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MINISTRY OF WATER AND ENERGY
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TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)

Consultancy Services for Independent Verification of
DLR #3.9: Strengthen Environmental and Social Safeguards Systems
ASCENT Ethiopia Program (P506061)

May, 2026

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA



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ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
AF	Additional Financing
ASCENT	Accelerating Sustainable and Clean Energy Access Transformation
DLI	Disbursement Linked Indicator
DLR	Disbursement Linked Result
DoE	Directorate of Electrification
E&S	Environmental and Social
EA	Environmental Assessment
EHS	Environment, Health and Safety
ESHS	Environmental, Social, Health and Safety
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
ESMS	Environmental and Social Management System
ESMSG	Environmental and Social Management System Guideline
EEU	Ethiopian Electric Utility
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
ESSA	Environmental and Social Systems Assessment
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
IVA	Independent Verification Agency
KII	Key Informant Interview
MoWE	Ministry of Water and Energy
MV	Medium Voltage
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
PAPs	Project Affected Persons



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PforR	Program for Results
PMO	Program Management Office
POM	Program Operational Manual
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RAP	Resettlement Action Plan
RSG	Resettlement System Guideline
WB	World Bank



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1. Background

Energy is one of the key sectors for Ethiopia's economic growth and social transformation. The Government of Ethiopia (GoE) has made significant efforts to expand access to electricity through implementation of the National Electrification Program (NEP).

The Government of Ethiopia, through the Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) and Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU), is implementing the Accelerating Sustainable and Clean Energy Access Transformation (ASCENT) Program with financing support from the World Bank under the Program-for-Results (PforR) financing instrument.

The ASCENT Program aims to improve access to reliable, sustainable, and affordable electricity services through grid and off-grid electrification interventions while strengthening institutional systems and sector reform.

The Program requires strong Environmental and Social Management Systems (ESMS) to ensure implementation of electrification activities in compliance with national environmental and social regulations and World Bank PforR Core Principles.

As part of Program implementation, DLR #3.9 focuses on strengthening the existing ESMS including Environmental, Social, Health and Safety (ESHS) staffing positions, revision and implementation of ESMSG and RSG, and implementation of Program Safety Procedure Manuals.



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Therefore, the Ministry of Water and Energy intends to recruit an Independent Verification Agency (IVA) to independently verify achievement of DLR #3.9 results under the ASCENT Ethiopia Program.

1.1 Program Description

The ASCENT Ethiopia Program (P506061) supports implementation of the National Electrification Program through three Result Areas:

1. Expansion of on-grid electricity access
2. Expansion of off-grid electricity access
3. Strengthening institutional capacity and sector reform.

The Program applies the Program-for-Results (PforR) financing instrument where disbursement is linked to achievement of agreed results. Environmental and social safeguards implementation, occupational health and safety management, grievance handling systems, and resettlement management are among the critical institutional strengthening areas under the Program. Independent verification of DLR achievements is required before disbursement of Program funds.

1.2 Objective of the Assignment

The objective of this consultancy assignment is to conduct independent verification of the results achieved under DLR #3.9: Strengthening Environmental and Social Safeguards Systems under the ASCENT Ethiopia Program.

The verification assignment shall:

- Assess compliance with ESMSG, RSG, and Program Safety Procedure Manual;
- Verify strengthening and operationalization of ESMS systems;
- Verify deployment and functionality of ESHS staffing structures;



- Verify environmental and social screening processes;
- Verify implementation of safeguards instruments;
- Verify GRM functionality;
- Verify OHS implementation and safety performance;
- Identify gaps and recommend corrective measures;
- Provide evidence-based verification reports for disbursement purposes.

2. Overview of DLR #3.9: Strengthen ESMS and ESHS Systems

Under the ASCENT Program, EEU is required to strengthen and operationalize ESMS systems at national, regional and service center levels.

The Program requires:

- Maintenance of ESHS staffing structures;
- Revision and implementation of ESMSG and RSG;
- Preparation and implementation of Safe Work Procedure Manuals;
- Environmental and social screening of subprojects;
- Preparation and implementation of safeguards instruments;
- Conduct of E&S monitoring and audit activities;
- Strengthening grievance redress systems;
- Community awareness creation and consultation.

