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**Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of QZA-20 0246, Scaling Conservation Agriculture-Based Sustainable Intensification (SCASI) In Ethiopia**

# **About the Development Fund**

For more than 40 years the Development Fund (DF) has collaborated with local communities and civil society organizations in developing countries to improve food production and income generation of highly vulnerable and marginalized rural communities. DF’s vision is a sustainable and just world with freedom from hunger, poverty, and marginalization. Hundreds of thousands of small-scale farming households have received DF support to develop resilient livelihoods and eliminate hunger, malnutrition, and poverty in their communities.

DF has stood steadfast in the forefront among development organizations promoting the empowerment of marginalized rural communities, pro-poor policies, and appropriate solutions, particularly through approaches such as crop diversification, model-farmer, climate adaptive villages (CAVs), affordable climate adaptive agriculture techniques, community seed banks, small-scale irrigation and mechanization, local natural resource management, microcredits and capacity building of civil society and grassroots organization. DF mobilizes the assets of small-scale farmers to ensure local contribution, involvement, and ownership, which is key to sustainable, resilient, and equitable development.

# **Background and Context**

* 1. **Programme description**

The Scaling Conservation Agriculture-based Sustainable Intensification in Ethiopia (SCASI) project was designed to scale up/out CASI in selected districts of the major crop-producing regional states in Ethiopia by implementing appropriate climate-smart agriculture practices such as CASI to sustainably increase agricultural production and productivity under the changing climate and declining soil health conditions in the country. This requires promoting conservation agriculture-based sustainable crop and livestock production technologies and practices that improve food and nutrition security and increase income while conserving the natural resources base and reducing GHG emissions through enhanced capacity of implementers at different levels. The project targets four regional states where (i) major crops are grown, (ii) population density is high, (iii) a limited promotion of CASI is already ongoing and (iv) most districts overlap with SLMP watershed interventions.

The project has been underway from January 2022 to December 2024. The target areas are eight Woredas in four regions namely: Amhara, Benshangul-Gumuz, Oromia, and Southern Ethiopia region. The intervention Woredas are Burie Zuria and Bibugn (Amhara), Asosa and Homosha (Benishangul Gumuz), Leka Dulecha and Sibu Sire (Oromia), and Boloso Sore and Boloso Bombe Woredas (Southern Ethiopia). The project is being implemented in 40 Kebeles. Direct participants in the project are smallholder farmers (SHFs) who are actively engaged in crop and fodder production. In addition, it is envisaged that agricultural experts and extension workers/development agents who are directly involved in the agriculture production system will benefit from various awareness creation, experience sharing, and skill, and knowledge enhancement efforts. The project will specifically target women based on criteria applicable to local conditions. The project will also involve landless youth through service provision activities such as CASI mechanization. The total number of direct participants in the project will be 75,000 people (15,000 households) of which at least 30 percent will be female participants. The project builds on partnerships, methodologies, and lessons learned from DF’s 40 years of experience in integrating rural development with climate adaptation and natural resource management.

* 1. **Objective of the programme**

The overall objective of the project is to improve soil health and sustainably increase the productivity of major crops through the widespread adoption of proven CASI practices and technologies thereby increasing the income of smallholder farmers and their resilience to climate change and variability.

To achieve the overall objective the project has the following major outcomes and outputs:

# Increased crop and fodder productivity on a sustainable basis.

# 1.1 Proven CASI practices and technologies practiced by smallholder farmers

# 1.2 Increased equitable access to knowledge of CASI systems amongst smallholder farmers

# Restored and enhanced soil health.

# 2.1 CASI Principles and Technologies promoted

# Increased awareness and capacity of smallholder farmers on sustainable production systems.

# 3.1 Reference demonstration plots for validation of CASI practices and technologies established at model farmers' farmland

# 3.2 Knowledge and practical skills of 15,000 smallholder farmers on CASI practices developed and increased adoption and implementation

# Increased institutional capacity to support smallholder farmers to adopt CASI.

# 4.1 Capacity of DAs and Agricultural experts enhanced to improve CASI extension delivery

# 4.2 Increased awareness of policymakers on CASI benefits

# 4.3 Improved CASI implementation capacity at all levels

# 4.4. Best CASI practices and technologies identified, documented, and developed scaling-up pathways

# **Objectives of the Evaluation**

The objective of the Review is to assess and document the performance of the Project and the extent to which the outputs and outcomes have been achieved, determining coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness. The review will assess success factors and constraints, capture lessons learnt and document new knowledge and important topics for further enquiry, action, lobbying and/or influence. It will also review and assess the findings and recommendations of the Project Progress Reports.

