

Scope of Work

Firm or Individual:	Firm
Program:	GIZ Digital Agriculture Africa (DAA)
Scope of Project:	End of Project Evaluation
Country:	Regional
From:	1 st September 2023
To:	16 th November 2023
Task Manager:	Director for Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, Accountability and Learning (MERAL)
Technical Support:	DCSA Director and Kenya country lead

Mercy Corps AgriFin: GIZ #SmartDevelopmentFund Overview

The challenges in agriculture in Africa, particularly for the smallholder farmers producing 80% of its food for consumption, are complex, and no single solution exists to reverse age-old issues around markets, infrastructure, poverty and exclusion. Digital solutions can provide relatively low-cost solutions that reach scale quickly, open new markets, and surpass the traditional brick-and-mortar approach to customer acquisition and the distribution and sales of products and services. Over the past five years, AgriFin has worked both to build capacity of fintech and agtech innovators to scale and also worked to broker partnerships for them onto larger digital platforms, typically hosted by banks, mobile network operators, large agricultural enterprises and government. Digital platforms are evolving as drivers for impact and viability in delivery of key services for agriculture and also for scale up of young, breakthrough technology providers. Digital platforms can host multiple service providers, working to offer “end to end” services to drive transformation in agricultural markets and impact for smallholders, while decreasing risks and increasing revenue models for fintechs, agtechs and other market actors.

Drawing on Mercy Corps’ experience implementing the AgriFin Mobile, AgriFin Accelerate and AgriFin Digital Farmer programs, GIZ has engaged Mercy Corps to understand how young technology innovators can be supported in scale and operational viability by engaging with emerging models of digital platforms. The GIZ Digital Agriculture Africa Phase 2 is a six-month, €1,300,000 initiative to work with a cohort of partners in Kenya and Nigeria to develop digital solutions that address challenges in the agriculture sector especially brought about by the Covid 19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has drawn attention to the complex fragility of many countries, highlighted most clearly in the interplay of public health, markets and food systems. Early warning signs are emerging that the continent is on the brink of an unprecedented food security crisis. In Kenya it is estimated that there are sufficient strategic reserves for three months, but disrupted food systems, logistics and evidence of food hoarding may shorten that timeline, particularly as the largest desert locust invasion in 70 years.

The World Bank estimates that the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to push upwards of 115 million into extreme poverty and set back poverty reduction by around three years. The primary risks to food security at the country level include: disruptions in domestic food supply chains, other shocks affecting food production, and loss of incomes and remittances that have created strong tensions and food security risks in many countries. A number of countries are experiencing varying levels of food price inflation, at the retail level, due to measures taken to combat the spread of COVID-19. Higher retail prices, combined with reduced incomes, mean more and more households are having to cut down on the quantity and quality of their food consumption, with potentially lasting impacts on nutrition and health. The U.N. World Food Programme has warned that the number of people at risk of encountering acute food insecurity will come close to doubling at the end of the year, from the initial 135 million currently facing acute hunger.

Purpose of Engagement

This engagement is being commissioned by Mercy Corps AgriFin (MCA) in collaboration with GIZ to generate key lessons for future strategic and programming decisions. The end of project evaluation aims to assess the project's



overall performance, achievements, and impact against the predetermined objectives and outcomes in Kenya, Tanzania and Nigeria. The evaluation will focus on identifying the project's strengths and weaknesses, documenting lessons learned, and providing recommendations for future projects.

Mercy Corps AgriFin selected two agencies under Mercy Corps AgriFin leadership to implement this project with focus on two key client groups, including smallholders and agribusiness in rural areas and consumers in cities thereby building sustainable connection between rural and urban areas.

