Proposal for the End evaluation of CABI Plantwise Burundi (2020-2023)

KIT Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam
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1 Our understanding of the ToR

1.1 CABI's programmes on plant health

The Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International (CABI), originally established in 1910, is a not-for-profit science-based development organization, operating under an international treaty agreement amongst its, currently 49, member countries, registered with the UN. It has a Headquarters Agreement with the Government of the United Kingdom and operates through a network of centres located around the world. CABI's mission is to improve people's lives worldwide by providing information and applying scientific expertise to solve problems in agriculture and the environment. The Netherlands joined CABI as an Associate Member Country in 2011.

1.1.1 Plantwise

CABI Plantwise is a large, multi-country and multi-donor programme to strengthen national plant health systems through improved stakeholder linkages in developing countries. Implemented from 2011 to date, Plantwise aims to help farmers lose less of what they grow due to plant health problems, using the unique plant clinic approach at scale. The objectives are to decrease crop losses, to increase crop productivity and to improve livelihoods and food security through improving the four main components of the plant health system, namely extension, research, input supply and regulation (see figure 1). In the long term, Plantwise aims to increase the effectiveness of the overall plant health system in addressing crop problems through gradual systems change.

Plantwise Burundi commenced in late 2020 amidst the COVID-19 crisis and officially launched in 2021. Funding support for plant doctor training was provided by NUFFIC (July 2020 thorough March 2022) and currently the Royal Netherlands Embassy (EKN) in Burundi (November 2020 through 31 December 2023).
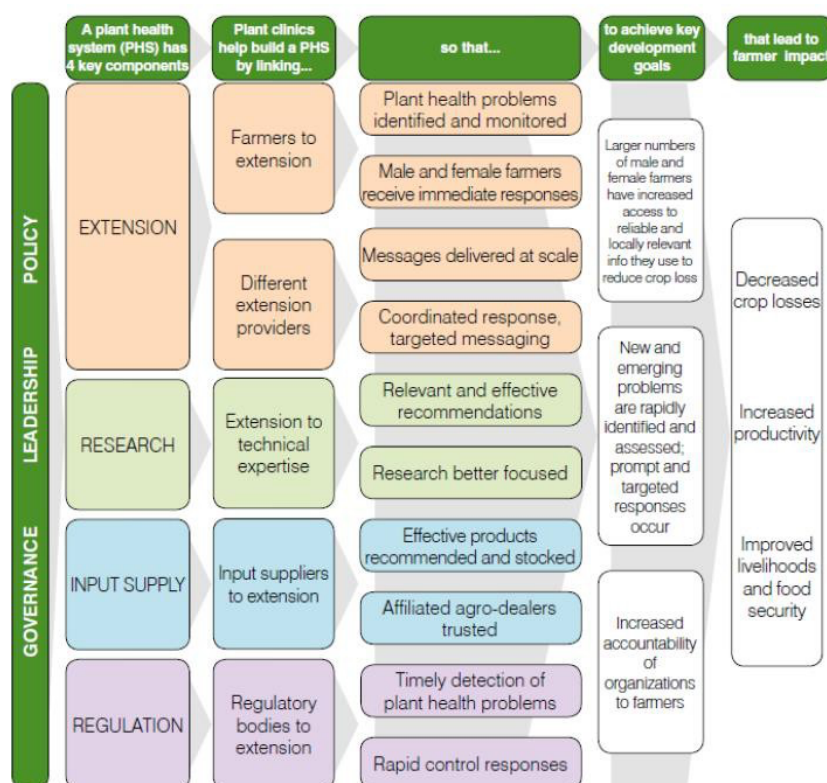

Figure 1. The Plantwise Theory of Change. Source – Terms of Reference

1.2   Objectives of the evaluation

The Terms of Reference states that the purpose of the End Evaluation is to make an overall assessment of the project, paying particular attention to the achievements thus far, and the feasibility for future activities that address remaining challenges, and associated risks and opportunities for the mid-term future (until end 2028). The End Evaluation should:

- **Provide information that allows the incorporation of lessons learned into decision-making processes of CABI**. Findings will be used to identify implementation challenges and reasons in case the project may not have evolved as planned; and develop project adjustments to address the evaluation learning.
- **Inform the development of follow-up activities** from January 2024 onward. This includes useful information for current and other donors to base their future funding decisions upon.

