



Terms of Reference

For the Project Mid-Term Evaluation

Project Title:

Improving Food Security and Income opportunities in two communities of Cibitoke Province, North-West Burundi

List of Acronyms

BIF	Burundi Francs
BPEAE	Provincial office in charge of Agriculture and Animal husbandry
CA	Conservation Agriculture
CF	Community Facilitator
ESM	income-generating measures
EUR	Euro
FAO	Food Agriculture Organization of United Nations
FFS	Farmer Field School
GAP	Good Agriculture Practices
HCB	Help Channel Burundi
HH	Household
IFAD	International Fund For Agricultural Development
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
ISABU	Institute of Scientific Research of Burundi
IT	Information Technology
KNH	Kindernothilfe
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MFI	Microfinance Institutions
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
(I)NGO	(International) Non-Governmental Organization
PHH	Post-Harvest Handling (Post-Harvest Handling)
PICS	Purdue Improved Crop Storage bags
PIP	Participatory Integrated Planning
PRODEFI	Agriculture Value Chain Development Program
RFFS	Rotational Farmer Field School
RoB	Government of Burundi
TOT	Training of Trainers
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VSLA	Village Saving and Loaning Association (community-based savings and loan groups). In Burundi: <i>Associations Villageoises d'Epargnes et de Crédits (AVEC)</i>
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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Introduction

Help Channel Burundi (HCB) is looking for a qualified consultant or team of consultants to conduct the project mid-term evaluation of a 52-months (01.10.2022 - 31.01.2027) project aimed at improving food security and income opportunities in two communities of Cibitoke Province in the Northwest of Burundi. The evaluation is to be carried out over two months, from February 1st to March 31st, 2025.

HCB is a Christian non-governmental organization founded in 2003 and recognized as a non-profit entity (ASBL) under Burundian law. Its vision is to foster a society that upholds human dignity, food security, sustainable livelihoods, environmental protection, and respect for human rights, including education, children's rights, and gender equality at national and regional levels.

The organization was officially registered as a non-profit on September 18, 2003, through Ministerial Decree No. 530/1359. A dedicated management team, led by an Executive Director, oversees daily operations, while a five-member supervisory board, meeting biannually, guides strategic decisions. The board's chairperson also serves as the organization's legal representative, and a 12-member General Assembly convenes annually.

Committed to empowering vulnerable and marginalized populations, HCB ensures that all individuals can realize their rights without discrimination based on identity, gender, religion, or political affiliation. To enhance its contribution to sustainable development in Burundi, the organization developed a strategic plan for 2021-2025, focusing on six key intervention areas: (i) Food Security and Livelihoods, (ii) Environmental Protection, (iii) Children's Rights, (iv) Gender Equality, (v) Community Health, and (vi) institutional Development.

Since October 2022, the organization has been implementing the project "Improving Food Security and Income Opportunities in Two Communities in Cibitoke Province," with support from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and from the German Child Rights Organization Kindernothilfe (KNH). This initiative addresses critical issues such as food insecurity, poverty, and malnutrition by promoting sustainable agricultural practices, strengthening savings groups, and improving nutrition.

This mid-term evaluation aims to assess 3 evaluation parameters of: **relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability** of the project thus far. It will examine how well the project activities align with the needs of the communities, the effectiveness of implemented interventions, and the potential for sustainable outcomes beyond the project's duration.

Information on the project

The proposed project aims to address the acute development challenges faced by Cibitoke, a province in northwestern Burundi with a population of about 695,000 people. Situated at the border with Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the region has experienced significant setbacks in trade, particularly with Rwanda, due to political tensions and the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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Agriculture, the primary livelihood for the population, is plagued by low productivity, mainly due to suboptimal farming techniques, limited access to quality inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides, and adverse weather conditions. In the target districts of Buganda and Rugombo, average maize production is a mere 200 kg/ha, contributing to widespread food insecurity. More than 50% of households suffer from insufficient food during the lean season, and high post-harvest losses, caused by inadequate storage and pest infestations, further exacerbate the situation. Additionally, in 2020, Cibitoke recorded 3,523 malnutrition cases, with a significant portion of these occurring in the target districts, particularly among children under five.

The region also faces significant structural challenges, including a lack of financial services, insufficient storage methods, and limited opportunities for entrepreneurship, which hinder efforts to improve livelihoods and build resilience to climate change. Despite the government's efforts to promote various development strategies, such as the Plan National de Développement (PND), these challenges persist due to limited resources and capacities.

