Terms of Reference

External Evaluation of ‘Promotion and Expansion of Organic Cotton in the Marginalized and Predominantly Tribal Region of Madhya Pradesh, India,’ an initiative implemented by Action for Social Advancement and funded by C&A Foundation


I. Introduction

C&A Foundation is a corporate foundation here to transform the fashion industry. The foundation work with change-makers all over the world, offering financial support, expertise and networks to make the industry work better for every person it touches. The foundation collaborates with a variety of stakeholders, including NGOs and industry partners, and works closely with smallholder farmers and garment workers. Currently, they are concentrating their current efforts in five key areas: accelerating sustainable cotton, improving working conditions for garment workers, eliminating forced and child labour from the apparel supply chain, fostering a transition to circular fashion, and the strengthening communities where they work. In every programme a specific emphasis is placed on the issues facing women and girls as they are disproportionately affected by the challenges of the apparel industry. C&A Foundation is driven by the belief that despite the vast and complex challenges, collaborative action can make fashion a force for good.

C&A Foundation is commissioning the evaluation of the sustainable cotton initiative implemented by Action for Social Advancement (ASA), to arrive at an objective assessment of the extent to which the initiative is meeting its goals, document the missed opportunities and provide a focused set of recommendations and lessons that will enhance learning and inform actions in similar initiatives. The initiative is promoting organic cotton production in Madhya Pradesh, India in two phases (Phase 1 from April 2015 - April 2018 and Phase 2 from June 2018 to May 2021).

The terms of reference present a brief description of the initiative; scope; objectives and key questions; evaluation methodology; stakeholder involvement; roles and responsibilities; evaluation process; deliverables; audience and dissemination; consultant qualifications and projected level of effort. The evaluation is required to be completed and submitted to C&A Foundation by 5 June 2019.
II. The Initiative

The initiative aims to promote organic cotton production in four districts of Madhya Pradesh in India; three districts - Jhabua, Ratlam and Barwani - were covered in the first phase and Alirajpur was added in the second phase. The goal of the initiative is to improve farmers’ livelihood and promote sustainable agriculture in organic cotton based cropping systems in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The objective is intended to be achieved by working on the sustainability of the cotton value chain through the promotion and grounding of environmentally friendly farming practices associated with organic cotton to improve overall farm profitability in a phased manner by fostering Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs).

The key activities are:

- Farmer capacity building and certification in organic practices through organization of cotton farmers and on-farm demonstrations at village level in primary producers groups for enhancing learning on organic cotton and other inter-crops
- Improvement of cotton yield and farm productivity by providing training on improved sustainable agronomic practices related to soil and water
- Aggregation of farmers in farmer producer groups (farmer producer organisations FPOs)
- Establishing linkages with institutions across the value chain for access to knowledge, creation of backward linkages (e.g. seed) and market linkages

C&A Foundation is providing approximately EUR 1,003,183 (including EUR 433,237 for Phase 1) for this specific initiative to Action for Social Advancement (ASA). Additional grant related details will be provided to the evaluation team by ASA and C&A Foundation.

III. Scope

The independent evaluation should assess the extent to which the initiative has achieved the intended objectives till date. The evaluation will document significant learning to

a) address specific issues/challenges in design and implementation; and

b) reinforce activities that demonstrate the potential for success

The evaluation must assess the extent to which the initiative’s design and implementation contributes to its ability to realise intended outcomes. It must identify missed opportunities and potential for leveraging and building upon the initiative, as required. The evaluation will cover first phase of the initiative and the second phase till date, and will:

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1 The initiative continues till 2021.

2 External Evaluation of Promotion and Expansion of Organic Cotton in Marginalized and Predominantly Tribal Region of Madhya Pradesh, India – Action for Social Advancement (ASA)
• Assess the extent to which approaches being used by ASA as part of the organic cotton production promotion initiative have demonstrated relevance to adoption and sustainability of organic cotton production in the implementation districts

• Examine the motivations and challenges for farmers to adopt and continue with organic farming practices

• Assess the current evidence of the initiative on the effectiveness and impact on change in cotton yield, farm productivity, farmer producer groups and price for organic cotton.

