TERMS OF REFERENCE - Mid-term Review of the EU Service Contract "Knowledge and research for nutrition" DCI/FOOD/2019/408-364

Contracting Authority: Agrinatura-EEIG

December 2022

NUTRITION RESEARCH FACILITY
Knowledge and Research for Nutrition

About the Nutrition Research Facility

The Knowledge and Research for Nutrition project of the European Commission (2020-2024) aims to provide improved knowledge and evidence for policy and programme design, management and monitoring & evaluation in order to reach better nutrition outcomes.

The project is implemented by Agrinatura - the European Alliance on Agricultural Knowledge for Development – which has established a Nutrition Research Facility, pooling expertise from European academia and having the ability to mobilise internationally renowned scientific networks and research organisations from partner countries.

The Nutrition Research Facility provides expert advice to the European Commission and to the European Union (EU) Member States and Partner Countries.

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Disclaimer

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Commission. Its contents are the sole responsibility of AGRINATURA and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Description
C4N	Capacity for Nutrition
CIRAD	French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
K4N	Knowledge for Nutrition
LMICs	Low and Middle Income Countries
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIP	Multi annual indicative programme
NRF	Nutrition Research Facility
NRI	Natural Resources Institute
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SUN	Scaling up nutrition
TA	Technical Assistance
UGent	Ghent University
WP	Work Packages

Content

1. Background

While there had been important achievements with respect to global food availability and nutrition, overall progress to eliminate all forms of malnutrition by 2030 was considered to be slow and uneven. In many developing countries malnutrition is an underlying cause of about 45% of all child deaths and 20% of maternal mortality every year[1].

Growth failure frequently begins in utero and then continues after birth, compounded by poor infant and young child feeding practices and inadequate control of infections. By the time they reach reproductive age, almost a quarter of all women are underweight and almost one in three are anaemic. Stunting still affects almost one out of every four children, while child wasting has remained virtually stagnant for decades, micronutrient deficiencies are widespread and the prevalence of overweight and obesity is increasing.

In addition, current food systems have a huge environmental impact in terms of resource depletion, biodiversity loss, pollution, contribution to global warming, etc. "*Global food production threatens climate stability and ecosystem resilience and constitutes the single largest driver of environmental degradation and transgression of planetary boundaries*" says the EAT Lancet Commission[2].

Many partner countries have already taken robust actions to address undernutrition, including commitments made through the Nutrition 4 Growth event, endorsing the Rome Declaration at the ICN2 conference, and membership in the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, launched in 2010, bringing together government authorities from countries with a high burden of malnutrition and a global coalition of partners, and calling for intensive efforts to scale up nutrition. Partners in the SUN movement have committed themselves to work together to mobilize resources, provide technical support, perform high-level advocacy and develop innovative partnerships.

Nevertheless, addressing all forms of malnutrition while taking into-account the sustainability of the whole food system in its three social, economic and environmental dimensions is a relatively recent approach that raises a number of new questions. In a constant effort to increase the relevance of its action, the EU seeks to mobilise, through the Nutrition Research Facility, the EU research community and their international networks (including in partner countries) to help identify and address emerging challenges and questions raised by decision makers and to better understand the multiple impacts of nutrition projects, programmes and policies.

1.1 Relevant sector background

Assessment of the European Union (EU) commitments on nutrition to support partner countries to reduce the number of stunted children under the age of five by at least 7 million by 2025, indicated that although significant progress is being made, acceleration of efforts and investment is needed to reach the intended targets. The need for better data on stunting for improved evaluation of the impact of investments and programmes was also highlighted[3].

According to the Seventh Progress Report of EC Action Plan on Nutrition (2021-2022)[4], modelled data suggests that the Covid 19 pandemic, through its disruption of societies, markets and livelihoods, is aggravating the malnutrition-poverty nexus. Alarmingly, stunting progress is expected to slow and may even be worsening in many low- and middle-income countries. Added to this, ongoing conflict and instability

[1] Black R., Victora C., Walker S., Bhutta Z. Maternal and child undernutrition and overweight in low-income and middle-income countries. Lancet. 2013;382:427–451. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(13)60937-X.
[2] Adapted summary of the Commission Food in The Anthropocene: the EAT-Lancet Commission on Healthy Diets From Sustainable Food Systems. https://eatforum.org/eat-lancet-commission/
[3] European Commission Action Plan on Nutrition. Fourth Progress report April 2018-March 2019 https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/nas_fourth_project_report_aw_screen.pdf
[4] European Commission Action Plan on Nutrition. Seventh Progress report April 2021-March 2022 - https://op.europa.eu/it/publication-detail/-/publication/d370223d-3894-11ed-9c68-01aa75ed71a1

around the world, including Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, is undermining the supply and availability of food and agricultural inputs and driving up global food prices. This further undermines people's ability to afford a healthy diet and improve their nutritional status.

