

Terms of Reference

End-of-Project Evaluation of DeSIRA project “Land Soil Crop Information Hubs to support rural transformation and Climate Smart Agriculture (LSC-IS) in Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda”

6 October 2025

1 Background

This document describes the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the End-of-Project Evaluation of the DeSIRA Land, Soil and Crop Information Services (DeSIRA LSC-IS) project. The project is part of the Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) Initiative of the European Union.

The [DeSIRA Initiative](#), funded by the European Commission (EC), Directorate General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), seeks to enhance an inclusive, sustainable and climate-relevant transformation of rural areas and agri-food systems, by linking agricultural innovation with research and education for developmental impacts at scale. It supports actions in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to strengthen agriculture and food systems resilience, the relevance of the national and regional innovation systems, and the coherence and efficiency of their agricultural public research and extension services related to climate change adaptation.

DeSIRA LSC-IS aims at supporting Climate-Smart Agriculture in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Rwanda (LSC-IS) through better access to soil, land and crop information. The project as such tests the hypothesis that better access to soil, land and crop information and better exchange between farmers, knowledge organisations and governmental organisations, will enhance innovation and informed decision-making in the agricultural sector of Eastern Africa.

The general objective of the DeSIRA LSC-IS is to develop sustainable land-, soil-, crop information hubs in national agricultural research organisations that facilitate the exchange of knowledge and information between farmers, knowledge organisations, private sector and policy makers, enhance the effectiveness of national Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems and contribute to rural transformation and Climate Smart Agriculture in East Africa.

Ultimately, DeSIRA LSC-IS aims to create an impact of increased agricultural productivity and farm income especially for small-scale farmers based on climate resilient and sustainable food production in Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda. Primary users of the LSC-hubs, however, will be policy bodies, knowledge organizations and development partners operating at the national level. Secondary users are local landscape and watershed planning and management bodies, local public rural extension, NGOs, farmer organizations and private sectors.

The project consists of five work packages (WPs):

- WP1, Management & coordination, is geared towards having a clear overview of the results, outcomes and lessons learnt and disseminating recommended steps to further optimise sector performance and resilience;
- WP2, Needs assessment and LSC-hub design, needs to result in a (proven) effective methodology and strategy for a LSC hub design trajectory, which is based on lessons learned of clearly specifying demands, roles, responsibilities and capacity of actors and criteria for the ownership of the LSC hubs;
- WP3, Development of LSC-hubs, results in LSC partners (i.e., producers and users of data) being familiar with LSC services, able to reflect on these services, and able to update LSC functions and operations;
- WP4 focuses on the LSC-hubs use at national level, i.e., operational LSC hubs, complemented by a long-term viable business plan, can collect and provide up to date LSC data to users at the national scale such as various ministries, agencies and universities, research centres and national stakeholder platforms related to agriculture and climate change adaptation. Producers of LSC information are actively engaged in the knowledge exchange. LSC hubs will start to play an active role in policy development and in CSA decision making at the national scale.
- WP5 addresses the LSC-hubs use at local level: Operational LSC hubs, complemented by a long-term viable business plan, can collect and provide up-to-date LSC data to users at the local scale such as local authorities, local representation of agricultural agencies and research centers, extension services, farmers associations etc. Local producers of LSC information are actively engaged in knowledge exchange. LSC hubs are contributing to enhancing the performance of extension services and public and private sector advisors. The strategy developed during the project to reduce the gap between research and practice in the farm planning of small-scale farmers has been embarked upon by public and private sector stakeholders.

LSC-IS is a project (in the contract referred to as 'the Action'¹) funded by DG International Partnerships of the European Commission (through the EU Delegation to the Republic of Kenya), the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and ISRIC. The Action is coordinated by the MoFA by means of a 'delegated agreement' between DG INTPA and the Dutch MoFA. The total budget of the project is EUR 6,468,000.