IV. Objectives and Questions

The Evaluation Objectives are to:
1. Review the approach and design implemented by ASA for the specific initiative in achieving and / or progress towards outcomes
2. Assess factors (in design and implementation) that have contributed to or impeded achievement of outcomes
3. Examine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and results and sustainability of the initiative
4. Distil actionable and strategic recommendations and lessons from the findings.

Evaluation Questions: The specific evaluation questions will include, but are not limited to the following:

Relevance:
• To what extent are the initiative strategies and objectives aligned to the C&A Foundation’s current vision and mission as well as to promotion of sustainable cotton? To what extent are the strategies aligned to ASA’s vision and mission? To what extent does the initiative contribute towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
• To what extent did the initiative engage with the ‘most appropriate and relevant’ beneficiaries and actors in the promotion of organic cotton?
• What specific, existing gaps were filled by the initiative in promoting organic cotton at the state, national, and global level – and at the farmer and industry level?
• To what extent is the design employed by the initiative relevant and appropriate in achieving the intended objectives?

Efficiency:
• Have the initiative modalities been executed in an efficient manner in the first phase and to what extent are they being executed efficiently in second phase?
To what extent did the human (technical, programme, etc.), financial and other resources assigned to the initiative contribute to or hinder the achievement of results?

Are the targets set by the initiative being achieved on time? Were the targets realistic given the scale of operations?

To what extent has the initiative been cost-effective?

Has the initiative employed monitoring systems to track outputs and outcomes in a credible, systematic manner? If yes, how?

What mechanisms (formal or informal) have been put into practice to capture and use results, experiences and lessons (allowing for adaptive management) for internal learning?
  - To what extent have the lessons from the first phase informed the design and implementation of the second phase?

Effectiveness and Results:

What are the results of the initiative thus far? To what extent did the initiative meet the logframe targets for the first phase? Is the initiative on track to meet the results for the second phase? What is the evidence of the initiative’s overall effectiveness, thus far, and with respect to:
  - farmer capacity building in organic practices
  - change in cotton yield and farm productivity
  - creation of efficient, results oriented farmer producer organisations (FPOs)
  - linking FPOs/federations to markets
  - farmers receiving an appropriate price for their produce (cotton, and other crops)

What evidence emerges from the initiative, thus far, in promoting organic cotton through the different activities employed (farmer capacity building, on-site demonstrations, linkages to markets, creation of effective farmer producer groups that interact with value chain actors)? Which of these strategies and processes, if not all as a whole, can be replicated or transferred to similar and different geographies?

What have been the positive and negative perceptions and evidence regarding the initiative in terms of the processes followed?
  - Did the initiative sufficiently involve/engage with relevant actors and stakeholders? If so, how?
  - What has been the effectiveness of engagement with value chain actors in achieving results?

What external and internal factors as well as challenges and risks have influenced the initiative delivery, successes and failures, thus far? And why?

What are the drivers (both positive and negative) that influence farmer adoption and market demand?

What are the main lessons learned from the initiative? What are the drivers (both positive and negative) that influenced the achievement of results, thus far?

To what extent has the initiative’s convergence with government schemes and/or other donors influenced efficiency and effectiveness of the initiative?
Sustainability:
- What are the main factors that promoted and/or reduced the sustainability and results of the programme?
  - To what extent is the initiative likely to continue (for ASA as well as farmers) after the C&A Foundation funding depletes?
  - To what extent will the farmer producer groups likely to continue after the duration of the initiative?
  - What has been the role of farmer producer groups or federations in influencing sustainability?
  - What has been the role of the initiative in linking with supply chain players in improving sustainability?
  - To what extent can the initiative be scaled and/or replicated?
  - What were the missed opportunities?

V. Methodology

Design: The evaluation design will be primarily based on the review of the existing documents, monitoring data, and reconstruction of the programme theory with appropriate indicators, borrowing from the initiative logframe. The programme theory will be empirically tested through review of and collection of quantitative data and conducting qualitative fieldwork. The programme theory will establish a logical model of cause-effect linkages by exploring the delivery of results. Reconstructing the programme theory will be a critical first part of the evaluation prior to conducting review of data and fieldwork and will be done through a combination of documentary review and interviews with C&A Foundation’s Effective Philanthropy Team, Sustainable Cotton Programme Team, ASA, value chain actors, supply chain actors, farmers and their community.

Methodology: The evaluation will be required to employ a mixed-methodological approach to ensure that data can be sufficiently triangulated to deliver aggregate quantitative and qualitative judgments; initiative documents; existing monitoring data; and interviews and focus groups.

