

## **CONSULTANCY SERVICES: TO SUPPORT YOUTH SAVINGS AND LOANING ASSOCIATION (YSLA) METHODOLOGY**

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### **ABOUT US:**

Practical Action is an international development organization putting ingenious ideas to work so people in poverty can change their world.

We help people find solutions to some of the world's toughest problems — challenges made worse by catastrophic climate change and persistent gender inequality. We work with communities to develop lasting and locally owned solutions for agriculture, water and waste management, climate resilience and clean energy. And we share what works with others, so answers that start small can grow big.

We consist of a UK registered charity with community projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America, alongside an independent development publishing company and a technical consulting service. We combine these specialisms to multiply our impact and help shape a world that works better for everyone.

In Kenya, we've been active for three decades, driving meaningful change in the systems that shape people's lives. We are a trusted partner to the government, funders, private sector, and communities. For more information, visit [www.practicalaction.org](http://www.practicalaction.org)

### **ABOUT THE PROJECT:**

Practical Action is currently implementing a five (5) year initiative panning the nine (9) counties of Kisumu, Homabay, Siaya, Migori, Nyamira, Kakamega, Bungoma, Busia and Vihiga. The project dubbed Resilient Agriculture that works for the Youth (RAY) aims to make agriculture an attractive and resilient

employer for young people by promoting agricultural livelihoods underpinned by agro-ecological principles and practices. The project targets four (4) main value chains namely poultry, African leafy vegetables, tomatoes and oil crops (groundnuts and soybeans). The project uses a peer-to-peer mentorship model. The model involves onboarding youth mentors mainly young men and women already engaged in agribusiness—and equipping them with the skills to mentor 15-20 other youth entrepreneurs (mentees). Mentors and mentees form business relationships, whether as agents, customers, or product suppliers, creating an ecosystem of both backward and forward linkages with other actors.

The project commenced in November 2022. As of the end of December 2025, the RAY project had a cumulative outreach of 80,191 participants through job creation pathways including: Mentorship and Regenerative Agriculture trainings, business management modelling, linkages with private sector actors on buy back models, last mile extension and affordable financial solutions to drive participants' entrepreneurship agenda.

## **CONTEXT OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

Access to affordable financial solutions remains one of the key barriers preventing young men and women from meaningfully engaging in agri-business. Most youths cite limited collateral, credit history and high interest rates as key hurdles limiting their access to financial products from mainstream Financial Institutions (FIs). As an alternative, youths are opting for Youth Savings and Loaning Association (YSLA) to access low financial envelopes to grow their enterprises and progressively build them to access debt financing from mainstream FIs.

This TOR therefore covers the scope of work and deliverables for Youth Savings and Loaning Associations (YSLAs) methodology that will supplement ongoing project interventions to enhance access to appropriate and affordable finance by young agri-preneuers in organized groups.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The project plans to engage a YSLA Service Provider to support access-to-finance interventions. This will include training and handholding newly formed groups on YSLA methodology, mentoring and coaching the groups through registration. These actions are intended to strengthen access to financial solutions for young women and men, enabling them to expand or improve their businesses.

Specifically, the consultant will:

- Conduct YSLA finance, governance and leadership skills needs assessment for newly established groups to identify capacity gaps to inform the delivery model for YSLA methodology.
- Build the capacity of the YSLAs based on the identified needs, with the overarching objective of strengthening their efficiency, reliability, and sustainability. These trainings will be facilitated by selected leads from the YSLAs groups undertaken through YSLA methodology, who will double as guides and Trainer of Trainers (ToTs).
- Guide YSLA groups to access affordable finance options for young men and women with practices on Interest rate, share outs and loan term optimization guides that can be scaled.
- Develop linkage models with MFIs, SACCOs, and banks to strengthen the credibility of YSLAs to enable needs-based access to wholesale credit for onward lending.

- Support the registration of the newly formed YSLAs as legal entities key to accessing debt financing from mainstream financial institutions.

## **SCOPE OF WORK:**

### **Inception phase:**

- The assignment will start with an inception phase. This phase will undertake a review of YSLA training guides, project documents, market-related reports and strategies. A rapid review of training needs assessment and the available information on the intervention area (access to finance & YSLA methodology).
- The inception phase will end with the submission of the inception report with detailed work plan and finalizing it after incorporating comments from Practical Action.