The Consortium implementing the Action consists of two units within Wageningen University & Research (Wageningen Social & Economic Research and Wageningen Environmental Research), ISRIC - World Soil Information and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) of Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). The Consortium coordinates the Action *with* the following national partners in Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda: the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR), Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organisation (KALRO) and Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB). The LSC-IS hubs will be hosted by EIAR, KALRO and RAB. In addition, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF,) Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) and the German Aerospace Center (DLR) provide specific services for the delivery of the Action. The consortium partners, national partners and service provision partners together form the project team members or implementation partners.

¹ This ToR refers to DeSIRA LSC-IS, therefore, as either 'the project' or 'the Action'.

The countries Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda are chosen because all have expressed the need for a LSC-hub and because the strong links the consortium partners have with the national agricultural research organisations of these countries. Also, it was preferred to learn from establishing such LSC-hubs in countries with different government styles of the AKIS. Ethiopia has a more governmental-driven AKIS while in Kenya the role of the private sector is much higher. Rwanda can be placed somewhere in between.

The start date of the project was 1 January 2021. The project was initially scheduled to run until 31 December 2024. Upon the recommendation of the Mid-Term Review (MTR), a one-year no-cost extension was requested and granted. This means that the project's current end date is 31 December 2025.

2 Purpose and scope

This End-of-Project Evaluation will look back on the project to capture its story and its learnings, and to formulate recommendations on how future project impact can be maximized. The results, furthermore, feed into the reflection on the project outcomes, results and Theory of Change (ToC) of the project. The end-users of the evaluation are the consortium partners, its implementing partners at national level, the Dutch MoFA and the EU delegation in Kenya (regionally representing EU DG-INTPA in the East Africa).

The evaluation covers the period from 1 January 2021 (the start of the Action) up to 'today', but should also evaluate the potential of future impact. The evaluation will cover all project components, countries and/or work packages. Over the course of the project, various external evaluations have already taken place. These include a [mid-term review](#) (conducted in 2023) and a [Results-Oriented Monitoring \(ROM\) review](#) (conducted in 2024). The currently requested end evaluation should be complementary to these efforts, meaning that it should build on existing data and minimize duplication of efforts.

3 Objectives and evaluation questions

The objectives of this evaluation are:

- A. To assess the effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of the Action in achieving its intended results as described in ToC and logframe;
- B. To evaluate the extent to which the LSC hubs have reached or can be expected to reach their intended scale;
- C. To assess the extent to which MTR and ROM recommendations have been addressed adequately;
- D. To identify, analyse and create an overview of factors that have facilitated or hindered project implementation;
- E. To capture lessons learned over the course of project implementation;
- F. To provide recommendations on how the LSC hubs can be sustainably effective and relevant after project support has ended.

These objectives are supported by the following, more detailed, evaluation questions.

Relevance

1. How do the services provided by the LSC-IS hubs meet the information needs of users at the national level and contribute to making better strategic decisions towards climate smart agriculture in their country? What is the perceived quality, timeliness and use of these services for national level decisions makers?

2. How do the services provided by the LSC-IS hubs meet the information needs of users at the subnational level and contribute to making better operational decisions towards climate smart agriculture in their area? What is the perceived quality, timeliness and use of these services for subnational level decisions makers?
3. How and to what extent do the LSC-IS hubs support providing advice to farmers in an inclusive way (hence targeting different types of farmers: small-scale, commercial, female, youth, etc.)?
4. To what extent are the LSC-hubs perceived as dynamic platforms where producers and users of data meet and exchange to improve the innovative capacity of the agricultural sector?
5. To what extent are project activities perceived as (directly or indirectly) contributing to the structural/systemic improvement of the agricultural performance of small-scale food producers?
6. To what level is the implementation of DeSIRA LSC-IS connected and aligned with other national, MoFA, EKN and EU-financed programs on CSA, AKIS and digitalization of agriculture?

Effectiveness

7. To what extent has the project achieved and/or will it achieve its intended results as described in the ToC and in the logframe (in other words, what is the level of effectiveness of the developed LSC-IS hubs for Ethiopia, Kenya, and Rwanda in meeting the demands among stakeholders for supporting climate smart agriculture knowledge and information)?
8. What were key factors that have facilitated or hindered project implementation and effectiveness?

