



## Mid-term Evaluation Scope of Work

<b>Activity Name:</b>	Strengthen Markets, Agroecology, Resilience & employment - SMART
<b>Implementer(s):</b>	Prime implementing partner: Mercy Corps Europe Partner: Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Germany (VSF)
<b>Award Number:</b>	NDICI AFRICA/2024/442-067
<b>Duration of the action:</b>	48 Months
<b>Active Geographic Region:</b>	Central and South Darfur states, Sudan.  Localities:  Central Darfur: Zalingei, Azoom, Wadissalih, Central Jabal Marrah  South Darfur: Kass, Belil, Meching, East Jabal Marrah
<b>Duration of consultancy</b>	<b>45 Working days</b> (June 21, 2026 – August 21, 2026)

### 1. BACKGROUND

The SMART (Strengthen Markets, Agroecology, Resilience & employment) program is a 48-month EU-funded action implemented by Mercy Corps Netherlands in partnership with VSF Germany. The program contributes to sustainable and resilient livelihoods and food security in rural communities affected by food insecurity, climate change, and conflict in South and Central Darfur.

SMART works with smallholder farmers, herders, women, youth, IDPs, returnees, refugees, host communities, MSMEs, cooperatives, private sector actors, service providers, and local institutions to strengthen agriculture and livestock market systems, promote agroecological practices, create decent jobs, and improve equitable access to natural resources.

The program contributes to EU priorities in Sudan, including resilience and livelihoods, women and youth participation, the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, peacebuilding, climate adaptation, and green development.

SMART is implemented in a volatile context marked by conflict, displacement, inflation, market disruption, access constraints, weakened institutions, and pressure on natural resources. The program therefore includes adaptive management mechanisms, including a crisis modifier, regular pause-and-reflect sessions, context monitoring, and flexible implementation planning.

### 2. SMART Program Specific Objectives:

SO1: To sustainably increase productivity and profitability of smallholder agriculture and livestock value chains using agroecological practices.

SO2: To create sustainable and decent jobs for youth and women, including IDP and refugee populations, with a focus on rural and food-insecure areas.

SO3: To facilitate equal and sustainable access to natural resources in order to contribute to food security, mitigate conflicts, and allow the voluntary return of conflict-displaced people.

The program is expected to directly benefit approximately 200,000 people, including 52,000 IDPs, 102,000 women, and 40,000 youth across South and Central Darfur.

As SMART approaches two years of implementation in June 2026, Mercy Corps seeks to commission an independent midterm evaluation to assess progress, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, early outcomes, market systems change, implementation quality, adaptive management, and sustainability prospects.

Considering the above objectives, the **Theory of Change** for the SMART program is summarized as follows:

***IF** we can protect livelihoods, assets and market relationships of vulnerable and marginalised smallholder farmers, especially women and youth, in the face of the current crisis and support the continuation of farming product to alleviate food insecurity; **and IF** we can protect and promote businesses and farmer organisations that provide key services to and purchase produce from smallholder farmers; **and IF** we can provide young men and women with relevant skills and income to keep them from having to migrate; **IF** we can strengthen the organisational capacity and skills of target communities to forecast and manage conflicts caused by the current war or by access to natural resources. **THEN**, we will be able to reduce the impacts of the current conflict on the target regions and protect and strengthen conditions for a faster post-war economic recovery and agricultural development.*

### **3. Purpose and Scope of the Midterm Evaluation**

#### **3.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the midterm evaluation is to assess SMART's progress toward achieving its intended objectives and results, determine whether its design and implementation approach remain fit for purpose, and generate practical learning to guide the remaining two years of implementation.

The evaluation will examine whether SMART's market-based programming approach is relevant, effective, inclusive, conflict-sensitive, adaptive, and capable of contributing to sustainable systems-level change. It will also assess whether the program is creating the right conditions for improved productivity, profitability, food security, job creation, natural resource access, social cohesion, and resilience among target communities and market actors.

The evaluation will cover SMART implementation from start-up to the midpoint of the program, expected in June 2026. It will focus on implementation in South Darfur and Central Darfur across SO1, SO2, and SO3.