To address these issues, the project since October 2022 has been implementing a range of coordinated interventions aimed at improving food security and income opportunities for vulnerable populations. The project is focussing on:

- **Capacity building:** Providing training in adapted agricultural techniques, promoting sustainable farming practices, and improving post-harvest handling methods.
- **Improved access to inputs:** Facilitating access to quality agricultural inputs and supporting the construction of storage infrastructure to reduce post-harvest losses and improve food security.
- **Financial services:** Supporting the establishment of community-based village saving and loans associations to enhance financial inclusion and enable households to access necessary resources.
- **Diversification of income:** Encouraging alternative livelihood opportunities to reduce dependency on agriculture and improve economic resilience.
- **Nutrition and health care:** Providing education on nutrition and health to tackle malnutrition, particularly among children and women.

Gender equity, youth empowerment, and the protection of marginalized groups, including children are cross-cutting themes integrated into all interventions, ensuring that the benefits of the project are equitably distributed. The project is aligned with national development goals, including those outlined in the Plan National de Développement (PND), and directly contributes to improving food security, economic opportunities, and resilience in the target regions of Cibitoke. This comprehensive approach ensures that the project not only addresses immediate agricultural challenges but also fosters long-term, sustainable development for the communities of Buganda and Rugombo.

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Objective and Purpose of the evaluation

The overall objective of the mid-term evaluation is to assess the; relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of project's implementation progress and assess the achievement of intermediate outcomes, identifying both successes and challenges encountered.

This evaluation will assess how; (i) effectively the project has reached its intended outputs and outcomes, and determine whether the interventions are on track to meet the overall objectives by the end of the project period, (ii) the project interventions have been relevant to the needs of the community, (iii) the project will be sustainable beyond the project period.

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the project's performance at its midpoint, including an assessment of relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability. By combining both quantitative and qualitative indicators, this evaluation will track measurable progress and explore the experiences and perceptions of beneficiaries and stakeholders, focusing on the skills and knowledge acquired through the project.

In addition, the evaluation will identify best practices, document lessons learned, and highlight areas needing further investment or adjustment to ensure the achievement of project goals by project end. This mid-term evaluation will provide valuable guidance for refining strategies for the remaining implementation phase, informing the planning of any necessary changes and ensuring that the project remains on track to meet its intended objectives.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation questions aim to assess the progress, relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the project in Buganda and Rugombo, Cibitoke province. The questions will evaluate key aspects such as relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, and cross-cutting issues. They are designed to provide insights into the project's success, challenges, and areas for improvement, guiding future decision-making and strategic planning.

➤ **Relevance:**

- To what extent do the project's activities address the key challenges faced by the target communities in Buganda and Rugombo, particularly in improving food security, nutrition, income generation, and climate resilience?
- To what extent were community members and local stakeholders involved in the identification of project priorities and intervention strategies?
- How effectively does the project align with national development goals and existing strategies, such as the Plan National de Développement (PND)?

➤ **Effectiveness:**

- How effective have the agricultural training programs and the provision of improved inputs been in enhancing farming practices, reducing post-harvest losses, and contributing to food security? How has the project impacted food security among

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participating households as measured by changes in food availability and household dietary diversity?

- To what extent have VSLA trainings improved access to resources and diversified income opportunities for households?
- To what extent have PIP trainings improved effective planning and utilization of household resources?
- To what extent have nutritional trainings improved nutrition situation among households especially for vulnerable groups children and pregnant mothers.

➤ **Sustainability:**

- What strategies have been put in place to ensure the long-term sustainability of agricultural practices, community financial access, good feeding beyond the project's duration?

➤ **Cross cutting issues**

- How well has the project integrated gender equality and women's empowerment, and what changes have been observed in the roles of women and marginalized groups?
- How actively have community members participated in the project, and how has their involvement influenced its outcomes and future sustainability?

Scope of the evaluation

i. Geographical coverage

The evaluation will be conducted in 8 targeted collines in 2 communes of Rugombo and Buganda, Cibitoke Province where the project has been implemented since October 2022

Province	Communes	Communities/collines
Cibitoke	Buganda	Kaburantwa, Murambi, Ndava, Gasenyi
	Rugombo	Munyika I, Rukana I, Rukana II, Gabiro-Runyagira

ii. Target groups and groups' sizes

- **Direct Target Group:**
Smallholder farmers: The project directly targets 3,200 vulnerable individuals across 8 communities in Buganda and Rugombo Municipalities of Cibitoke Province. Of these, 1,920 (60%) are women, reflecting a focus on gender inclusivity. These individuals are involved in activities such as agricultural improvement, post-harvest management, and participation in community-based savings and loan associations (VSLAs) and nutrition.
- **Community Facilitators (CFs):** A team of 16 facilitators, playing a critical role in knowledge transfer, capacity building, and agricultural training for community members.
- **Community Health Advisors (Mamans Lumière):** These are 50 community based volunteers conducting awareness campaigns and provide information on health

