**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE END OF PROGRAM EVALUATION FOR AGRA AFRICA’S SEED SYSTEMS PROGRAM**

1. **Background**

AGRA was founded in 2006 with a mission to trigger a uniquely African Green Revolution that transforms smallholder agriculture into a highly productive, efficient, competitive, and sustainable system to promote food security and lift millions out of poverty. AGRA’s first Strategy (2007 – 2015) was anchored around four integrated programmatic areas, namely Soil Health Program, Program for Africa’s Seed Systems (PASS), Market Access Program and Policy and Partnerships. AGRA invested over $700 million in these programs which helped to develop tools and systems for an African agricultural transformation. The lessons and experiences of this phase have helped shape the new strategic focus of AGRA for 2017-2021 that aims to *Catalyze and Sustain an Inclusive Agricultural Transformation in Africa to increase Incomes and improve Food Security of at least 30 million smallholder farming households* with a set of targeted catalytic downstream and systemic investments coupled with government engagement made through its alliance of partners.

The **Program for Africa’s Seed Systems** (PASS) was central to AGRA’s work towards agricultural transformation. PASS started in 2007 with the goal to develop sustainable, mostly private sector-based seed systems in Africa that would increase access for smallholder farmers to improved crop varieties that produce higher crop yields that would their increase income, improve food security and reduce poverty. PASS sought to address the problem of lack of plant breeders, limited funding to develop new high-yielding seed varieties, and weak seed production and distribution systems.

PASS consisted of four sub-programs that focused on different aspects of the input supply chain. These were **Education for African Crop Improvement** (EACI), the **Fund for the Improvement and Adoption of African Crops** (FIAAC), the **Seed Production for Africa Initiative** (SEPA) and the **Agro-Dealer Development Program** (ADP). Program objectives were as follows:

* To train a new generation of crop breeders and agricultural scientists upon which seed systems depend for growth and productivity.
* To support crop breeding in Africa to improve African crop varieties and promote their adoption by smallholder farmers.
* To ensure that quality seeds of improved crop varieties are produced and distributed through private and public channels (including private, “SME” seed companies, publicly-supported seed programs, and public extension) so that farmers can adopt these varieties.
* To establish and support the growth of small agro-dealers, who are a primary conduit of seeds, fertilizers, and knowledge of their proper use, to smallholder farmers to increase their productivity and incomes.

Overall, PASS invested over $200 million in 18 target countries (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Senegal, South Sudan, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe). PASS was implemented in two phases. Phase I laid the foundations for sustainable seed systems by developing new varieties of seeds, training African crop scientists in plant breeding and strengthening/retooling seed distribution systems. The second phase invested about $60 million in 13 sub Saharan African countries and aimed to build on the achievements of phase I in developing an efficient and sustainable seed system that delivers improved seed varieties to target farmers across Sub-Saharan Africa.

Key cumulative achievements of the PASS Program include:

* 341 African plant breeders were trained to the level of MSc and 160 trained to the level of PhD;
* 1,091 seed enterprise professionals were trained by Africa’s first stand-alone seed training facility, the Seed Enterprise Management Institute (SEMIs);
* 659 improved crop varieties officially released by PASS-supported breeding teams;
* 147 seed enterprises assisted, including 114 private, independent seed companies;
* 80 private, African seed companies producing and marketing the technically challenging hybrid maize seed products commercially by 2017;
* Over half a million on-farm demo’s funded, and over 5,000 farmer field days held;
* Annual seed production from private seed companies reached 130,000 MT by 2016; cumulative seed production from 2007-2017 totaling 733,698 MT;
* Numerous, high-impact partnerships with the CGIAR, including CIMMYT, IITA, CIP, and ICRISAT;
* Important seed policy changes made in 10 countries of the program area; and,
* 40,336 private agro-dealers trained and certified.

Successive PASS performance reviews (Mid-Term review 2010; End of Phase I evaluation 2012; and Variety Traceability Study 2013) all found that PASS has achieved success in its objectives although some challenges still remained e.g. weak linkages among stakeholders.