EEU shall ensure that ESMS performance reports include documented evidence of safeguards implementation, safety management, grievance handling, consultation activities, incident reporting, and implementation monitoring.



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2.1 Focus Areas for ASCENT Verification Protocol on DLR #3.9

The IVA shall verify the following:

ESMS Institutional Strengthening

- ESHS specialists maintained at national and regional levels;
- E&S focal persons assigned at service center levels;
- Functionality of ESMS coordination structures.

ESMS Operationalization

- ES screening checklists developed and applied;
- Subprojects screened for environmental and social risks;
- Appropriate safeguards instruments prepared and implemented;
- Monitoring and supervision undertaken.

ESMSG and RSG Revision and Implementation

- Revised ESMSG and RSG approved and disseminated;
- Trainings conducted at all levels;
- Implementation verified at operational levels.

OHS and Safety Systems

- Safe Work Procedure Manual prepared and implemented;
- PPE provision and usage verified;
- Safety supervision and incident reporting systems operational.

GRM Functionality

- GRM committees established and operational;



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- Complaint handling documented;
- Grievance logbooks maintained;
- Resolution procedures functioning effectively.

Community Consultation and Awareness

- Stakeholder consultations conducted;
- PAPs consulted and compensated;
- Awareness activities implemented.

Monitoring and Reporting

- Quarterly and annual ESHS reports prepared;
- Accident and incident reports documented;
- Annual E&S audit reports completed.

3. Prepare and Implement Safe Work Procedures Manual

The Program gives high priority to implementation of occupational health and safety requirements.

The IVA shall verify:

- Preparation and implementation of Safe Work Procedures Manuals;
- Inclusion of health and safety clauses in contracts;
- Availability and use of PPE;
- Internal safety supervision practices;
- Incident and accident reporting systems;
- Safety awareness training activities.

3.1 Quarterly Progress Reporting Including ESMSG and RSG Implementation

EEU and MoWE shall prepare quarterly and annual ESHS performance reports in accordance with approved ESMSG and RSG requirements.



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The IVA shall verify:

- Timely preparation of reports;
- Documentation of incidents and accidents;
- Monitoring reports;
- Consultation and awareness activities;
- Compensation and resettlement documentation;
- Implementation of RAPs/ARAPs;
- Training implementation records.

4. Scope of Work

The assignment shall be conducted nationwide covering all Program implementation regions and city administrations.

The Consultant shall undertake the following activities:

- Review Program documents related to DLR #3.9;
- Review ESM/RO, RSG, POM, and Safety Procedure Manuals;
- Review screening forms and safeguards instruments;
- Review quarterly and annual ESHS reports;
- Review accident and incident reports;
- Review E&S audit and monitoring reports;
- Conduct field verification at selected Program sites;
- Conduct stakeholder consultations including PAPs;
- Verify staffing structures and institutional arrangements;
- Verify implementation of safeguards measures;
- Verify GKM functionality;
- Verify OHS implementation;
- Verify compensation and resettlement implementation;
- Produce Results Verification Reports (RVR).



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The verification shall include both quantitative and qualitative evidence.

Verification Matrix for DLR #3.9

DLR	Definition of Achievement	IVA Verification Requirements
DLR #3.9: EEU strengthened the existing ESMS including all ESHS positions, revised and implemented ESMSG and RSG and Program Safety Procedure Manual	EEU maintained and operationalized ESMS at national, regional, district and service center levels by September 7, 2026	IVA shall verify: staffing structures, revised ESMSG and RSG, trainings conducted, safeguards screening completed, safeguards instruments prepared and implemented, monitoring reports documented, GRM operational, safe work procedures implemented, incident reports documented, OHS provisions included in contracts

5. Timeframe / Duration

The verification period covers Program implementation activities undertaken from March 2026 to September 7, 2026. The independent verification report shall be submitted to MoWE and the World Bank within two calendar months after receipt of Program achievement reports from EEU and MoWE.



