

## Terms of Reference

# Interim Evaluation of Project REG-19-018: Nudging for good

## 1. Introduction

### Background on Funding Partner

Fondation Botnar is a Swiss-based foundation established in 2003 whose core purpose is improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people in growing secondary cities around the world. We do this by investing in sustainable solutions, learning with, connecting and catalysing diverse partners.

At Fondation Botnar, we recognize the value of learning in effectively driving towards systemic change, and are committed to cultivating and nurturing learning both within and outside of the organization.

### Background on Implementing Partner (“Grantee”)

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) provides research-based policy solutions to sustainably reduce poverty and end hunger and malnutrition in developing countries. Established in 1975, IFPRI currently has more than 600 employees working in over 50 countries. It is a research centre of CGIAR, a worldwide partnership engaged in agricultural research for development.

### Project description

The project aims to develop, validate and examine the feasibility of using AI-based technology to improve the diets of adolescent girls in urban Ghana and Viet Nam, including the following objectives:

1. Develop new AI functionality to allow for accurate diagnostics of food intake.
2. Validate new AI functionality training, validating, and explore the feasibility of using AI-app to record food consumption in daily periods, and provide nudges, in a controlled setting in Accra (Ghana) and Thai Nguyen (Vietnam)
3. Release AI-app aimed at changing diets in adolescent girls using mobile technology in Ghana and Viet Nam

4. Design randomized trial to rigorously test the feasibility of using the AI-app to record daily food consumption and provide nudges in a real-life context, and its effectiveness in improving diets of adolescent girls

The long-term objective is to address knowledge-related barriers to healthy food choices using information tailored to existing circumstances to improve adolescent's behaviours related to food and diet. Further, the objective is to see changes in dietary patterns. Ultimately, the project should impact the diet and nutrition of adolescents living in an urban setting and improve their physical and psychosocial health and could also affect the food environment, including availability, affordability and quality of foods.

The approach is based on the FAO/Pennsylvania State University collaboration using AI to diagnose crop diseases and nudge smallholders towards improved farming practices across sub-Saharan Africa and is guided by the Lancet Series framework on Maternal and Child Nutrition.

Alongside IFPRI, the other partner organizations involved in the project also bring intellectual leadership in their respective fields. In particular, Penn State/FAO team is responsible for extending the existing AI-based platform with additional functionality on dietary assessment and nudging and release of the final version of the AI-app incorporating learnings from the project. The country teams, including the U. of Ghana and the Thai Nguyen National Hospital, Thai Nguyen University of Pharmacy and Medicine, and the National Institute of Nutrition in Viet Nam, are responsible for the in-country validation and feasibility testing of the new technology.

Project start date: 10.02.2020

Project end date: 30.10.2021

## Current Status of project implementation

The project has kicked-off at the beginning of 2020 and has slightly been affected by COVID-19 postponing the project timeline by 3 months.

The next milestones are:

- Developing the AI-functionality and engaging stakeholders by Oct-2020
- Completed in-country validation of new AI-functionality by Apr-2021

## 2. Evaluation objectives and questions

The evaluation pursues the following objectives:

1. To support the grantee's reflection on the ways in which the research can contribute to change in the lives of children and young people in low-income countries

Fondation Botnar works with a systemic approach, which assumes that change does not take place in a linear path, but rather requires a number of different factors to align and contribute to making the change. The evaluation should support the grantee's reflection on the research through creating an understanding of the projects long-term critical path and context that influences it.

2. To learn about the status of the research, and assess its fairness and equity

Fondation Botnar support the concept of fair partnerships in research based on the KFPE principles and Research Fairness Initiative. It is important for the Foundation that the research that is supported is fair and equitable, building lasting partnerships and capacity sustainably. The evaluation should appraise the current status of research fairness in the project for both the foundation as a grant maker and the grantee as a researcher to reflect on and initiate improvements.

3. To feed into the development of the overall monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and knowledge management system of Fondation Botnar

Fondation Botnar has been developing its strategic learning and evaluation system. The evaluation can contribute to this process by contributing to the development of indicators and/or guiding questions that could be used across research projects funded by the Foundation.