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topics, particularly focusing on nutrition and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene).

iii. Actors, Stakeholders, and Intermediaries

The project leverages a wide range of intermediaries and stakeholders to ensure successful implementation and knowledge dissemination:

- **Government Technical Services:** Representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and related agencies i.e Provincial directorate in charge of agriculture and animal husbandry (BPEAE) support the target group by offering technical expertise and oversight for Farmer Field Schools and agricultural activities.
- **Local Authorities:** Leaders at the municipal and community levels facilitate coordination and ensure alignment with local development plans.

These actors and stakeholders work in synergy to enhance the project's impact, sustainability, and reach, ensuring that knowledge, resources, and benefits are equitably distributed across the communities.

Methodological Approach and Data Analysis

Key elements of the methodology should include:

1. Methods to be employed:

- **Quantitative Methods:** Use standardized surveys to collect data from a representative sample of project participants, focusing on indicators related to resilience, income diversification, and women's empowerment. The community beneficiaries' survey will also consider survey on diverse impact, and change due to the project implementation.
- **Qualitative Methods:** Conduct in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with community members, stakeholders, and project staff to gather insights into experiences, challenges, and success stories.

2. Data Collection Tools:

- Utilize participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools, questionnaires, and effect chain analysis to assess changes and impacts systematically.
- Consider employing an influence matrix to understand the relationships between project activities and outcomes.

3. Information Sources:

Data will be collected from a range of sources, including:

- Project reports, baseline data, and earlier feasibility reports provided by Help Channel Burundi.
- Monitoring data, financial records, and documentation of training and capacity-building activities.

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- Input from key informants, such as target group members, local government officials, community-based organizations, and partnering organizations.

4. External Data

- Assess relevant local, regional, and national data to contextualize findings and compare them with similar projects, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation perspective.

5. Stakeholder Involvement

- Engage various users and stakeholders throughout the evaluation process, ensuring that community members, including children and youth, are consulted in a manner that respects their rights and perspectives. This may involve tailored activities to gather their input on project impacts and suggestions for improvement.

Expected deliverables

The consultant (team)

- Plans the overall evaluation process in collaboration with HCB's staff. To this effect there will be a meeting of HCB staff and consultants.
- Shall prepare the data collection tools (e.g. questionnaires, interview guidelines, observation sheets...) both in English and in Kirundi for comment before the actual work.
- Needs to realize document review, a stakeholder analysis and conduct physical interviews with HCB staff in order to gain knowledge of the project, its progress and clients, and the organization.
- Shall submit an inception report with their evaluation methodology, timelines, and data collection tools within two weeks of contract signing.
- Tests the tools in the field with the presence of HCB staff in order to ensure that the right terminology is used and the questions are fully understood by the respondents.
- Is responsible for data collection during project evaluation. The evaluator will be assisted by HCB staff.
- Conducts FGDs with at least 100 participants, satisfaction survey with at least 60 participants, and interviews with at least 5 key informants.
- Collects and review secondary sources from BPEAE and governor office.
- Realizes a reflection session with HCB staff, where draft findings are presented and in-depth sense-making of the data is done. Two days of exchange meeting with beneficiaries' representatives and stakeholders will be organized to have an input in evaluation results.
- Will present a draft evaluation report and a validation session with HCB staff, stakeholders, and beneficiaries on the draft content of the report will feed into the final report. KNH will also be involved for reviewing the draft report
- will present a final project mid-term evaluation report

Additionally, the consultant (team) will provide weekly updates summarizing completed activities, initial findings, and any challenges encountered. A mid-evaluation meeting will be held to discuss preliminary findings and make any necessary adjustments to the evaluation plan.

All deliverables, including reports and presentations, should be written in English and, when necessary, translated into Kirundi for local stakeholders.

Required consultant qualifications and Expertise

- ✓ A minimum of five years of experience in conducting evaluations, with at least three completed evaluations in relevant sectors. Submitting a reference study is an advantage.
- ✓ Should hold at least a Master's degree in a relevant field (e.g., social sciences, rural economics, agriculture development and development studies).
- ✓ Relevant experience in both qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods.
- ✓ Fluency in English, Kirundi and French.
- ✓ Demonstrated expertise in agriculture, climate resilience, and community development is crucial.
- ✓ Familiarity with the socio-economic context of Burundi

Roles and Responsibilities

HCB through the project management:

- Will support the evaluation by arranging transportation for evaluators, organizing workshops and focus group discussions with stakeholders,
- Will supply necessary data and documents, including the project proposal and objectives upon contract signing, baseline data reports, project annual reports, feasibility report and project monitoring data, on request within a week of signing, and essential policies such as the Child Rights Protection Policy and Code of Conduct at the start of the evaluation.
- Payment of consultant for according contractual terms

The consultant (team)

- Is responsible for carrying out the evaluation within the intended period and in the required quality while providing all listed deliverables.
- Must notify the employer as soon as he/she becomes aware of any circumstances likely to delay the work. The evaluator will take all reasonable steps to minimize these effects

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Timeframe

This ToR is published on January 23 to February 10, 2025.

