

We are hiring a

External Evaluation Team for the NMA project

About Us

Founded in 1972, IFOAM – Organics International works as an agent of change, advocating for true sustainability in agriculture, value chains, and consumption. We are an international non-profit organization with a membership base across around 120 countries and promote a holistic approach to food systems based on the principles of health, ecology, fairness, and care.

Background

In 2015, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation approved the first phase of the Nutrition in Mountain Agro-ecosystems project that was implemented in 5 mountain areas: Himalayas (Nepal), Hindu Kush (Pakistan), Tian Shan (Kyrgyzstan), African Highlands (Ethiopia) and Andes (Peru). The second phase started in 2018 with 3 additional countries included in the project: India (Himalayas), Tajikistan (Tian Shan) and Ecuador (Andes). The second phase will be finalized in October 2021. The project has been led by IFOAM-Organics International in a consortium with HELVETAS, FiBL and Wageningen University and with the support in the countries by:

- *Asociación Bio Dinámica Perú* (Peru),
- *Fundación HEIFER* (Ecuador),
- *Helvetas* in Pakistan, Nepal and Tajikistan,
- *Welthungerhilfe* (India),
- *Bio Service Public Foundation* (Kyrgyzstan)
- and *ISD* (Ethiopia).

At the national level, through its local partners, insights from the NMA project have informed the SUN Movement. At the global level, IFOAM-Organics International used the results at the national level in global events to advocate in different global processes.

The main goal of the NMA project is to contribute that men, women and children in mountain areas consume more diverse diets containing sufficient, safe and nutritious food.

1. Evaluation Purpose

The purpose of this Evaluation is to inform SDC, IFOAM – Organics International, the Consortium partners and the project implementing partners, their national organic movements and local stakeholders about the performance of the partnership and cooperation in the implementation of the Phase I and II of the project Nutrition in Mountain Agro-Ecosystems (NMA).

This evaluation therefore aims to describe and assess the quality of the implementation process as well as the results (at the output, outcome, and impact level, as feasible), as compared to NMA's objectives. The specific objectives of the evaluation are to provide information about the performance of the NMA project with respect to the DAC evaluation criteria (see also SDC Evaluation Assessment Grid in Annex 3):

- Relevance - Assess the extent to which nutrition sensitive agriculture organic agriculture is a promising approach to tackle issues such as food and nutrition security, sustainable use of agricultural resources and climate change in the countries concerned and the extent to which the NMA II project addressed the needs and priorities of the target groups (producers and consumers), as well as to contributed to the policies discussions both at national and global level.
- Coherence– Assess internal and external coherence of the intervention. Internal coherence refers to synergies and interlinkages with other actions of the implementing partners and to consistency with relevant international standards the organizations adhere to. External coherence considers the consistency of the intervention with other actor's programs / projects in the same context looking at harmonization, complementarity and coordination to avoid any possible duplication.
- Efficiency - Assess the cost-effectiveness of the project. This refers to the extent to which the costs of the NMA project can be justified by its results, taking reasonable alternatives into account.
- Effectiveness – Assess the extent to which the NMA project has achieved its objectives, taking their relative importance into account.
- Impact – The evaluation shall mention direct and indirect every impacts of NMA, including - as far as it is possible - after the implementation period. In addition, the evaluation shall assess the totality of effects of the NMA project, including both positive and negative, intended and unintended effects and short and long-term.
- Sustainability – Assess the likely continuation or longevity of the benefits from the NMA project after its finalisation. The evaluation shall examine whether inbuilt components such as the individual approach in the Capacity Development Program (people-centred approach) as well the involvement of governmental, civil society organizations and private sector ensure that activities potentially continue beyond the project duration.

More specifically, the purpose or intended use of the evaluation is to:

- To inform SDC, IFOAM-Organics International and its partners about the quality, the performance and the progress of the NMA project from 2018-2021; what has worked well, less well and not; what have been the results in relation to the objectives; and what has been the overall likely impact of the project.
- To provide recommendations in regard to feasibility of a scenario of further upscaling or replicating of the different initiatives and approaches carried it out in the NMA project, with the same or different implementing setting.

