



Terms of reference

For the Consultancy Services for the mid-term review of Strengthening Agrobiodiversity in Southern Africa (SASA) and the Seed and Knowledge Initiative (SKI)

1.0 Purpose of this document

This document contains the requirements relating to the mandate and describes the tender procedure for the **Consultancy Services for the Mid-term Review of Strengthening Agrobiodiversity in Southern Africa (SASA) and the Seed and Knowledge Initiative (SKI)**. It serves as a guideline for the applicant to submit his or her proposal/offer.

2.0 Goal and content of the mandate

2.1 Background

The Swiss Regional Programme for Southern Africa (RPSA) 2018-2022 focuses on the thematic domains of agriculture and food security, and HIV/sexual and reproductive health and rights, with gender, governance, climate change and HIV being transversal themes. It covers five countries – Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe – and is managed from the Embassy of Switzerland in Harare. To align with the countries and objectives prioritized in its International Cooperation Strategy 2021-2024, Switzerland is in the process of re-focusing its activities in Zambia and Zimbabwe and increasing its engagement in the areas of climate change, private sector engagement and digitalization.

The Strengthening Agrobiodiversity in Southern Africa (SASA) and Seed and Knowledge Initiative (SKI) projects have been funded by the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) since 2013. Project work has evolved and been funded in various phases. For SKI, this has involved a pilot phase from 2013 to 2015, Phase 1 from 2015 to 2019 and Phase 2 from 2019 to 2023. For SASA, the phases have involved a single phase from 2013 to 2016, followed by a full programme of two phases as follows: Phase 1 from 2017 to 2019, and Phase 2 from 2019 to 2023. This Mid-term Review (MTR) focuses on the periods March 2019 to 31st July 2021 for SKI, and 1 September 2019 to 31st July 2021 for SASA.

The African Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) manages SASA and has legal responsibility for all SASA grants. SKI is a collaborative of 16 partner organizations in four Southern Africa countries. SKI is managed by a partner steering committee with overall grant responsibility held by Biowatch in South Africa. SASA and SKI work in parallel and in a complementary manner, with both organisations sharing a common goal to promote and protect farmers' food and seed sovereignty through increasing and sustaining use of agricultural biodiversity.

This is the first time that the ACB and Biowatch are collaborating on a combined or joint evaluative learning process. As set out in this MTR terms of reference, the scope, objectives, criteria and many of the questions that the evaluators are expected to address are similar for both organizations.

2.1.1 The African Centre for Biodiversity (ACB)

The ACB (previously 'Biosafety') was established in 2003 and registered in 2004. ACB's SASA project focuses on: research, analysis, capacity and movement building, and advocacy, and shares information to widen awareness and catalyse collective action and influence decision making on issues of biosafety, agricultural biodiversity and farmer-managed seed systems (FMSS) in Africa. This work both informs and amplifies the voices of social movements fighting for food justice and food sovereignty in Africa.

The SASA project is implemented in a context of renewed global interest in African agriculture, especially since the mid-2000s, after decades of neglect. Governments and private corporations globally have identified Africa as a new frontier for development and investment, with land and natural resources considered to be underutilized in the context of increasing global food demand. Key interventions include the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), the G8's New Alliance on Food Security and Nutrition, and there are many others from the US, EU, etc. While introducing much needed resources into African agriculture, ACB's view is that these interventions tend to favour corporate private sector interests, and channel scarce public resources from African governments into institutional mechanisms

and funding commitments that protect and enable private sector profits at the expense of improved well-being of rural communities, especially smallholder farmers. These strategies and interventions can only benefit a small layer of African farmers at best, with long term social and ecological costs that are not adequately considered.

SDC has provided funding support to ACB on seed sovereignty work since 2013. During this time, ACB has played an important role in supporting and building active and critical national and regional networks of civil society organisations (CSOs) and farmer organisations to contest inequitable commercial plant variety protection and seed laws and policies. ACB has also played a huge role in igniting a discourse on farmer seed systems in the Southern African region, which has also had impacts in parts of West Africa and pan-African seed work under the auspices of the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA). This provides a strong base for further work in advocating for recognition and public sector and donor support for farmer managed seed systems and the crucial role of smallholder farmers in maintaining and strengthening agricultural biodiversity in Southern Africa.