The findings of the review will be used by DF and its IPs to make necessary adjustments to the project for the remaining grant period. On this basis, the review shall also provide clear (actionable) recommendations for improvement and identify key areas for learning in order to strengthen the management and effectiveness of the project and inform the design of a possible extension.

The evaluation will be conducted in the selected targeted districts ensuring the representation of all target groups, partners, and stakeholders at all levels. It is understood that the findings and recommendations from the evaluation will be used by DF and its partners as valuable inputs to strengthen their capacity during effective project design and implementation. Accordingly, DF and project partners expect that the consultant will deliver concrete lessons and recommendations with reliable measures which will help to guide DF and implementing partners to identify which areas need improvement and areas to capitalize on and ultimately for constructive decision-making.

**Summary of Evaluation objectives:**

Objective 1: Evaluate Relevance, Effectiveness, and efficiency of the SCASI project

This evaluation will primarily assess the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the project’s design in terms of addressing the needs and priorities of the target beneficiaries, attaining its intended objectives, and appropriate usage or the cost-effectiveness of the project resources.

Objective 2: Evaluate the impact and sustainability of prioritized areas

This evaluation will review the impact and sustainability of the SCASI project implementation in terms of its contribution to changing or improving the livelihoods of the target communities and the extent to which the achieved impacts and outcomes are sustainable.

In achieving both objectives above, the evaluation will serve for both learning and accountability purposes and will seek to:

* Identify key achievements in the course of SCASI project cycle management that are the strengths so far and;
* Identify any problems faced by the project and formulate appropriate recommendations for future actions.
* To the extent possible, conduct spot checks without implementing partners present to verify results reported by partners[[1]](#footnote-2)

1. **Key Evaluation Questions**

The evaluation shall answer the following questions and offer tangible recommendations for follow up:

**Relevance**

* To what extent the project identified and addressed the different needs and priorities of the target communities in the different interventions?
* Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
* Does the project design respond to the priorities of the country as well as donor’s priorities?
* Has the risk analysis been strong enough and monitored regularly? Has the project been adapted to changing risk-environments?

**Coherence**

* To what extent the project interventions have linkage and integration with other interventions carried out by the implementing partners?
* To what extent the project intervention were consistent with other actors’ interventions in the same context, including government programmes?
* Has the communication/ collaboration between the partner and DF been adequate?

**Effectiveness**

* To what extent are the objectives (outcomes & outputs) of the program being achieved compared to the planned target based on the existing data?
* Can reported results and participant lists be independently verified?
* What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
* To what extent is the programme cost effective? Please assess indirect costs versus direct project activity costs, including per diem, travel costs etc. Are all costs and procurements necessary and appropriately documented? Can participants verify the length and contents of training provided? Please provide tangible examples of cost-effective measures and cost-ineffectiveness.
* Have budget revisions during the course of the programme been appropriately justified and quality checked?

**Efficiency**

* Was the project implemented most efficiently compared to alternatives?
* Were objectives achieved on time?
* What measures have been made to prevent delays? Strengths and weaknesses in these.

**Quality**

* Please assess the quality of the results framework and sources for data collection. To what extent are the applied methodologies adequate? Do the applied methodologies allow for verification of results, verification of the quality of results, and randomized controls?
* If need for adjustments, what concrete recommendations do you propose to DF and partners for the remainder of the program cycle and future programs?

**Impact**

* To what extent has the project contributed towards the intended impacts (outcomes)? In particular, we are interested to know:
* Has the increase in number of months of increased food availability supplied assessed using the tool ''Months of Adequate Household Food Provisioning [MAHFP]'' and reduction in downside risk measured as percent of annual yield variability reduction expressed in coefficient of variation lead to food security and resilience of smallholder farmers while enhancing production resources. If yes How? If not, what has been missing?
* To what extent has the project contributed to any unintended impacts or effects, positive or negative (e.g. social, economic, environmental, or other)?