In addition to this, the evaluation team will employ a rubric system that rates the initiative's overall performance. The rubric will be used in consultation with the Effective Philanthropy team at the foundation. The data analysis will be used to provide critical insight into the implementation and results of the initiative internally and externally and why as well as how the initiative has produced results or not. The qualitative data will be complemented with quantitative data from the monitoring data and/or survey of farmers, implementers and key value chain actors. The evaluation will follow, but is not restricted to, the below mentioned data collection methods. Attention needs to be paid to triangulating feedback different actors in order to ensure validity.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Portfolio, documentary and monitoring data review</th>
<th>Portfolio and documentary review will be conducted based on all existing initiative related documents (proposal, reports, M&amp;E reports, etc.) and monitoring data held by ASA and C&amp;A Foundation. The review (alongside initial interviews) will be conducted first. Review of data will include that from Farmer Field Books, and both initiative treatment and comparison farmers etc.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Semi-structured Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)</td>
<td>Conducted with farmers (and their households, as needed), any other partners, key stakeholders along the value chain, supply chain and with local communities. In addition, relevant ASA and C&amp;A Foundation staff will be interviewed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sampling</td>
<td>Purposive sampling will be done for identification of the farmers and key stakeholders for surveys, interview and focus groups. Stakeholder Involvement is critical to the successful execution of the evaluation. The evaluation is expected to employ a participatory approach providing for meaningful involvement of partners (ASA, etc.) and where appropriate, end-beneficiary public.</td>
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VI. Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholder involvement is critical to the successful execution of the evaluation. The evaluation consultancy is expected to retain independence in coming to judgments about the initiative but employ participatory and collaborative approach providing for meaningful involvement of C&A Foundation and ASA management and staff, additional actors and beneficiary farmers.

The key stakeholders are:
- Relevant ASA staff both part of management and those involved in initiative delivery
- Key staff at C&A foundation involved with this initiative
- Relevant value chain actors
- Relevant supply chain actors
- Farmers and their communities (if needed)

The draft report will be discussed in a meeting and also circulated to relevant ASA and C&A Foundation staff and management for review and comments prior to finalisation.

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VII. Roles and Responsibilities

The Head of Effective Philanthropy\(^2\) (the Evaluation Manager) is responsible for:

- Overall responsibility and accountability for management and delivery of the evaluation up to and including approval of the final report;
- Technical guidance for the evaluation consultants throughout the implementation of the evaluation up to and including participation / observation of field visits.
- Leadership of the evaluation draft report review process including collating comments and facilitating discussion and management responses.
- In all of these roles, necessary support will be provided by other members of the C&A Foundation Effective Philanthropy Team – specifically the Evaluation Specialist located in India.

The Programme Manager at C&A Foundation is responsible for:

- Facilitation on the evaluation including access to initiative related data, all documents, and access to stakeholders (internal and external);
- Reviewing and commenting on drafts of the inception and evaluation report;
- Preparing a management response, as and when necessary.

The Programme Manager at ASA is responsible for:

- Facilitation and day-to-day assistance to the evaluation consultants including access to initiative data, all documents, and access to stakeholders;
- Reviewing and commenting on drafts of the inception and evaluation report;
- Preparing a management response, as and when necessary.

The evaluation consultants are responsible for:

- Conducting all necessary qualitative and quantitative assessments and fieldwork;
- Day-to-day management of the evaluation;
- Regular formal and informal reporting to the Evaluation Manager;
- Participation in key evaluation related meetings (kick off meeting, inception report meeting and draft findings meeting etc.)
- Production of deliverables (inception report and evaluation report) in accordance with the Terms of Reference and contractual arrangements.

The evaluation consultants will report to the Lee Alexander Risby – Head of Effective Philanthropy, C&A Foundation on all issues related to the evaluation, contracts, fees and expenses, and deliverables and commenting / responses processes.

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\(^2\)Head of Effective Philanthropy and the Evaluation Specialist is not involved in the management of the initiative or the day to day operations.

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VIII. Evaluation Process

The evaluation will be carried out in conformity with the principles and standards set out in C&A Foundation minimum requirements and policy for Monitoring and Evaluation.

