



Terms of Reference FOR MID-TERM REVIEW (MTR)

Resilience Building through Agroecological Intensification
in Zimbabwe (RAIZ) Project



Grant Agreement No.
CTR FOOD/2021/424-933

1 Introduction

This document describes the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the DeSIRA - Resilience Building through Agroecological Intensification in Zimbabwe (DeSIRA-RAIZ) Project. The project is part of the Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) Initiative of the European Union (EU).

1.1. Background

CIRAD, together with its Implementing Partners (University of Zimbabwe & CIMMYT), are implementing the European Delegation in Zimbabwe funded “Resilience Building through Agroecological Intensification in Zimbabwe” Project – “DeSIRA RAIZ Project” or “the Action”. This initiative aims to assist Zimbabwe in embarking on the necessary changes to enhance agricultural production and make agriculture more climate resilient while protecting the environment and reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.

The Team European Initiative (TEI) is aligned with the EU Green Deal and contributes to the implementation of Zimbabwe’s Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), of which Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) is an important strategic element. It directly relates to two priorities of this DESIRA call, namely i) climate-relevant practices and ii) integrated approaches combining the farm level, territorial level and value chain level, as well as to prioritise the GCCA+ (Global Climate Change Alliance Plus Initiative) to mainstream climate change into poverty reduction and increasing resilience to climate-related stresses and shocks, including the socio-economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The RAIZ project is part of the EU funding programme “Climate-relevant Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (and food systems)” – DeSIRA. This 48-month project has a total budget of 4 million Euros and started in December 2021 with an end date of December 2025.

This project is the research component of the Team European Initiative (TEI) and provides scientific evidence and experiences for the design, implementation and progress monitoring of the CSA component of the TEI and its future projects. Therefore, the project will provide scientifically tested solutions and concepts to support the necessary changes and adaptations of agriculture to respond to the challenges of climate change. The 4-year action contributes to the European Union’s overall objective of a greener and more resilient Zimbabwe.

DeSIRA aims to support research and innovation projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America and strengthen research capacities and research governance involving key actors at national, regional, continental and global levels. DeSIRA aims to put more science into development, considering that the solutions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are context-specific. It contributes primarily to the achievement of SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 2 (Zero hunger), SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG 13 (Climate action) and SDG 15 (Life on land).

The RAIZ project specific objective is to **scientifically test agroecological approaches that can be adopted by smallholder farms in different agroecologies**. The RAIZ project has five inter-related results:

1. **Result 1:** Guidance are provided for the design, implementation and progress monitoring of the CSA component of the TEI.
2. **Result 2:** Concepts and methods to promote Agroecological (AE) approaches and practices are developed and adapted to local circumstances.
3. **Result 3:** Experiences and results made with the AE approaches and practices are assessed for their uptake and contribution to CSA objectives and documented.
4. **Result 4:** The capacity of extension and advisory services on AE approaches and their contribution to intensification, adaptation and mitigation is developed.
5. **Result 5:** Curricula to promote AE and CSA are developed for higher education purposes.
6. **Result 6:** Scientific evidence is provided for policy dialogue on AE and CSA in Zimbabwe.

In order to assess the extent to which the Action is on track to achieving its target results, identify any challenges and opportunities, and make recommendations on the way forward, a Mid-Term Review (MTR) will be undertaken. It is against that background that the RAIZ Project calls for Expression of Interest from qualified individual consultants or consulting firms to carry out the MTR.

1.2. Mid-Term Review Objectives

The MTR will include the analysis of progress against the RAIZ project objectives and outcomes, including an analysis of the underlying reasons for the improvement and implications. The evaluation will help to identify significant changes in context or operational circumstances that may impact the Action. This MTR will provide strategic recommendations for each of the areas to be delivered effectively, specifically but not limited to the envisioned outcomes as per Action Log Frame Results. The specific objectives of the MTR are to:

1. To assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and potential impact on policy and sustainability of the Action in achieving its intended results as described in the Theory of Change (ToC) and log frame;
2. To evaluate the extent to which the ToC's assumptions hold true;
3. To identify and analyse factors that have facilitated or hindered project implementation;
4. To conclude, if the Action can achieve its envisaged impact of contributing to the agroecology policy and associated dialogues and discussions;
5. To provide recommendations for adjustments to the Action design and implementation to improve its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, scaling potential and sustainability;
6. To advise the consortium and donors on the need (if any) to extend the project duration.

1.3. The MTR is issued by CIRAD, the coordinator of the project

The direct audience of the MTR findings includes RAIZ Project Team, EU Delegation, and the DeSIRA Project Steering Committee. CIRAD and Implementing partners will share the findings with the other relevant project stakeholders, e.g. Ministry of Land, Agriculture, Water, Fisheries & Rural Development and associated departments; District Level Stakeholders.