At the same time, the mounting climate and ecological crises constitute a far-reaching threat to the prospects of ensuring that everyone on the planet is able to access the healthy and sustainable diet required for good nutrition. The series of back-to-back global summits held in 2021 – on food systems, biodiversity, climate change and nutrition – collectively delivered a heightened awareness of the urgent need for transformative change.

Providing evidence from research and implementation of programmes is key to strengthen the design of interventions, policies and investment and can provide data for future impact assessment. The identification of knowledge gaps is key to identify future areas of research focus.

In addition, further efforts are needed to strengthen monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of programmes and policies. The development of a clear hypothesis (also called Theory of Change) helps understand how investments may influence the drivers of nutritional status in beneficiary populations. Such theories of change are informed by a range of proxy variables related to nutritional status (e.g. dietary quality, diet diversity) and changes in its distal determinants in the population's food environments (including the physical, social and macro food environments).

By harnessing its expertise and relevant networks, the Nutrition Research Facility (1) identifies demand for evidence and (2) mobilises expertise and address this demand, as well as (3) facilitates the uptake of evidence by decision makers from the EU and EU Members States (in relation to their development policies) as well as EU Partner Countries prioritising nutrition.

The Nutrition Research Facility has a global scope, with a specific interest in the 42 EU Partner Countries that prioritised nutrition in the previous programming cycle (2014-2020)[5] and those in which nutrition features under at least one priority area in their multi-annual indicative programmes (MIPs) (2021-2027). Most of these countries have signed up to the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, of which the EU is a partner.

1.2 Intervention to be evaluated

Title of the intervention to be evaluated	• **Knowledge and research for nutrition**
Budget of the intervention to be evaluated	• EUR 6.588.500,00
Dates of the intervention to be evaluated	• Start: 01/04/2020 • End: 31/03/2024

The Nutrition Research Facility is implemented by AGRINATURA EEIG through the following members:

- University of Ghent (UGhent), Belgium (Team Leader and Project Manager)
- Natural Resources Institute (NRI), University of Greenwich, UK (Deputy Team Leader)
- Agropolis International, France

[5] Africa: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroun, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinee Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauretania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste and Yemen. Latin America: Guatemala, Haiti and Honduras.

- French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), France
- Universidade de Lisboa, Instituto Superior de Agronomia, Portugal

Overall objective

The overall objective is **to provide improved knowledge and evidence for better project/programme design & management, monitoring and evaluation and policy development for nutrition, in view of increasing the effectiveness of programmes and investments in that crucial development area.**

Research and M&E expertise will be provided to the Commission, EU Member States for their external assistance in nutrition and EU partner countries. The work of the Nutrition Research Facility will be driven by the demand for evidence from decision makers, mainly from the EU and its partner countries prioritising nutrition ('policy-driven research for evidence-informed decision making').

Specific objectives

Two specific objectives are expected:

1: **Improved connection, collaboration, communication and coordination between research and decision making**[6].

This is achieved through (1) identification of evidence needs of decision makers and prioritisation of questions to be addressed by the facility; (2) analysis and contextualisation of existing evidence by the facility; (3) publication and dissemination of results in formats suitable for decision makers along with support to decision makers for the uptake of results. As a "by-product", questions raised by decision makers, for which no or inadequate evidence is found, may be listed to constitute a "research agenda" for research funding mechanisms.

2: **Strengthened M&E systems (including capacities) for tracking nutrition benefits of policies and programmes at field level**.

The facility provides specific support to the EC, EU Member States and Partner Countries where necessary to guide M&E of nutrition programmes and policies. These actions ensure that evidence on emerging nutrition challenges as well as on conditions of success and on the multiple benefits and/or non-desired effects of the array of nutrition-sensitive interventions, alongside nutrition-specific ones, is generated and translated into policy-relevant recommendations through an active dialogue between researchers and decision makers.

The Nutrition Research Facility deals with questions on nutrition-sensitive interventions arising from various sectors of activity. All forms of malnutrition are taken into consideration (undernutrition, micro-nutrient deficiency and over-nutrition). Due consideration is given to diets as a key driver of nutritional status, but also to the social determinants of nutrition. Specific consideration is also given to identifying proxy variables to assess the impacts of interventions on the wider food system to track broader impacts of programmes than the nutritional status. Where relevant, consideration of the sustainability of human diets and food systems are integrated into the approach. Furthermore, a specific focus is put on vulnerable groups such as women and children and low socio-economic groups. Gender is also considered as a cross-cutting element.

Structure of the intervention

As outlined in Figure 1, the NRF operates through four work packages (WP). Three work packages (1 to 3) contribute to Result 1, while the fourth work package contributes to Result 2. An additional coordination and management component is transversal to the project (WP0). WP 1 corresponds to identifying the need for evidence from decision makers, WP2 corresponds to the analysis and contextualisation of evidence, WP3

[6] I.e., improved relevance of research questions/topics to decision making of both the Commission and partner countries and improved use of research results by decision makers.

corresponds to the dissemination of outputs to decision makers, WP4 corresponds to support, assistance and capacity building in relation to M&E of policies and programmes. The underlying Theory of Change of the NRF is presented in Figure 2.