The consultants will prepare an evaluation inception report and work-plan that will operationalize the Terms of Reference. The inception report will be based on initial documentary review and preliminary interviews with different actors including farmers.

The inception report and work-plan will address the following elements: expectations of the evaluation; roles and responsibilities within the evaluation consulting team; elaboration of the initiative programme theory, as appropriate; any refinements and elaboration to evaluation questions; methods – qualitative and quantitative and data collection, including possible constraints; outline of the final evaluation report and an evaluation matrix linking questions – methods – data sources and indicators.

The inception report and work-plan will be approved by the Head of Effective Philanthropy and act as an agreement between the consultants and the C&A Foundation on how the evaluation is to be conducted.

The consultants will prepare the draft and final evaluation reports that describe the evaluation methodology, findings, recommendations and key lessons.

If significant differences arise regarding the interpretation of evidence between C&A Foundation and ASA programme management on the external evaluation report, an opportunity will be provided to formulate a management response to the findings and recommendations. This will be published with the final report.

The main activities and evaluation timetable for this consultancy is set out below:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Evaluation Process</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection and contracting of consultancy</td>
<td>18 March 2019</td>
<td>C&amp;A Foundation (Head of Effective Philanthropy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inception report</td>
<td>29 March 2019</td>
<td>Consultant Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completion of documentary review / interviews and fieldwork</td>
<td>30 April 2019</td>
<td>Consultant Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft report for comment</td>
<td>15 May 2019</td>
<td>Consultant Team / Head of Effective Philanthropy (facilitator)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final report</td>
<td>5 June 2019</td>
<td>Consultant Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation and copy-editing of</td>
<td>June 2019</td>
<td>C&amp;A Foundation (Effective</td>
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The evaluation requires the consultant to submit the following deliverables:

- Inception report
- End of Data Collection – initial findings workshop or a virtual call to C&A Foundation and ASA staff
- Draft evaluation report
- Findings Meeting (in person meeting with relevant C&A Foundation and ASA staff)
- Final evaluation report, not to exceed 30 pages, with a two page executive summary

The main audiences for the evaluation will be: C&A Foundation and ASA. The final evaluation report will be published by C&A Foundation and ASA and disseminated through websites and social media.

Learning products including a lessons notes will be developed after the completion of the evaluation.

Applicants must have at least the following qualifications:

- Substantial experience in conducting programmatic/strategic evaluations to a high standard in the region with experience in India
- Demonstrated experience in conducting evaluations on agriculture (cotton farming is preferred);
- Additional experience is expected in:
  - Methods for evaluating technical capacity building in agriculture and value chain analysis
  - Theory-based evaluation designs;

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Qualitative and quantitative methods;
• Strong facilitation skills and proven ability to lead participatory processes;
• Knowledge of organic cotton farming and India’s agriculture policy;
• Understanding of the current thinking and attitudes around organic cotton today;
• Willingness to travel to rural communities where the project operates;
• No conflict of interest with C&A foundation or the C&A company and Action for Social Advancement
• At least one member of the evaluation team must speak Hindi

The expected level of effort for the evaluation is approximately 35-40 working days. This is an estimate – the level of effort proposed must be aligned with the proposed methodology.

Please submit the following to Lee Alexander Risby (l.risby@candafoundation.org) with a copy to s.mull@candafoundation.org by 13 March 2019.

A. Technical Proposal

• A narrative proposal (no more than 5 - 6 pages excluding annexes) and including the following sections:
  a) Evaluation Methodology: Describe your overall approach and evaluation methodology including, and not limited to, evaluation questions, evaluation design and methodology.
  b) Relevant Experience: Provide details of projects of similar scope, complexity and nature you have worked on previously. Please include any experience with partnerships and system change initiatives. Include also any experience with summative evaluations in sustainable cotton.
  c) Specific Expertise: Describe your level of knowledge and expertise conducting partnerships and systems change initiative evaluations.
  d) Key Personnel and Staffing: Describe the key personnel. Include CVs (no more than 4 pages each and attached as annex) of key personnel who would be part of the proposed plan.
  e) Timeline: Include a detailed timeline of key activities.
  f) Sample reports: Two sample evaluation reports authored by the team lead (will be treated as confidential and used for purposes of selection)

B. Financial proposal

• The financial proposal should include a line-item budget and a budget narrative. The cost estimates used to prepare the budget should be presented in Euros.