#### **3.2 Scope**

The evaluation will review:

1. Progress against the Description of Action and logframe.
2. Agriculture and livestock value chain interventions, including sorghum, millet, sesame, groundnuts, vegetables, potatoes, milk, and meat, where applicable.
3. Agroecology, seed systems, input access, extension services, livestock services, cooperative strengthening, savings groups, MSME development, youth employment, vocational skills, infrastructure-linked employment, and natural resource management.
4. Market facilitation approaches, including grants, subsidies, partnerships, private sector engagement, and service provider models.
5. Emerging systemic change, market actor behavior, business model performance, sustainability, crowding-in, replication, and scale.
6. Adaptive management in response to insecurity, displacement, inflation, market disruption, access restrictions, and local power dynamics.
7. Cross-cutting themes, including gender equality, youth inclusion, disability inclusion, protection,

conflict sensitivity, accountability, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion.

8. Implementation bottlenecks, unintended effects, and opportunities for adaptation in the remaining two years.

#### 4. Evaluation Objectives

The evaluation will:

1. Assess progress against SMART's objectives, outputs, outcomes, and logframe targets.
2. Review the continued relevance of the Theory of Change, intervention logic, assumptions, selected value chains, targeting, and implementation strategies.
3. Assess the effectiveness of SMART's market-based programming approach, including work through market actors, cooperatives, MSMEs, service providers, and community institutions.
4. Identify early signs of systemic change in market actor behavior, service provision, business models, access to finance, employment pathways, natural resource governance, and community cooperation.
5. Review implementation quality, adaptive management, sequencing, layering, and use of evidence for decision-making.
6. Assess gender, youth, IDP, returnee, refugee, host community, disability, protection, and conflict-sensitivity considerations.
7. Review coordination, consortium management, partnership arrangements, staffing, procurement, grants, operations, and technical support.
8. Assess whether SMART's MEL, accountability, and learning systems generate useful, timely, disaggregated, conflict-sensitive, and decision-relevant evidence.
9. Generate practical and prioritized recommendations to improve implementation, adaptation, sustainability, and scale during the remaining program period.

#### 5. Evaluation Design and Proposed Questions

**Mid-term Methodology** - The mid-term survey will be conducted using a mixed method approach employing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies involving administration of a simple questionnaire to eligible respondents within the communities of intervention alongside focus group discussions, key informant interviews among other viable data collection methodologies. Data will be collected from purposely selected participants to better understand the contextual norms and practices surrounding participants' improved status and practices and to gather information about the communities of intervention.

The consulting firm is expected to provide a means of answering the evaluation questions using both qualitative and quantitative means of data-collection, using a representative sampling design. It will also include generating key deliverables that include developing an Inception Report detailing the process and methodologies to be employed to answer the evaluation questions; undertaking desk review of the relevant program documents and secondary analysis to further inform the results interpretation; designing evaluation methodology in line with global best practices and standards as well as generating key lessons and best practices identified through the evaluation process.

evaluation methodology will consider the following:

**Design Qualitative and Quantitative Data Framework and Tools** - The external evaluator (consultant) is expected to conduct a mixed methods evaluation using tools and a work plan approved by the Country MEL Lead prior to the start of the evaluation.

Data collection shall involve visits to a sample of program locations, meetings with program partners, targeted participants, and other key stakeholders. Travel to program locations is subject to security clearance and adherence to Mercy Corps safety and security protocols. The consultant will lead the qualitative and quantitative data collection, including supervising data collection teams, and completing the analysis using an approved Data Analysis Plan (DAP) within the approved timeline adopting the most appropriate sample size for the assignment.

**Qualitative approach** - The qualitative evaluation must capture lessons learned and best practices through

a variety of qualitative methods. The consulting firm will design the overall qualitative study approach that considers a variety of primary data collection methods, including semi-structured in-depth interviews; focus group discussions; behavior/system change case studies; and observations. The evaluation team leader and members will be responsible for collecting and analyzing qualitative data. Data will be collected from key stakeholders through interviews, discussions, consultative processes, and observations. Participants for the qualitative interviews will be selected using purposive samples. The consultant should provide measures to ensure data quality is assured throughout the evaluation process.