**Sustainability**

* What is the likelihood of the project results to continue after donor funding ceased?
* What were the major factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project?
* Are the approaches being applied by the project contributing to the sustainability of the project achievements?
* Is the project applying a sensible exit strategy for transfer of responsibility and activities to other stakeholders (local government, community institutions)?

# **Scope of the Review**

* ***Temporal scope***: The project runs from January 2022 to December 2024 and the review will be conducted for the total project period.
* ***Geographic scope:*** The evaluation will cover implementation areas in Ethiopia. Accordingly, the evaluation will make sample from eight Woredas in Amhara, Benshangul-Gumuz, Oromia and Southern Ethiopia regional states: Burie Zuria and Bibugn (Amhara), Asosa and Homosha (Benishangul Gumuz), Leka Dulecha and Sibu Sire (Oromia), and Boloso Sore and Boloso Bombe Woredas (Southern Ethiopia), with a total of 40 project implementation Kebeles.
* ***Activity scope:*** The review will be conducted for the whole program across the intervention areas as indicated above under geographic scope.

1. **Main users and stakeholders**

The main users of the evaluation are DF and partners. Other stakeholders having an interest in the review include Norad, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA), and relevant institutions at different administrative levels in program countries.

# **Methodology**

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable, and useful. The consultant will develop appropriate methodologies and data collection tools to answer the above review questions. The review team shall use a mixed methodology approach to assess results, including desk reviews of relevant documentation. Qualitative data can be collected through i.e. focus group discussions, Key Informant Interviews, and observation. To the extent possible, the implementing partner should not be present during FGD and KIIs. The review shall employ participatory methods that give voice to the local communities and programme participants. It shall consult community-based institutions, programme staff (from DF and partners), relevant government office staff, local, regional and federal authorities, and other relevant stakeholders. The areas and partners to be included in the study are to be decided by the consultant as independently as possible, based on information provided by DF and partners including the annual report for 2023.

The final evaluation report must describe the full evaluation approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses of the methods and approach of the review.

## **Geographic location and sampling**

The geographic areas covered in the SCASI project are 4 regions, 8 Woredas (2 Woredas from each region), and 40 Kebeles (5 kebeles from each Woredas). The consultant will propose sampling strategies based on the proposed methodological approach. A final sampling plan will be developed in agreement with DF and partners.

**List of Partners, Regions, Zones, Woredas, and Number of Kebeles and Households**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Implementing partner | Region | Zone | Woreda | Number of Kebeles | Number of Households |
|
| Food For Hunger Ethiopia (FH Ethiopia) | Oromia | East Wolega | Leka Dulecha | 5 | 2225 |
| East Wolega | Sibu Sire | 5 | 1736 |
| Benishangul-Gumuz | Assosa | Ura | 5 | 1405 |
| Homosha | Homosha | 5 | 1975 |
| Terepheza Development Association (TDA) | Southern Ethiopia | Wolayita | Boloso Sore | 5 | 2005 |
| Wolayita | Boloso Bombe | 5 | 2917 |
| Megbare Senay Mothers and Children Support Organization (MSFCSO) | Amhara | West Gojam | Burie Zuria | 5 | 1289 |
| East Gojam | Bibugn | 5 | 1448 |
| Total |  |  |  | 40 | 15,000 |

# **Deliverables**

**Inception Report:** The Inception Report shall not exceed 15 pages in length and will comprise detailed methodology, including data collection tools and interview protocol; initial findings based on a desk study (document/literature review), a work plan and a comprehensive list of stakeholders and key informants (KIs); list of relevant documents and references; sampling strategy; and any other issue of importance.

**Draft report:** The Draft Evaluation Report shall be delivered in English and shall not exceed 40 pages, including an executive summary and excluding annexes, with the following sections (illustrative, not exhaustive):

* Executive summary presenting main findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
* Introduction and background, including review purpose, objectives, and scope
* Description of methodology
* Limitations
* Review Results
* Findings, conclusions, and recommendations
* Lessons learned

Annexes (to include updated log frame with results, review ToR, Inception Report, maps, list of KII/stakeholders, documents/literature reviewed, raw collected data and research tools (if applicable).The consultant must comply with global and DF Data protection policies, including GDPR.

Personal data is to be included only if deemed relevant (i.e. when it is contributing to the credibility of the review) based on a case-based assessment by the evaluator. The inclusion of personal data in the report must always be based on written consent.

The evaluation findings shall flow logically from the data, showing a clear line of evidence to support the conclusions. Conclusions should be substantiated by findings and analysis. Review questions shall be clearly stated and answered in the executive summary and the conclusions. Recommendations and lessons learned should flow logically from conclusions. They must be clear, relevant, targeted, and actionable so that the review can be used to achieve its intended learning and accountability objectives.

The structure of the Evaluation will be agreed at the inception stage. The report will be presented both in hard copy and an electronic version and be presented in a way that enables publication without further editing.

The Executive Summary will include the main findings and conclusions, lessons learned, an assessment of what has worked well, and recommended improvements.

**Presentation:** The consultant will present initial findings to DF, implementing partners, and key stakeholders for validation.

**Final report:** The Evaluation Report in English shall incorporate Client comments and shall not exceed 40 pages including the executive summary and excluding annexes. It shall be submitted in digital form in PDF and Word format. A presentation of the final report shall be made to DF and Norad.

# **Timeline and resourcing**

The duration of the evaluation is estimated to be a maximum of eight weeks. The review should commence, no later than 15 September 2024. The budget available for the Evaluation is estimated at 200,000 NOK. Activities, dates (to be agreed upon) and deadlines (to be proposed by the consultant and agreed upon) for the consultancy work are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Delivery Dates** |
| Start-up – Preparatory/Contract signing |  |
| Start-up meeting (kick-off) |  |
| **Phase 1 – Inception / desk study** |  |
| * Submission of Draft Inception Report |  |
| * Client review and comment |  |
| * Submission of Final Inception Report |  |
| **Phase 2 – Data collection** |  |
| * Fieldwork (data collection) |  |
| * Debrief |  |
| **Phase 3 – Analysis and Reporting** |  |
| * Submission of Draft Evaluation Report |  |
| * Presentation of draft reports and presentation of initial findings and recommendation |  |
| * Client review and comment |  |
| * Submission of Final Evaluation Report |  |

# **Roles and Responsibilities**

The consultant will prepare a comprehensive participatory methodology for undertaking the review. S/he will collaborate with partners to appraise existing data collection tools and design as needed and collect data. S/he is expected to travel to project implementation areas, and adequately familiarise him/her with the project logical framework and any relevant information relating to policy and legal frameworks in the agriculture, environment, and related sectors. The consultant will be responsible for data analysis and report writing which will be accompanied by presenting study results to DF, and partner organisation for validation. Whereas field visits and contact sessions with communities will be facilitated by partners.

The main responsibility for ensuring that all responsibilities are carried out lies with the consultant.

**The consultant will undertake the following activities:**

* Conduct a review of data sources such as reports, relevant policies, strategies, and project documents.
* Develop appropriate study methodology, design, and tools.
* Select the most appropriate sample project areas for the visit.
* Submit an inception report and finalize the review plan.
* Conduct field work.
* Synthesise findings.
* Produce draft report.
* Organise validation workshops in which local partners, DF, and other relevant stakeholders participate.
* Produce the final report, including incorporating comments from DF and its implementing partners.
* Present findings to DF and IPs as required by DF.

**Other responsibilities of the consultant:**

* Adhere to all terms/conditions stipulated in the contract.
* Pay income tax or other taxes as required.
* Obtain relevant insurance as needed.
* Adhere to DF’s code of conduct while undertaking the assignment.
* Adhere to the agreed timeframes regarding all activities outlined in the timeline.
* The consultant shall cover all costs associated with transportation during the assignment.
* Consultant’s own laptops and phones are to be used during the assignment.
* Pay for own accommodation and per diem etc.

**DF will be responsible for the following:**

* Provide the consultant with all required documents.
* Link consultants to partner organizations and other relevant stakeholders and set up meetings as required.
* Support in the process and provide technical input on methodology both from Oslo and country offices.
* Plan (in collaboration with the consultant, and with the implementing partner where appropriate) the field visits.
* Take part in selected field assessments and follow up on the progress of the review as per plan ensuring quality.