More specifically, the End Evaluation will assess the performance of Plantwise Burundi, by:

- Reviewing **programme performance against the Plantwise logframe and OECD-DAC evaluation criteria** (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, plus programme additionality).
- Identify **innovative aspects** of Plantwise Burundi
- Identify and validate **lessons learned, good practices, and project responsiveness** to challenges in implementation.
- Provide clear and **actionable recommendations** with respect to the project /programme intervention.
- Provide an independent opinion on **benefits of a roll-out of PlantwisePlus activities.**

During the inception phase, fitting evaluation questions will be developed that will in turn guide the development of the three main research methods. We will take guidance from the (sub) questions provided in the Terms of Reference, but also from the additional evaluation questions suggested by EKN Burundi. We will refine and confirm these questions with EKN and CABI before kick-off, but a few possible questions are suggested here:

- How effective have information campaigns been in mobilizing farmers for plant clinics? (*effectiveness*)
- Have farmers become more capable of preventing and/or treating pests and diseases? (*effectiveness*)
- To what extent has Plantwise improved farm production and increase farmer income? (*impact*)
- Are research staff capable of interpreting and drawing conclusions from plant clinic entries in the Plantwise database? (*effectiveness, relevanc*e)
- Is the ministry of agriculture able to develop strategies and policies based on information that comes out of the database? Does the ministry have enough confidence in the data? (*relevance, effectiveness*)
- Has the Burundi Government taken actions to institutionalize Plantwise in government systems? (*sustainability, relevance, coherenc*e)

The evaluation will collect data from stakeholders involved in reaching programme impact, from the coordination and programme management to country implementers and key partners, as well as from community level implementers and beneficiaries of the programme. KIT will use key informant interviews, online survey and data collection tools and document review to answer the evaluation questions.

2 Evaluation approach

The full evaluation methodology will be developed during the inception phase in June, in consultation with CABI. KIT's evaluation approach is presented in brief below.

The main purpose of the evaluation is to review progress made since the start of Plantwise programme in Burundi in late 2020. The evaluation will make an overall assessment of the project, paying particular attention to the achievements and the feasibility for follow-up activities that address remaining challenges, and associated risks and opportunities for the mid-term future. The evaluation approach will lean towards a formative evaluation with an emphasis on learning rather than accountability. The evaluation will be qualitative in nature, where the principles of contribution analysis will be applied. This means that we will look for evidence that the change pathways and two Burundi-specific underlying assumptions (as presented in the Terms of Reference) hold true. This means that triangulation of evidence from different sources, using different methods, is required. The proposed evaluation approach includes three main methods:

1. A desk study, based on secondary information on the Plantwise programme generally, and the Burundi Plantwise programme specifically.
2. Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with CABI staff and EKN Burundi, and Burundi implementers and stakeholders.
3. Structured interviews with selected stakeholders, including beneficiaries, using innovative surveying techniques.

Table 1 presents an initial overview of how KIT intends to deploy the different methods to answer the main evaluation questions.