Sustainability

9. To what extent is it ensured that the national partners allow the continued operating and hosting of the hubs after project finalization? This relates to the available level of knowledge (content and technical), capacity of people, and collaboration (in a "value chain of partners").
10. To what extent is the support for continuing the information services through LSC-hubs being guaranteed politically (policies, legislation) and institutionally? E.g., how do the hubs appear in the strategic papers and year planning of the hosting organizations and national and local users?
11. To what extent is the support for continuing the information services through LSC-hubs being guaranteed financially? What is the magnitude of national financial investments in KALRO, EIAR, and RAB for the strategic, technical, operational and institutional requirements for sustaining the developed LSC hubs?
12. To what extent is it ensured that the capacities within national and local hub users allow effective utilization of LSC information to improve their decision-making for CSA after project finalization?
13. What feedback mechanisms are in place for hub hosts to improve and adapt their hub-services after project finalization?

Scaling potential

14. To what extent and how did the Action facilitate the upscaling of the LSC hubs project within the implementation countries at the sub-national scale (from pilot counties/woredas/districts to others)?
15. To what extent and how did the Action facilitate the scaling of the LSC hubs concept to other countries?
16. To what extent and how can hub hosts best follow up this national upscaling: when, how, with whom?

17. To what extent are project assumptions with regard to reach plausible? What external factors enable or constrain these assumptions?

Learning and adaptive management

18. To what extent did the project incorporate and use appropriate feedback and learning mechanisms to modify activities, tools or partnerships during implementation? (Including, but not limited to, MTR and ROM recommendations).
19. What are the key lessons learned over the course of project implementation? Which ones were shared across the three target countries and/or are relevant for other countries in East-Africa?

4 Methodology

The evaluation will predominantly use a qualitative approach. A document review will be at the core of the evaluation. As mentioned in section 2, various external evaluations have already taken place. The currently requested end evaluation should be complementary to these efforts, meaning that it should build on existing data and minimize duplication of efforts. Where necessary, existing data can be supplemented, e.g. by key informant interviews, quantitative data (where available), and/or other methods deemed necessary and feasible in the project context. Despite the more qualitative approach of the evaluation, it will be necessary to review the quantitative targets indicated in the Logical Framework of the Action.

The review will establish a Reference group consisting of the Action Advisory Commission and an independent representative of DeSIRA LIFT who have an overarching monitoring and evaluation role across DeSIRA project. The Reference group with the following roles and responsibilities:

- Give approval of selection of evaluators;
- Provide feedback on and give go / no-go on inception rapport;
- Provides feedback on draft final report.

The review will include an online validation workshop² with project implementers and the Reference group.

5 Qualifications of the evaluation team

The evaluation should be conducted by a team of evaluators. The evaluators and affiliated organisations must not have been involved in the design or implementation of the project, nor its Mid-Term Review, and must have no interest in the evaluation's outcome (see IOB quality criteria evaluations). We look for the following minimal qualifications:

- Proven experience in conducting evaluations of large, multi-annual development projects and/or programmes;
- Able to work with local translators provided by the National Partners and to reflect on translators' and own biases;
- Proven experience with participatory, qualitative methodologies;
- Demonstrated ability to write concise, readable and analytical reports;
- Educational background or experience in (a combination) of the following topics: agriculture, climate adaptation and/or mitigation, LSC-information systems;

² The date and details of the validation workshop will be prepared in cooperation with the MEL officer of DeSIRA LSC-IS

- Experience in at least one of the implementation countries (Ethiopia, Kenya and/or Rwanda) is mandatory. Experience in all countries will be an added advantage.

6 Deliverables

The deliverables for the end-term evaluation are:

- Inception report: The inception report will include the evaluation methodology, data collection tools, work plan, and evaluation team roles and responsibilities;
- The data set and transcriptions of both qualitative and quantitative data;
- Draft report: The draft report will include the evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations and provides for country specific information
- Online validation workshop: The evaluators will organize an online validation workshop to present their draft report and collect final additions and feedback;
- Final report (<35 pages, excluding annexes): The final report will include the evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations, considering the feedback received on the draft report and the validation workshop. It provides country-specific information. It will also include a 2-page narrative and visual summary of the key findings, meant for a general audience.