Quantitative approach - The quantitative analysis developed to evaluate the results of the program should allow for comparison of indicators at mid-term, and the changes over time in the program participants. The sampling design, the questionnaire, and the fieldwork data collection activities will be guided and led by the external consultant, in coordination with Mercy Corps SMART program team. The mid-term will include primary data collection and analysis of quantitative survey data. The mid-term survey tool will be designed by the consultant. The field operations - from hiring and training of enumerators and testing of tools - will be led by the consultant with support from Mercy Corps. Quantitative designs will allow the program to examine statistically significant changes and aligned to key outcome indicators, with the sampling frame and sample size determined as the overall sampling strategy.

As a recommendation, the following evaluation questions can be considered with potential edits and changes considered by the external evaluator:

### **Relevance and Strategic-Fit**

- To what extent does SMART's design remain relevant to the current food security, livelihood, conflict, climate, displacement, and market realities in South and Central Darfur?
- Are the Theory of Change, assumptions, targeting criteria, selected value chains, and intervention pathways still valid?
- Is SMART's market systems approach appropriate in a context where markets, institutions, mobility, and services are disrupted?
- How well does SMART align with EU priorities on resilience, women and youth participation, green development, peacebuilding, and the HDP nexus?

### **Effectiveness and Progress Toward Results**

- What progress has SMART made toward its overall objective and three Specific Objectives?
- What results are emerging in productivity, profitability, market access, agroecology adoption, veterinary services, cooperative membership, access to finance, job creation, enterprise development, and natural resource governance?
- Are interventions delivering results at the expected depth, quality, scale, and pace?
- What evidence exists of improved food security, income, employment, resilience, social cohesion, or coping capacity?
- What unintended positive or negative outcomes have emerged?

### **Market Systems Development and Systemic Change**

- To what extent is SMART facilitating sustainable market functions rather than substituting for market actors?
- Are supported market actors changing behavior, investing resources, expanding services, reaching new customers, or sustaining activities beyond program support?
- Are cooperatives, MSMEs, input suppliers, veterinary service providers, financial actors, traders, processors, and institutions taking stronger roles in the market system?
- Are cost-share, subsidy, grant, training, and partnership mechanisms encouraging ownership and avoiding dependency?
- Are there signs of replication, crowding-in, adaptation, or scale?
- What market constraints remain most binding, and how should SMART adapt?

### **Agroecology, Climate Adaptation, and Environment**

- To what extent are farmers, cooperatives, service providers, and market actors adopting or promoting agroecological practices?
- Are the promoted practices technically feasible, commercially viable, climate-relevant, and attractive to farmers and market actors?
- Are interventions contributing to productivity, soil health, water efficiency, crop diversity, nutrition, profitability, and climate resilience?
- How effective are farmer field schools, demonstration plots, ToT models, extension approaches, and farmer-to-farmer learning?

### **Job Creation, Youth, Women, and Enterprise Development**

- To what extent is SMART creating realistic, safe, sustainable, and decent employment opportunities for youth, women, IDPs, returnees, refugees, and host communities?
- Are vocational skills, agro-processing, BDS, enterprise support, and market linkage interventions aligned with market demand?
- Are youth and women transitioning from training to income generation, wage employment, self-employment, or enterprise growth?
- What barriers continue to limit women and youth participation in rural markets?

### **Natural Resource Governance, Conflict Sensitivity, and Social Cohesion**

- To what extent are natural resource management, land access, water infrastructure, grazing routes, and farmer-herder relations being addressed in ways that reduce conflict risks?
- Are community resilience groups, NRM committees, traditional leaders, and local governance actors functioning effectively?
- Are interventions conflict-sensitive and do-no-harm in design and implementation?
- Are IDPs, returnees, refugees, host communities, women, youth, pastoralists, and farmers equitably represented in decision-making structures?
- Are any interventions creating or worsening tensions around resources, markets, employment, infrastructure, or assistance?