Following the initial success of PASS, several donors sought to significantly scale up its interventions for seed systems to drive transformation across Africa – a trend that continues up to the present day. AGRA was contracted by the USAID on behalf of the Group of 8 (G8) as part of its commitment under the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN) to implement the **Scaling Seeds and Technologies Partnership (SSTP)** in Africa. This was in line with the commitment of the NAFSN to catalyze private sector investment across African agriculture value chains by taking innovations to scale and provided an opportunity for AGRA to scale up the work of PASS. The aim of SSTP was to take to scale seed and other technologies relevant to smallholder farmers. Hence, SSTP did not include funds for post-graduate training of plant breeders or crop breeding. STTP focused on 6 countries (Ghana, Senegal, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania) and sought to support Alliance countries to coordinate country, donor-financed and private sector programs to strengthen the inputs sector and to promote the commercialization, availability and adoption of technologies at scale. SSTP was expected to help countries transition from state-dominated seed systems to systems that allow for private sector including local businesses and non-profit organizations to provide key services but also strengthen the capacity of the state to carry out critical regulatory functions. The goal of SSTP is to improve food security and reduce poverty among smallholder farmers in targeted areas within selected sub-saharan African countries. Specific objectives of SSTP were to:

* Improve capacity of public and private sector groups to deliver quality seeds and other technologies to smallholder farmers.
* To increase use of quality seeds and other technologies by smallholder farmers;
* To improve regional and country level policy and regulation mechanisms for the production and delivery of quality seeds and technologies to smallholder farmers.

SSTP recorded significant achievements over the five - year period, including:

* contributing to improved seed production of more than 41,000 MT
* commercializing over 60 improved technologies and scaling up more than 110 other improved technologies,
* Trained 179,000 farmers in agricultural productivity and food security.
* directly reaching more than 1.7 million farming households.

PASS phase II ended in December 2017 and SSTP implementation will be completed in June 2018. AGRA is looking to procure the services of a suitable firm (‘the consultant’) to conduct a combined evaluation of the seeds systems work implemented through the second phase of PASS and SSTP to determine the success and impact of the intervention in the seed systems and draw lessons that should inform AGRA seeds work for the future.

1. **The Purpose and objectives of the evaluation**

The purpose of the combined evaluation is to measure and provide robust empirical evidence on the success and impact of the AGRA seeds systems in developing and scaling up seed systems in Africa that should inform future investments in seed systems in the 2017-2021 AGRA Integrated Strategy and beyond. Impact is understood to mean the wider effects of the programs on farmers, input systems and overall food systems. The evaluation will assess the changes or outcomes observed as a result of the programs and to what extent these changes or outcomes can be attributed to the programs. It will also assess any unintended impacts that resulted from the programs. It will assess the mechanisms that delivered the observed changes and the key features of these mechanisms. Lastly, it will recommend how the evidence should be used to inform future AGRA investments.

The results of the evaluation will be used by AGRA to generate knowledge and learning that should inform future seeds systems work in AGRA as well as in governments, private sector and other players to help catalyze continental efforts for agricultural transformation. Findings will be shared broadly with focus countries for PASS and SSTP, AU-CAADP institutions, private sector agribusiness, non-government organizations, academic institutions among others. Findings will also be shared with funding partners such as Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, USAID and other key partners. The evaluation will also provide learning to inform implementation of AGRA’s strategy for 2017-201.

The evaluation will be guided by the following ethical considerations: openness, broad participation of key stakeholders, integrity and honesty of the process; reliability and independence to ensure valid and trustworthy findings and conclusions.

1. **Evaluation Questions**

The evaluation will be expected to answer the following questions. These questions are grouped on the basis of the different areas of interest of AGRA in the seed systems. The consultant selected will be expected to refine/develop these questions further during the inception period so that they better reflect the interests of AGRA using the matrix in annex 1. In doing so AGRA expects that the consultant will guided by the five criteria of the OECD/Development Assistance effectiveness: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The consultant will also be expected to identify how gender as a cross cutting theme was mainstreamed into the seed systems work and how evidence from past work shall be used to inform future investments in seeds systems.

**Developing African plant breeders**

* To what extent have AGRA trained breeders been absorbed in country research systems and funded by governments to continue crop research? Has this resulted in improvement in functioning of National Research Stations?

**Development of new improved crop technologies**

* To what extent have varieties produced by AGRA supported breeders been commercialized by seed companies and up-taken by smallholder farmers?

**Private sector seed production**

* Did the approach of starting seed companies result in improved uptake of new improved varieties and technologies?
* How many of the companies started by PASS are financially viable today (without subsidies or donor support) and selling meaningful amounts of seed?
* Did the AGRA supported companies scale up production and operations and crowd out the national, regional and international seed companies? What were the key features of scaling and how can this be replicated in future?
* To what extent have AGRA supported seed companies been successful in crops other than maize? How can we adapt this model to other crops in future?