7 Timeline

The key activities and time indications of this evaluation are:

Table 1 Key activities and time indications of the ETR process

Nr	Activity	Output	Time period
1	Call for Expressions of Interest (EoI)	Call for EoI published by WUR	13-10-2025
2	Submission of EoIs	EoIs, including track record and key CVs obtained	02-11-2025
3	Selection of EoIs to develop a full proposal	At least 3 EoIs invited to develop a full proposal	07-11-2025
4	Submission of proposals	At least three proposals received	30-11-2025
5	Evaluation of proposals and interviews	Winning proposal selected and service provider awarded	05-12-2025
6	Contracting service provider	Contract signed	12-12-2025
7	Inception phase	Revisit the proposed work plan, methodology, and tools regarding details and schedules	15-12-2025 – 23-01-2026
8	Presentation of inception report (revisited work plan and methodology for evaluation)	Online assessment of revisited work plan and methodology with a go/no-go decision by Reference group in case the plan is not in line with this ToR	26-01-2026
9	Implementation phase	Interviews and data collection done Data processed and interpreted	13-01-2026 – 27-03-2026

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Nr	Activity	Output	Time period
10	Validation	Online validation workshop with key project staff and Reference group with PowerPoint presentation of preliminary results and recommendations	30-03-2026
11	Reporting	Draft report and presentation of the findings	06-04-2026
		Review of draft report by Reference Group	13-04-2026
		Final report	30-04-2026

8 Budget

The budget for the evaluation is 62,680 EUR (incl. VAT). This includes all costs associated with the evaluation, including consultancy fees, possible travel expenses, and any other relevant expenses.

9 Expression of Interest

Interested parties are requested to complete the attached Expression of Interest (EoI) form and submit it to: Mr Pascal Debons (pascal.debons@wur.nl), project manager of DeSIRA LSC-IS, and Ms. Hermine ten Hove (hermine.tenhove@wur.nl), PMEL advisor, by 2 November 2025.

The EoI is to be accompanied by information on two previous assignments that the evaluation team leader believes to best illustrate the track record, (some of) the capabilities that they intend to bring to this current assignment (e.g., through links to webpages, reports, videos, testimonials, other documentation). Please include at least one example of an earlier assignment that has a strong qualitative component. In addition, please supply the CVs (maximum of 2 pages per CV) of any individuals already identified who can give input to the design of the evaluation.

For questions related to this ToR, please contact Ms Hermine ten Hove (hermine.tenhove@wur.nl).

Table 2 Expression of Interest form

1. Applicant details		
Name of applicant:		
Applicant company/organization:		
Contact details of applicant		
Email:	Telephone:	Physical address:
2. Acknowledgement of terms and conditions		

The starting date of this evaluation is 12 December 2025	☐
A total budget of 62,680 EUR (inc. VAT) is available for this evaluation	☐
EoI is to be accompanied by information of two previous assignments that the evaluation leader believes best illustrate the track record that they intend to bring to this current assignment	☐
EoI is to be accompanied by the CVs (maximum of 2 pages per CV) of any individuals already identified who can give input to the design of the evaluation	☐
3. Track-record [max. 200 words each including links to resources; please include at least one example of a qualitative/mixed methods (end-term) evaluation]	
Example 1:	
Example 2:	
4. CVs [max. 2 pages each]	
CV 1:	
CV 2:	
CV n:	

10 Full proposal

The full proposal should include the following and be prepared upon invitation to do so (i.e., after having submitted a successful Expression of Interest as described in the previous section).

1. Detailed descriptions of:
 - a. Intended scope;
 - b. Methodology of answering each evaluation question;
 - c. A workplan, indicating also the expected role of project staff and partners and detailed timeline (using the broad timelines provided in the ToR);
 - d. Detailed budget for this study based on the objectives outlined in the ToR;
 - e. Potential risks and strategies to mitigate these.
2. CV(s) of all team members, and information about their availability during the evaluation process.
3. At least two relevant references from previous clients, including contact details.
4. At least two examples of recent and relevant evaluation reports.