### **Adaptive Management and Implementation Quality**

- Is SMART using flexible, iterative, and adaptive implementation approaches in response to uncertainty?
- Are rapid evaluations, context monitoring, market information, conflict analysis, and field learning informing decisions?
- Are adaptations documented, evidence-based, and communicated to relevant stakeholders?
- Are interventions sequenced, layered, and integrated effectively across SO1, SO2, and SO3?
- Which interventions should be scaled, redesigned, paused, exited, or replaced?

### **Efficiency, Value for Money, and Return on Investment**

- Are SMART's financial, human, operational, and partnership resources being used efficiently?
- Are procurement, logistics, grants, subawards, access management, and partner arrangements enabling timely and quality implementation?
- Are cost-share, subsidy, cash-for-work, grant, and market actor support mechanisms proportionate to the results achieved?
- What is the emerging value for money of selected intervention models in terms of outreach, adoption, income, jobs, resilience, market actor investment, and sustainability?

### **MEL, Learning, and Accountability**

- Is SMART's MEL system fit for purpose for a complex, adaptive, market-based program in a conflict-affected context?
- Are indicators, targets, tools, and data sources adequate to capture outputs, outcomes, systemic change, inclusion, resilience, and sustainability?
- Are data collected in a timely, reliable, disaggregated, and conflict-sensitive manner?

- Is SMART capturing behavior change, market actor investment, business model performance, sustainability, partner performance, and unintended effects?
- Are monitoring findings being used for decision-making?
- Is the Community Accountability Reporting Mechanism accessible, safe, confidential, and responsive?

It is expected that the external consultant will carry comprehensive desk review of program documents in addition to reviewing relevant contextual documents. An inception report detailing the process and methodologies to be employed to answer the evaluation questions aligned to the proposed evaluation dimensions will be produced as part of the initial review of the proposed methodology for evaluation.

## 6. Required Sources of Information

For each evaluation question, the consultants are expected to define the information required, sources of information, procedure for collecting data and ensuring its validity and credibility, and the method of analysis (Data Analysis Plan), interpretation, and synthesis. This will be an iterative process between the evaluation team and the program teams at the inception stage. This process will also anchor the review of the original evaluation questions in the SoW when designing the criteria and standards for the data that would be required to answer them, to refine and finalize on the learning evaluation questions.

In addition, the recommended sources of information, the Activity implementation team will avail the programs indicator plan and work plans to enable extraction of further learning questions for in-depth analysis. The following data sources includes both existing and new program information sources

### Existing Sources of Information

- Program proposal
- Logframe and Indicator Plan Tracking Table (IPTT)
- Program Reports
- Annual work plans
- Monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan
- All Assessment Report (Gender, value chain, youth LMA, etc.,)
- Annual reports (and associated data)

### New Sources of Information

- Participatory reflection workshops reports and meetings to gather experience and observations from team members, partners, participants, and other external stakeholders

## 7. Evaluation Findings Dissemination

The primary intended users and uses of the evaluation's findings will include.

1. European Union as the funder - We hope that the evaluation findings will be used to decide if and how to further support similar activity and collaboration efforts in Sudan.
2. Mercy Corps Sudan and its partners – We hope that the evaluation findings will be relevant to guide review of the Activity implementation plans based on progress and achievement, and sustainability plans, refine key project documents including Activities logframe and performance indicators and tools, as well as strengthen the Activity's evaluation strategies and development of the next funding strategy and help develop relationships with funders.
3. Implementing partners and the broader nonprofit organizations implementing similar triple nexus activities in Sudan, we hope that the findings will be useful to assess their role in designing and implementing similar programs.

In addition, we hope that the evaluation findings will not only be critical to meet the above-highlighted purpose but also serve as a learning experience, where the process of generating answers to the proposed evaluation questions will provide the Activity and the implementation team with new understanding on the Activity's achievements and inform an effective implementation strategy for the remaining period of implementation.

## 8. CONSULTANCY KEY TASKS, OUTPUTS and DELIVERABLES

Mercy Corps will establish an evaluation team to oversee all related tasks of the mid-term evaluation process. Successful consultant (consultancy firm) will work closely with the Senior MEL Manager, MEL Coordinator, Program Director, Program Performance and Quality team and the Program team to design and conduct this mixed-methods evaluation and post-evaluation workshop deliverables. The Senior MEL Manager and the MEL Coordinator will be responsible for the overall coordination of all tasks.

