

ATTACHMENT 1 – Terms of Reference

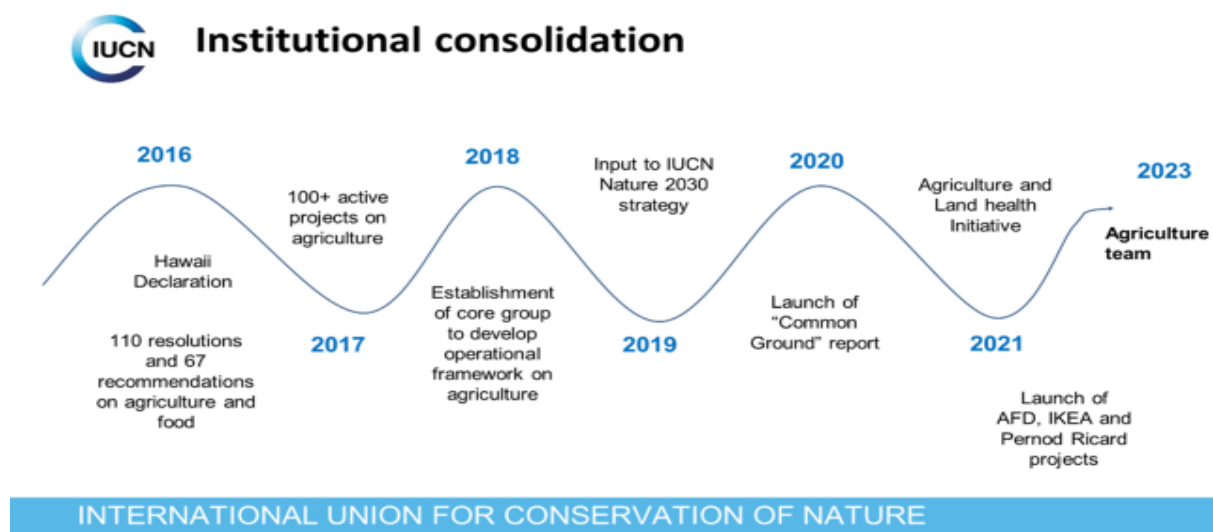
Terms of reference for the independent Mid Term Review of the Accelerating the Global Transition to Sustainable Agriculture Project

Evaluation Terms of Reference July 2023

1. Evaluation context

Agriculture is the major cause of biodiversity loss worldwide, and in most countries, agricultural policy continues to reward unsustainable practices. However, biodiversity is a stepping-stone of sustainable agriculture and food production, as farming relies on nature and natural resources, including soil, water supply, pollinators, and genetic diversity. It is therefore critical to encourage above and below ground biodiversity, and sound natural resources management, to achieve a sustainable and healthy food- system in capacity to deliver ecosystem services for the Society, and ensure long term food security, especially in the context of extreme vulnerability to climate change impacts.

Despite the strategic importance of investing in promoting sustainable agriculture, restoration and sustainable management, IUCN has only very recently seen agriculture as a priority (IUCN 2016 World conservation congress in Hawaiï), with a formal recognition as a strategic priority in 2019 (IUCN’s Nature 2030 vision) and the creation of a dedicated agriculture team in the Secretariat organigram in January 2023.



In parallel, a number of efforts have been made to develop a coherent agriculture approach in IUCN of which a critical step was the launch by IUCN’s Director General (DG), in January 2021, of a 2 years initiative (2021-2022) to “accelerate action for mainstreaming land health in sustainable agriculture, as a Nature based Solution to food and water insecurity, climate change and other societal challenges”. The initiative intended to build on IUCN’s capacity as a convenor and knowledge broker to bring together actors from historically adversarial sectors (conservation and agriculture actors) to build convergence around the common concern of land health and to develop knowledge and tools to support development of policy and investments in sustainable agriculture.

In order to support this initiative and with the support of the IKEA Foundation, IUCN launched “The Accelerating the Global Transition to Sustainable Agriculture” Project in 2021. This project is a EURO 3 Million, three-year initiative (October 2021-December 2024).

implemented in Asia, Africa, America and Europe (more precisely, India, Vietnam, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Rwanda, Guatemala, so far) aiming at accelerating action for mainstreaming land health in sustainable agriculture, as a Nature based Solution to food and water insecurity and climate change. More specifically, the Project aims at achieving the following outcomes through production and testing of guidelines and case studies through common ground dialogues, among other project activities:

- **Outcome 1: Commitments to sustainable agriculture are put forward and monitored through dialogue between conservation and agriculture actors;**
- **Outcome 2: Scientific evidence of the multiple benefits of sustainable agriculture is communicated widely;**
- **Outcome 3: A portfolio of sustainable Agroecological projects is developed.**

The Project is also aligned with IUCN's global programme goals on sustainable agriculture. It is guided by IUCN's 2020 report "Common Ground: restoring land health for sustainable agriculture" and the IUCN Operational Framework on Agriculture.

2. Rationale and Purpose for the Evaluation

This Mid Term Review fulfils IUCN requirements to conduct an independent Mid Term Review for the purpose of learning and reflection on project management and early results. It is expected that the findings and recommendations of this mid-term review will help to identify any needed course corrections in the Project's approach and activities and bring valuable external reflections to help strengthen the Project and complement the MEL system of the Project through an adaptive management modality.

3. Audience, key stakeholders and use of the evaluation

The primary intended users of this Mid Term Review are:

- The Project Coordinators and Managers in IUCN's global and regional programmes for the purpose of managing the Project, and in particular, for making adjustments to improve delivery of outcomes;
- The Head of Agriculture Team, for the purpose of gathering lessons to inform future project design and implementation of other projects under the Agriculture Programme
- The IUCN Monitoring and Learning team, for the purpose of improving the Project monitoring and learning approach;
- IKEA Foundation to provide information to its board of direction.

4. Objectives and evaluation questions

This Mid Term review will be carried out in conformity with IUCN Evaluation Policy (2023) and use a sub-set of the widely accepted OECD DAC Evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency..

The Mid Term Review should explore the Project's work and achievements with the aim of assessing progress so far and providing guidance on how to maximize the potential for achieving the intended results and improve learning in its remaining timeframe (end date 31 December 2024). Through the assessment of the performance and lessons learnt, the Mid Term Review will also contribute to both learning and accountability.

The specific objectives of the Mid Term Review are:

- To assess the **relevance** of the Project in terms of aligning and responding to the objectives of the current IUCN Programme and other IUCN needs and priorities in relation to Agriculture;

- To assess its **coherence** with the situational analysis and how well the Project fits in its context and its compatibility with other interventions lead by IUCN
- To assess the **effectiveness** of the Project in achieving its objectives and provide clear insights about what has and has not worked and why notably in terms of improving IUCN's capacities and expertise, in order to influence policies, deliver messages, develop knowledge products and new projects proposals in sustainable agriculture. It should also highlight how external factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, has affected the Project and how the project adapted to this situation.
- To assess the **efficiency** in terms of use of funds and value for money through the delivery of the Project;
- To identify **lessons** and provide set of **actionable recommendations** on how the Project and the project coordination/management could be adjusted for further improvement and to strengthen delivery of results.
- Three additional lines of inquiry should also be addressed: contribution to the **IUCN One Programme Approach**, **Science/policy/action interface**, and **Gender Concerns**.

An initial set of questions that should guide the Mid Term Review in assessing the Project against each given criterion have been developed as follows:

Relevance

- How relevant is the Project in terms of aligning and responding to the objectives of the current IUCN Programme and other IUCN needs and priorities in relation to Agriculture?
- How appropriate and relevant is the Project approach and intervention logic in terms of its objectives and anticipated outcomes, and within the global context of the Project? To what extent is the Project fit-for-purpose to promote:
 - ✓ Commitments to sustainable agriculture
 - ✓ Communication of scientific evidence of the multiple benefits of sustainable agriculture
 - ✓ A portfolio of sustainable Agroecological projects
- Has there been any change in the relevance of the Project since the launch of the project? If so, what are the reasons that explain the change in relevance and where the project able to adapt to remain relevant?

Coherence

- How well does the Project fit in its context? In particular:
 - To what extent were the capabilities of different implementing partners and other counterparties carefully considered in the design of the Project?
 - How effective has the Project been in aligning with other IUCN projects, knowledge products and stakeholder engagement process?

Effectiveness

- To what extent has the Project delivered on its outputs and outcomes? In particular:
 - How effective has the project been in terms of coordinating the work across teams and key stakeholders?
 - How effective has the Project been in terms of organising and facilitating common ground dialogues (concept note design, collaboration across teams, stakeholders mapping and engagement, communication, etc.)?
 - How effective has the Project been in terms of compiling and disseminating key findings from the dialogues conducted so far? And in communicating any other key achievements internally and externally?
 - How effective has the Project been in fostering collaboration for the generation of knowledge products?
 - How effective has the Project been in building capacities and training stakeholders?
 - How effective has the Project been in identifying new projects grant opportunities and developing new project proposals with a multi-country perspective?

- To what extent are the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) strategy and tools adequate and effective in view of:
 - Building a record and repository of decisions taken, their consequences, level of engagement of decision makers and their progress;
 - Providing lessons from activities and results (at country and global level) that contribute to the enrichment and continuous improvement of the IUCN Agriculture Initiative;
 - Enabling adaptation in the strategy according to changes of stakeholders' priorities or conditions on the context;
 - Improving reporting, transparency and accountability to IKEA Foundation, and IUCN Members through IUCN Project Portal.
- Are there any unintended consequences as a result of the actions of the Project?

Efficiency

- Has the management approach promoted by the Project led to the most effective use of the resources, costs savings and to efficiencies of scale in the provision of coordination and technical support? More especially:
 - In terms of communication and collaboration between the agriculture team and the global and national/regional IUCN teams.
 - In the management of internal agreements and in the monitoring of progress and cash outflow?
 - In the involvement of global and country partners in the project implementation? In the alignment and coordination between the 3 components of the project: country pipeline, knowledge products and policy engagement processes?
- To what extent has the Project been able to adapt to any changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation?

In addition to the above criteria and questions, the evaluator(s) will also ensure that the following topics are addressed in the evaluation:

- **One Programme Approach:** To what extent did the project engage all constituents of the Union in its design or implementation so far?
- **Science/policy/action interface:** To what extent is the knowledge or science produced or disseminated by the Project likely to influence policy or actions in the future?
- **Gender concerns:** To what extent has gender been taken into account in the design and implementation so far?

5. Methods and source

A. Methods, sources and analysis

Different sources will be used to verify information, and evidence will be validated through triangulation. Information and insights will be derived mainly from three key sources:

- (1) Document review - including Project proposal, Project Implementation Reports, information and data collected through MEL system and other relevant knowledge products developed by the Project so far;
- (2) Key informant interviews – including interviews with executing partners and other relevant internal and external stakeholders across IUCN Headquarter and the Region (approximately 16-20);
- (3) Optional online survey or other methods proposed by consultant.

B. Stakeholders to be consulted

The evaluation will adopt a consultative approach, seeking and sharing opinions with stakeholders at different stages throughout the evaluation process. Stakeholder categories include, but are not

limited to: IUCN project staff, project executing partners, and external stakeholders involved in testing guidelines, contributing to case studies, and participating in common ground dialogues. External stakeholders may include decision makers, farmer organizations, partner NGOs and/or private sector, among others.

The list of stakeholders to be consulted will be presented and validated through the inception report. The total number of stakeholders to be consulted in the different region where the Project is implemented is however estimated to 16-20. IUCN will provide a suggested list of stakeholders in different categories during inception. The evaluation team may propose changes or additions. "

C. Sampling approach

To date the project has been implemented in six countries and is expected to expand further. The consultant may propose to sample three to four of the countries for interviews to ensure depth of analysis, and the suggested sample is India, Vietnam, Guatemala and Burkina Faso. The sample of countries will be confirmed during inception with the project team. Desk review of work in all countries is expected.

6. Evaluation deliverables

The evaluator(s) will be accountable for producing the following products for this Mid Term Review:

- ✓ Inception report including methods and detailed evaluation matrix;
- ✓ Draft evaluation report;
- ✓ Final reevaluation report, plus annex;
- ✓ A Powerpoint presentation targeted to evaluation key audiences in which the key finding and recommendations from the Mid Term Review will be presented.
- ✓ A two-page executive summary of key findings, lessons, recommendations and messages from the Mid Term Review report.

The evaluator(s) will be expected to develop an inception report that will include a methodological note based on the suggested questions above and suggesting additional questions or modifications to tailor the Mid Term Review to the Project's needs. The methodological note will include a review matrix (see annex A) presenting how each review question will be addressed, the data sources and the data collection methods and tools that will be used to gather additional data needed for the Mid Term Review and a set of criteria to rate the strength of the evidence collected.

Adequately addressing each key review questions will be the basis for IUCN to sign off on the completeness of the review report. The evaluator(s) will submit a draft report for further review by IUCN and key target audiences. The report should clearly and transparently demonstrate links between review questions, data collection, analysis, findings and conclusions. The conclusion and recommendations presented in the final report should be underpinned by a strong set of evidence and will be further explained during the final webinar.

Finally, evaluator(s) will produce a short but concise summary that can be disseminated to the wider public for general information on the project's results and performance.

The final report is expected to follow the format below:

- A. Title page including project identification details
- B. Executive Summary (including at a minimum the methodology, findings and recommendations)
- C. Table of Contents
- D. List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

- E. A short introduction to project/programme – context and description
- F. Purpose of the Evaluation
- G. Evaluation Issues and Questions
- H. Methodology (including approach to data analysis)
- I. Findings - organized according to the key evaluation questions
- J. Conclusions and lessons learned
- K. Recommendations – actionable recommendations clearly linked to findings and lessons
- L. Annexes

Given that this is a mid-term review at the end of the second year of a three year project, it is particularly important that recommendations are actionable in a short time frame (1-6 months maximum).

7. Travel requirements

Travel is not required for this Mid Term Review. All interviews are expected to be conducted remotely.

8. Schedule

It is expected that evaluator(s) will submit their deliverables according to the following schedule:

Milestone/Deliverable	Indicative Completion Date	Responsibilities
Estimated contract award date	04 September 2023	IUCN
Inception meeting and start of the evaluation	07 September 2023	Evaluator(s), IUCN
Draft inception report with methodological note and review matrix	18 September 2023	Evaluator(s)
Comments on inception report	25 September 2023	IUCN
Final inception report and approval	28 September 2023	Evaluator(s) and IUCN
Data collection and analysis phase completed	10 November 2023	Evaluator(s)
Draft report delivery	17 November 2023	Evaluator(s)
Comment on draft report	29 November 2023	IUCN
Final report delivery and approval	10 December 2023	Evaluator(s) and IUCN
Final presentation	15 December 2023 (approx)	Evaluator(s)
Two pagers summary document	15 December 2023	Evaluator(s)

9. Roles and responsibilities

This Mid Term Review is commissioned by IUCN and Day-to-day management and coordination will be done by its agriculture team. This evaluation will be undertaken by an independent evaluation team, selected through IUCN's procurement process.

10. Qualifications of the Evaluator(s)

IUCN requires a person or a team of evaluators with experience in assessing change in complex systems and with extensive expertise and knowledge in at least one of the following fields:

Organisation capacity building, project engineering, Governance, Research, Agriculture, Agronomy, Biodiversity, or a combination thereof, applied to policy instruments and practice.

In addition, the Lead team member will meet the following technical requirements:

- At least 5 years of relevant experience in supporting, designing, planning and/or conducting development evaluations; with demonstrated quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis skills, with proven record of conducting formative, process and impact evaluation;
- Proven experience in evaluating similar projects; Prior experience in conducting evaluation in countries where the Project is implemented would be an asset;
- Proven experience in complex project management;
- Advanced university degree in agriculture, agronomy or environmental science is preferable.
- English language fluency in both speaking and writing; additional fluency in Spanish and French would be considered as an asset.

Women are strongly encouraged to apply. The successful candidate will be selected based on merit.

The review team members should be completely independent from any organisation that have been involved in designing, implementing, executing or advising any aspect of TRI.

11. Cost

The maximum available budget for this review, including travel, is EUR 20'000. The evaluator(s) shall be paid upon completion of the following milestones:

- ✓ 30% upon signing of the contract
- ✓ 30% after presentation of the draft report
- ✓ 40% after the approval of the final report

Annex A. Evaluation matrix

1. Relevance:				
<i>Key evaluation questions</i>	<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>
<i>[Add rows as required]</i>				
2. Coherence –				
<i>Key evaluation questions</i>	<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>
<i>[Add rows as required]</i>				
3. Effectiveness:				
<i>Key evaluation questions</i>	<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>
<i>[Add rows as required]</i>				
4. Efficiency:				
<i>Key evaluation questions</i>	<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>
<i>[Add rows as required]</i>				
One Programme Approach:				
<i>[Add rows as required]</i>				
Relevance and efficiency of the evaluand with respect to gender,				

<i>[Add rows as required]</i>				
Science/policy/action interface:				