**Agro-dealer development for technology distribution**

* Has the AGRA approach of agro-dealer development resulted in improved access and uptake of improved inputs by farmers in target areas?
* Are agro-dealers that were supported by AGRA still functional, financially viable and selling viable amounts of seed to smallholder farmers?

**Scaling and adoption of technologies**

* To what extent did AGRA work increase the use of improved seeds and technologies by smallholder farmers at scale in the target countries, and how did this impact change of yield levels in the respective countries?
* Which improved seeds and technologies were developed by PASS and scaled up by SSTP? What were the key enablers and/or barriers to scaling up efforts?

**Creating an enabling environment**

* What country level and regional policy and regulatory reforms did AGRA support/facilitate that increased production, delivery and uptake of improved seeds and technologies? What reforms still need to be supported in focus countries and regions to improve scaling up of seed production, delivery and uptake?

**Program performance**

* To what extent did the PASS and SSTP achieve expected program outputs, outcomes and impacts at all levels? What were the positive and negative, direct and indirect, planned and unplanned results of the program;
* Specifically, for SSTP, assess indicator progress towards achieving targets for the following indicators:
	+ Poverty index - percent of people living on less than $1.25/day in the focus areas through the analysis of LSMS data as defined in the SSTP Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS). This will be calculated from secondary sources e.g. LSMS and applied to target area.
	+ Gross margins per hectare of focus crops in the focus countries - an analysis of yield and Gross Margin trends over three years across the focus countries from the SSTP annual survey reports shall be conducted, complemented with results from the findings of mid-term evaluation and limited household surveys/Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) that may be integrated in the final evaluation.
	+ Farmers applying improved technologies and the resultant area under improved technologies - technology application/use trends for three years across the focus countries from the SSTP annual survey reports will be analyzed, complemented with findings from the mid-term evaluation and limited household surveys/FGDs that may be integrated in the final evaluation, and;
	+ New private sector investment in agriculture in the focus countries over the implementation period as a result of SSTP implementation.

**Cross-cutting question**

* What lessons can be learnt from the work of PASS and SSTP across the key questions outlined above that should inform AGRA’s new integrated approach?
1. **Scope of the evaluation**

The evaluation will explore the extent to which AGRA seeds systems work through PASS and SSTP achieved stated goals, objectives and demonstrated impact. The evaluation will study the work of AGRA seed systems from 2012 to 2017 for PASS and from 2013 to 2018 for. The evaluation will also recognize that the PASS has been under implementation since 2007 and will therefore make reference to the previous phase in order to properly attribute for the results that are reported.

The evaluation should focus on the whole program and with site visits conducted and data collected in five key countries – Ghana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya, and Ethiopia. A statistically representative sample of PASS and SSTP grants/projects, seed companies and beneficiary smallholder farmers will be selected and assessed through site visits across the focus countries. As appropriate a sample of smallholder farmers who benefitted will also be selected and data collected to assess change. The major crops that should be addressed will include maize, cassava, beans, and Irish potatoes. The consultant shall include selection criteria for focus crops in their evaluation design after consultation with AGRA. However more emphasis should be placed on use of existing AGRA M&E data for analysis than on extensive primary data collection surveys.

The evaluation will take into consideration program limitations and implementation conditions in each country and the influence they may have had on success.

**5. Evaluation Methodology**

This evaluation will aim to assess and document overall difference that AGRA seed systems work has made, how effective it was against set outcomes, whether outcomes of the systems work are sustainable and lessons that can be learnt for future programming.

The evaluation is expected to use a mixed methods approach that should collect/use qualitative and quantitative data to provide insights into the overall changes that the AGRA systems work has caused. The evaluation is expected to collect/use data from a wide range of stakeholders including smallholder farmers that benefitted directly or indirectly, seed companies, breeders, universities, national research stations, agro-dealers etc. in order to provide a clear picture of the changes that have occurred.