1.4. Relevant stakeholders

Relevant stakeholders include but are not necessarily limited to relevant staff from:

- Ministry of Agriculture (MoLAWFRD & Department of Research & Specialist Services, Agricultural Education & Agritex)
- European Delegation in Zimbabwe;
- CIRAD (Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement)
- CIMMYT (Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maíz y Trigo)
- University of Zimbabwe;
- Colleges of Agriculture (Gwebi, Chibhero & Kushinga/Pikhelela);
- District Authorities and Local Leadership;
- Communities (smallholder farmers);
- Private Sector

2 Methodology

The consultant should use a mixed-method approach in undertaking the MTR assignment, including e.g. study of relevant project documentation (e.g. proposal, technical and financial reports, Log Frame, Communication Plan, ROM report etc.), key informant interviews with relevant stakeholders (e.g. Project Team; PhD students; National and local government, beneficiaries), focus groups discussions, and questionnaires through meetings and field visits in Murehwa (Ward 26, 28) and Mutoko (Ward 8,10) Districts in the Mashonaland East Province of Zimbabwe.

2.1.MTR Evaluation Questions

The consultant may add or remove evaluation questions s/he sees fit to address the requirements of the MTR. The MTR will adopt the DAC OECD evaluation criteria as summarized below.

2.1.1. Relevance: Is the intervention doing the right things?

The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities and continue to do so if circumstances change. It requires analysing any changes in the context to assess the extent to which the intervention can be (or has been) adapted to remain relevant. Specific questions to be answered:

- i. How does the relevance of the Action align with the priorities of various stakeholders at the government level?
- ii. To what extent has the Action taken into consideration the different needs and priorities of different groups?
- iii. How has the context in which the Action is being implemented changed over time, and how has this influenced the assessment of the relevance of the project and its components?
- iv. To what extent is the design of specific components relevant to the direct beneficiaries? Can the relevance of the Action be made higher? If so, how?

2.1.2. Coherence: How well does the intervention fit?

The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector, or institution. The extent to which other interventions (particularly policies) support or undermine the intervention, and vice versa. Includes internal coherence and external coherence. This includes complementarity, harmonization, and coordination with others, as well as the extent to which the intervention adds value while avoiding duplication of effort. Specific questions to be answered:

- i. To what extent is the design and implementation of the Action programme coherent with the policy priorities of the Government of Zimbabwe, especially with regard to building climate resilience?
- ii. To what extent is the design and implementation of the Action coherent with the policy priorities of the European Delegation?
- iii. To what extent is coherence sought and achieved with other projects and programmes in the targeted areas from Government, national and local stakeholders?

2.1.3. Effectiveness: Is the intervention achieving its objectives?

The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results, including any differential results across groups. The following specific questions will guide the effectiveness of the assessment:

- i. To what extent is the Action on track towards achieving its outputs and outcomes, both in terms of quantity and quality? (Explain reasons for over-/underachievement)
- ii. To what extent is risk management adequate, and to what extent has the implementation of the project been adjusted based on regular assessments of assumptions and risks?
- iii. To what extent is interdisciplinarity appropriately managed and put into practice?
- iv. To what extent is there adequate coordination and collaboration between the Action's key stakeholders?

2.1.4. Efficiency: How well are resources being used?

The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economical and timely way. Note: "Economic" is the conversion of inputs (funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc.) into outputs, outcomes, and impacts in the most cost-effective way possible, as compared to feasible alternatives in the

context. “Timely” delivery is within the intended timeframe or a timeframe reasonably adjusted to the demands of the evolving context. Specific questions to be answered:

- i. How do the costs of implementing this Action compare to similar projects, if any, in Zimbabwe?
- ii. How timely is the implementation of the Action (taking into account factors outside the Action’s control)?
- iii. To what extent does the budget burn rate to date of the Action match the timeline of the Action?
- iv. To what extent, and if so, how, could the project achieve better efficiency?

2.1.5. Impact: What difference does the intervention make?

Impact addresses the ultimate significance and potentially transformative effects of the intervention. It seeks to identify social, environmental and economic effects of the intervention that are longer-term or broader in scope than those already captured under the effectiveness criterion. Specific questions to be answered:

- i. What change that can be ascribed to the Action has occurred to date towards increasing the generation of scientific evidence to inform policy in agroecology?
- ii. What intended or unintended (positive and negative) effects has the Action had to date, and on which stakeholders?
- iii. Is it possible for the Action to achieve more impact than projected? If so, what impact and how could this have been done?

2.1.6. Sustainability: Will the benefits last post project implementation duration?

The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue beyond the intervention. Depending on the timing of the evaluation, this may involve analysing the actual flow of net benefits or estimating the likelihood of net benefits continuing over the medium and long term. Specific questions to be answered:

- i. To what extent is knowledge generated during the Action being transferred, or envisioned to be transferred, to relevant stakeholders?
- ii. To what extent do or will the Action’s outputs inform policy and practice, and generate a transformative change on the ground?
- iii. How can the Action be scaled up and out beyond the current Action timeline and scope?
- iv. Is the enabling environment within which the project operates supportive of its continuity?
- v. To what extent will the activities and outputs be maintained after development support is withdrawn?

2.2. Conclusions and recommendations

After gradually setting out its observations, findings and judgements on the project in the light of the evaluation questions, the consultant should, in this section, present its general conclusions, so as to give an overall assessment of the evaluated project.