### **Progress phase**

- Conduct a YSLA skills needs assessment for 700 new groups through a sample framework to identify capacity gaps in the implementation of the YSLA methodology and systems. The broad objective is to guide these YSLA groups to be efficient, reliable, and sustainable.
- Identify 350 lead ToTs from the selected YSLAs who will double as facilitators and guides.
- Capacity building the ToTs on YSLA methodology based on the needs and gaps identified.
- Develop a schedule for training delivery to be employed by the ToTs to support the YSLA groups.
- Train the YSLA groups through the selected guides and ToTs to registration.
- Monitor the implementation of the guidelines developed and report on the progress of each YSLAs.
- Linkages of YSLAs to mainstream financial institutions e.g Saccos, MFIs

### **Final reporting phase**

- The initial draft interim reports shared by the consultant will be reviewed by Practical Action.
- The comments will then be incorporated and developed into the full draft of the report by the consultant.
- The final reports will be produced by the consultant upon incorporation of all comments from reviewers.
- The consultant will present specific recommendations to address problems/ constraints/ gaps and opportunities for improvement and defined roles of different actors in the creation of working opportunities for young men and women.

## **EXPECTED DELIVERABLES**

The following deliverables are envisioned under this consultancy:

- **Inception report:** An inception report incorporating findings of a rapid review of training guidelines, desk review, details of the work plan, and time schedules towards achieving the

objectives of the TOR.

- **Interim reports:** Brief progress report highlighting the 700 groups trained on YSLA methodologies, lessons learned and linkages to financial institutions.
- **Final reports:** Detail report meeting the objectives and scope of the TOR and with used methodologies as agreed in the Inception Report and revisited in the Interim Report. The final report will be the end project after incorporating all the comments from Practical Action. If the report is acceptable, final payment will be made.

A detailed schedule will be developed and agreed upon with the successful candidate for these deliverables.

## PROFILE OF POTENTIAL CONSULTANT

For this assessment, the Consultant should have at least a Master degree in Agribusiness /Agricultural economics/ Marketing/ Economics/ Commerce/Business Management or related field background and extensive experience and knowledge in implementing YSLA methodology with young men and women. Among the desirable qualifications for a lead consultant are:

- Organizations that have over 5 years' experience in conducting similar activities in building the capacity of young men and women and mentoring on YSLA methodology.
- Technical proposals should indicate at least two similar projects and contacts of the relevant people who can be contacted for reference, as well as names and qualifications of the lead consultant(s)
- Demonstrated experience in community economic development, community empowerment, and working with community-based organizations.
- Good understanding and proven track record in safeguarding / do not harm principle.
- Experience working in the Lake Basin, highly recommended.

### Essential

- Extensive experience in delivering YSLA TOT training and directly training participants in YSLA methodology, with a focus on markets and value-chain projects.
- Good knowledge and understanding of gender equality issues, particularly in the context of the agricultural value chain

## TIMELINES

The consultancy is expected to be carried out over a period of five (5) months, commencing from February 2026 to July 2026. The consultant will be engaged on a delivery-based contract, with specific milestones linked to the completion of key activities and submission of satisfactory reports.

A tentative timeline is proposed as follows:

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Inception report and detailed work plan	Feb 2026
Training and handholding of newly established YSLAs on YSLA methodology	Mar-May 2026

Monitoring the progress of the 700 established groups and offer guidance on their cohesion model and access to finance.	Mar – May 2026
Support the newly established YSLAs on their Registration	May - June 2026
Final report and presentation of results	July 2026

## REPORTING AND PAYMENT

Payment for the study shall be made in three tranches as indicated below

- Inception Report: Upon successful submission of an acceptable inception report.
- Monthly Progress Updates: submission and acceptance of the 1st draft of the report
- Final Report: Submission and acceptance of the final report (Comprehensive documentation of achievements, lessons, and recommendations)

### Payment Terms

Financial proposal detailing the workplan, the budget breakdown and consultancy fees in Kenya Shillings. If the team consists of several members, the professional fees should be based on clearly shown time allocation for each member of the team to the various activities.

All payments shall be inclusive of applicable taxes and subject to Practical Action’s financial procedures and timelines.

## GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

A consulting entity that meets the above requirements and is available within the time limit indicated above should submit the following:

1. Proposal and capability statement with clear methodological approach (technical proposal).
2. Detailed financial proposal in Kenyan Shillings: If the team consists of several members, the professional fees should not just be a daily rate, but it should be based on clearly shown time allocation by each member of the team to the various activities.
3. Evidence of experience in similar work.
4. Annexed to the proposal should be CVs of the evaluation team outlining previous evaluation experiences and accomplishment.

### NOTE

1. Practical Action reserves the right to accept or reject any application.
2. All outputs, including the strategy, creative materials and raw data, will become the sole property of Practical Action and its partners.
3. Consultants must declare any existing or potential conflict of interest with or competing projects.
4. The consultants shall comply with Practical Action’s Safeguarding and Data Protection policies and obtain informed consent from all research participants.
5. Payments will be done subject to the consulting entity meeting quality and timely delivery of stated task.