Various methods may be used by the evaluation team to collect this data including:

* Sample farmer household surveys across different categories of farmers to assess changes that have happened as a result of the project. This should be used to complement existing M&E data on PASS and SSTP as required.
* Key informant interviews to collect qualitative information using structured and semi-structured interviews on key evaluation questions that should complement any quantitative analysis or data that will be collected/used.
* Focus group discussions to collect information from stakeholders that should help evaluators identify changes/trends or conclusions on any key issues under consideration.
* Secondary data collection from program documents e.g. project performance reports, baseline studies, earlier evaluations including the SSTP mid-term evaluation, the PASS phase I evaluation, the PASS seed traceability study and other documents as may be requested by the evaluators. Secondary information will also be collected from official sources including national statistics as well as from sources such as the Living Standards Measurement Surveys (LSMS). The evaluators may also conduct literature reviews on seeds systems to inform how they respond to evaluation questions and measure changes.

The evaluation will use different methods to analyze the data that will be collected from different sources. The evaluation must ensure it triangulates data from various sources to improve validity of results. The evaluation will be expected to propose and use a clear data quality assurance mechanism to ensure results can be clearly interpreted. In addition, the consultant will be expected to secure free informed consent for evaluations and provide assurances that personal data provided by the stakeholders shall be safeguarded.

The consultant shall be expected to define a detailed evaluation design with methodology for approval by AGRA. They may use the impact matrix presented in annex 1 as a guide.

**6. Deliverables/outputs**

The consultant shall be expected to submit to AGRA a set of key reports in the course of undertaking the evaluation. Any payment shall be made contingent to review and approval of reports by AGRA. The consultant will submit the following key reports:

1. Detailed Evaluation Design Report – This shall be prepared and submitted within two weeks after the signing of the contract. The consultant will prepare this after reviewing key technical documents and after discussion with AGRA. The will serve as an inception report and shall focus on the understanding of the Terms of Reference and scope, the relevant evaluation design, theory of change and impact pathway, key evaluation questions to be addressed, analytic framework for outcomes and impact assessment, methods of data collection, the work-plan and budget for the evaluation. The inception report shall be reviewed by AGRA within 5 days after submission, and shall have to be approved before proceeding to the next phase.
2. Progress Brief - While there is no formal progress report required during the assignment implementation, between inception and Draft report submission, the consultant(s) shall be expected to regularly (bi-weekly) share with AGRA, key emerging issues and trends to avoid surprises or misconceptions by either party.

1. Draft Evaluation Report – This shall be prepared and submitted to AGRA Management and Program Committee of the Board towards the end of the assignment for AGRA to provide feedback (comments, questions and inputs). In addition, the consultant will be required to make a personal presentation of the Draft Report to a wider AGRA audience for validation.
2. Final Evaluation Report – This shall be no more than 40 pages (excluding annexes), and submitted to AGRA Program Committee of the Board on, or before the expiry of the assignment contract through the Head of M&E. Any valid extension may be mutually agreed between the Consultant and AGRA, provided it carries no extra cost to the latter.

The following will also be expected from the Consultant:

1. A master copy of the final evaluation report suitable for reproduction, and four copies, in full color and bound, as well as soft copies;
2. Submission of the final report, after incorporating the comments/inputs on the presented draft report. The final report shall include actionable recommendations;
3. All data-sets and questionnaires used during the assignment shall be a property of AGRA, and shall be the responsibility of the consultant to securely deliver them to AGRA, protecting personally identifiable information (PII).

**7. Management and Reporting**

During the course of the evaluation, the consultant will be required to report regularly on progress. Reporting shall be directly to the Program Committee of the Board through the AGRA management with Head of M&E and Knowledge Management as point person.

To ensure objectivity and credibility of the evaluation, the exercise will be conducted by an external consultant who made no prior commitment or major contribution to AGRA.

**9. Timing**

The evaluation is expected to be completed within 90 days effective from the date the contract is signed.

**10. In-house Resources**

Access to files, databases, financial records and other program related documents depending on the consultant’s requirements will be availed. Access to relevant grantees, Heads of departments and Program Officers will be organized.

**11. Qualifications of the Evaluation Team**

AGRA expects this evaluation to be conducted by a team of four experts with experience in program evaluations, agricultural economics and agribusiness. The team leader will be expected to a very skilled evaluator with deep understanding and experience of managing program evaluations. The team must include a member with experience in private sector seed business. Particular qualifications and experience of the lead and team members include:

* + PhD in Agricultural Sciences, Social Sciences, Economics or related field and at least 10 years of relevant experience for the team leader.
	+ A solid background and experience in agricultural development in Africa including in the seed sector, the entire input systems and extension systems in Africa;
	+ Technical knowledge of and recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies and project management.
	+ Proven and demonstrated ability to conduct program evaluations and provide strong strategic thinking on future direction.
	+ Experience in managing or supporting private sector seed business in Africa.
	+ Experience in leading teams in field (training, field logistics, human relations, teamwork);
	+ Demonstrable ability and experience in research methodology;
	+ Excellent writing skills, with publication record in one discipline related to assignment
	+ Demonstrable analytical skills for analysing issues and formulating concrete recommendations to a wide range of stakeholder;
	+ Past related experience in agricultural systems, value chains, seed regulatory systems in sub-Saharan Africa; and
	+ Excellent English and/or French communication skills.