The **consultant(s)** will be expected to:

1. Attend the initial kick-off meeting of the evaluation to validate the purpose, outputs, and deliverables of the evaluation assignment.
2. Review program documents updated work plans and program reports and all other relevant documents to inform a comprehensive evaluation methodology and matrix presented in a detailed inception report.
3. Review and use the program's up to date IPTT and other performance data including:
  - a. Routine monitoring data (RMD)
  - b. Baseline study data
  - c. Progress and performance reports and/or recurrent monitoring data
4. Review other key program documents (e.g., gender analysis, formative studies conducted for the program, etc.)
5. Review any data/information used to monitor the quality of the program's key services/interventions (including but not limited to CARM data)
6. Prepare an ***inception report*** to include a comprehensive evaluation approach, a draft data analysis plan (DAP) appropriate for the mixed-methods study), sampling design(s) and size(s), a practical method to assess the quality of the program's key services/interventions, a revised and final timeline for conducting the mid-term evaluation (one round of revisions to inception report and DAP anticipated).
7. Recruit, train and manage enumerators and supervisors
8. Prepare and present a 1-day workshop to present the evaluation plan to the evaluation team and program staff
9. Develop evaluation instruments (one round of revisions anticipated)
  - a. Including finalizing and testing of these tools as appropriate
10. Develop a final Data Analysis Plan (DAP)
11. Conduct secondary data analysis of Routine Monitoring and Program Data
12. Facilitate the training of FGD/KII facilitators & note takers (and enumerators where applicable)
13. Conduct and analyze key informant interviews (**KII**) and focus group discussions (**FGD**) and manage that new qualitative data.
14. Collect and oversee comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data collection in addition to the above as applicable
15. Encode and analyze data collected through quantitative and qualitative data collection approaches
16. Prepare and present preliminary results and analysis to the SMART Program team.
17. Draft report, with the following required revisions:
  - a. Feedback from SMART and PaQ Team
  - b. Review of updated document when feedback is addressed (by Mercy Corps)
18. Edit and finalize (all deliverables to be submitted as publication ready)
  - a. Mid-term Evaluation Report (Not more than **30 pages** including links to annexes )
  - b. ***Lesson Learnt Document*** (Not more than **7-10 pages** minus annexes)
  - c. ***Two-pager infographic*** highlighting key program successes and working models informed by the evaluation findings
  - d. At least ***two case studies*** highlighting the program significant contributions towards the desired outcomes
19. Summarize the findings of the mid-term evaluation into a publication ready two-pager visual presentation (with graphs, columns, photos, if applicable)

**Mercy Corps** will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Share all necessary documents with the consultant to finalize the mid-term methodology and data collection tools.

- Provide input for study methodology, data collection tools, and report.
- Provide working space for the Consultant in Central and South Darfur MC offices throughout the evaluation.
- Has overall accountability of the process, while supporting coordination of field activities including data collection where applicable.
- Closely facilitate and monitor field data collection process, debriefing, and meeting the timelines.
- Inform sampled audience about their involvement in the study and set specific dates for the study field schedule.
- Approve inception report before data collection.
- Provide additional support to the consultant study technical lead (external Consulting partner) for the field visits processes as needed such as orientation, FGDs and KIIs.
- Approve draft and final reports.
- Provide any other required support aligned to the delivery of the mid-term evaluation tasks.

## 9. Consultant Outputs and Key Deliverables

The Mid-term evaluation will consist of three key phases namely a) inception, b) data collection and c) finalizing the report

### a) Inception phase:

- Kick off meeting with SMART Program team, PAQ team, and Technical focal point to understand the project and to collect required documents such as TOC, project proposal, logframe, Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation Plan, etc.
- Engage in additional consultations with relevant program team members to come to a consensus on the mid-term evaluation methodology, field visit plan, and sampling strategy.
- Produce an electronic copy of the draft inception report which include a detailed methodology and analytical framework along with tools to be used to gather any needed data/information and analyze existing and new data. The report should also specify provisions for quality assurance, data /information collection, data management and confidentiality, sampling, roles and responsibility of team members, key milestones, and detailed work plan.
- Make an oral presentation of the draft inception report.
- Incorporate feedback after Mercy Corps review of the inception report
- Submit final Inception Report

### b) Data collection phase:

The consultant will be provided with all the necessary contacts and assisted with arrangement of field discussions or survey administration where required as per the field visit plan. This phase will include the training of enumerators, adjustments of data collection tools (FGD, KII and surveys-if needed), planned reflection workshops with the project team, partners, and other stakeholders, and gathering existing program data and preparing it for analysis.

If a survey is needed, data will be collected using mobile devices on a tools coded by the consultant and deployed on Commcare app then synchronized into the Mercy Corps database.

### c) Finalizing the mid-term evaluation report:

This phase consists of the following steps:

- **Presentation:** Present preliminary results to SMART team for reviews and feedback.
- **Draft mid-term evaluation report:** Submit draft report incorporating feedback received during the preliminary results presentation. Mercy Corps will provide feedback to the mid-term report within five business days of receiving the draft report.
- **Final mid-term report:** Submit the final report to SMART Program Director and the Program Team. The final report will be prepared after a few iterations of the report if the quality standards are not met within the first round. The Final report format will be agreed during the inception phase and included into the inception report.

The final report will include the completed analytical framework of mid-term evaluation. The soft copy of all the supporting documents and annexes shall be handed over to Mercy Corps with the final report.

Informed by the above steps, the consultant will provide the following **deliverables** during their contract:

Deliverable	Estimated Deadline
<p><b>Inception report</b> with a comprehensive <b>evaluation plan</b>, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Mixed-methods evaluation design, methodologies used and sampling design/criteria, frame, size(s) for the qualitative data collection</li> <li>b. The Data Analysis Plan (DAP) for the mixed methods study</li> <li>c. Suggested improvements to the evaluation scope</li> <li>d. Revised Evaluation timeline</li> <li>e. Ethical considerations, limitations, and mitigation strategies.</li> </ul>	<p><b>June 25, 2026</b></p>
<p><b>1-day workshop</b> to present the evaluation plan to key staff</p>	<p><b>June 29, 2026</b></p>
<p><b>3-day training</b> for facilitators, interviewers and/or enumerators</p>	<p><b>July 5-7, 2026</b></p>
<p><b>Presentation of preliminary results and analysis workshop</b> for validation with the SAMRT program team and partners</p>	<p><b>August 11, 2026</b></p>
<p><b>First Draft of Final Report</b></p>	<p><b>August 13, 2026</b></p>
<p><b>Final Version of Final Report</b>, incorporating feedback from MC. The proposed reporting structure has been provided below (not more than 30 pages – all other additions can be included as annexes).</p>	<p><b>August 21, 2026</b></p>
<p><b>All Data sets, code books, syntax, etc.</b></p>	<p><b>August 21, 2026</b></p>
<p><b>Synthesized lessons learned document</b> for the program (7 – 9 pages)</p>	<p><b>August 21, 2026</b></p>
<p><b>Two Program Case study profiles</b> aligned to the program outcome themes</p>	<p><b>August 21, 2026</b></p>

A two-pager, publication-ready, visual summary of the findings of the mid-term evaluation (with graphs, columns, photos, if applicable).	<b>August 21, 2026</b>

## 10. Proposed Report Structure & Content

- Cover Page,
- List of Acronyms
- Table of Contents
- **Executive Summary:** This section should be a clear and concise stand-alone document that gives readers the essential contents of the evaluation report, including a summary of major findings, lessons learned, and recommendations.
- **Methodology:** This section should be sufficiently detailed to help the reader judge the accuracy of the report and its findings.
- **Limitations and mitigation strategies:** This section should address constraints and limitations of the methodology, and the implications of these limitations for the findings, including whether and why any of the evaluation findings are inconclusive.
- **Evaluation Results:** This section should provide a clear evaluation of progress concerning indicators/targets/objectives and evaluation questions. Reference baseline information as well as program logic, a theory of change, etc.
- **Synthesis, Recommendations, and Lessons Learned:** This is space for the evaluation team to think about the data and results and make concrete recommendations for current or future program improvements, pull out organization lessons learned, and comment on data and results. Everything presented in this section should be directly linked back to the information presented in the Results section of the report
- **Conflicts of Interest:** Disclose any conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest, including the interest of program staff in having a successful program.
- **Annexes:** These should include a complete file of data collection instruments in English and translations to Arabic; list of stakeholder groups with number and type of interactions; SOW, qualitative protocols developed and used, any data sets (these can be provided in electronic format), any required photos, participant profiles or other special documentation needed.

### Limitations and proposed mitigation strategies

Time and access to some places may be a major limitation concerning evaluation processes in fragile contexts such as Darfur in Sudan. This makes it often challenging to keep up strictly with a set agenda. This may potentially slow down the ability of the consultant, enumerators, or other members of the evaluation team to complete the evaluation on time. To address this issue, Mercy Corps has considered additional days to proposed work plan with extra overflow days for field data collection. MC team will also work closely with local authorities to ensure that the data collection process is conducted in the most appropriate time and acceptable conditions to all.

**Time frame** Although the mid-term evaluation is scheduled within very strict timelines by considering all the practical concerns, interested candidates are encouraged to develop a work plan in the proposal in line with the provided timelines.

### Evaluation Implementation Work Plan and Timelines

The Senior MEL Manager, MEL Coordinator, the program team, and PaQ team will manage the Evaluation process in coordination with the evaluation consultant to provide technical support in the refinement of the evaluation methodology and - in the case of data collection tools, inputs, and all supporting documents - to guide design and finalization of the evaluation methodology and data collection instruments.

The Consultancy will run for approximately **45 days** between **June 21 – August 21, 2026**. Bidding firms should propose edits where needed to the timelines estimated below. The duration/level of effort included is an estimate and the firm / consultant are welcome to suggest changes to this LOE in their bid/proposed plan.

Estimated durations and activities are outlined below:

Duration	Activity	Persona Responsible
1 day	Review draft evaluation SOW with the External Evaluator to clarify timeframe and available budget.	External Evaluator, Program Director, MEL Coordinator, MEL Team, Senior MEL Manager, PaQ Director, among others.
4 days	Undertake desk review of the relevant program documents that include the proposal, implementation plans, revised program design and timelines, program implementation reports, Baseline Report, Gender analysis report, and any other relevant documents. Develop an inception report detailing the process and methodologies to be employed to answer the evaluation questions. This should include all evaluation tools, and important time schedules for this exercise, and be presented to Mercy Corps for review and further inputs before going to the field.	External Evaluator (Consultants)
2 days	Provide feedback to inception report and tools for External Evaluator to incorporate (feedback will be consolidated from all reviewers before returning to External Evaluator)	External Evaluator, Program Director, MEL Team, Senior MEL Manager, PaQ Director, among others.
3 days	With input from Mercy Corps Programs team and MEL teams, refine data collection tools	External Evaluator
	Provide final versions of inception report and data collection tools to Mercy Corps	External Evaluator
	Consultant/firm submits complete draft of the DATA ANALYSIS PLAN (DAP) to Mercy Corps' POC (a complete draft includes dummy tables, placeholders for charts/graphs/images, description of how data triangulation/synthesis will be conducted, how qualitative data will be analysed, etc)	External Evaluator
	Mercy Corps' POC distributes DAP complete draft to ALL Mercy Corps reviewers consolidates feedback returning this to consultant/firm	External Evaluator
	Consultant/firm submits FINAL DAP to Mercy Corps' POC having addressed consolidated all feedback	External Evaluator
3 days	Train enumerators/surveyors; pre-test data collection instruments	External Evaluator
1 days	Finalize data collection instruments/tools	External Evaluator
14 days	Conduct and oversee data collection	External Evaluator
5 days	Encode and analyze data	External Evaluator
5 days	Prepare a draft evaluation report and learning summary	External Evaluator
3 days	Provide detailed feedback to draft report	External Evaluator, Program Director, MEL Coordinator, MEL Team, Senior MEL Manager, PaQ Director, among others.
4 days	Finalize report, produce a presentation of findings, and share back with MC (not more than 30 pages – all other additions can be included as annexes)	External Evaluator

	A two-pager, publication-ready, visual summary of the findings of the mid-term evaluation (with graphs, columns, photos, if applicable).	External Evaluator
	After donor review of report, incorporate any feedback from donor for final donor reviewed version.	External Evaluator
	Data sets, code books, syntax, etc., are delivered to Mercy Corps' POC	External Evaluator
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Estimated 45 Days</b>	

**NB\*\*** Consultants must NOT exceed beyond the **allocated 45 working days** but will work within the timelines provided to complete the assignment, and consultants should spend at least 15 days in the field locations where possible during this evaluation.