SDC is currently funding about 47% for this phase of SASA's work. Bread for the World (BftW) and other donors currently contribute approximately 53% to the overall budget. The overall objective/goal of the SASA project has been to strengthen food security in Southern and Eastern Africa by promoting seed diversity and agro-ecological practices. The project objectives are to secure biosafety in Africa; secure agricultural biodiversity in Africa; and to limit corporate expansion while ensuring farmers have alternative systems of support based on agro-ecology in place. The ACB's theory of change is rooted in implementation of six integrated and dynamic strategies, namely, Horizon scanning and prioritisation; Research and analysis; Sharing and learning; Movement building; Communications; and Advocacy. Through these activities, it works in partnership with social movements, farmer associations, non-government organisations and other CSOs, promoting popular participation by opening up policy spaces and facilitating informed entry into policy processes at all levels, from on farm research and discussion all the way through to global policy negotiations. Its main area of focus is Southern Africa (where this review should focus) but with connections to East and West Africa and beyond the continent.

The SASA project's intended outcomes are that by August 2023:

Outcome 1.1: Selected African governments are encouraged to follow stringent biosafety regulations, risks assessments and take precautionary decisions, with regard to new technologies around Genetically Modified Technologies and biosafety in Africa.

Outcome 2.1: Exemptions in commercial seed laws are adequate to allow for the unimpeded development and support of farmer seed systems and securing of farmers' rights.

Outcome 2.2: Political and policy processes under way at national and regional levels in support to alternatives in farmer seed systems, farmers' rights and agricultural biodiversity.

Outcome 3.1: Increased support to alternatives to corporate agricultural expansion in Southern Africa.

2.1.2 Seed and Knowledge Initiative (SKI)

SKI is a Southern Africa regional programme hosted by Biowatch. SKI's aim is to strengthen community-based seed and knowledge systems and to promote agro-ecology on all levels (local farmer, district, national and regional levels). The overall development goal of SKI Phase 2, based on collective experience from Phase 1 work and the latest research, is: *Improved food security in participating farming communities through more resilient farmer-led seed systems and agro-ecology by 2023.*

SKI's work is rooted in the principles of food sovereignty and is driven by a collaborative effort between organisations and individuals who agree that seed sovereignty and agro-ecology are both fundamental to food sovereignty. The three outcomes driving SKI Phase 2 are:

Outcome 1: The practices of agro-ecology and farmer-led seed and knowledge systems are strengthened, spread and deepened in participating farming communities in southern Africa.

Outcome 2: A movement on agro-ecology and farmers' rights in Southern Africa is developed and strengthened.

Outcome 3: Decision makers increasingly support policy agenda / initiatives for farmer-led seed systems, localised nutritious food systems and agro-ecology.

SKI's primary stakeholders are the farmers that SKI partners work with. However, SKI has strong working relationships with many other organisations and individuals, both regionally and internationally. SKI works with 15 funded partners across four African countries. These partners are:

Malawi: Biodiversity Conservation Initiative (BCI), SCOPE Malawi, and the Soil, Food & Healthy Communities (SFHC);

South Africa: Biowatch South Africa, EarthLore Foundation, Ukuvuna and the University of Cape Town (UCT);

Zambia: The Zambia Alliance for Agro-ecology & Biodiversity (ZAAB), Regional Schools & Colleges of Permaculture (ReSCOPE), Community Technology Development Trust (CTDT), Kasisi Agriculture Training Centre (KATC);

Zimbabwe: Participatory Organic Research Extension and Training Project (PORET), PELUM in Zimbabwe, Towards Sustainable Use of Resources Organisation (TSURO) and the Zimbabwe Small Holder Organic Farmers' Forum (ZIMSOFF).

SKI works in a complex and continually changing environment in which politics is inherent in food and farming. It shares ACB's concerns about the renewed global interest in African agriculture which tends to favour corporate private sector interests and benefit only a small layer of African farmers while undermining farmers' rights, agrobiodiversity and agro-ecological farming practices. To counter this, SKI is implementing a multidimensional programme that focuses on innovation, connection and responsiveness between the partners and the small-scale farmers they work with to enable them to increase and protect their agrobiodiversity. Some of the transversal themes implemented through the SKI programme include gender equality, HIV mainstreaming and youth engagement.

2.2 Objectives

As Phase 2 of the SKI project (March 2019 to Feb 2023) and Phase 2 of the ACB project (September 2019 – August 2023) are mid-way through implementation, SDC together with SKI and SASA partners, seek to hold a MTR of both projects. For efficiency and cost effectiveness, the SDC has combined the process, although there will be some specific questions pertaining to each project. The review will assess the extent to which the SASA and SKI projects are on track to achieve their set objectives and outcomes, identify major strengths of their work, the challenges they are experiencing in delivery of the set outputs, and draw lessons on improvement for the funders, ACB and SKI. It shall provide recommendations for the short/mid-term steering of both projects (up to the end of their current phases), as well as longer-term recommendations that will inform the design of the final phase of implementation of SKI. The review will primarily be held online, with the option of physical meetings with communities where the COVID-19 situation permits. Both SASA and SKI have shown resilience in the face of COVID-19, and there has been significant adaptation to increased use of the online space and a redesign of activities at local level. Nevertheless, there are ongoing challenges in terms of connectivity, and the limitations of online versus face-to face interaction. The review should include questions on the overall impact of COVID-19 on these projects.