FSPN took lead on farmer group mobilization, support and training, preparing women and youth farmers to engage in best-practice agriculture, as well as to leverage new products, services, technologies and partners from the program. FSPN has strategic expertise in Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping, as well as identifying and registering smallholders, providing them with training on Good Agricultural Practice (GAP). In Phase I of the project, the FSPN expanded its reach to more groups and linking them to offtakers and buyers with support from Mercy Corps AgriFin and its network of more agribusiness partners in Kenya. The partner deployed a team of agricultural experts, to manage and contribute qualitatively and quantitatively to the solution scale for farmers by:

- Using the Geographical Information System (GIS) to map out the regions to match food production to market needs
- Identifying and registering smallholder farmer groups and their specific produce for traceability
- Training registered smallholder farmers on Good Agricultural Practice to support successful use of new products and technologies, leveraging Sprout – the Open Content for Agriculture Platform
- Collaborating with MCA and to expand digital marketplace services across Kenya and Tanzania, enriched by Sprout learning solutions.
- Monitoring and evaluating the economic and social impact of the solution as well its contribution to food and nutrition security.

CoAmana leveraged and expanded its existing technology and infrastructure in Nigeria to link smallholder farmers to markets providing fresh food to urban populations. CoAmana is a technology for social development company. Its digital marketplace is a simple digital supply chain platform designed specifically for farmers and small businesses, with a strong focus on women, accessible through web and SMS making it accessible to both smartphone and feature phone users. Through group leaders and agents, farmers and small businesses are linked to an ecosystem of suppliers, buyers and financial services. CoAmana operates primarily in Nigeria but is currently piloting its' digital market in Kenya. For the Kenya rollout, they focused on Kiambu and Nyandarua counties through an identified group of medium and large Farmer Organizations/Cooperatives/Farmer groups identified, Market/scoping agents, individual farmers, aggregation groups, offtakers and input suppliers to participate in the Kenya version of digital marketplace for piloting in the second half of 2021. In Phase 2, key activities included the following:

- End to end digitization plan and prototype
- Prototype Pilot
- Platform Build Out
- Scaling

Mercy Corps AgriFin supported and enhanced overall project implementation leveraging the full experience and network of the program across our agriculture, banking and technology partners now reaching farmers to help DAA youth technology startup partners successfully implement the project and grow their businesses to achieve their individual company goals and the joint goals of the project. Over Phase 1 of the DAA program, AgriFin leveraged learning around its' WhatsApp for Business solutions tailored to the needs of its partners to develop a public good e-learning platform to provide key digital learning content to partners tailored to digital channels, based on partner



needs assessments. For the purposes of long-term sustainability and technical expertise, MCA partnered with the Government of Kenya through the Kenyan Agricultural Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) to engage with farmers, partners and end markets leveraging the power of machine learning and AI. The major MCA activity under this project was to develop “**Sprout – the Open Content for Agriculture Platform**” (Sprout) environment to meet the needs of each organization and also providing a bridge for organizational collaboration and greater Pan-African scale and impact potential. Key MCA activities in Phase 2 included:

- Supporting partnership development and linkages with financial institutions, technology providers and agribusinesses to enhance their outreach, product offering and scale potential
- Supporting on use of data for digital credit score farmers for financial services, including data strategy support for both partners to lead their future expansion
- Leading development of the Sprout/OCAP solutions for both partners in Kenya and Nigeria, incorporating existing locust and COVID -19 support service
- Leading development of new learning content on the Sprout/OCAP linked to key DAA partner needs
- Supporting in developing piloting and go-to-market strategies
- Project management, reporting and learning.

The evaluation is expected to provide MCA, GIZ and Innovators with progress made towards achieving the project objectives of bringing direct impact on SHFs and contribution made in establishing a new delivery model for SHFs, through experimenting and learning across various digital platform models and producing tools and content for public use, and to the improvement of country systems and demonstrating new ways to serve SHFs sustainably and at scale, impacting farmers’ ability to be more productive, earn more income and build resilience to climate shocks.

The purpose of the evaluation is to:

- Determine the extent to which the outcomes of the project have been achieved
- Document the achievements, lessons learnt and best practices in design, management and implementation of the project
- Provide recommendations for future programming based on the results of the current project

Scope of work

Mercy Corps requires the services of a research consulting firm with extensive experience designing, and implementing high caliber program evaluations, including ecosystem studies, to conduct an evaluation of the Digital Agriculture Africa program, to provide a final evaluation of program performance, answering specific program learning questions at the farmer, partner and ecosystem levels. As part of this engagement, the consulting firm will be expected to assess the following:

(i) Effectiveness of the implementation strategy

To ascertain whether the reach through the private sector through overall implementation approaches were effective and appropriate in delivering scalable and high impact DIS and market linkages by use of digital platforms tailored to the needs of SHFs and food systems. This will include:

- How Partnership arrangements, institutional strengthening and beneficiary participation stimulate greater innovation and scaling of critical services including agricultural advisory services, inclusive finance and smart farming solutions (such as climate insights, precision farming tools, and food security maps, etc)
- How the optimization of digital supply chain management and market access solutions at partner level enable:

- i. Scaling of markets management across market clusters and scaling of farmer input purchasing and sales via market networks
 - ii. Support for payments and storage in markets
 - iii. Facilitation of market buying from farmer clusters
 - iv. Farmer training on GAPs, financial literacy and GIS advice
 - v. Linkage to extension services, support, and market access
- Examine the extent to which project included climate related elements and what has been the impact and value derived from these initiatives
 - How do Linkages, synergies and coordination with other projects/programs contribute to scale up of digital services tailored to the needs of SHFs
 - Determine the impact, both positive and negative, as well as intended and unintended from contribution of the project to the achievement of the outcomes
 - Examine the extent to which gender equality, women and youth empowerment were integrated and achieved
 - What are the key learnings and ecosystem recommendations for the utilization of digital agriculture services

(ii) Project and the development process

To learn and gather insights on whether the establishment of Sprout, a digital global public good has simplified and increased utilization of the resources from the platform by private sector and governmental engagements to support the effective delivery of digitally enabled platforms providing a range of services including, rural advisory, market access, financial and farm management services to SHFs, leveraging improved data exchange environments. This will include evaluating the extent to which the Project results have been achieved, partnerships, established, capacities built specifically:

- The extent to which a digital global public good has been developed through a public facing platform and the services provided on the platform
- The extent to which the public learning output has been published on Sprout, openly accessible to partners, and the learnings generated
- The extent to which the digital global public good has established a transparent, secure and robust marketplace for agricultural advisory services
- The extent to which the public good has streamlined how content is obtained and disseminated
- Whether the project implementation strategy has been optimum and recommend areas for improvement and learning
- Draw, based on above objectives, lessons and recommendations for sustaining the project results, and providing guidance for the future strategic direction for similar products

(iii) Commercial Sustainability of the Farmer Facing Organizations and Sprout

- Where feasible, measure return of investment and other business viability metrics and KPIs as appropriate to understand impacts at MCA partner levels.
- Measure to what extent are the benefits of the Project likely to be sustained by the private sector after the completion of this Project? If not, why?
- What is the likelihood of continuation and sustainability of the project outcomes and benefits after the completion of the project?

- Establish the key factors that will require attention in order to improve the prospects of sustainability of the project outcomes and potential for replication of approach?
- Establish whether the project has generated the buy-in and credibility needed for sustained impact with end users

Evaluation Approach

Our emphasis is on the reliability and validity of information and analysis, rather than a preference for a specific data type or collection approach. The selected consulting firm should propose a methodology towards that includes:

- A mixed-methods approach including quantitative and qualitative data sources
- Primary data collection with key stakeholder groups at the partner and ecosystem levels
- Review of programme documents which will be supplied by Mercy Corps AgriFin and implementation partners. Programme documents available include activity/deliverable reports, monitoring reports and quarterly reports that might be relevant to the evaluation
- Review other external documents such as ecosystem reports to enrich output of the current evaluation and contribute to existing body of knowledge

Deliverables

The consulting firm will work to submit the following with support from relevant Mercy Corps AgriFin teams and partners:

1. **Program Evaluation Inception Report:** In the inception phase of the evaluation, the evaluator is expected to review the available documentation for the evaluation and prepare an Inception Report/Work Plan. The report should not exceed twenty (20) pages and should include the following elements:
 - The purpose of the evaluation including key questions/evaluation objectives
 - Evaluation methodology, including data collection and analysis. Draft data collection tools including any surveys and interview protocols, should be included in the appendices to the report
 - Data analysis plan, addressing how the primary and secondary data will be systematically analyzed to address the learning questions
 - Activities and timeline, including roles and responsibilities of all team members

The MCA team and partners will provide timely feedback to facilitate development and submission of final versions of the Inception Report for approval before the evaluation proceeds.

2. **Program Evaluation Report:** The draft evaluation report should not exceed thirty (30) pages and should include the following sections:
 - Executive Summary (maximum two pages)
 - Project introduction/background
 - Evaluation Purpose, including evaluation framework/learning questions
 - Evaluation approach and methodology, including limitations
 - Findings, organized in a clear and logical fashion that corresponds to the evaluation questions, assessment criteria, and overall project.
 - Conclusions
 - Recommendations

Annexes to the report (independent of document page count) should include supporting information on the methodology, including individuals/groups consulted, documents reviewed, compiled monitoring data, etc.

The consulting firm will be asked to present the draft report in person to Mercy Corps AgriFin. Timely feedback on the draft report will be provided by the Mercy Corps AgriFin team.

In addition to these deliverables, the evaluator will engage in regular briefing updates – either by online call or email – with relevant Mercy Corps AgriFin Team Members



The consultants will also submit regular invoices, as agreed tied to completion of deliverables.

Timeline of Activities and Deliverables

Deliverable #	Deliverable Description	Estimate Due Date
Kick-off:	Virtual meeting with Mercy Corps and to launch the evaluation	1 st September 2023
Inception Report	<p>The consulting firm will provide an inception report that will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed approach and methodology Timeline for activities Draft data collection and analysis protocols <p>Feedback from Mercy Corps AgriFin will be provided.</p>	22 nd September 2023
Evaluation report	The Evaluator will present a Draft Report including Lessons Learned as a section within the evaluation report. The draft report will include all preliminary analysis, citing data sources, and provide findings as per the scope of work. A presentation to MCA will be required and feedback will be provided.	13 th October 2023
Final Evaluation Report	Final Evaluation Report and PowerPoint presentation. The evaluator will present a Final Evaluation Report and PowerPoint presentation after receiving feedback and comments on the draft report from Mercy Corps AgriFin	27 th October 2023

Required Qualifications

The evaluator(s) must submit evidence to demonstrate:

1. Extensive experience in evaluation, including in designing and leading evaluations across different African geographies.
2. Strong experience evaluating programs that apply a market system and/or ecosystem development approach.
3. Strong experience in evaluating digital information and market services
4. Strong experience evaluating innovation in technology and support for transformative technology solutions supporting digital information and market services
5. Experience with research in Africa, with a specific focus on program areas of agriculture and technology



6. Demonstrated experience understanding social enterprise business models
7. Ability to translate evidence from the evaluation into actionable lessons learned and strategic recommendations for Mercy Corps.
8. Strong analytical and writing skills and knowledge of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methodologies.
9. Demonstrated ability to bring a strong rural gender and youth lens to the evaluation.

Ownership/Control of Work Product/Publication

Matters relating to ownership and control of work product and publication of materials produced during the course of this engagement are addressed in the main contract agreement entered into between Mercy Corps and the consulting firm

Task Manager/Reporting

The Task Manager Mercy Corps AgriFin Director for Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, Accountability and Learning (MERAL).

Payment and Schedule

Payment will be over the course of **three months**, based on successful completion of agreed deliverables. Payment will be made upon regular invoicing against satisfactory delivery and acceptance of services rendered. Final approvals and acceptance of deliverables are granted with the Program Director.

Submission Requirements

Please submit your detailed Proposals and Budget to the email agrifinprocurement@mercycorps.org on or before Monday 21st August, 2023 08.00 AM, quoting the name "End of Project Evaluation : GIZ Digital Agriculture Africa (DAA)" on the subject line. All questions and answers will be furnished via the email address agrifinprocurement@mercycorps.org.