2. Objectives of the project NMA II

The main goal of the NMA project is to contribute that men, women and children in mountain areas consume more diverse diets containing sufficient, safe and nutritious food. The project distinguishes outcomes at three levels, which are interlinked and mutually reinforcing:

- **Outcome 1 at local level:** If rural service providers are sensitized and empowered, then a) they facilitate improvement and diversification of production systems and diets of rural households, b) local markets will respond and c) dietary diversity and resilience will increase. *⇒ NMA continues to capacitate RSPs to implement Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture (NSA) interventions to directly impact rural households and is scaling-up nutrition sensitive agriculture interventions in collaboration with local institutions.*
- **Outcome 2 at national levels:** If awareness of policy makers is raised and local as well as national experience sharing events are conducted, a conducive environment for diversified production, market activities and consumption is created. Successful cases will influence policies and programs towards the mainstreaming of nutrition sensitive agriculture, processing and consumption. The impact on local levels beyond the project's geographical scope will increase. *⇒ NMA influences policy dialogues and strategy discussion in regard to agriculture and nutrition based on successful NSI cases, which contribute to development goals.*
- **Outcome 3 at global level:** Advocacy messages that are based on local and national success stories influence the international nutrition and food security debate in a way that many countries include agricultural diversification and innovation interventions based on the NMA approach. *⇒ NMA contributes knowledge and practical evidence on the impact of different NSI to this debate and partners up with SUN representative to influence opinion- and decision-making through international activities.*

The expected results of the project are structured around specific targeted actions (Outputs) that aim at improving smallholder farmers' diets and livelihoods by improving their access to nutrition sensitive agriculture practices and technologies and to increase their outreach to the consumers. The project outputs are:

Output 1: MAAN platform is well governed and capacities of RSPs are enhanced

MAAN platform and mobile app are well governed and NSA interventions (MIs, SUNSAIs, etc.) are shared through active RSP participation; Rural Service Providers' capacities and social capital are enhanced.

Output 2: Local stakeholders engaged in scaling up NSA interventions

Rural Service Providers implement systemic interventions to upscale NSA (SUNSAI), and local multipliers implement campaigns to raise awareness on sustainable and diverse diets.

Output 3: National stakeholders engaged in NSA policy setting motivated by the stories of RSPs

Motivated by the stories of RSPs, policy makers and allies support broad uptake of NSA by developing conducive policies and mainstreaming NSA in their programs.

Output 4: NSA best practices and messages spread to relevant institutions and processes

Evidence cases and messages of RSPs to implement and share best practices of NSA are spread globally.

Implementation setting

The project is administered in accordance with the Mandate for Project implementation concerning “Nutrition in Mountain Agroecosystems Phase 01”, contract No. 81033665 and contract No. 81055242 for the Phase II, both issued by the Swiss Confederation, represented by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, acting through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The phase I started in May 2015, with a budget of CHF 2.611,150 while the phase II started in May 2018 with an initial budget of CHF 2, 999, 050, then increased to CHF 3,149,009. The implementation of the project is led in each country by local partners, under the supervision of IFOAM-Organics International and the thematic support of the consortium partners, Helvetas, FiBL and Wageningen University. Each local partner designated a Country Manager to oversee the implementation and most of the countries assigned a Coordinator to support the day-to-day implementation.

There are three different instances for regular updating and coordination. The Management Team is composed by the IFOAM-Organics International team and representatives from the Consortium Partners and serves to discuss the overall implementation strategy and update on the immediate plans. The Country representatives’ team is composed by all the Country Managers and the Project Coordinators, where general updates are shared and specific topics regarding the strategic implementation are discussed and agreed. These two instances meet in a quarterly basis, remotely. Finally, the Project Steering Committee (PSC) is composed by representatives from SDC, IFOAM-Organics International, FiBL, Helvetas and other organizations that advice IFOAM-Organics International and SDC on project strategy, open opportunities and evaluate and advise on the sustainability of the implementation. The PSC meets twice a year. Regular reporting of the implemented activities and expenditures are provided on a yearly basis.

3. Methodology

The overall approach and method for conducting the project end evaluation should comply with international evaluation quality standards (DAC Evaluation Standards). The Evaluation team is expected to frame the evaluation effort using the six standard criteria of relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. A set of guiding questions covering each of these criteria has been drafted and are included in point 3 of this TOR. These questions are generic and

shall be adapted and further defined by the evaluation team along the lines of the DAC evaluation criteria.

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluation team is expected to follow an inclusive and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with the team of IFOAM – Organics International and its local partners (NMA country teams) that steer and implement the project including the experts, the national stakeholder counterparts including but not limited to Teams of Trainers (ToTs), Rural Service Providers (RSPs), SUNSAI implementers, government representatives and other key stakeholders. The evaluation team is expected to conduct field missions in Nepal and either Pakistan or India in South Asia. The region was selected because the evaluation of the phase I of the project was conducted in Ethiopia and Peru. The countries to visit and the actual places for the field mission will be decided together with the evaluation team in the planning phase of the evaluation.

Interviews shall be held with a wide range of stakeholders including but not limited to the individuals and communities involved in the implementation, IFOAM-Organics International project management team, the Country teams, government representatives at local and national levels, representatives from SDC, and any other deemed relevant to assess the impact of the project.

The evaluation team will review all relevant sources of information, such as the project proposal, project reports including annual operational and financial reports, project budget revisions, minutes from the project management, Country representatives and PSC meetings, monitoring reports, policy gap analyses and any other materials that the team considers useful for the evidence-based assessment. A list of documents that will be available for the evaluation team to review is included in the Annex 1.