The evaluation must take place during February 2025 up to end of April 2025. The evaluation team is expected to visit the project area during the 2nd week of March 2025.

Phase	Activity	timeline
Conclusion of contract	Signing the contract	February 17, 2025
Inception phase	Documents reviews, preparation of methodologies and data collection methods, developing data collection tools, face-to-face interviews with HCB staff	March 3, 2025
Field visit	Field data collection and analysis	March 24, 2025
End phase	Writing of the draft of report	April 7, 2025
End phase	Submission of the Draft evaluation report	April 14, 2025
End Phase	Feedback from HCB staff and comments from donors	April 21, 2025
End phase	Discussion of the Evaluation Results and Recommendations with Stakeholders : Validation meeting	April 24, 2025
End phase	Final report	April 30, 2025

Mode of payment

Payments for the evaluation will be made as follows:

30% upon Signing of the Contract

40% upon Submission of the Draft Report

30% upon Approval of the Final Report

Proposal Requirements

Interested consultants for this consultancy assignment are expected to submit a technical and financial proposal on the basis of the TOR. The technical proposal should be prepared according to standard, including all necessary information that indicates the competence of the consultant, their understanding of the assignment and their preparedness to take and conduct the assignment. Accordingly, the proposal is expected to contain the following minimum requirements:

- Consultants' understanding of the content and essence of the TOR
- Profile of the consultant/consultancy firm focusing on information relevant to the task at hand.
- CVs of key personnel who will be engaged in the assignment



- A detailed technical proposal with information about what data are to be collected from what sources to answer the evaluation questions (e.g. in the form of an evaluation matrix), suggested sample sizes, information about human resources to be employed in the evaluation with their different functions and a suggested evaluation schedule.
- A detailed and transparent financial proposal.

Ethical considerations

- **Child Protection Policy:** The evaluator adheres to the Child protection policy of Help Channel Burundi's child protection policy. He/she will sign the policy and heed all regulations.
- **Transparency:** The evaluator maintains open communication regarding evaluation processes and findings.
- **Confidentiality:** Protect the privacy of participants and safeguard sensitive.
- **Anti-Corruption Policies:** Adherence to anti-corruption measures during the evaluation process.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in this mid-term evaluations

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in evaluation processes is becoming increasingly common and can bring significant benefits by improving the quality and efficiency of evaluations. However, it's important to recognise that the use of AI also presents inherent risks and challenges. While AI technologies can streamline data analysis, identify patterns and generate insights at scale, they can also introduce bias, inaccuracy and ethical concerns into the evaluation process. These risks not only affect the integrity and credibility of evaluation findings, but also have implications for the privacy, rights and well-being of the target groups and stakeholders involved. Therefore, consultants submitting proposals for this evaluation assignment are required to provide a firm description on how they plan to use AI tools in the proposed evaluation and how they will address and mitigate their inherent risks, thereby ensuring the responsible and ethical use of AI throughout the evaluation process. In particular, evaluation proposals are to provide detailed information on the following aspects:

- **Rationale and Purpose:** Consultants should clearly articulate the rationale and purpose for incorporating AI into the evaluation methodology, explaining how it will enhance the quality, rigor, and efficiency of the evaluation process.
- **Methodological Approach:** Consultants should provide a detailed description of the specific AI techniques, tools, or models they intend to utilize in the evaluation, including their relevance to the evaluation objectives and data sources.
- **Data Collection and Analysis:** Consultants should outline the sources of data that will be used to train AI models or algorithms, as well as the methods for data collection, processing, and analysis. This should include considerations for data privacy, confidentiality, and security, as well as measures to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and validity of the data.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Consultants should address ethical considerations associated with the use of AI, including potential biases, fairness, transparency, and accountability. They should describe how they will mitigate risks and ensure compliance with relevant ethical guidelines and regulations.