### 11. Timeframe/Schedule:

The process is expected to take **45 working days** including preparation, data collection and analysis, and reporting. The Consultant should be able to undertake some of the tasks concurrently to fit within the planned time frame, without compromising the quality expected. The assignment is expected to commence in **June 21, 2026** with the final mid-term evaluation report expected by **August 21, 2026**. The Consultant will commit to NOT more than the estimated total of 45 working days spread within the provided timelines.

### 12. Budget

The invoice for the evaluation services rendered by the consultants should be provided to Mercy Corps on a time and material contractual agreement and pegged to deliverables after which final payment will be done immediately after the delivery of the final evaluation report. The budget for this project will cover the consultants' fees. Other logistics cost including flights both domestic and international where applicable as well as accommodation cost should be included in the budget.

### The Consultants will report to:

Mercy Corps Senior MEL Manager.

### The Consulting firm will work closely with:

SMART Program Director, SMART Program Team, SMART MEL Focal Points, PaQ Director, Grants and partnerships team, among others.

### Payment Schedule

Payment for the service will preferably be made as lump sum of total cost (100%) at the end of the assignment, however payment based on milestones can be accommodated.

### Required Experience & Skills:

The following are the qualifications and experiences the firm should possess:

- Strong experience (5 years) conducting major research exercises in support of major development programs – preferably in MSD, emergency and resilience programming – in challenging operational environments, previous experience in Darfur Sudan is desirable.
- A strong approach to assuring quality assurance of data collected.
- A strong ethical approach to data collection – while still being able to meet the objectives of the consultancy.
- Demonstrable experience (5years) in leading evaluations of early recovery and development programs, with specific emphasis on agriculture, youth empowerment, conflict management, and social protection in emergencies.
- Strong analytical skills and ability to synthesize and present findings, draw practical conclusions, make recommendations and to prepare well-written reports on time.

- Demonstrated experience in both quantitative and qualitative data collection and data analysis techniques, especially in emergency operations.
- Data visualization skills are highly desirable and required (Tableau or Power BI).
- Strong skills in survey form design for mobile data collection (ODK, Ona or Commcare) – Required.
- Experience, knowledge, and clear understanding of Sudan humanitarian context.
- Experience with evaluating EU-funded projects.
- Good interpersonal skills and understanding cultural sensitivities of Sudan.
- Readiness to travel to Darfur Sudan and conduct direct standard evaluation activities as well as field visits to program sites. Having a presence in Sudan is desirable but not essential.
- Fluency in English is required.
- Evaluation team must have at least one Arabic speaker capable of leading tool translation, conduct interview in Arabic.

### **13. Evaluation and Award of The Assignment**

Mercy Corps will evaluate **Technical and detailed financial proposals** (including travel and accommodation cost) and award the assignment based on technical and financial feasibility. Mercy Corps reserves the right to accept or reject one or all proposals received without assigning any reason and is not bound to accept the lowest or the highest bidder. Only those shortlisted will be contacted.

Subcontracting to other entities is not allowed and will not be accepted under this evaluation.

### **Documents Comprising the Proposal**

Interested evaluators (consulting firms) should submit the following documentation for the proposal:

- Technical proposal with methodology, evaluation design, workplan, risk management, and quality assurance approach.
- CVs of proposed staff/team members noting identified roles and team lead.
- 1-2 example reports from similar work, with a preference for work done in Sudan or similar context.
- Corporate Capacity statement (not to exceed 2 pages) detailing where they have worked, years of experience in the evaluation industry, office locations if any, and types of evaluation previously carried out.
- Samples of similar evaluation reports.