

Date: May 03th, 2023

Terms of Reference

Mid-Term Review of the Accelerating Agriculture and Agribusiness in South Sudan for Enhanced Economic Development (A3-SEED) project



to be published on
04 May 2023 to 25 May, 2023





1. Introduction

Accelerating Agriculture and Agribusiness in South Sudan (A3SEED project Number 400004440 [IATI](#)) is a 5-year project (January 2021 – December 2025) funded by the Embassy of the Royal Kingdom of Netherlands (EKN (Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands)) and implemented by the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) in collaboration with the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT).

An external mid-term review (MTR) of the project is required by EKN before the end of July 31, 2023. This MTR is intended to be both backward and forward looking, in such a way as:

1. assess progress accrued in the implementation of A3SEED over the past 2 and half years (Jan. 2021 – June 2023) against the project's result framework and Theory of Change (ToC), to establish whether the project is on track to achieve its stated and intended results by the end of 2025.
2. produce key recommendations to reinforce project implementation over the next two and a half years (July 2023 - December 2025) and justify a potential extension of the project beyond December 2025.
3. To give clear analysis of where the project is going systematically, show clear links with other related programs and give recommendations on how to cause relevant systemic change within the sector.
4. Clearly identify the main gaps in the A3-SEED project and present recommendations the project can capitalize on.

To conduct such a mid-term review, IFDC is seeking to recruit an independent consultant who is expected to work on a part-time basis over a total period of 2 months (June-July 2023) to:

1. Develop a detailed inception report (including a detailed workplan), in consultation with IFDC and KIT.
2. Present the inception report to EKN in the context of an inception workshop, to obtain EKN's feedback and approval.
3. Interview selected key project staff from both IFDC and KIT
4. Review all relevant documentation (reports, research, manuals, etc.) and data produced so far by the project.
5. Interview key project stakeholders, at least 40 representatives (including women and youth) of seed companies, out-growers and agro-dealers.
6. Interview key project beneficiaries, grain farmers (including women and youth) from at least 2 project target areas;
7. Write a mid-term report (max 20 pages + annexes) that includes:
 - an assessment of project progress between January 2021 and June 2023;
 - a strategy for project reinforcement between June 2023 and December 2025;
 - a justification for project extension or termination after December 2025;

Present the report to EKN, incorporate EKN's feedback and finalize it.

2. Background

A sustainable agricultural sector is critical for the conflict-sensitive development of South Sudan. Relief programs in South Sudan that focus on humanitarian assistance, including distribution of food and inputs (primarily seed), distort local markets and represent a missed opportunity to stimulate local agricultural development. Sustainable agricultural development depends in part on an effective seed system that ensures the availability of - and access to - diversified quality seeds of market-desired varieties, adapted to different climatic conditions prevalent in the country.

Over the past decade, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in South Sudan (EKN) and other development partners have invested in seed sector and market development projects, including the EKN-funded project **Seed Sector Development for South Sudan (SSD4SS)**, led by the Alliance for a Green Africa (AGRA), the **Food and Nutrition Security and Resilience Programme (FNS-REPRO)** led by the Food



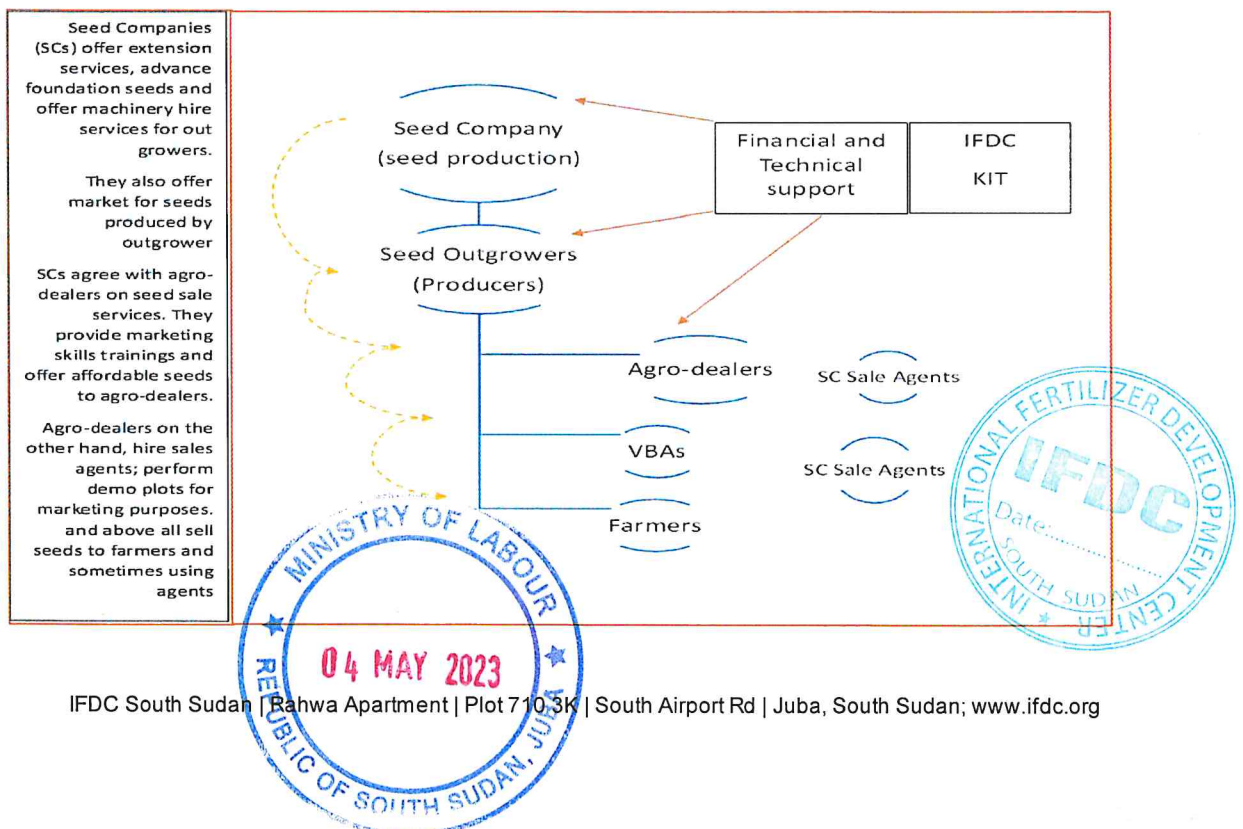
Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the **Food Security through Agribusiness in South Sudan (FSABSS)**, led by CORDAID. The challenge now is to build on and leverage these interventions to build a dynamic private seed sector based on successful entrepreneurship; one in which relief seed distribution is minimized and informal seed exchange is complemented by a functioning *commercial* seed market from which smallholder farmers regularly buy high quality seed for production of marketable surpluses sold into competitive markets.

The project is designed to effectively contribute to the protection and rehabilitation of the South Sudan Seed sector and livelihoods means of the most vulnerable and affected people in South Sudan. The project target is to reach 200 Local seed producers and actors in the seed sector aimed at bolstering seed production and supply to direct and indirect 100,000 as beneficiaries which includes IDPs, returnees and host communities in the targeted locations experiencing deteriorating food insecurity situation and who missed the cropping season due to various reasons including due to conflict or having no access to humanitarian assistance.

2.1. About A3SEED

Accelerating Agriculture and Agribusiness in South Sudan (A3SEED) is a 5-year project (January 2021 – December 2025) funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands (EKN) and implemented by the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) in collaboration with the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT). An external or independent mid-term review of the project is required before the end of July 31, 2023, to assess progress in the implementation of A3SEED against the project’s Theory of Change (ToC) and assess whether the project is on track to achieve its stated and intended results by the end of 2025. The assessment of project progress over the past two and half years (December 2020 to – June 2023) is specifically intended to focus on output and short-term outcome indicators, which are specified in the project result framework and have been regularly measured through the project monitoring system.

EKN has invested a total of €8.5 million in the A3SEED project, to build upon previous and expand on other EKN’s investments in the seed sector and agribusiness of South Sudan. A3-SEED aims to reduce the dependency of the South Sudanese seed sector on humanitarian support—and especially on international seed-aid (or on the distribution of free seeds of foreign origin)—and promote the rise of domestic seed value chains and markets. To do so, the project budget included a €1 million intervention fund, to be granted to 10 seed producing and trading companies registered with the Seed Trade Association of South Sudan (STASS), together with technical assistance. In other words, the A3-SEED projects was designed to provide both financial and technical support to 10 national seed



companies, for these to build upstream linkages with seed out-growers (or seed multiplying farmers), as well as downstream linkages with seed dealers and seed-aid agencies, and indirectly also with seed consumers (or grain producing farmers). On one hand, the A3SEED project is therefore expected to ensure the distribution of improved seed down to the last mile (or all the way to grain producing farmers). On the other, it is expected to supply seed-aid agencies with an increasing amount of locally produced and adapted seeds.

Figure 1: A3SEED's Theory of Change

The A3SEED project is a private sector led seed systems development project. The project scope is limited to the provision of financial and technical support to 10 private seed companies, which are in turn expected to establish and develop networks of seed out-growers and agro-dealers and create demand from both seed-aid agencies and household grain farmers.

Based on this approach, A3-SEED seeks to support the seed companies and STASS in:

- supplying improved and locally adapted seeds and providing training on Good Agricultural Practices) to more than 100,000 grain producing farm-households, which are expected to increase their grain yields by 20-50% and double their agricultural revenues, thereby improving their livelihoods.
- developing 400 new agri-businesses owned or managed by women and youth, including 100 seed dealers and 300 seed out growers.
- building the resilience of 42,000 hectares of farmland through the dissemination of agroecological farming practices.
- ensuring that 50% of seed aid is procured locally.

Goal and key objectives of the A3-SEED project

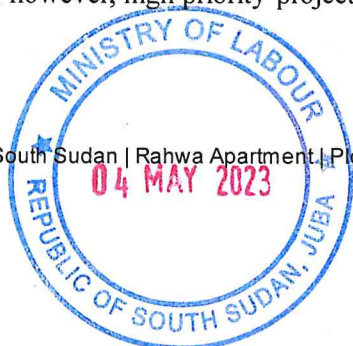
The overall objective of the A3-Seed project is to accelerate agriculture/agri-business in South Sudan for Enhanced Economic development through supporting existing private sector including seed companies and individual commercial seed producers to improve seed production, marketing, and distribution down to the last mile and strengthen the national seed trade association (STASS) to promote domestic seed. The project employs the market systems development approach to develop quality seed production and market systems that will function more effectively, sustainably, and beneficially for all farmers in the Country.

The four specific objectives of the project include.

- Objective 1.** To support Commercial Quality Seed Production that focuses on assuring efficient, high quality and economically viable seed production, sales and distribution tailored for market-oriented small holder farmers.
- Objective 2.** To Support and ensure Quality Seed Use, Good Agricultural practices and Climate resilient farming practices among small holder farmers results from tailored sales and distribution strategies provided by seed companies and Commercial seed producers.
- Objective 3.** To support and ensure Quality Seed Input and Output Marketing and distribution through the establishment of last-mile input distribution and effective seed, input and output market relationships which improve local competitiveness through agri-business development, women empowerment, and youth employment.
- Objective 4.** To support and capture Learning and Capacity Development that supports the above result areas together with targeted research to address bottlenecks, support adaptive project management and advance knowledge on seed sector development.

Targets, stakeholders and expected results.

The A3-SEED project has some ambitious results targets. Full information can be got from the results framework; however, high priority projected results include the following.



- Reach more than 100,000 farming households which will see a doubling of income from marketable surpluses of targeted commodities, improving livelihoods.
- Over 50,000 directly and 50,000 indirectly trained farmers will realize a 50% and 20% yield increase of targeted commodities, respectively.
- Facilitate the development of 100 agro-dealers, 200 new businesses owned or managed by women and 200 businesses owned or managed by youth.
- Over 42,000 hectares of farmland under agroecological production and improved farming practices will become more resilient to shocks.
- 50% of relief seed procured locally, coordinated through the seed trade association, STASS.

Partners involved or engagement.

Collaboration with current EKN initiatives: Two of EKN’s current FNS (Food and Nutrition Security) (Food and Nutrition Security) projects - FNS-REPRO and FSABSS – share objectives and activities that complement A3-SEED. FNS-REPRO focuses on building food system resilience in crisis settings, in part by integrating the seed sector and related systems at community and public sector levels. FNS-REPRO will strengthen GoSS capacity to provide EGS (Early Generation Seeds) for selected crops and will also build capacity of community-based, market-oriented seed SMEs. FSABSS will strengthen functional markets, ensure access to market information, promote sustainable production and productivity, improving the performance of Cooperatives and Agri-MSMEs (micro, small, and medium enterprises) and resilience to shocks and hazards. The project aims to improve access to quality seeds and financial support. IFDC and KIT have engaged in several discussions with both projects and their teams in Juba and Nairobi. Several discussions were held with FNS-REPRO, including with Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (CDI) in the Netherlands. IFDC is also doing other collaborations with partners outside the EKN funded projects and these includes MoU with IFDC sister project RASS and 2SCALE, MoUs with local government stakeholders, other humanitarian agencies that procure seeds, AMVAT collaborations in Terekeka and Magwi among others that can be explored to check how the synergies are contributing to one way or the other to the success to the A3-SEED project.