**Implementing partners will be responsible for the following:**

* Support the consultancy team so they can undertake interviews, focus group discussions, meetings, and project site visits as requested.
* Logistic arrangement in the field in discussion with DF.

# **Desired competencies and skills of the consultant**

The review team shall preferably be an international consultant(s) in collaboration with local consultants to facilitate unaccompanied spot checks and interviews. The term Consultant in this ToR refers to the review team. The Consultant will liaise closely with DF, implementing partner staff, and staff of relevant government and non-government institutions in the areas where the review will take place.

The members of the consulting team should hold the following competencies and skills:

* Advanced university degree in the field of agriculture, development studies, agricultural economics, or related fields; working particularly on climate-smart agriculture, food security, nutrition, and rural development.
* Extensive experience in designing and conducting independent reviews on rural development, food security, and climate change programs/projects.
* Good understanding of gender, the inclusion of youth, people with disabilities and minorities where applicable
* Excellent writing, communication, analytical, and presentation skills.
* Demonstrated ability to meet deadlines.
* Extensive experience in both qualitative and quantitative methods.

# **Reference documents (secondary data for desk study/literature review)**

DF and the implementing partners will provide the Consultant with all available program documentation upon signing of the contract. The Consultant is encouraged to identify any other sources for appropriate additional information that may be required to supplement what is provided by the project. Project documents available include:

* Project proposal document
* Results framework and logic model (original and revised)
* Implementation plan / annual work plans
* Baseline data
* Programme progress reports
* Partners annual reports
* Monitoring and/or field reports
* Thematic reports
* List of project locations and participating communities
* List of key stakeholders

# **Tender submission and contact details**

Tenders/offers to conduct the Evaluation will be accepted from consultants as well as firms and must be submitted in two separate documents, one containing a technical proposal and the other financial proposal marked “Consultancy Service for the Review of the Scaling Conservation Agriculture-Based Sustainable Intensification (SCASI) In Ethiopia, and sent by email to [Hosaena](mailto:Hosaena) Teklab, International Controller by **05 August 2024.**

Please note that the bid must contain CVs of the proposed evaluation team. The financial proposal shall disclose all pricing information related to the consultancy service as described in this Terms of Reference in USD for international consultants. Fees (non-recurring and recurring costs), travel costs, and other out-of-pocket expenses should be given separately as a lump sum. Conditional cost is not acceptable.

For further details or questions regarding this ToR for the Evaluation, kindly contact Elin Cecilie Ranum, Head of Programme [elin@utviklingsfondet.no](mailto:elin@utviklingsfondet.no)

# **Annexes**

Annex 1: Letter of tender form

**Re. Letter of tender: “Mid-term Evaluation for the Scaling Conservation Agriculture-Based Sustainable Intensification (SCASI) In Ethiopia** **QZA-20 0246”**

We hereby confirm that:

We have fulfilled our obligations concerning the payment of taxes and social contributions to the country of legal registration for our organization/firm.

Our organization/firm has not been convicted of participation in a criminal organization, corruption, fraud, or money laundering. Furthermore, it has not been convicted of any criminal offense related to its business conduct and has not in the pursuit of its business activities committed any serious breach of professional or ethical standards in the industry concerned.

We have experience performing similar assignments.

The tender complies with the minimum requirements specified in section 8 of the tender/ToR.

No potential conflicts of interest are foreseen, nor are we aware of any factors that potentially could create a conflict of interest in connection with carrying out the assignment.

The individual consultants who have been proposed for this assignment, and who will be traveling to high-risk areas, possess sufficient knowledge and training before travel to high-risk areas.

We have *[please select]*:

**No deviations** to the tender document/ToR

We confirm that the tender is binding for ----------calculated from expiry of the closing date for submission of tenders.

Contact person for the tender: *[name and position/email/telephone]*

Signed by an authorized representative:

Stamp

(If a firm)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Name and position)

1. Spot checks will have higher credibility if locations and interview subjects are selected at random, interviews and checks are carried out without the implementing partner present, and without prior notice to the implementing partners. The same applies to the point on verification of trainings under Effectiveness. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)