- **Human Oversight and Interpretation:** Consultants should clarify the role of human oversight and interpretation in the use of AI, including how AI-generated insights will be validated, interpreted, and integrated with other sources of evidence or expertise.
- **Reporting and Documentation:** Consultants should specify how findings, conclusions, and recommendations derived from AI-driven analysis will be documented, reported, and communicated to stakeholders in a clear, understandable, and transparent manner.

Submission of applications

Interested consultants are expected to send the technical and financial proposals as well as any attachments, if applicable, to Executive Director of HCB (info@helpchannelburundi.org & copy: nkndyaguma@gmail.com and Helena Dietz by KNH (helena.dietz@knh.de).

Submission deadline: **February 10, before 4:00hr**

Remedying Defects

Help Channel Burundi may at any time notify the evaluator of any defect or outstanding work. The Consultant shall remedy, at no cost to the organization, any defect in the design, quality of materials, or workmanship of the evaluator. Failure to remedy defects or complete outstanding work within a reasonable time of the HCB's notice shall entitle HCB to carry out all necessary work at the Consultant's expense.

Approval and Termination of the Agreement

This agreement will only be effective if signed by both HCB and the evaluator. Any breach of the employer will have the mandate to terminate the agreement. The termination of the agreement does not guarantee any compensation to the evaluator.

Annexes

Annex 1. Evaluation Matrix

The evaluation matrix is an important tool for summarizing the evaluation design. First, the key questions for the evaluation are defined. These are then broken down into specific research questions. Then, data sources are identified for each specific research question, along with appropriate data collection tools or methods for each data source. This matrix is also useful for specifying the indicators by which specific questions will be evaluated.

Issues	Key Questions	Specific Research Questions	Data Sources	Methods / Tools	(Indicators)
Design					
Relevance					



Effectiveness					
Sustainability					
Cross-cutting issues					
(Other key issues as necessary)					

Annex 2. Key Informants

Below is a list of individuals to consult, along with their contact information. The list includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Project Team members: HCB Executive Director, Program Project Manager, project coordinator, PMEL officer, field staff
- Direct stakeholders such as VSLA member, youth in income generating activities, Mama Lumiel, and local government representatives, colline's elected, administrator office, District medicine officer, BPEAE office, Governor representative, and.
- Location to visit: All 8 collines from target area

Annex 3. Documents to consult

This is the list of important documents that evaluators should read at the outset of the evaluation and before finalizing the evaluation design. This should be limited to essential information that the evaluation team needs. Data sources and documents may include:

- HCB Standards for Project/ Program Management
- HCB/ KNH Project proposal
- Baseline Data Reports/ Monitoring Reports
- Latest Annual work plans
- Monitoring data and analysis of the data
- Latest full year's technical report
- Feasibility study report
- Child protection policy of HCB
- Safeguarding policy of HCB

Annex 4. Required Format for the Evaluation Report

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- Title Page, including project title and number, date of report, authors and their affiliations, HCB point of contact for the evaluation, etc.
- Executive Summary:
 - Brief project description and context
 - Purpose and expected use of the evaluation.
 - Objectives of the evaluation
 - Summary of the evaluation methodology
 - Main findings and conclusions, especially regarding the project's objectives/targets.
 - Key recommendations
 - Summary of lessons learned.
- Acknowledgments
- Table of Contents
- List of Acronyms and Abbreviations
- Main Report:
 - Audience and use of the evaluation
 - Objectives of the evaluation
 - Evaluation methodology, including the rationale for the choice of methodology, data sources, data collection and analysis methods, participatory techniques, ethical and equity considerations, and major limitations of the methodology.
 - Composition of the evaluation team, including specific roles of team members
 - The project description includes background, underlying rationale, stakeholders and beneficiaries, conceptual model, results chain or logical framework, and project monitoring system.
 - Evaluation results, documented by evidence:
 - Design: quality and relevance
 - Effectiveness (progress towards objectives and results); contributions of stakeholders; constraints or problems encountered.
 - Sustainability of project/program impacts; capacity built; institutional and stakeholder issues.
 - Conclusions: overview of results; reasons for successes and failures; innovations
 - Recommendations (based on evidence and insights)
 - Lessons learned with greater relevance can be generalized beyond the project.
- Annexes to the evaluation report:
 - Terms of reference for the evaluation
 - Evaluation matrix
 - Timetable
 - List of individuals interviewed and of stakeholder groups and/or communities consulted.
 - List of supporting documents examined.
 - Research instruments: questionnaire, interview guide(s), etc., if applicable

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- Summary tables of progress towards outputs, targets, and objectives – referring directly to the indicators established for these in the project log frame.
- Short biographies of the external facilitator.

Date of approval: 23/07/2025

Approved by:

NDIKURIYO Cassien

Executive Director

Sign:

