

## Terms of Reference (ToR)

### MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE ACRE PROJECT

*“Strengthening the agency of CSOs in developing policy frameworks for equitable rural development and an enhanced contribution of family farmers towards the achievement of the SDGs”*

#### 1. Summary

|                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Project coordinator and contracting authority</b>  | World Rural Forum (WRF)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Project</b>                                        | Strengthening the advocacy capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the development of policy frameworks for equitable rural development and a greater contribution by smallholder farmers to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) |
| <b>Title of the consultancy</b>                       | Mid-Term Evaluation of the ACRE project                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Estimated duration of the services</b>             | 4 months                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Estimated budget</b>                               | EUR 10 000                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Country where services will be delivered</b>       | Remote work                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Working language</b>                               | English, French, Spanish<br>Working language for service coordination: Spanish or English                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Deadline for submitting proposals</b>              | 18 October 2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Subject line for email submitting the proposal</b> | “Application for the mid-term evaluation of the ACRE project”                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

## 2. Background and context

The World Rural Forum (WRF) is a plural network serving as an umbrella organisation for CSOs promoting Family Farming and Sustainable Rural Development.

The WRF develops an intense activity aimed at promoting political dialogue and contributing to differentiated public policies for Family Farming. The WRF carries out recognised international advocacy work through alliances and networks, while promoting the actions of its partner organisations in countries and regions.

The activities can be broken down as follows:

- Promotion of articulation, policy dialogue and construction spaces between multiple actors, at national, regional and international levels.
- Strengthening the capacities of family farming organisations.
- Events, exchanges and knowledge management between different actors from the 5 continents.
- Promotion and strengthening of alliances with key actors.
- Technical support for public policy.

The WRF brings together organisations representing more than 75 million family farmers on 5 continents. In addition, it maintains partnerships with hundreds of external (non-member) organisations around the world.

Part of our work is carried out with financial support from the European Union, through the 'ACRE' project: *"Strengthening the advocacy capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the development of policy frameworks for equitable rural development and a greater contribution by smallholder farmers to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)"*, hereafter "the ACRE Project". The ACRE Project was launched in January 2024 and is being implemented by the WRF (the Coordinator) and 6 regional organisations that are members of the WRF.

The table below sets out the key contractual details of the project:

|                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>PROJECT TITLE</b>          | Strengthening the agency of CSOs in developing policy frameworks for equitable rural development and an enhanced contribution of family farmers towards the achievement of the SDGs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Results</b>                | <p><b>Impact:</b> To strengthen community led inclusive rural socio-economic development and sustainable food systems that work for all the people and the planet</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> Improved agency and role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in enabling policy frameworks and actions for equitable rural development and family farming at the global, regional and country levels.</p> <p><b>Output 1:</b> Increased opportunities for the World Rural Forum (WRF) and its members to advocate for inclusive policy making for family farming and related development initiatives at the global, regional and country levels.</p> <p><b>Output 2:</b> Reinforced governance, operational, and advisory capacities of the WRF and its members.</p> <p><b>Output 3:</b> Strengthened capacities of WRF members in support of inclusive policy frameworks, catalysing multi-stakeholder partnership mechanisms and on how to deliver effective services to rural peoples' organisations for the socio-economic well-being and resilience of rural communities</p> |
| <b>Applicants</b>             | <p>World Rural Forum Association for Development (WRF) (Lead applicant)</p> <p>Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA)</p> <p>Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (AsiaDHRRA)</p> <p>Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON)</p> <p>INADES Formation</p> <p>Plateforme Régionale des Organisations paysannes d'Afrique Centrale (PROPAC)</p> <p>Confederación de Organizaciones de Productores Familiares del Mercosur Ampliado (COPROFAM)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Coverage of the action</b> | <p><b>Africa:</b> Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Gabon, Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tomé et Príncipe, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.</p> <p><b>America:</b> Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panamá, Paraguay, Peru.</p> <p><b>Asia:</b> Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR (Laos), Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma/Myanmar), Nepal, Tajikistan, Thailand, The Philippines, Timor-Leste, Vietnam.</p> <p><b>Oceania:</b> Micronesia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu.</p> <p><b>Europe:</b> Belgium, Spain.</p> <p>Others: A minor part of the action will take place in other additional countries</p>                                                           |
| <b>Duration:</b>              | 48 months from January 2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

### **3. Objective of the consultancy**

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to provide an external perspective on implementation and to ensure that we make the most of our efforts in order to achieve the best possible outcome by the end of the project.

As a Midterm evaluation, it is expected to focus on progress to date and explains why progress is – or is not – occurring as planned. It should also provide recommendations on how to improve the intervention during its remaining duration in order to achieve the expected objectives, taking into account both problems and opportunities and lessons for future interventions in the same sector or region.

It is expected to include:

- a participatory evaluation method in which the coordinator and co-applicants work together in designing, carrying out and interpreting the evaluation findings.
- a formative approach in which the evaluation is an ongoing process that allows feedback to be implemented during the intervention cycle.
- gender-responsive and rights based approaches

The main objectives of the mid-term evaluation of the project are to provide the relevant services to the applicants with:

- an overall independent assessment of the past performance of the ACRE project, paying particular attention to its intermediate results measured against its expected objectives, the reasons underpinning such results.
- reinforced capacity to understand the performance of the targeted action, its enabling factors and those hampering a proper delivery of results as to inform the planning of the second phase of the implementation.
- key conclusions and related recommendations in order to improve current and future interventions
- recommendations towards future strategy of intervention in the sectors concerned and programming of the cycle support
- documents to share with the EU and stakeholders, sharing findings and learning outcomes

### **4. Methodology**

The evaluation shall be based in a theory-based design aligned with the EU approach for thematic mid-term evaluations and the EU Better Regulation Guidelines and the OECD-DAC criteria.

It will be grounded in the project theory of change and structured around a set of agreed evaluation questions.

A mixed-methods approach that produce both quantitative and qualitative evidence its required, with triangulation across tools, data sources, and stakeholder perspectives to validate findings and strengthen the robustness of conclusions and recommendations.

- Documentary review:
  - Extensive review of EU policy documents, thematic docs, Project documents, etc
- Primary Data Collection
  - Interviews and Focus group discussions
- Analysing
  - Mapping activities and results
  - Identify best practices and case studies of interest

The evaluation should summarise the findings on each assessed evaluation criterion, and put forward the main conclusions and actionable recommendations to tackle the potential design or implementation issues of the intervention.

Taking into account the time and budget available, we propose an assessment carried out remotely, prioritising the most relevant elements to improve the intervention ahead of its final phase (2027). We look forward to receiving practical, applicable, participatory and capacity-building methodological proposals that will enhance the applicant organisations' capacity to achieve the expected results and the greatest possible impact.

### Initially proposed evaluation criteria and questions

Taking into account the time available and the most pressing needs of the project management team, the following evaluation criteria have been prioritised.

| Criterion                       | Definition                                                                                                                                      | Key evaluation questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Relevance</b>                | Extent to which the intervention is suited to the priorities of the donor, the policy agendas, and beneficiaries' needs.                        | Is the Project design still aligned with EU development priorities, the national, regional and global agendas related to family farming, and the needs of family farming organisations and rural communities? Have the context and assumptions changed significantly since design? |
| <b>Effectiveness</b>            | Extent to which the intervention's objectives have been achieved or are expected to be achieved.                                                | To what extent are the Project's specific objectives and expected results being achieved? What factors are facilitating or hindering progress? Are indicators on track to meet targets?                                                                                            |
| <b>Impact (Preliminary)</b>     | Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced.                                                                        | What preliminary evidence is there of changes in indicators attributable to the Project? What unintended effects (positive or negative) have been observed?                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Gender equality approach</b> | Gender equality approach as a stand-alone criterion on equity Although a gender perspective has to be also adopted in the rest of the criteria. | How is the Project mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment?                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

## 5. Deliverables and Expected Outputs

| Deliverable                                               | Content                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Format                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inception Report</b>                                   | Refined evaluation questions; detailed methodology and strategy; data collection instruments (interview guides, focus group guides, survey); evaluation matrix; work plan with timeline and final deliverables index and descriptions.                                                                                                     | Word & PDF, max 25 pages excluding annexes |
| <b>Presentation of Preliminary Findings</b>               | Presentation of preliminary findings and emerging conclusions to WRF for validation and feedback.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Power Point presentation                   |
| <b>Draft Final Report</b>                                 | Full evaluation report covering all evaluation criteria, findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Must include an executive summary.                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Word & PDF, max 60 pages excluding annexes |
| <b>Final Evaluation Report</b>                            | Revised report. If required, it must include a management response matrix.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Word & PDF                                 |
| <b>Executive Summary</b>                                  | Stand-alone executive summary suitable for public dissemination.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Word & PDF, max 5 pages                    |
| <b>Recommendations and knowledge management documents</b> | List of actionable recommendations to address any potential design or implementation issues identified during the evaluation.<br>Identify and document learning vectors (Lessons learnt, Good practices and Promising practices) as well as learning pathways and opportunities to share with stakeholders for knowledge sharing purposes. | Word & PDF, max 6 pages                    |

## 6. Ethical and Safeguarding Requirements

The evaluation team must comply with all applicable ethical standards and safeguarding requirements. The following principles must be observed throughout the evaluation:

- Rights based approach, including the "do no harm" principle
- Informed consent must be obtained from all respondents prior to data collection.
- Anonymity and confidentiality of respondents must be protected in all reports and data storage.
- Any suspicions or allegations of misconduct, abuse, or exploitation encountered during the evaluation must be reported immediately to the WRF and the implementing organisation's safeguarding focal point.
- Data collection instruments and storage must comply with applicable data protection standards.
- The evaluation team is required to disclose any potential conflicts of interest in the technical proposal or as soon as they come to light.

## **7. Quality standards**

The evaluation shall comply with the EU evaluation quality standards and the OECD-DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation. In particular, the evaluation shall be:

- Independent: Free from conflicts of interest; shall not be related to any of the co-applicants by an employment relationship, nor shall they have been involved in the implementation of the project.
- Impartial and credible: Based on sound evidence; findings and conclusions clearly linked to evidence; limitations acknowledged.
- Participatory: Stakeholders' views actively sought and considered.
- Gender-responsive: Analysis disaggregated by sex and other relevant socio-economic dimensions.
- Transparent: Methodology, limitations, and data sources clearly documented.

## **Confidentiality**

All information, data, documents, and materials shared with or accessed by the evaluation team in the framework of this assignment are strictly confidential and shall not be disclosed to any third party without the prior written consent of the World Rural Forum.

## **8. Required expertise: Consultant or Technical Team Profile**

The evaluation shall be conducted by an independent external evaluator or evaluation team.

The following qualifications must be demonstrated:

- Advanced degree in development studies or related field. Minimum 10 years of experience in project/programme evaluation. Proven expertise in EU INTPA-funded project evaluations. Familiarity with OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and EU evaluation methodology.
- Experience evaluating advocacy and policy change, familiarity with global and regional agricultural policy agendas and in particular with the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDIFF).
- Experience in evaluating civil society strengthening or organisational capacity development programmes.
- Proven expertise in gender analysis and mainstreaming in development programming. Experience conducting gender-responsive evaluations. Knowledge of intersectionality and social inclusion dimensions.
- Demonstrated sensitivity to and knowledge of gender and human rights approaches.
- Robust analytical skills, strong research and synthetic skills, excellent writing, presentation and information organization skills.
- Strong command of English and French (both written and spoken). Working knowledge of Spanish is desirable.

The evaluation team must demonstrate independence from the Project. Any actual or perceived conflict of interest must be disclosed in the technical proposal and addressed to the satisfaction of the WRF.

## **9. Evaluation management**

The WRF Project's Coordinator will be the primary point of contact and will be responsible for reviewing and approving deliverables and ensuring stakeholder cooperation.

An Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC) will be established to provide oversight and ensure quality. The ESC will convene at key stages: inception, preliminary findings presentation, and final report review.

The WRF will facilitate introductions to key stakeholders; all communication and collaboration in the framework of the present evaluation will be done online.