### Evaluation Questions

1. What is the **relevance** of the project in the wider research landscape of its topic, including behavioural intervention to improve diets of adolescent girls, and AI-based tools to improve dietary assessment methods? What difference has the grant by Fondation Botnar made or is it likely to make?
2. What is the critical path of the solution to achieving impact on adolescent health?
  - a. What is the **theory of change** of the project within its wider systemic context ?
  - b. How can the research project **inform policies and practice** to improve young people's well-being in low income countries? What steps have been undertaken, what else should be done (including questions on other actors to be involved)?
  - c. How does the project contribute to **capacity building**?
  - d. How has the grant by Fondation Botnar contributed to leveraging co-funding or follow-up **funding** by other donors?

3. What is the **project status** with respect to answering the research questions?
  - a. Which successes or promising results have been attained so far? What are the most important insights the project has generated to date?
  - b. To what extent can these research results be generalised?
4. Which **challenges** have been met in the course of the project and how has the grantee managed these challenges, to what effects?
  - a. How has the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the project in its process and outcomes, and how does the grantee manage issues linked to the pandemic?
5. How has the project been aligned with the **Research Fairness** Initiative, in particular:
  - a. Decision-making and responsibilities in the project, i.e. how research partners share their responsibilities in the project to ensure decisions are fair and effective?
  - b. Project ownership, in particular how research partners share costs and benefits of the research?
  - c. How can research fairness be optimized in further steps of the project?
6. How does the **use of digital media** and **artificial intelligence** respond to criteria of data security and privacy, equity and inclusion? Is there any evidence of unintended consequences or harm caused by the deployment of such technology?

During the inception phase, the evaluator can review and develop additional evaluation questions as necessary, in consultation with Fondation Botnar and the implementing partner.

## Alignment with Fondation Botnar Strategic Learning and Evaluation

The project is part of the research portfolio of Fondation Botnar which aims to support the foundation's objectives by providing scientific evidence in the various areas of activity.

Fondation Botnar emphasises learning to understand the systems affecting young people's wellbeing and achieve its vision. Strategic learning agendas guide this approach through learning questions for focused enquiry. The primary learning question for the research approach is:

*To what extent do the results from our research grants advance and accelerate our programmatic city work?*

While it is not the primary focus of the evaluation, the learning questions should be taken into consideration in case captured findings may be applicable.

## 3. Methodology and Paradigm

### Paradigm and Approach

The evaluation exercise regarding the first objective can be described as falling primarily within theory-based and complexity-responsive evaluations. The use of a mixed-methods should be considered. The application of a participatory theory-based approach and possibly a network analysis is believed to be necessary to complete this evaluation exercise.

The evaluator is expected to initially propose a set of data collection activities and analytic approaches appropriate to respond to the evaluation objective and questions outlined above and responsive to the financial parameters given.

The evaluator or evaluation team is expected to document the evaluation process and share any lessons learned for future evaluations supported by Fondation Botnar in their final report?

### Role as an External Evaluator

Fondation Botnar is committed to partnering closely with grantees to enhance learning directly related to implementation and the follow-on phases of the program, be it with or without Fondation Botnar support. The External Evaluator implementing the contract must be able to situate themselves as a partner with the recipient organization for maximum transparency and utility of the evaluation findings for program improvement.

For midterm evaluations, the primary focus of the exercise should be on program improvement to leverage results. The consulting evaluator is expected to work in tandem with the Project Lead based in Switzerland to understand the research process and its prospective use. The contracting evaluator is expected to collaborate closely with the implementor to:

- A) Reach a shared understanding of the evaluation objectives and questions, and develop the evaluation approach and process accordingly
- B) unpack or develop the broader theory of change for the project and potential future steps towards introducing the treatment
- C) consult regularly with the project team to boost both the validity of findings and the relevance of results and recommendations, also taking into account the grantee's internal communication needs
- D) recommend adjustments to project's measurement framework as needed so as to effectively inform future steps
- E) facilitate a validation workshop or consultation (online) so as to discuss initial findings and recommendations with the implementor and Fondation Botnar.

## 4. Evaluation logistics

### Scope and Field Visits

The evaluation is expected to start between November 2020 and December 2021. Its budget should not exceed CHF 20.000-23.000.

Given current travel restrictions and risks linked to COVID-19, the evaluation will be carried out online, such as videoconference and visual collaboration platforms.

### Ethical Considerations

The evaluator is expected to comply with evaluation ethics, as set out in the OECD/DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation (<http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf>) throughout the evaluation process, as well as with the ethical standards applied within the project.

### Proposed Timeline and deliverables

Evaluation activities will start upon execution of the consultancy contract and conclude no later than January 2021. The Final Report including the respective slide deck should be submitted no later than March 2021.

Work Packages/Action	Responsible	Timeline
Interview	Fondation Botnar/Grantee	By 13 November 2020
Kick-off/inception meeting	Evaluator	Mid-November 2020
Submission of an inception report	Evaluator	By 7 December 2020
Submission of draft evaluation report	Evaluator	By 5 February 2021
Feedback on the draft evaluation report	Fondation Botnar/Grantee	By 19 February 2021
Closing workshop	Evaluator	Late February 2021
Submission of Final Report	Evaluator	By 12 March 2021

## Inception and dissemination consultations

At a minimum, the consultant will plan and facilitate two consultation events/moments in consultation with the implementor. The minimum set of activities are specified as follows:

- Inception meeting or workshop (on-line or in a hybrid format) with representatives of Fondation Botnar and of the implementing organisation
- Validation workshop (on-line or in a hybrid format) with the implementing organisation, to verify and deepen findings, reflect on future steps and gather inputs for recommendations.

## Minimum Deliverables

The deliverables expected from the evaluation are as follows:

- Inception report of 5-15 pages (plus annexes) including:
  - Understanding of the evaluation purpose and scope (– i.e. what is in and out of scope)
  - Proposed adjustments to evaluation objectives and questions as appropriate
  - Secondary data analysis plan as appropriate
  - Data collection and analysis plan(s)
  - Tentative work-plan and schedule for the overall evaluation process, specifying involved stakeholders' roles and moments for communication between the specific stakeholders
  - Preliminary proposal for the dissemination of findings
  - Draft instruments for data collection and analysis
- Methods documentation package including data collection instruments and analysis plan (data collection protocols, including training plans for any field workers, if appropriate, are expected to be developed and iterated with implementing partner)
- Draft outline of the evaluation report (anticipating 1 round of feedback)
- Full draft evaluation report of up to 30 pages including a three-page executive summary
- Closing Workshop
  - Discuss Learnings
  - Reflect on the evaluation process
- Final evaluation report (after one round of feedback) accompanied by a short briefing slide deck

The ownership of the results/deliverables obtained in the framework of the study/context analysis, including the intellectual property right, is jointly owned by ISUH and Fondation Botnar as the clients of the evaluation.

## 5. Evaluator Requirements

### Specialized evaluation expertise

- Theory-based evaluation
- Participatory evaluation

### Evaluation experience

- Experience in evaluating multi-disciplinary projects
- Experience in evaluating collaborative projects in intercultural contexts
- Touch points with or knowledge of research fairness approaches (RFI or KPFE Principles)

### Contextual experience or linguistic capability

- Excellent written and spoken English
- Knowledge in the field of software use in behaviour change interventions
- Experience in conducting interviews, group discussions and workshops via online platforms

### References

*Applicants are requested to include at least three hyperlinks to examples of evaluations that are broadly representative of the evaluator's or the evaluation team's capability vis-à-vis this call.*

## Expression of interest and deadline

The expression of interest should be no longer than **2 pages** consisting of:

- Introduction of the evaluator or evaluation team including relevant experience and skills
- Short proposal of the methodological approach
- Rough day-rate

An annex can include further documentation such as CVs, reports and publications or other relevant documentation. The 2-pager, however, will be the main basis for decision-making.

Interested experts are requested to send their expression of interest by 6 November 2020 at 11 am Central European Standard Time. Applications in pdf format can be electronically submitted to [m.raab@posteo.de](mailto:m.raab@posteo.de) cc. [dsuhr@fondationbotnar.org](mailto:dsuhr@fondationbotnar.org) and [grants@fondationbotnar.org](mailto:grants@fondationbotnar.org)