- The consultant will distinguish between specific conclusions whose validity is limited to the project evaluated, and more general conclusions.
- The consultant will identify strategic and operational recommendations.

3. Required Expertise

The Consultant/Consultancy Firm for this evaluation must have extensive experience and knowledge of undertaking midterm review of research projects, and must include the following expertise:

- Master’s or PhD in Agriculture, Agroecology, Soil Science, NRM, Climate Change, or other related degrees
- Training in Monitoring and Evaluation
- Proven experience in assessing knowledge production
- Proven experience in evaluating impact of research on public policies
- The consultant should have a record of M&E work done for EU or similar donor funded projects
- Demonstrated evidence of completed mid-term or end-of-project evaluations in the last five years.

- Proficiency in qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection
- Proficiency in statistics and proven experience with data analysis.
- Excellent report writing and data interpretation
- Ability to conduct research independently.
- Knowledge of English and Shona.
- History of published peer-reviewed articles, studies, or research work is an added advantage.

Proposed evaluators should have no previous or present involvement in the design or implementation of the project under evaluation, nor in the design, implementation, or evaluation of a preceding project phase. This includes research and advisory services.

4. Planning

The MTR is foreseen to take place between April and June 2024. Activities will include on-site fieldwork where the project is working directly with approximately 200 smallholder farmers in Murehwa (Ward 10 & 13) and Mutoko (Ward 26 & 28) Districts in Mashonaland East Province of Zimbabwe. Interviews with the project's team member should take place preferably over the second fortnight of April 2024.

5. Logistics

Consultants will be responsible for arranging visas, travel, and insurance, as needed. Accommodation, transport, and other logistics are to be arranged by the Consultants as well. However, CIRAD will assist and facilitate where feasible.

6. Key Deliverables

The conformity of the report to the MTR standards and requirements will be assessed and confirmed by RAIZ project Technical Team. The text of the report should be illustrated, as appropriate, with maps, graphs, and tables (appropriate visuals). The MTR will be completed within forty (40) days from the date of contract signing and the selected individual consultants/consultancy firm will submit the following documents in English:

- No. Item/Activity Period/time: i.e. after signing the contract
- Prepare and submit Inception Report (detailed methodological approach) which will include data collection tools
- Workplan for fieldwork for MTR activities
- Draft MTR Report
- Presentation of Draft Report
- Finalisation and submission of the Final Report
- Submission of raw data (audio & video recordings, interview & FGD transcripts)

7. Technical Evaluation Criteria

The total score will be calculated as the weighted sum of both the technical score and the financial score. Please note that a proposal with less than 70% for the technical evaluation will not continue with the evaluation. The relative weights will be:

- **Technical:70%**
- **Financial:30%**

Criteria	Maximum Score
Technical Bid Score	70
Details:	
Understanding of ToR and objectives to be achieved	10
Overall methodological approach (including experimental designs, sample size, and power calculations), relevance of the proposed approach, estimation of difficulties and proposed solutions	30
Task and time organization	10

Proposed team of experts	10
Experience of similar previous assignments especially EU funded projects	10
Financial Offer Score Itemised budget	30
Total Score	100

8. Applications

Interested consultants should email Technical and Financial proposals (**itemised budget in USD**) detailing the proposed approach, methodology, and work plan for the assignment. The technical proposal must not exceed 10 pages and should be accompanied by (i) detailed CVs outlining the consultant's academic qualifications, previous relevant experience, contact information, etc.; (ii) documented evidence e.g. 1 copy of recent Research Project Midterm Review Report previously developed and (iii) and conflict of interest statement. Requested additional information to be in annexes e.g. team CVs, copy of recent MTR.

Applications addressed to: CIRAD Zimbabwe Office (6 Lanark Road, Belgravia, Harare) entitled: "RAIZ Project MTR Full names of Consultants/Consultancy Firm" should be sent electronically by email to francois.affholder@cirad.fr with a copy to mashoko.grey@cirad.fr by the **18th of March 2024 at 5:00 PM**, local time in Zimbabwe.

During the course of this procurement, i.e. from the publication of this RfP to the award of a contract, if you have any questions, please address all correspondence and questions by email to the following CIRAD contacts: Mashoko GREY, email: mashoko.grey@cirad.fr with a copy to francois.affholder@cirad.fr before the **13th of March 2024**.

9. Ownership and Confidentiality of Data and Information

The consultant undertakes to treat as confidential all documentation, materials and confidential information contained therein, which shall not be distributed to third parties without CIRAD's written consent. At the end of the evaluation, all available documents (paper and electronic versions), as well as all data collected during the evaluation, will be returned to CIRAD at the latest with the delivery of the final version of the report. Similarly, the rights to use the data and reports produced will be transferred to CIRAD before the end of the evaluation contract.

10. Acronyms

AE: AgroEcological

CSA: Climate Smart Agriculture

DeSIRA: Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture

EU: European Union

GCCA+: Global Climate Change Alliance Plus Initiative

GHG: Greenhouse Gas

MTR: Mid Term Review

NDC: Nationally Determined Contributions

SDG: Sustainable Development Goals

TEI: Team European Initiative

ToC: Theory of Change

ToR: Terms of Reference