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6. Qualifications and Experience of the IVA

The IVA shall demonstrate:

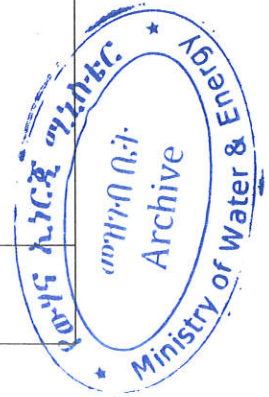
- Legal registration recognized by the Government of Ethiopia;
- Extensive experience in verification and technical audit assignments;
- Experience in World Bank-funded projects and PforR Programs;
- Experience in environmental and social safeguards verification;
- Strong knowledge of Ethiopian E&S legal frameworks;
- Ability to conduct field assessments and stakeholder consultations.



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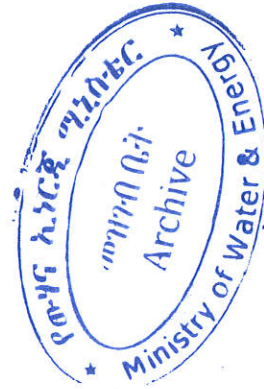
6.1. Required Key Experts

No.	Position/Title	Minimum Requirement	No. Required	Minimum Experience	Required Relevant Experience and Responsibilities
1	Team Leader	MSc or above in Environmental Science, Sociology, Development Studies, Engineering, or related fields	1	Minimum 15 years	Successfully led and completed at least five projects of similar scope, size, and complexity as team leader
2	Environmental Safeguards Specialist	MSc or above in Environmental Science, Environmental Engineering, or related	1	Minimum 10 years	Participated as an Environmental Safeguards Specialist in at least three projects of similar nature, size, and complexity."



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3	Social Safeguards Specialist	MA or above in Sociology, Anthropology, Development Studies, or related fields	1	Minimum 10 years	Participated as an Environmental Safeguards Specialist in at least three projects of similar nature, size, and complexity
4	Health and Safety Specialist	MA or above in Occupational Health and Safety, Community Health, or related field	1	Minimum 10 years	Participated as an Environmental Safeguards Specialist in at least three projects of similar nature, size, and complexity



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Note:

The IVA may include additional complementary experts as necessary to ensure adequate coverage of all technical, environmental, social, health, and safety aspects of the assignment.

7. Deliverables

The Consultant shall submit the following deliverables:

a) Inception Report

Including:

- Methodology;
- Work plan;
- Verification tools;
- Sampling strategy.

b) Draft Verification Report

Including:

- Verification findings;
- Compliance assessment;
- Gaps and recommendations.

c) Final Verification Report

Including:

- Final verified results;
- Compliance rating;
- Recommendations;
- Evidence annexes.



d) Presentation

PowerPoint presentation summarizing:

- Verification findings;
- Key recommendations;
- Compliance status.

8. Consultant's Service Administration

The Consultant shall report to the Ministry of Water and Energy through the Program Management Office (PMO).

MoWE shall monitor and facilitate implementation of the assignment.

9. Budget

The budget for this consultancy shall cover:

- Professional fees;
- Field travel costs;
- Data collection;
- Stakeholder consultations;
- Reporting and presentation costs.

10. Client's Input for the Service

MoWE and EED shall:

- Provide access to Program documents;
- Facilitate access to project sites;
- Assign counterpart staff;
- Support stakeholder coordination;



- Provide comments on deliverables.

11. Reporting Procedures

The IVA shall submit:

- Three hard copies;
- Soft copies of all reports.

The Consultant shall maintain regular communication with MoWE throughout the assignment period. All reports shall be shared with the World Bank.

12. Annexes

- Annex 1: Financing Agreement
- Annex 2: Program Appraisal Document
- Annex 3: Program Operational Manual (POM)
- Annex 4: DLR #3.9 Verification Criteria
- Annex 5: FSMS Verification Checklist
- Annex 6: GRM Verification Checklist
- Annex 7: OHS Audit Checklist
- Annex 8: Field Verification Template