3. The Scope of the assignment

Consistent with the above background, IFDC is seeking services of a competent company or groups of individuals with proven experiences in conducting similar assignments in South Sudan or the region to assess the project progress between December 2020 and June 2023 focusing on output and short-term outcome indicators. This review should generate information and inform A3SEED management and EKN whether the project is on track to achieve its objectives by the end of 2025. . However, the review will be used to highlight the early signs of impact as long term outcome and impact indicators are expected to significantly improve over time and assessed during Endline Evaluation. Geographically, the review is limited to 5 geographic locations in which A3SEED has supported seed companies i.e., Rumbek, Bor, Juba, Torit/Magwi, and Yambio. Nzara. The scope is also informed by the general outline of the intervention logic outlined on page 3 of this ToR.

4. Goal and Objectives of the mid-term review

The overall objective of the mid-term review is to assess the progress of A3SEED project towards achieving project objectives and outcomes and draw out lessons for how the project can be improved during the rest of its implementation period for more positive impacts. It also assesses the relevance of the Theory of Change at this stage and where necessary recommends relevant amendments. The review also aims at highlighting lessons learnt for improving the next phase of the project beyond 2025. Specifically, the mid-term review process will be assessing the following.

- Comment on whether the seed sector market systems development (MSD) methodology is appropriate for the project context e.g., agriculture, crop selection, geographic location etc. should any adjustments be made?



- What changes in the socio-economic and market conditions have taken place since the inception of the project – intended and un-intended effects; will this affect the overall outcomes?
- What, if there are any adjustments would you recommend for the project in terms of project approach and methodology, geographical coverage, targeted beneficiaries, enterprise choice etc.?
- Comment on the progress of the project at the midterm point? What factors may be limiting the achievement of intended results? Are there signs the program is on track to achieve long-term change?
- What are the prospects for sustainability of A3-SEED project results?
- Assess the project's current Theory of Change, intervention logic and results measurement systems for suitability and update accordingly.
- Identify the immediate and longer-term strategies that could be adopted for the future of the project.

Cross-cutting questions regarding accomplishing the project objectives are included.

- Are there decent quality results focused on Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning System (MELS), allowing for periodic reflection and adjustment of activities if needed? Analyze the suitability of the existing data sources and indicators.
- Relevance/Appropriateness: To what extent is/will the project activities be consistent with the needs of intended beneficiaries?
- **Effectiveness**
 - ◆ To what extent will the project's intended results (outputs and outcomes) be achieved?
 - ◆ How successful has the project incorporated elements of Quality seed production using quality foundation seeds? climate smart agriculture and GAP (Good Agricultural Practices), youth, and gender inclusion into the implementation of its activities?
 - ◆ How is this viewed by project participants?
- **Efficiency:** How well will the various activities transform available resources into the intended output?
- **Coherence:** To what extent will the project implementation (a) hinder or contradict or (b) support and reinforce the work of other projects and interventions? This will include exploring A3-SEED/IFDC internal and external coherence
- **Impact:** What impact, whether positive or negative, will the project's existence have on the target people and the community at large?
- **Sustainability:** What mechanisms, strategies and structures are there to ensure that key activities, results, and outcomes from the project will continue even after the project phases out?
- **Lessons learnt:** What good practices can be learned from the project that can inform future programming?

5. Expected Review Approach and Methodology

The consultant is expected to employ mixed approaches involving investigative research using a variety of data collection and analysis techniques with a particular focus on qualitative methods to ensure comprehensive review exercise. He/she is expected to use the DCED (Donor Committee for Enterprise Development) standard methodology, this will include, at a minimum:

- **Document and systems review:** Review of existing documentation, including project reports, project results framework and monitoring and evaluation data.
- **Focus Group Discussions:** With target groups and other stakeholders including farmers to assess implementation experiences and effectiveness, challenges and lessons learned, and develop recommendations for improvement.
- **Key Informant Interviews:** Consultations with key project stakeholders, including project staff, STASS, EKN. In-depth interviews with seed companies, agro-dealers, out-growers, off-takers



(where applicable) and other project partners. Guidance on appropriate stakeholders will be provided by project staff.