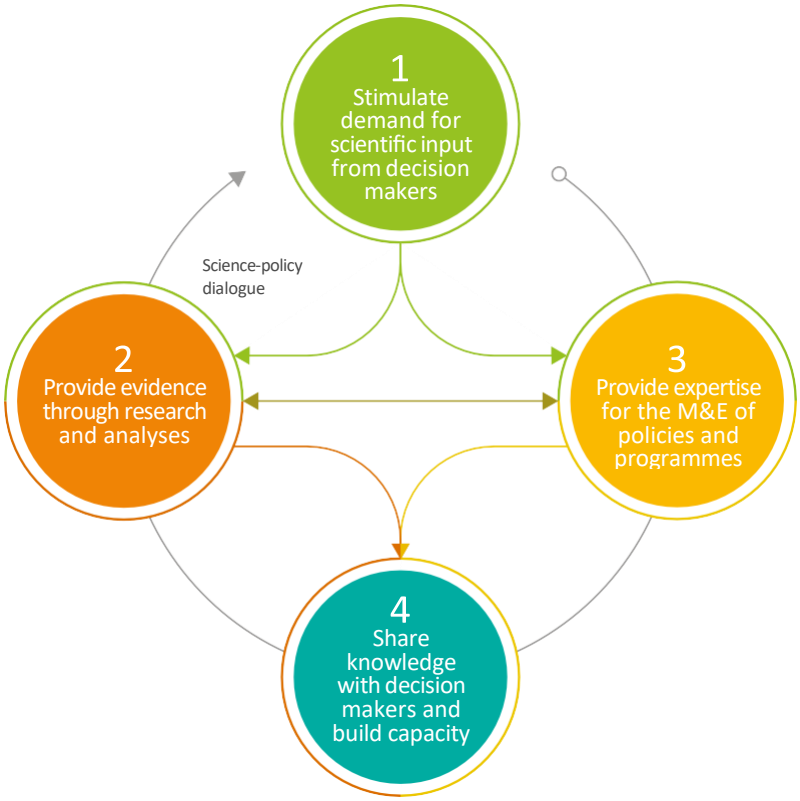

Figure 1 - How the Nutrition Research Facility operates

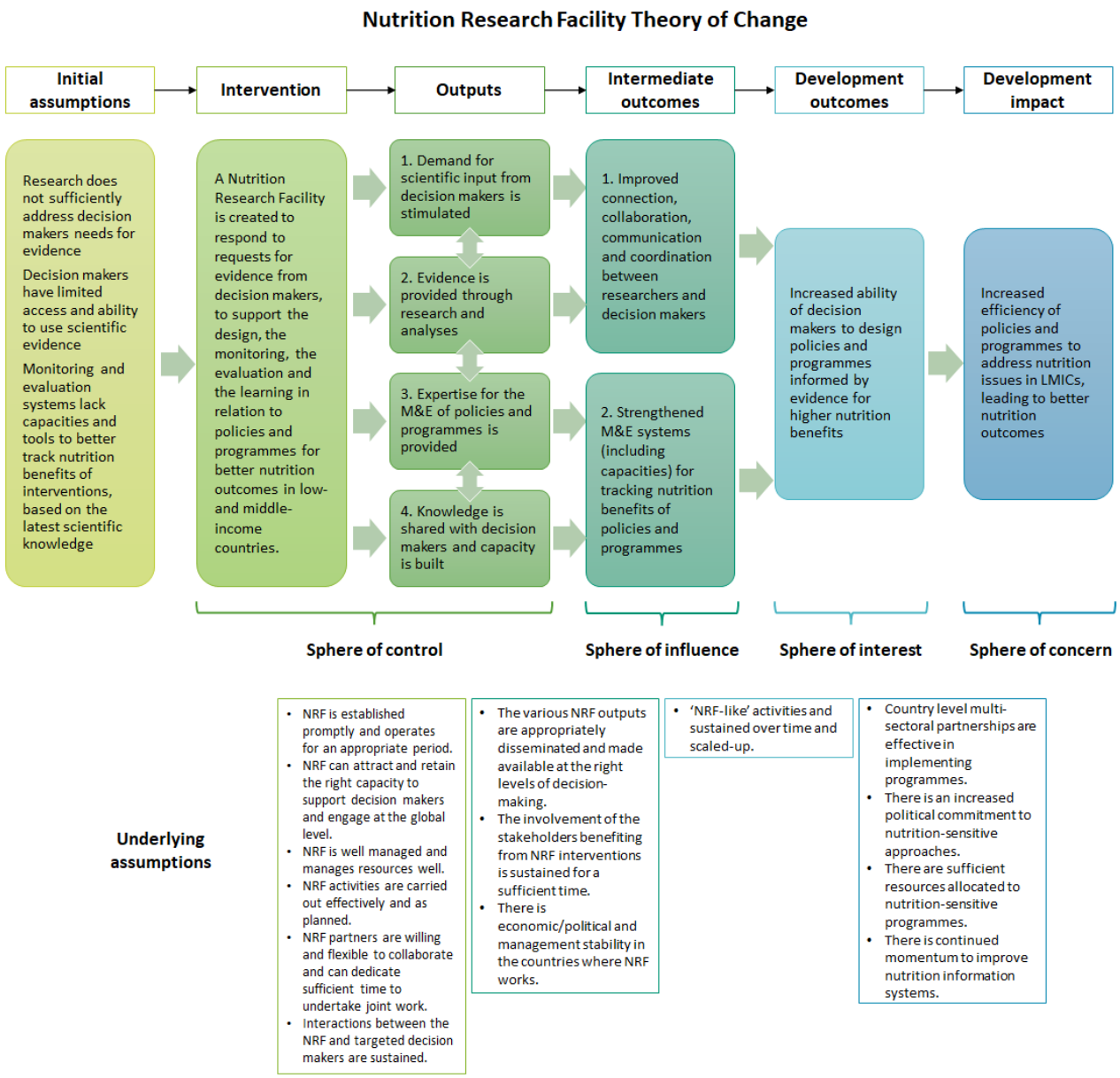

Figure 2 - Theory of Change of the NRF

The NRF Logical Framework Matrix is presented in the Annex IV.

1.3 Stakeholders of the intervention

Table 1 - NRF Stakeholders matrix

Key NRF stakeholders	Role	Involvement in NRF	How NRF is expected to impact on them
F3 (Unit F3 DG INTPA)	Thematic Unit of DG INTPA responsible for Sustainable Agri-Food Systems and Fisheries	Overall management of the NRF contract	Improved F3 policy development and programming on nutrition
C4N (Capacity for Nutrition)	Multi donor action set up by the European Commission (EC) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)	Regular exchanges and coordination with NRF Provide advice to the NRF - and facilitate dialogue if needed - to better respond to EU Delegation and HQ requirements,	Enhanced dialogue with and improved support to EU Delegations

	C4N advises the EU Delegations more broadly and retains the overview in the field of nutrition The primary interlocutor of C4N is the EU Delegation;		
Partner countries decision makers	High-level managers in ministries - and other stakeholders, including civil society, farmer's organization or the private sector.	Involved through consultations and dialogue to identify evidence needs and priority research questions in the respective countries	Enhanced evidence use in policy formulation and programming on nutrition
EU Member States (involved in nutrition interventions)	Nutrition officers in MS Ministries involved in development cooperation activities	INTPA F3 facilitates the consultation process with Member States. MSs have the possibility to contact the NRF team at any time to share their demands for research and evidence through a continuous consultation process.	Improved decision-making on nutrition sensitive programming with LMICs
EU Delegations to countries **that prioritised nutrition in the previous programming cycle (2014-2020)** and **in which nutrition features under at least one priority area in their multi-annual indicative programmes (MIPs)** (2021-2027)	Heads of Section, programme managers , and ad-hoc Technical Assistance (TA)	Have been informed by F3 about the services offered by NRF. Can access the NRF through F3.	Improved M&E systems in EU funded nutrition-sensitive programmes, improved accountability and learning
Implementing partners of nutrition sensitive interventions in beneficiary countries	Organisations implementing EU funded nutrition sensitive programmes in beneficiary countries (International Organisations, NGOs, etc.)	Benefit from NRF support on M&E	Improved M&E capacities in nutrition-sensitive interventions, improved accountability and learning