## **10. Duration of services and timetable**

The work is expected to take a maximum of four months. The draft of the final report must be submitted by 31 January, and all final deliverables by 25 February.

### Indicative timetable

|   | Phase/Activity                                                                                    | Indicative timing | Responsibility          |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Contract signature / Kick-off meeting / Initial documentation provided                            | October 30        | WRF and evaluation team |
| 2 | Desk review and development of evaluation tools / Submission of Inception Report                  | November 2-13     | Evaluation team         |
| 3 | Meeting to refine the participatory methodology and discuss potential difficulties or limitations | November 17       | WRF and evaluation team |
| 4 | Data collection, interviews, focal groups, participatory activities                               | November 18-30    | Evaluation team         |
| 5 | Data analysis and report drafting                                                                 | December 1-8      | Evaluation team         |
| 6 | Presentation and discussion on preliminary findings to ESC                                        | December 9        | Evaluation team / ESC   |
| 7 | Submission of Draft Final Report, Executive Summary and other deliverables                        | January 31        | Evaluation team         |
| 8 | Review and comments from the WRF                                                                  | February 10       | WRF                     |

|   |                                                  |             |                 |
|---|--------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 9 | Submission of Final Report and Executive Summary | February 25 | Evaluation team |
|---|--------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|

### 11. Budget

The estimated total cost of the evaluation is EUR 10 000 including all costs associated with the delivery of the services described herein.

### 12. Evaluation criteria

The contract will be awarded to the most economically advantageous tender, i.e. the tender offering the best price-quality ratio (See formula 2 below).

|                      |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Technical evaluation | 70 %         |
| Financial evaluation | 30 %         |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>100 %</b> |

The evaluation criteria are the following:

| Technical evaluation criterion                                  | Max score  | Weight      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Quality and relevance of the proposed methodology               | 30         | 30%         |
| Technical expertise of the team (qualifications and experience) | 30         | 30%         |
| Understanding of context and evaluation objectives              | 30         | 30%         |
| Quality of the workplan and team management                     | 10         | 10%         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                    | <b>100</b> | <b>100%</b> |

| Financial evaluation criterion                                                          | Max score  | Weight      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Score obtained due to price offered through a standard inverse proportional formula (1) | 60         | 60%         |
| Budget breakdown and coherence with the technical proposal, cost effectiveness          | 40         | 40%         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                                            | <b>100</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Formula 1

$$\text{Financial score} = \frac{\text{Lowest evaluated price}}{\text{Price of the proposal being evaluated}} \times \text{Maximum financial weight}$$

Formula 2

$$\text{Final score} = (\text{technical quality score} \times 0.7) + (\text{financial score} \times 0.3)$$

### **13. Submission of applications and information on the process**

The consultant or technical team must submit a technical and financial proposal including the following:

- Understanding of the assignment and evaluation context
- Proposed methodology, including evaluation matrix
- Proposed team composition, roles and expected dedication (with CVs in annex)
- Indicative workplan and timeline
- Budget breakdown, including fees per working day of the different team members. Please clearly state any required tax.
- Legal and tax registration details, country of establishment and declaration of no conflict of interest

**Proposals may be submitted to [procurement@ruralforum.org](mailto:procurement@ruralforum.org) by 18 October 2026 with the following subject: “Application for the mid-term evaluation of the ACRE project”.**

Due to the volume of applications received, only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Interviews with the shortlisted consultants or teams are expected to take place between 26 and 28 October.

### **14. Contractual Conditions**

Participation in this procedure is open, on equal terms, to all natural persons who are nationals of, and to legal persons who are effectively established in a Member State of the EU or or an eligible country under the EU contract through which the service will be funded (**NDICI - Global Europe<sup>1</sup>**). Applicants

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ENGLISH: [Rules governing participation in procurement and grant award procedures-EU External Action](#)

FRANÇAIS: [Règles régissant la participation aux procédures de passation de marchés et d'octroi de subventions – Action extérieure de l'UE](#)

ESPAÑOL: [Normas relativas a participación en procedimientos de contratación-Acción exterior UE](#)

must state their nationality in their tenders and, if so requested, provide the standard proof of nationality and registration with the tax authorities as required by their national legislation.