2.3 Content of the mandate, terms of reference

2.3.1 Scope and focus

This Mid-term review should evaluate and assess the following:

- The continuing relevance and effectiveness of project assumptions and theories of change, and to recommend adjustments, where necessary.
- The progress being made towards achievement of the outcomes and the larger project goal or objectives as detailed in the ACB 2019 log-frame and SKI's 2019-23 log-frame, taking into account the limitations imposed by the pandemic, lockdowns, travel restrictions and curfews etc. What is the scale of impact?
- The nature and extent to which the SASA and SKI have responded and adapted their project approaches and strategies to the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of their projects. Which adaptations are relevant in the mid-term and should thus be maintained?
- The projects' research and advocacy work in terms of relevance, performance and effectiveness.
- How is the work partners are doing on seed diversity, agro-ecology and policy advocacy impacting on women? On men? On youth? Or what is changing in terms of gender relationships as a consequence of the work being done by partners (changes in power)?
- Determine possible synergies of the two projects in terms of coordination, collaboration and benefiting the same project participants and stakeholders. How are coordination and complementarities working between the two initiatives (SKI and SASA) as well as with other SDC funded projects?
- Determine how the SKI project could be modified and/or aligned to accommodate SDC's future strategic focus on a bilateral programme anchored in Zambia and Zimbabwe with regional linkages, and to make the best use of the synergies with SDC's current and future portfolio. This should include looking at the balance between regional and two-country focus.
- In what way are ACB and SKI ensuring equity of resources to the most marginalized and vulnerable groups amongst their targeted beneficiaries? Conduct a basic cost-benefit analysis or cost-effectiveness analysis of the project interventions.
- Make recommendations with regard to strategies and approaches that ensure greater effectiveness in delivering the project's intended outcomes of promoting and protecting farmers' food and seed sovereignty through increasing and sustaining use of agricultural biodiversity. What shape and form could SKI and SASA have in the future?

The Mid-term Review is expected to conclude with a set of recommendations and areas for priority attention for both organisations and donors. In particular, with respect to understanding how each partner thinks about their work and possible opportunities in line with the new SDC bilateral programme and areas of focus (climate change, the urban-rural interface, private sector engagement and digitalization).

2.3.4. Methodology

The review should use multiple methods that can include document/desk review, group discussions, key informant interviews, and in-depth structured interviews to allow for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The consultant(s)/ review team will also be granted the opportunity to use other innovative methods that will allow for the triangulation of data, generate objective results, and use in conclusions.

The consultant team should build on the participatory and principle-based processes and methods. Due to on-going stressors brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, farmers and partners are burdened with adapting and dealing with more than normal levels of uncertainty. Review consultants need to be sensitive to the added stresses within communities and partners and adapt their review methods in order to minimize partner work overload.

The review team should draw sufficient samples of stakeholders to engage including:

- ACB partner organisations in South Africa, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia; SKI partner organisations in South Africa, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe (recognising some partner organisations work with both SKI and ACB);
- ACB and SKI Regional staff;
- Representatives of Ministries of Agriculture and relevant departments in participating countries with which ACB and SKI partners have engaged;

- National, regional and international organizations that support farmer-led seed systems and agro-ecology (strategic allies);
- For ACB, other research institutions and think tanks in the region, including SADC;
- For SKI, community members through participant observation in ongoing processes at partner levels.
- SASA and SKI current and potential future donors.

Other groups or categories of informants may be added during the review planning process as necessary.

2.4 Review results/Deliverables

- 1) Inception report, max 10 pages (incl. understanding of assignment; list of key informant interviews to be conducted; initial desk review of key literature; detailed work plan);
- 2) Draft Report (max. 20 pages without annexes) and Power Point Presentation with findings and recommendations;
- 3) Final Report (max. 20 pages without annexes) including an executive summary highlighting key findings and recommendations;
- 4) A Power Point Presentation to be presented (max. 1 hour with discussion) to key stakeholders.

2.5 Time frame, target dates

The timeline / deadlines for specific milestones and deliverable shall be set out in the contract.

Deadline	Activity
3 rd September 2021	Confirmation of intention to submit proposals by potential consultants
6 th September 2021	Deadline for submitting questions of clarification to SDC
8 th September 2021	SDC sends out response to questions to consultants that confirmed their intention to submit their proposals
13 September 2021	Deadline for submitting proposal/ offer
27 September 2021	Awarding of mandate
1 October 2021	Signing of contract
1 October 2021	Begin of mandate
11 October 2021	Inception Meeting
11 November 2021	Joint de-briefing meeting highlighting key insights and recommendations
19 November 2021	Submission of draft report
30 November 2021	Comments sent to consultant
13 December 2021	Submission of final report

3.0 Formal aspects of the invitation to tender

3.1 Contracting authority

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
 Regional office Southern Africa
 Embassy of Switzerland to Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe
 9, Lanark road, Belgravia
 Harare, Zimbabwe
www.eda.admin.ch/harare

3.2 Type of procedure

Procurement in the invitation to tender is in accordance with the Federal Ordinance of 11 December 1995 on Public Procurement, FOPP, SR 172.056.11, revised on 1 January 2021.

The submitted bids/ proposals must meet the requirements and instructions provided here in.

3.3 Composition and content of the offer

The following structure for the offer is compulsory:

Chapter	Description	No. pages (max.)
0	Covering letter with signatures	1
1	Technical Offer	5
1.1	Introduction with motivation for the bid	
1.2	Understanding of the mandate	
1.3	Description of the proposed methodology and implementation plan with timeframes, risks, constraints and opportunities	
1.4	Competencies, roles, responsibility of the consultant team	
2	Financial proposal: In United states dollars (USD \$) currency in accordance with proposed number of days and strictly complying with the budget template provided. For travel expenses refer to the "Synopsis of the lump sum reimbursement" in annex.	1
3	Annexes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- CVs of consultants participating (each CV not exceeding 2 pages)- List of similar projects evaluated before with contact of references- Others	

3.4 Budget

Please prepare a budget based on your estimations of time and the fees of the involved consultants. There is no predefined number of man-days for this assignment. The proposed number of man-days should be clearly justified. No reimbursement shall be made for the bidder's work in preparing and submitting his or her offer. All costs must be submitted in USD Currency. There are two types of the budget templates depending with origin of the consultant. All consultants originating in OECD countries will use form type B mandate, while consultant from other countries use the form local mandate.

3.5 Contractual terms

The contract to be concluded is subject to the general terms and conditions [which are supplied in the Annexes]. The SDC's general terms and conditions are considered to be accepted when an offer is submitted.

4.0 Suitability criteria

The bidder can verify his or her ability to fulfil the mandate in technical, financial and commercial terms; resp. shall confirm this with a self-declaration.

No.	Suitability criterion	Verification
SC1	Experience in evaluation , at least two in	The technical proposal attached with

	designing and leading evaluation in the past five years	CVs of the consultants to be involved
SC2	Experience in policy analysis and governance in Agriculture and in particular in seed systems and/or Agro-ecology sector, at least three within the last five years	The technical proposal attached with CVs of the consultants to be involved
SC3	Experience in action-oriented research , at least three within the last five years	The technical proposal attached with CVs of the consultants to be involved
SC4	Experience in cost-benefit and/or cost-effectiveness analysis , at least one in the last five years	The technical proposal attached with CVs of the consultants to be involved
SC5	Experience in Sub-Saharan Africa & Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and/or Zimbabwe in particular	The technical proposal attached with CVs of the consultants to be involved

5.0 Award criteria

The consultant/agency will be selected by a limited tender process. Of the valid offers submitted, the contract will be awarded to the technically and economically most favorable bid. Offers will be evaluated on a combination of technical and financial criteria. In this case the ratio between technical and financial scores will be 75/25.

Offers will be assessed according to the following award criteria and weighting:

AC	AWARD CRITERIA	WEIGHTING
AC1	Qualification and experience of the consultant or a group of consultants	40 %
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced educational qualifications in agriculture and/or social sciences. At least eight years research experience on seed systems, agro-ecology, social justice advocacy and climate justice. Relevant participatory, analytical, quantitative and qualitative research skills. Experience in conducting cost-benefit or cost effectiveness analysis. Experience of designing and managing review processes with appreciative, developmental and utilized-focused evaluation approaches, multi-partner consultative processes including engaging participants/constituents, including women and men smallholder farmers, in an evaluation. Significant knowledge in the design, implementation and monitoring of smallholder rural agricultural projects. Experience with conducting political economy analysis studies on farming communities and seed systems. Gender mainstreaming experience in agricultural projects. 	
AC2	Understanding of the mandate and methodological approach	35%
	Understanding of the mandate and proposed approach	15 %
	Alternative and innovative approaches	5 %
	Proposed approach for cost benefit or cost-effectiveness analysis	10%
	Description of the risks, constraints and opportunities as well as the means identified for addressing them	5%
AC3	Financial Proposal	25 %
	Clarity of the proposition, full character of the cost structure, realistic estimation of the unit costs	10%

	Costing of items (fees, reimbursable)	5%
	Price formula $\text{Score} = \left(\frac{P_{\min} \times \text{max. Points}}{P} \right)$ P = Price of the Proposal to be assessed P min = Price of the lowest Proposal Max.points = 5	10%

Award criteria are evaluated on a scale of 0 to 5.

Score	Fulfilment and quality of the criteria	
0	Cannot be established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not available
1	Very bad fulfilment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is incomplete Data quality is very poor
2	Bad fulfilment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information relates inadequately to the requirements Data quality is poor
3	Average fulfilment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information globally responds inadequately to the requirements Data quality is adequate
4	Good fulfilment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information focuses well on requirements Data quality is good
5	Very good fulfilment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information clearly relates to the achievement of outputs Data quality is excellent

6.0 Additional points to be noted by the bidder

6.1 Address for submission of offers

All bids/ proposals should be sent by e-mail to:

Ms. Esther Chilawila, esther.chilawila@eda.admin.ch

And must be copied by e-mail to:

Ms. Dudzai Chingono dudzai.chingono@eda.admin.ch.

The Subject of the E-mails should be **SASA and SKI MID-TERM REVIEW PROPOSAL** written in CAPITAL

Postal Submissions are not accepted.

6.2 Language of documents, language of bids

The bid must be submitted in English. The documents are available in English and the final work must be provided in English.

6.3 Deadline for submitting a bid and validity

The bid must be sent by E-mail to the contact persons named under point 6.1 above by **13 September 2021 at 16:00hrs (Close of Business Zimbabwean Time)** at the latest.

The bid is valid for up to 60 days after the aforementioned date for submission.

6.4 Negotiations

Remain reserved.

6.5 Confidentiality

All information of any kind that comes to the attention of the bidder in connection with the tendered mandate of the awarding authority is to be treated as confidential. The content of the present tender may only be made available to persons taking part in the preparation of the bid.

The tender documentation may not be used for any other purposes than preparation of the bid, even in extracts.

Bidders treat facts as confidential that are not public knowledge or publicly available. In cases of doubt, facts are to be treated as confidential. This obligation to secrecy remains valid even after conclusion of the tender procedure.

The awarding authority undertakes to maintain confidentiality about this bid towards third parties subject to the reserve of statutory publication requirements.

6.6 Integrity clause

Bidders undertake to take all necessary measures to avoid corruption, especially not to offer or accept payments or other advantages. Bidders who violate the integrity clause are required to pay a contractual penalty to the contracting authority amounting to 10% of the contract sum or at least CHF 3,000 per violation. The bidder notes that a violation of the integrity clause leads as a rule to the cancellation of the award or to early termination of the contract by the contracting authority for important reasons. The Parties shall inform each other in case of any well-founded suspicions of corruption.

6.7 Protected rights

All protected rights that arise from executing the mandate shall be transferred to the contracting authority.

7.0 Learning Opportunity for SDC

This evaluation is a learning opportunity for SDC staff. The selected/winning bidder should be ready to cooperate with expert (s) from head office and/or other cooperation offices during fieldwork for few days.

Annexes:

General Terms and Conditions

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Budget template

[K:\HAR\Open\9_Reserved\9.1_Templates\Program_Templates\2021_LocalMandate-Budget_EN\(002\).xlsx](K:\HAR\Open\9_Reserved\9.1_Templates\Program_Templates\2021_LocalMandate-Budget_EN(002).xlsx)

TypeBOffer

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Conditions for Local Mandate Type A and B

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Synopsis of the lump sum reimbursement (2021)

Malawi

- Food lump sum: USD 60/day
- Hotel accommodation: max USD 160 (against receipts)

South Africa

- Food lump sum: USD 30/day
- Hotel accommodation: max USD 140 (against receipts)

Zimbabwe

- Food lump sum: USD 45/day
- Hotel accommodation: max USD 210 (against receipts)

Zambia

- Food lump sum: USD 25/day
- Hotel accommodation: max USD 130 (against receipts)

NB:  If the accommodation is booked on a bed and breakfast basis, the consultant can only claim 80% of the per diem.

The following documents will be provided to organisations interested in submitting their offers for this assignment:

- SKI and SASA annual reports
- SKI and SASA project documents