Table 1. Evaluation matrix for the evaluation of Plantwise Burundi

Evaluation Questions	Document review	Key informant interviews	Structured interviews	Analysis methods
1. What is the performance of Plantwise? (According to OECD-DAC criteria)				
1.1 Relevance	- Strategy documents - Plantwise policy statements - Gender strategy	- CABI staff (coordination) - Collaborators from national key partners (Ministry of Agriculture, extension agency, ISABU) - EKN Burundi	- Beneficiary farmers - Plant doctors (extension agents) - Field agents of national key partners - Private sector (input suppliers, agricultural services providers)	- Sprockler (Key partners, Private sector - LQAS (farmers)
1.2 Coherence	- Burundi national strategy documents - Plantwise policy statements/ strategy	- CABI staff (coordination) - Collaborators from national key partners (Ministry of Agriculture, extension agency, ISABU) - EKN Burundi	- Plant doctors (extension agents) - Field agents of national key partners - Private sector (input suppliers, agricultural services providers)	- Sprockler (Key partners, private sector)
1.3 Effectiveness	- Plantwise country reports/ milestones - Annual donor reports - Published reports/papers	- CABI staff (coordination, M&E officers) - key partners - Other Burundi stakeholders	- Beneficiary farmers - Plant doctors	- Sprockler (Key partners) - LQAS (farmers)

1.4 Efficiency	- Impact/monitoring reports
	- Programme strategy
	- Donor reports
		- CABI staff
		- National key partners
			- Beneficiary farmers
			  Plant doctors
				- Sprockler (Key partners)
				  LQAS (farmers)

1.5 Impact	- Impact/monitoring reports - Programme strategy - Donor reports	- CABI staff, M&E officers - National key partners - Ministry of Agriculture	- Beneficiary farmers - Plant doctors	- Synthesis - Sprockler (Key partners) - LQAS (farmers)
1.6 Sustainability	- Impact/monitoring reports - Programme strategy - Donor reports	- CABI staff - National key partners - Ministry of Agriculture	- Plant doctors	- Sprockler (Key partners)
1.7 Additionality	- Online document search - Government/sector reports - Strategy documents	- Sector stakeholders - National key partners - Ministry of Agriculture	-	-

2. To what extent is Plantwise innovative?	- Strategy documents
	  External evaluation reports
		- National key partners
		- Similar projects
		- EKN Burundi
			- Beneficiary farmers
			  Plant doctors
				- Sprockler (Key partners)
				- LQAS (farmers)

3. What are the benefits of Plantwise?	- Monitoring reports - Published reports and papers	- CABI staff - National key partners	- Beneficiary farmers - Plant doctors	- Sprockler (Key partners) - LQAS (farmers)
4. What are the good practices and key lessons learned?	- Annual donor reports - Published reports and papers	- CABI staff - National key partners	- Beneficiary farmers - Plant doctors	- Sprockler (Key partners) - LQAS (farmers)
5. What are risks/potentials for the mid-term future?	- External reports Plantwise policy statements	- CABI staff - National key partners	-	- Sprockler (Key partners)

The **desk study** will inform the evaluation team on the strategy, project implementation activities, policies, processes, and preliminary results. Besides directly contributing to the evaluation questions, the desk study also informs all other data collection tools.

KIT proposes to conduct **Key Informant Interviews** (KIIs) with CABI staff involved in the programme, as well as the programme donors (EKN Burundi and Nuffic). The evaluation team will also conduct semi-structured interviews with in-country stakeholders. These interviews will be used to cover the evaluation questions, though the emphasis might differ across various actor types, following their role in the programme and expertise. The evaluation team will conduct all interviews in-person insofar possible. In case of inability to travel (internationally, or locally) interviews can be conducted online or by phone.

For the third method - **structured interviews** with selected stakeholders - KIT proposes to make use of two methods that together allow for triangulation of the findings from the desk study and semi-structured interviews. Firstly, KIT proposes to use the innovative Sprockler[1] tool to collect most significant change stories (MSC) among key actors. The most significant change technique is a participatory method of evaluation which entails collecting change stories and identifying impact through these stories. Central to the method, is a self-assessment of the story provided by the participant. Additionally, Sprockler allows to analyze, visualize, and share the outcomes of the stories collected on an interactive platform. Various actors, such as extension providers, farmers, the ministry of agriculture, quarantine services, the national agricultural research system and collaborating NGOs and private sector will be interviewed.

KIT considers it essential to capture the opinion of beneficiaries, as they are key stakeholders in the programme. Since the timeline and scope of the project do not allow for on-site household surveys in the selected countries, KIT proposes to conduct short, phone-based surveys following a Lot Quality Assurance Sampling (LQAS) method. LQAS is a sampling and analysis methodology, which can be used for rapid, population-based surveys. LQAS provides real-time information on the status of a project. The method is based on a fixed set of closed (yes/no) questions, which are asked to a small, random sample in the population. Following this method, it can be assessed whether certain areas, or "lots" are performing at an 'below-average' or 'above-average' level, compared to a pre-determined target or to the overall average value. In this specific study, the tool will allow the evaluation team to assess topics such as exposure to the programme, the degree of satisfaction on the programme and the percentage of households experiencing certain challenges in a time- and resource-efficient manner. Comparing the topics where people score 'above-average/desired' and 'below-average/desired' is a good indication of the successes of the programme, as well as areas for improvement. The random sampling technique in combination with the use of only binary (yes/no) data allow for deriving statistically sound conclusions based on a very small sample size of around 20-40 households.

Although KIT has the intention to include farmers (that is, those who have visited plant clinics in the last two years) in the structured interviews, feasibility will need to be assessed based on: 1) availability of phone numbers that can be used as sampling frame for the random selection of respondents; and 2) level of effort required to track down farmers for phone interviews as farmers may have changed their phone numbers. However, it is considered feasible to include a random sample of plant doctors in the structured interviews, assuming that their phone numbers will be made available by CABI.

3   Evaluation team

3.1   Team members

The proposed evaluation team comprises one international lead evaluator and one Burundi-based technical consultant. As KIT can draw on an internal pool of highly experienced and specialized staff, the evaluation team may also draw on limited KIT technical support if needed. This may be needed to support LQAS data analysis, for example.

Boudy van Schagen is the lead evaluator. He is a senior adviser in agricultural development and leads the Food and Agribusiness team in the KIT knowledge unit. Boudy is an experienced advisor with a broad experience in brokering interdisciplinary knowledge for development, coordinating multistakeholder processes and the scaling of agricultural innovations. He holds an MSc from Wageningen University in Management of Agricultural Knowledge Systems. He has well developed evaluation capacities, co-leading the outcome monitoring for AGRA in 11 countries in 2019 and 2021. He was also a core team member on the recently completed ex-ante evaluation of CABI PlantwisePlus programme. Based in Burundi from 2010-15, he spearheaded a knowledge-to-impact unit for an international agricultural-research-for-development consortium in Central Africa, working in close collaboration with ISABU and BPEAE.

Jean Ndimubandi (subject to confirmation) is Professor of Monitoring and Evaluation at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Burundi. Dr. Ndimubandi is a highly capable agricultural development professional and consultant. He has experience conducting project evaluations, training, and project coordination. He is conversant in Kirundi, French and English.

Table 2. Overview of expertise of the team

Team member	Qualification[1]	M&E	International policy	Familiar with CABI	Comparative studies	Cost-efficiency / effectiveness	Ex-ante evaluations	Evaluation design
Boudy van Schagen	MSc	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	
Jean Ndimubandi[2]	PhD	▓	▓			▓	▓	

[1] Highest qualification obtained in fields related to the domain of this assignment

[2] Proposed national consultant, subject to confirmation

3.2   Division of tasks

The appointment of Dr. Jean Ndimubandi is subject to confirmation, although he has confirmed his availability for the period of the assignment. The different tasks and evaluation components are anticipated to be divided amongst the two team members as follows:

- Boudy van Schagen will be the main evaluator and is responsible for methodology development, document review, semi-structured interviews with CABI staff, EKN Burundi, and partners in Burundi. He will also lead the report writing.
- Dr. Jean Ndimubandi will conduct the structured interviews by phone or face to face and will assist in semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders where relevant. He will also participate in the validation workshop and contribute to the country reports.

Table 3 provides and overview of the number of days allocated to the different team members and tasks.

Table 3. Allocation of days to different tasks and team members

	B. van Schagen	J. Ndimubandi
Total days	34	20
Inception phase		
Completion of methodology	2	2
Review of project documents	5	2
Interview guides	2	
Sprockler tool development	2	
LQAS tool development	1	
Data collection		
Training consultant	1	1
Semi-structured interviews CABI staff	4	2
Semi-structured interviews partners	4	4
Structured interviews beneficiaries	2	7
Reporting		
Analysis structured interviews	3	
Analysis Sprockler/LQAS	2	
Draft report	4	2
Revisions final report	2	

3.3 Proposed timeline

We are confident that the evaluation team can deliver against the timeline provided in the ToR and discussed with CABI, under a few conditions as indicated in Table 4. The exact timeline will be confirmed during the inception phase, in coordination with CABI and EKN Burundi. An overview of the activity schedule is provided in Table 5.

Table 4. KIT's response to the suggested timeline in the TOR

Activities	Responsible	Involved	Time period	KIT comments on feasibility
Respond to TOR	Evaluation leader		19 May	We expect a quick decision on approval of the assignment
Confirm evaluation team and finalize contract	CABI / EKN	Evaluation leader	2 June	We assume that the starting date of the contract will be 5 June.
Kick-off meeting	Evaluation team/CABI	Evaluation team CABI	5 June	As soon as possible after contracting
Develop methodology and workplan, orienting interviews, and delivery of inception report	Evaluation team	CABI EKN Nuffic	26 June	Assuming (most) inception meetings can be planned in the month of June, draft inception report will be delivered 26 June.
Final inception report	Evaluation team	CABI EKN	7 July	Feasible with timely feedback from CABI and EKN (and possibly Nuffic)
Fieldwork – mission to Burundi	Evaluation team	National programme leaders Programme stakeholders and beneficiaries	17 July	Proposed fieldwork (including validation workshop) commences 17 July for 6–8 days. National consultant will conduct further data gathering and analysis immediately afterwards
Submit draft report	Evaluation team	CABI	1 September	Summer leave period accounts for duration between fieldwork and draft report.
Final End Evaluation report	Evaluation Team		15 September	Assuming timely feedback from CABI and EKN. Final report in English. We propose deadline for French translation of 22 Sept.
Management response	CABI	-	-	

Table 5. Gantt chart of planned activities

Date	5-6	12-6	19-6	26-6	3-7	10-7	17-7	24-7	31-7	7-8	14-8	21-8	28-8	4-9	4-9	11-9
Inception phase	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓										
Completion of methodology	░	░	░													
Review of project documents	░	░	░	░												
Inception meetings	░	░														
Interview guides			░	░												
Sprockler tool development				░	░											
LQAS tool development					░											
Draft inception report				░												
Final inception report						░										
Primary data collection						▓	▓	▓	▓	▓						
Training local consultant						░										
Field mission –evaluation leader							░	░								
KII in-country stakeholders							░	░								
Structured interviews							░	░								
Reporting										▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Analysis structured interviews											░	░				
Draft report													░			
Revisions final report														░		░

4 Financial proposal

KIT proposes a fixed-cost budget of EUR 59,065 including KIT staff and local consultant fees, workshops, field mission and meeting travel, workshop, communication, analysis software expenses, and costs related to reporting and translation.

Item	Quantities	Average unit price (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
KIT staff time	34 days	1,080	36,720
Local consultant	20 days	400	8,000
Software costs Sprockler	1	795	795
KIT research ethics clearance	1	1,500	1,500
International travel costs	1	2,500	2,500
Hotel and DSA – evaluation lead	10 days	225	2,250
Hotel and DSA – local consultant	15 days	50	750
Local travel: vehicle and driver	15 days	250	3,750
Stakeholder workshop	1	1,000	1,000
Report editing and translation	1	1,800	1,800
Total cost excl. VAT (if applicable)			**59,065**

5 Annex: Curriculum Vitae evaluation team

Documents provided separately.

6 Annex: KIT track record

Document provided separately.