The proposal will be analysed based on the following criteria and related points:

Table 3 Criteria for the evaluation of the evaluation full proposal

Nr	Criteria	Points
1	Comprehensive and convincing proposal (delivering on the ToR)	20
2	Methodology of the evaluation appropriate to review the project, including the different evaluation questions	35
3	CVs and experience	35
4	Budget	10
	Total	100



Land Soil Crop Hubs

Draft Theory of Change DeSIRA - LSC-IS



Our Impact (or where we want to be ...)

So we ultimately contribute to ...

Increased agricultural productivity and farm income especially for small-scale farmers based on climate resilient and sustainable food production in Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda, characterised by reduced greenhouse gas emissions from primary production systems

Our ultimate outcome

LSC hubs evolved and expanded towards dynamic national Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS 2.0) in Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda, which contribute to the continuous **monitoring of the status quo of food system performance and food system governance and support rural transformation and the development towards a climate smart agricultural sector** in Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda, and, eventually, in East Africa

Sphere of interest

Discussed and agreed roadmaps for the design of an enabling and vibrant national AKIS 2.0 exist.

These roadmaps have the aim to further reduce the gap between research and practice and contribute to rural transformation, climate change adaptation and mitigation in Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda and, eventually, in East Africa

LSC hub partners (producers and users of data) have enhanced their adaptive capacity to stimulate knowledge exchange and improve the innovative capacity of the LSC hubs in particular and of the agricultural sector in general.

LSC hub partners have created performing and inclusive national multi-stakeholder partnerships/platforms, including public and private sector stakeholders, NGOs and knowledge institutes, in Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda while building on and complementing LSC hub lessons learnt to further optimise sector performance and resilience

LSC hubs are actively used at national and local level and play an active role in policy development and in CSA decision making thus supporting digital innovation and rural transformation in Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda and, eventually, in East Africa

Sphere of influence

1. A clear overview of the results, outcomes and lessons learnt and recommended steps to further optimise sector performance and resilience exists. These have been widely disseminated and enjoy a great visibility.

Other: Youth have enhanced entrepreneurial skills to contribute to an innovative agricultural sector capacity

Other: The strategy developed during the Action reduced the gap between research and practice in the farm planning of small-scale farmers and has been embarked upon by public and private sector stakeholders

3. LSC hub partners (i.e. producers and users of data) are familiar with LSC services, are able to reflect on these services and are able to update LSC functions and operations.

2. A (proven/tested) effective methodology and strategy for a LSC hub design trajectory based on lessons learned of clearly specifying demands, roles, responsibilities and capacity of actors exists and ownership has been made explicit.

4. LSC hubs are used at national level, are complemented by a long-term viable business plan, are able to provide up-to-date LSC data to users and LSC hubs started to play an active role in policy development and in CSA decision making at national level

5. LSC hubs are used at local level, are complemented by a long-term viable business plan, are able to provide up-to-date LSC data to users and LSC hubs started to play an active role in policy development and in CSA decision making at local level and contribute to enhancing the performance of extension services and public and private sector advisors

Other: National Agricultural Research Institutes are able to operate the LSC hubs

Our Action

Embedding & Scaling

Together we use, learn, improve, innovate

Developing & Testing

Together we develop, test, adapt, test, learn

Assessing

Together we assess, we learn, we build partnerships

Institutionalisation

We will train, test and adapt together and scale hub use at local level including introducing and training local level users in the testing of the hubs and collect feedback, demonstrate the use of LSC-information for climate smart farm- and watershed- level management, and include local level use of LSC-hub services in LSC-hub sustainability plans.

We will train, test and adapt together and scale hub use at national level including introducing and training national level users in the testing of the hubs and collect feedback, demonstrate the use of LSC-information in CSA related agricultural policy development and planning and agricultural extension systems, and -implement and adapt sustainability and financial strategies;

We will design, build, train, test and adapt together an innovative IT system, databases -of land, soil, crop and other data- and user interfaces of the hubs in Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda, and train staff in the operation and maintenance.