1.4 Other available information

A risk analysis has been carried out at the time of the design of the intervention, and constantly updated in the six-monthly progress reports. A risk analysis matrix is included here below.

Risk	Level	Mitigation action	Work Package
Unavailability of high-quality published research to address the request for evidence	Medium	Assessment of evidence will detail areas of uncertainty and is completed with expert opinion.	1;2;4
Challenges in formulation of clear evidence demand by the Commission, EU Member States and partner countries	Medium	A specific methodology has been developed to capture demand and set priorities (WP 1).	1

Timeline of the Nutrition Research Facility does not match the evidence request	High	Align expectations with feasibility from the start of the project, through inception phase and stakeholder's consultation. Prioritisation of incoming requests on the basis of its feasibility to be addressed within the NRF lifespan.	All
Demand for nutrition evidence research and M&E services exceeds capacity/resources of the Nutrition Research Facility	High	Prioritisation of demands by NRF in agreement with INTPA F3 on the basis of a pre-established set of objective criteria. Hire additional staff. Advocate for additional support through other mechanisms.	0;1;2;4
COVID-19 pandemic affecting the implementation of project activities, mobilization of experts, field data collection etc.	Medium	The NRF team is exploiting as much as possible online tools (SharePoint, Microsoft Teams, etc.) that allow efficient coordination with Experts, INTPA F3 and other stakeholders, also minimizing to the degree possible the need for in person presence in the field and/or meetings. Despite these measures, project activities have been slowed down to a certain extent The evolution of Covid pandemic has recently allowed to implement in-country missions.	All
Lack of clarity in the role of NRF and C4N/overlapping of activities	Low	The NRF-C4N teams along with INTPA F3 maintain continuous and dynamic communications, aiming to early identify bottlenecks, avoid overlapping of activities and ensure complementarity.	All

1.5 Contributions to Sustainable Development Goals

The European Union is committed to the achievement of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development adopted by the UN in September 2015; as a consequence, all interventions co-financed by the European Union should reinforce and make explicit their contributions to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the core of Agenda 2030.

The intervention to be evaluated is expected to contribute to the following SDGs:

Goal 1	No poverty
Goal 2	Zero hunger
Goal 3	Good health and well-being
Goal 5	Gender equality
Goal 6	Clean water and sanitation
Goal 10	Reduce inequalities
Goal 12	Responsible consumption and production
Goal 13	Climate

2. Description of the review assignment

Type of evaluation	mid-term review
Coverage	the intervention in its entirety
Geographic scope	global
Period to be evaluated	From 01/04/2020 to 31/03/2023

2.1 Objectives of the mid-term review

The midterm review will focus on the NRF operational period of April 2020 to March 2023 Assessing the performance of the NRF in this period, this mid-term review will have the following four objectives:

1. Assess the performance and effectiveness of the NRF in terms of achieving its stated results and Logical Framework outputs and outcomes
2. Evaluate the NRF interventions so far to identify enabling factors and those hampering a proper delivery of results
3. Generate lessons and recommendations for the NRF to finetune its design or implementing modalities during the remaining period of implementation.
4. Assess the continued validity and future potential of the NRF as an instrument to deliver its stated results /intermediate outcomes in the theory of change and in this light, assess the potential for a no-cost extension of the intervention, formulating recommendations on design and implementing modalities.

The main users of the results of this mid-term review will be the NRF team, Agrinatura implementing partners, INTPA/F3, and the C4N support service.

2.2 Review criteria and issues to be addressed

The review will assess the Intervention using four of the six standard DAC evaluation criteria, namely: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency[7].

It is considered too early, in relation to the period during which the intervention has been implemented, to assess sustainability and impact. In addition, the review will assess one EU specific evaluation criterion[8], which is:

- the EU added value (the extent to which the Intervention brings additional benefits to what would have resulted from Member States' interventions only);

The review team must consider to what extent and how **gender, environment and climate change were mainstreamed and addressed by the intervention and the results of this**. It shall furthermore consider whether the relevant SDGs and their interlinkages were identified; the principle of Leave No-One Behind and the rights-based approach methodology was followed in the identification/formulation documents and the extent to which they have been reflected in the implementation of the , its governance and monitoring.

The **issues to be addressed** as formulated below are indicative. Following initial consultations and document analysis, the review team will discuss them with the Review Manager[9] and propose in their Inception Report a complete and finalised set of Review Questions with indication of specific Judgement Criteria and Indicators, as well as the relevant data collection sources and tools.

Once agreed through the approval of the Inception Report, the Review Questions will become contractually binding.

The issues to be addressed by the review are the following (issues are listed according to the review criteria):

1. **Relevance** – *What is the continued relevance of the NRF project, to the EU policy priorities on nutrition, as indicated in the NDICI Thematic Programming?*

[7] ***PLEASE KINDLY NOTE****: The definition of the DAC evaluation criteria has changed following the release (10 December 2019) of the document "Evaluation Criteria: Adapted Definitions and Principles for Use" (DCD/DAC(2019)58/FINAL). In this document the DAC included Coherence as a sixth standard evaluation criterion. The DAC work to issue new guidance documents on the use of the new criteria is ongoing and can be followed at this link:*

https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

[8] https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2019-09/evaluation-matters_en.pdf

[9] The Review Manager is the staff of the Contracting Authority managing the evaluation contract.

2. **Coherence** – *To what extent is the NRF Project complementarity, harmonised and co-ordinated with other EU interventions on nutrition (e.g. C4N, K4N, etc.), and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort?*
3. **Effectiveness** – *To what extent is the intervention achieving, or is expected to achieve, its specific objectives?*
4. **Efficiency** – *To what extent the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way?*
5. **EU added value** – *To what extent the Intervention brings additional benefits to what would have resulted from Member States' interventions only?*

2.3 Phases of the review and required outputs

The review process will be carried out in three phases:

- Inception
- Data Collection
- Synthesis

The following table presents an overview of the key activities to be conducted within each of these phases and lists the outputs to be produced by the team as well as the key meetings. The main content of each output is described in Chapter 5 - Reporting.

Phases of the review	Key activities	Outputs and *meetings*
Inception Phase (2 weeks after the beginning of the assignment)	• Initial document/data collection • Document analysis • Inception briefings • Stakeholder analysis • Description of the Theory of Change (based upon available documentation) • Methodological design of the review (Review Questions with judgement criteria, indicators and methods of data collection and analysis) and review matrix • Planning of the Data Collection phase	• Inception Report • Slide presentation of the Inception Report • *Kick-off meeting with F3, Agrinatura-EEIG Secretariat, and NRF management team* [via remote conference]
Data Collection Phase (6 weeks after the end of the Inception Phase)	• Gathering of primary evidence with the use of the most appropriate techniques as proposed in the inception note (e.g. interviews, focus groups, storytelling sessions, surveys etc.)	• Slide Presentation of key findings of the data collection phase. • *Debriefing with F3, Agrinatura-EEIG Secretariat, and NRF management team* [via remote conference]
Synthesis phase (4 weeks after the end of Data Collection Phase)	• Final analysis of findings • Reporting	• Draft Final Report • Final Report • Slide presentation • *Final Report presentation to F3, Agrinatura-EEIG Secretariat, and NRF management team* [via remote conference]

2.3.1 Inception phase

This phase aims at structuring the review and clarifying the key issues to be addressed.

It will start with initial background study, to be conducted by the review experts from home. It will then continue with a kick-off session via teleconference between the review experts and the Reference Group (see section 2.4). The meeting aims at arriving at a clear and shared understanding of the scope of the review,

its limitations and feasibility. It also serves to clarify expectations regarding review outputs, the methodology to be used and, where necessary, to pass on additional or latest relevant information.

In the Inception phase, the relevant documents will be reviewed. Further to this, and in consultation with the Review Manager, the review experts will reconstruct the Intervention Logic / Theory of Change of the to be reviewed.

Based on the Intervention Logic and/or the Theory of Change the review experts will finalise i) the Review Questions with the definition of judgement criteria and indicators, the selection of data collection tools and sources, ii) the review methodology, and iii) the planning of the following phases. The methodological design of the review will be summarised into a Review Design Matrix.

The limitations faced or to be faced during the review exercise will be discussed and mitigation measures described in the Inception note. Finally, the work plan for the overall review process will be presented and agreed in this phase; this work plan shall be in line with that proposed in the present ToR.
On the basis of the information collected, the review team should prepare an **Inception Report**.

The review team will then present via video conference the **Inception Report** to the Reference Group. (see section 2.4).

2.3.2 Data collection phase

The Data Collection Phase starts after approval of the Inception note by the Review Manager.

If any significant deviation from the agreed work plan or schedule is perceived as creating a risk for the quality of the review or not respecting the end of the validity of the specific contract, these elements are to be immediately discussed with the Review Manager and, regarding the validity of the contract, corrective measures undertaken.

During the data collection phase, the review team shall ensure adequate contact and consultation with, and involvement of the different stakeholders. Throughout the assignment the review team will use the most reliable and appropriate sources of information, respect the rights of individuals to provide information in confidence, and be sensitive to the beliefs and customs of local social and cultural environments.

At the end of the Data Collection Phase the review team will prepare a Slide Presentation to inform a debriefing session with the Reference Group; its content is described in Section 5.1.

2.3.3 Synthesis phase

This phase is devoted to the preparation by the contractor of the Final Report, whose structure is described in the Annex II; it entails the analysis of the data collected during the early phases to answer the Review Questions and the preparation of the overall assessment, conclusions and recommendations of the review.

The review team will make sure that:

- Their assessments are objective and balanced, statements are accurate and evidence-based, and recommendations realistic and clearly targeted.
- When drafting the report, they will acknowledge clearly where changes in the desired direction are known to be already taking place.

The review team will deliver to the Review Manager the **Draft Final Report** and, after addressing the comments consolidated by the Review Manager, will finalise the **Final Report** (including the Executive Summary.

2.4 Management and steering of the review

The review is managed by the Review Manager; the progress of the review will be followed closely with the assistance of a Reference Group consisting of two representatives indicated by INTPA/F3 and two by NRF.

The main functions of the Reference Group are:

- To agree on the focus of the review, including the review questions at Inception Phase.
- To facilitate contacts between the review team and the external stakeholders.
- To ensure that the review team has access to and has consulted all relevant information sources and documents related to the intervention.
- To discuss and comment on notes and reports delivered by the review team.
- To assist in feedback on the findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations from the review.

2.5 Language of the specific contract

The language of the specific contract is English

3. Expertise required

3.1 Number of review experts and working days per category

The table below indicates the minimum number of evaluators and the minimum number of working days (overall), per category of experts to be foreseen by the tenderers.

Category of experts	Minimum number of review experts	Total minimum number of working days (total)
Senior Non-Key Experts	2	50

In particular, the Team Leader (to be identified in the offer) is expected to possess a demonstrable senior evaluation expertise coherent with the requirements of this assignment and not provide less than 20 working days.

3.2 Expertise required

The team shall have a cumulative experience of at least 15 years in the area of evaluation; a sound practice of development interventions in the sector of nutrition and food security. Experience in the area of support services to the EC would be an asset.

Minimum requirements of the team:

- 15 years of experience in evaluation;
- 15 years of experience in nutrition sensitive /nutrition specific interventions

Additional requirements of the team

- experience in supporting EU funded programmes in nutrition and food security
- experience in EC external support services

Language skills of the team:

- English: at least 1 member shall possess a level C2 expertise;
- French: at least 1 member shall possess a level C1 expertise;

Language levels are defined for understanding, speaking and writing skills by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages available at https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/resources/european-language-levels-cefr and shall be demonstrated by certificates or by past relevant experience.

Gender balance in the proposed team, at all levels, is highly recommended and should be striven for.

4. Location and duration

4.1 Location(s) of the assignment

The assignment will be home based.

4.2 Foreseen duration of the assignment in calendar months

Maximum duration of the assignment: 3 calendar months.

This overall duration includes working days, weekends, periods foreseen for comments, for review of draft versions, debriefing sessions, and delivery of outputs.

4.3 Starting period and planning

Provisional start of the assignment is beginning of May 2023

As part of the technical offer, the framework contractor must fill in the timetable in the Annex III (to be finalised in the Inception note). The 'Indicative dates' are not to be formulated as fixed dates but rather as days (or weeks, or months) from the beginning of the assignment (to be referenced as '0').

5. Reporting

5.1 Content, timing and submission

The review deliverables must match quality standards. The text of the reports should be illustrated, as appropriate, with maps, graphs and tables.

List of outputs:

	Number of Pages *(excluding annexes)*	Main Content	Timing for submission

Inception Report	10 pages	• Intervention logic
		• Stakeholder map
		• Methodology for the review, incl.:
		  ○ Review Matrix: Review Questions, with judgement criteria and indicators, and data analysis and collection methods
		  ○ Consultation strategy
		• Analysis of risks related to the review methodology and mitigation measures
		• Work plan of the entire review
			End of Inception Phase

Slide presentation	20 slides	• Key, preliminary findings of the field phase to guide the debriefing session	End of Field Phase
Draft Final Report	30 pages	• Cf. detailed structure in Annex II	End of Synthesis Phase
Final report	30 pages	• Same specifications as of the Draft Final Report, incorporating any comments received from the concerned parties on the draft report that have been accepted	2 weeks after having received comments to the Draft Final Report.

5.2 Comments on outputs

For each report, the Review Manager will send to the Contractor consolidated comments including those received from the Reference Group within 10 calendar days. The revised reports addressing the comments shall be submitted within 10 calendar days from the date of receipt of the comments. The Review team should provide a separate document explaining how and where comments have been integrated or the reason for not integrating certain comments, if this is the case.

5.3 Language

All reports shall be submitted in English

5.4 Formatting of reports and number of reports copies

All reports will be produced using Font: (Default) +Body (Calibri), Justified; Line spacing: Multiple 1.08 li, Space; After: 8 pt, Widow/Orphan control. They will be submitted both in Word and PDF formats.

Apart from their electronic submission, the approved version of the Final Report will be also provided in 2 paper copies double sided at no extra cost.

6. Content of the offers

The offers to be submitted for the execution of this contract will include a Technical and a Financial Offer.

6.1 Technical offer

The Technical Offer will compulsorily include:

- An introductory and short chapter detailing the comprehension by tenderers of the assignment and its main challenges.
- A chapter detailing the tentative methodology to conduct the review; this methodology will then be finalised in the Inception Note. The proposed methodology will detail how the review will address the cross-cutting issues mentioned in these Terms of Reference
- A short analysis of the main risks and remedy measures of the assignment.
- A chapter detailing the relevance of the team composition and competencies to the work to be undertaken and how the tasks will be organised.
- Annex: the CVs of the proposed expert(s) (max length of each CV: 5 pages).
- Annex: a synoptic table detailing the work to be undertaken by each proposed expert and their role, based on the proposed methodology.
- Annex: the proposed timetable (Gantt chart).

The maximum length of the Technical offer is 15 pages excluding annexes.

6.2 Financial offer

The Financial Offer must be drawn bases on the information provided in the procurement notice section 2.5 (Price). Offers not using a different format will be disqualified.

Annexes

Annex I: Information that will be provided to the review team

- Global policy commitments on nutrition
- EU policy commitments pertaining to nutrition
- Financing agreement and addenda
- Six-months progress reports
- NRF technical outputs
- Calendar and minutes of all NRF coordination meetings with F3
- Any other relevant document

Note: The review team has to identify and obtain any other document worth analysing, through independent research and during interviews with relevant informed parties and stakeholders of NRF.

Annex II: Structure of the final report and of the executive summary

The structure of the review report will be as follows.

The cover page of the Final Report shall carry the following text:

''This mid-term review is supported and guided by NRF and presented by [name of consulting firm]. The report does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of NRF nor of the European Commission, which financed the review''.

Executive Summary	A tightly-drafted and to-the-point Executive Summary. It should be short, no more than five pages. It should focus on the key purpose or issues of the review, outline the main analytical points, and clearly indicate the main conclusions, lessons to be learned and specific recommendations.
1. Introduction	A description of the intervention, of the relevant country/region/sector background and of the review, providing the reader with sufficient methodological explanations to gauge the credibility of the conclusions and to acknowledge limitations or weaknesses, where relevant.
2. Answers to the Review Questions	A chapter presenting the Review Questions and conclusive answers, together with evidence (findings) and reasoning. An overall assessment of the intervention is to be added, as well. It shall be based on the detailed response to the Review Questions.
3. Conclusions and Recommendations	
3.1 Conclusions	This chapter contains the conclusions of the review, organised per review criterion. A paragraph or sub-chapter should pick up the 3 or 4 major conclusions organised by order of importance, while avoiding being repetitive. The transferable lessons from this review are to be included in this chapter.
3.2 Recommendations	They are intended to improve or reform the intervention in the framework of the cycle under way, and to prepare the design of a potential no-cost extension phase. Recommendations must be clustered and prioritised, and carefully targeted to the appropriate audiences at all levels.
Annexes to the report	The report should include the following annexes: • The Terms of Reference of the review • The names of the review experts and their companies (CVs can be attached, but summarised and limited to one page per person) • Review methodology including tools utilised, analysis of the limitation of the methodology, remedy and degree of confidence in the conclusions.

- Review Matrix (a table presenting the tools used to respond to each review question as well as the indicators used).
- Intervention logic / Logical Framework matrix of the intervention.
- List of persons/organisations consulted
- Literature and documentation consulted
- Other technical annexes as relevant (e.g. statistical analyses, matrix of evidence, databases)

Annex III: Planning schedule

This annex must be included by tenderers in their Technical Offer and forms an integral part of it. Tenderers can add as many rows and columns as needed.

The phases of the review shall reflect those indicated in the present Terms of Reference.

Indicative Duration in working days[1]				
Activity	**Location**	**Team Leader**	**Evaluator**	**Indicative Dates**
Inception phase: total days				
•				
•				
Data collection phase: total days				
•				
•				
Synthesis phase: total days				
•				
•				
TOTAL working days (maximum)				

[1] Add one column per each evaluator

Annex IV: Logical Framework Matrix (LogFrame) of the NRF

	Result chain	Indicator	Baseline 10/ 2020*	Target 03/2024	Current value 09/2022	Source and mean of verification	Assumptions
Impact	Increased ability of decision makers to design policies and programmes informed by evidence for higher nutrition benefits	Before/after comparisons of policy & documents, M&E plans and evaluations: assessment of the use of evidence			*None***	NRF survey & analysis Final project evaluation	
Outcome(s)	Result 1: Improved connection, collaboration, communication and coordination between research and decision making	Number of decision makers who have benefitted from NRF activities	*0*	*At least 200 beneficiaries*	*115 Beneficiaries*	NRF records: *(EU Delegations; implementing partners; EU Member State representatives; participating organisation in the NRF consultations)*	The various NRF outputs are appropriately disseminated and made available at the right levels of decision-making. The involvement of the stakeholders benefiting from NRF interventions is sustained for a sufficient time. There is economic/political and management stability in the countries where NRF works.
		Total aggregated audience of NRF dissemination activities	*0*	*At least 2000 targets for dissemination*	*3257*	Google analytics; lists of contacted stakeholders	
	Result 2: Strengthened M&E (including capacities) systems for tracking nutrition benefits of policies and programmes at field level	Qualitative feedback from decision makers about their experience with the NRF	*0*	*Satisfactory rate of NRF service recipients >80%*	*None*	NRF consultations' participants satisfaction form NRF User satisfaction form (M&E support);	
Outputs	Output 1: Demand for scientific input from decision makers is stimulated	Number of demands for evidence by decision-makers in relation to nutrition policies, programmes and intervention	*0*	*22 requests*	*27 requests*	NRF records: *Total number of demands received so far through consultations with EU partner countries; EU Member states & F3 – regarding RS*	NRF is established promptly and operates for an appropriate period. NRF can attract and retain the right capacity to support decision makers and engage at the global level. NRF is well managed and manages resources well. NRF activities are carried out effectively and as planned.

							NRF partners are willing and flexible to collaborate and can dedicate sufficient time to undertake joint work. Interactions between the NRF and targeted decision makers are sustained.
	Output 2: Evidence is provided through research and analyses	Number of studies (evidence review) carried out	*0*	*10 studies*	*1 finalised (8 ongoing)*	NRF records	NRF receives requests for M&E support
	Output 3: Expertise for the M&E of policies and programmes is provided	-Number of M&E support assignments	*0*	*12 M&E assignments (8 short term; 4 longer term)*	*1 finalised (3 ongoing)*	NRF records	
		Number of training material produced on M&E and nutrition	*0*	*5 sets of training material*	*0*	NRF records	
	Output 4: Knowledge is shared with decision makers and capacity is built	Number of scientific publications	*0*	*3 scientific publications*	*1 scientific publication*	NRF records; Scientific journals	
		Number of policy briefs published	*0*	*10 policy briefs*	*3 policy briefs*	NRF records	
		Number of dissemination/capacity events organized	*0*	*10 events*	*3 events*	NRF records	

***Baseline:** calculated at October 2020 – commencement of the implementation period*

****None**: baseline and/or target value is undefined*