During Inception, the consultant is expected to provide a detailed approach methodology and tools to be used during the review.

6. Expected deliverables and timeline (the matrix on activity-timeline- deliverables)

The review is expected to take place over a total period of 45 days, starting from the first of June, including days in the field. The proposed time limit for completion of field work and submission of the final report by mid-July 2023.

The A3-SEED project management team proposes the following activities and timelines to accomplish the mid-term review. However, the consultant will be expected to submit a detailed outline of the proposed methodology and along with detailed cost/time limit associated with the activities in ToR while submitting the proposal for review. Any deviation from the proposed activity-timeline calendar should be justified in the proposal submission.

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Outputs/deliverables</i>
<i>Desk study and fieldwork preparation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary data review • Initial discussions with IFDC & KIT • Meeting with EKN • Preparation for inception meeting • Study the existing monitoring data and identify gaps. • Develop questionnaires/checklists
<i>Field work and data collection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If necessary, IFDC will support the identification of Translators. • Field data collection from 5 project hubs targeting STASS, Seed Companies, Agro-dealers, Sales Agents/VBAs, out-growers, farmers, and key stakeholders as per agreed sampling method. • Data collection from national level stakeholders.
<i>Data processing and reporting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data cleaning, analysis and summary of tables and reporting

It is anticipated that the consultant team for the evaluation will produce the above set of deliverables that includes the following details at each stage of the reporting:

- a. An Inception Report (to be submitted and accepted prior to commencement of field work) including the following items:
 - A detailed methodological approach including, key research questions, defined indicators, research plan, sampling framework, review matrix and data collection tools etc.
 - The Inception Plan should retain a degree of flexibility to allow the incorporation of any changes recommended from the inception workshop.
- b. Conduct a one-day stakeholder validation workshop to review the early findings from the draft midterm review report. This will be conducted at the end of the field mission.
- c. A final report of the midterm review should be a maximum of 20 pages excluding annexes. (Accepted by both IFDC, KIT & EKN).

7. Management and implementation responsibilities

The consultant team will report directly to the IFDC A3-SEED Project Manager. However, the team will also be expected to work closely with the project staff, MELs, and KIT, for quality checks. Any proposed changes to the personnel listed in the application must be pre-approved by KIT & IFDC South Sudan and explained in the inception report.



8. Team composition and skills mix

The team will consist of a lead consultant with demonstrated experience in the implementation and assessment of MSD projects and be supported by a range of subordinates with appropriate skills to fulfil the deliveries under this ToR. To be eligible to conduct this midterm review the consultant(s) on the review team should have no personal stake in the IFDC A3-SEED project. The lead consultant shall possess:

- Extensive experience in review and evaluation of Market Systems Development or private sector led programs in the agriculture sector.
- Experience in using the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) DAC Network on Development Evaluation standards that has defined six evaluation criteria – **relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability** – and two principles for their use.
- Be receptive to socio-economic dimensions, including gender, youth, and labor issues.
- Ability to write concise, readable, and analytical reports.
- Demonstrable experience conducting similar assignments in South Sudan and Eastern Africa is essential.

9. Desired qualifications of the consultant

- 15+ years' experience in leading, supporting and/or evaluating seed and/or agricultural sector projects in South Sudan or in the East African regions using qualitative and quantitative analytical skills.
- Experience in results measurement using the DCED standard approach.
- A patient and curious listener, a diplomatic but direct communicator, and a parsimonious but insightful writer.
- Willingness and flexibility to travel within remote areas of South Sudan.

How to apply

Applicants should apply as follows:

- Upload a Capabilities Statement, stating your understanding of the TOR
- Upload all relevant CVs consultants forming part of the active team. Upload at least 2 Relevant previous assignments
- In a separate folder upload your financial proposal
- All these should be done through the IFDC website, at this link
<https://jobs.silkroad.com/IFDC/Careers>

Application Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Score
<i>Detailed Capabilities Statement, stating your understanding of the TOR</i>	50%
<i>CVs of consultants forming part of the active Team</i>	20%
<i>2 Relevant previous assignments</i>	30%
<i>Detailed financial proposal</i>	10%
Total	100%