We will assess together the agricultural sector (i.e. the institutional setting) and prepare stakeholder overviews at national and local levels. This includes carrying out information-needs assessments of users at national and local level, as well as an assessment of the capacity of the hub host. The assessments and overviews will determine the **requirements for the design of the hubs**.

Monitoring Evaluation Adapting Learning

Together we plan, monitor, evaluate, adapt, learn

We will develop a conducive learning environment for the implementing teams, but particularly focus on **facilitating multi-stakeholder learning**. We will keep stakeholders, as well as the general public at large informed and engaged about performance and progress of the Action.

The Action will use a **gender equal and youth inclusive approach** with a strong focus on **PPMEAL regarding all activities to be implemented** which, - supported by the communication plan- will stimulate interest in and support the development of agricultural entrepreneurship and an innovative agricultural sector

Sphere of control

Our specific target groups

We do this for ...

Primarily, small-scale farmers (male and female, and young farmers) and other (young) 'agripreneurs' (male/female).

We do this with...

preferably, small scale farmers themselves but to ensure a systems change we focus particularly on the 'hub-hosts' and 'primary and secondary hub-users'. The hub-hosts are the National Agricultural Research Centres in Kenya, Rwanda and Ethiopia. Primary users include policy bodies, knowledge organizations and development partners. Secondary stakeholders are those stakeholders with a direct interaction with small-scale farmers, and mechanisms for incorporating LSC-hub services in regular extension services, landscape planning and management bodies and digital service providers all operating at the local level. They include local landscape and watershed planning and management bodies, local public rural extension, NGOs, farmer organizations and private sector stakeholders.

Our Aim

Therefore, we aim to ...

To develop sustainable land-, soil-, crop information hubs in national agricultural research organisations that facilitate the exchange of knowledge and information between farmers, knowledge organisations, private sector and policy makers, enhance the effectiveness of national Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS 2.0) and contribute to rural transformation and Climate Smart Agriculture in East Africa

(this is the overall objective of the Action)

Our Assumptions

We believe that ...

Better access to soil, land and crop information supports climate resilience and sustainable food production and helps to improve the efficacy of CSA measures and projects; Better access to soil, land and crop information and better exchange between farmers, knowledge organisations and governmental organisations, will enhance innovation and entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector;

Better access to soil, land and crop information requires capacity development at national and at farming systems level, and an enabling environment for (multi-stakeholder) monitoring, learning and action;

Making LSC-hub data available as Open Source data will boost its application;

Farmers (large and small-scale, men and women, experienced and young) are crucial actors in soil, land and crop data use and data provision

Embedding LSC-hubs in the National Agricultural Research System (NARS) will increase national ownership of data, and thereby its recognition and usage as source for policy development and decision making

An enhanced innovative approach and improved entrepreneurship, will make a significant change in the increase of agricultural productivity and farm income, especially for small-scale farmers;

Bridging the digital divide between farmers, knowledge institutes and governmental organisations is providing the fundament for sustainable growth

A gender sensitive and youth inclusive approach during the Action is pivotal for having gender equal and youth inclusive outcomes by the end of the Action.

A gender and youth inclusive approach lays out the baseline for **fair rural transformation**

(these are our underlying assumptions of how we believe change happens)

The need for change (or where we are now...)

Currently, ...

Addressing today's climate challenges requires better access to data about land, about soil and about crops. This enables farmers to plan more effectively and be more efficient. Especially for small-scale farmers in East-Africa, the digital divide can largely be reduced and better access to information can lead to improved crop yields. Soil, land and crop information (in many East-African countries) can currently not be used effectively in decision-making (at national and at farming system level), because the data are not available in an organised and accessible form;

Annex 2: LSC-IS Logframe

<http://bit.ly/DeSIRA-LSC-IS-Logframe>

(Original version of the logframe – updated version will be provided upon the start of this assignment)