Each team will describe the size, qualifications and experience of team members and how this aligns with the evaluation needs.

**12. Proposal**

The proposal should include:

1. A detailed elaboration of issues to be addressed/covered;
2. A description of the evaluation plan (see annex 1) including details of the proposed methodology, sampling, study design; analysis and reporting and milestones for the evaluation and a timetable of activities;
3. Detailed budget;
4. Description of the pay schedule for the review;
5. **Past performance summaries** (at least three brief descriptions of past or current contracting mechanisms for efforts similar in size, scope and complexity to this tender) and list of references that demonstrate performance in conducting similar evaluations;
6. At least one copy of a **previous relevant report** and list of previous reports;
7. **CVs** conforming to the qualifications listed above for persons to manage and conduct the evaluation;
8. **Supporting documents including** mandatory institutional documents such as incorporation papers and most recent financial statements.
9. **Submission of proposals**

Technical and Financial proposals shall be submitted as separate documents. Financial proposals will not be opened until the conclusion of the technical evaluation and then only for those proposals that are deemed qualified and responsive.

The consultant will be selected through an open and competitive process and will be based on their proven experience, qualifications and ability to deliver a quality product in a timely and efficient manner.

1. **Criteria for Evaluation**

In deciding the final selection of qualified bidder, the technical quality of the proposal will be weighted at 70% on the basis of a criteria for evaluation. Only the financial proposal of those bidders who qualify technically will be opened. The financial proposal shall be weighted at 30% and the proposals will be ranked in terms of total points scored.

|  | **Evaluation question**  | **Score (%)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Technical proposal
 | Team composition | 20% |
| Does the proposed team have the required experts with the right experience for this assignment?  |
| Does the team have an expert with experience in private sector seed business? |
| Does the team have a leader with right skills that will manage the team and assignment? |
| Team experience | 20% |
| Does the team possess proven ability to both assess past effectiveness and provide strong strategic thinking on future direction that could be useful for AGRA’s integrated approach?  |
| Does the proposal demonstrate clear understanding of seeds systems development in Africa? |
| Has the team demonstrated clear understanding and knowledge of agro-dealer model for distributing technologies? |
| Has team demonstrated understanding of relevant enabling environment issues for seed systems? |
| Do team members possess full working knowledge of English as well as excellent report writing skills? |
| Has the team demonstrated ability to generate high quality, rich, readable products on time and in line with expected deliverables? |
| Methodology | 20% |
| Is the evaluation methodology technically strong and comprehensive and is the interpretation of the TOR accurate?  |
| Has team demonstrated that it is fully conversant with the principles and working methods of project/program cycle management and evaluations? |
| Past experience | 10% |
| Has the team successfully conducted similar evaluations in the past in Africa? |
| 1. Financial proposal
 | What is the proposed cost of assignment? | 30% |
| Is the proposed work plan schedule for delivery realistic and aligned to budget? |
| Has the team/company/institution demonstrated from past assignments that it has capacity to utilize the proposed budget and deliver on the assignment? |

Interested and suitable firms are invited to submit their expressions of interest by close of business on **21st May, 2018** at 5:00 pm East Africa Time (GMT +3) to the following email address: procurement@agra.org.

**Disclaimer**

AGRA reserves the right to determine the structure of the process, number of short-listed participants, the right to withdraw from the proposal process, the right to change this timetable at any time without notice and reserves the right to withdraw this tender at any time, without prior notice and without liability to compensate and/or reimburse any party.

**Clarifications**

Questions and/or clarifications may be submitted to procurement@agra.org.

**Annex 1: Impact matrix**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Evaluation criteria** | **Evaluation questions** | **Method of Data Collection** | **Sources of data** | **Method of selection of respondents** | **Data analysis and reporting** |
| **Design/** relevance |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Effectiveness** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Efficiency** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Impact** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Sustainability** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Other Key issues** |  |  |  |  |  |