the Iraqi context, equal rights for women and girls and inclusion, and climate resilience/adaptation is required. The consultant must be fluent in English and Arabic; knowledge of Kurdish is highly desirable.	30

2. Technical Approach and Methodology	Quality and appropriateness of the proposed methodology, including understanding of the assignment and CARE Iraq's ownership of strategic decisions; approach to stakeholder consultations, KIIs/FGDs, qualitative analysis and synthesis; strategy drafting and Theory of Change articulation; and integration of equal rights for women and girls, inclusion, Do No Harm, confidentiality, and data protection considerations.	20
3. Workplan, Availability and Quality of Previous Work	Feasibility and clarity of the proposed workplan; availability and capacity to complete the assignment within the required timeframe, including flexibility to travel to different locations as needed; and the quality and relevance of submitted samples of previous strategy development or similar work.	20
4. Financial Proposal	Competitiveness and reasonableness of the financial proposal in relation to the required scope, level of effort, and deliverables.	30
Total		100