It is expected that the evaluation team describes and justifies an appropriate methodology and methods for data collection in the offer. The evaluation design, methodology and methods for data collection and analysis shall be outlined and fully presented in the inception report.

4. Guiding Questions

The guiding questions listed below were developed in a participative manner and draw attention to issues which particularly need to be considered when evaluating the performance and impact of the project. They are of special interest in this evaluation. The responses to the guiding questions are supposed to be presented under the corresponding chapters of the report in accordance with their content. If necessary, separate sub-chapters should be inserted.

Relevance:

- How do project partners (private/public) perceive the project's approach, their facilitation role and the results achieved?
- What are the major challenges of the chosen farming systems? Have these challenges been adequately addressed within the project? What are the lessons learned?

- Does the diversity of production improve livelihoods of producers and do diverse production systems improve consumers access to healthy food?

Coherence:

- How relevant are the chosen interventions, taking into account current situation and stage of the development of proposed approaches/ methods in the target countries and internationally?

Efficiency:

- Was the cost/benefit - ratio appropriate for the different local conditions in each country?

Effectiveness:

- Were the selected NSA practices and technologies appropriate to the context to achieve the target of increasing the food and nutrition security and improving the local diets? What was the involvement of the local governments to support the implementation of SUNSAIs and MIs?
- Has there been a good achievement of the integration of NSA / OA into national policies in all countries? And what were the driving forces for these achievements?
- Have the messages shared at the global levels reached the appropriate stakeholders (UN organizations, SUN, etc.)?

Sustainability:

- Was the people – centered approach for the Capacity Development Program successful, in the sense that trained RSPs became active participants of the social network MAAN and continuing to have a leading role in their communities?
- Is the ownership and the role of MAAN platform after the project clear for the project partners? Is the base for its sustainability well established?

Impact:

- What is the level of awareness and commitment of relevant stakeholders about the organic agriculture and NSA in regard of food and nutrition security in the respective countries? Were the results of the project appropriately shared with the relevant stakeholders to promote changes at the policy level?
- What are the prospects for future replications or further scaling up of the NSA practices and technologies and the engagement between producers and consumers?

5. Organisation of the evaluation management

This Evaluation is commissioned by IFOAM – Organics International in close cooperation with SDC. A steering group is set up with representatives of SDC, IFOAM-Organics International, Helvetas and FiBL. The role of the steering group is to provide inputs and information and to approve the inception report and the final report of the evaluation. The steering group will be participating in the start-up

meeting of the evaluation as well as in the debriefing workshop where preliminary findings and conclusions are discussed. The Steering Committee of NMA will be informed from the beginning and involved to comment on the evaluation report.

Deliverable/Activity	Involvement of whom?	Timing
Kick-off meeting (discuss proposal, destinations for field visit and timeline)	Evaluation team, Steering group	1st week of July
Desk study on background documents	Evaluation team	2 nd and 3 rd week of July
updated, detailed planning of the evaluation	Evaluation team, Steering group to approve it	4 th week of August
Workshops & Interviews with selected project team members	Evaluation Team, Country teams, Steering group	4 th week of August
Field mission	Evaluation Team, Country Teams	1 st and 2 nd week of September
Draft Evaluation Report	Evaluation team	3 rd week of September
Comments on draft Evaluation Report	Steering group and Steering Committee	3 rd week of September
Presentation of main conclusions of the Evaluation Report (Workshop)	Evaluation team, Country teams, steering group (on availability the Steering Committee)	4 th week of September
Final Evaluation Report	Evaluation team	4 th week of September

The period for the evaluation shall fall within the specified 3 months, from July to September 2021. (see also under point 6).

This Evaluation is commissioned by IFOAM – Organics International in close cooperation with SDC.

6. Time schedule and deliverables

The schedule of the evaluation should be agreed upon and also reflected upon in the Inception Report. Due to unforeseen mobility and arrival restrictions in the countries, adjustments of the schedule might be necessary. Currently, the foreseen schedule for the field missions is 10 – 15 days in September 2021.

The deliverables shall include:

- Filled above table
- Updated, detailed planning of the evaluation (max 10 pages)
- Main evaluation report (approx. 40 pages, in English) plus annexes. The final version of the main report is to be submitted electronically both in PDF and in a format, which can be edited. The main report may contain a maximum of 5 pictures with direct explanatory notes. Otherwise, a separate annex should be provided.
- Filled SDC evaluation assessment grid
- The thorough final debriefing should include the preliminary findings, lessons learnt and action points to move forward to be presented to the entire team and discussed with the steering group. The most important results of this final discussion (consensus/disagreement) are to be documented.

7. About the evaluation team

The members of the evaluation team should have the following competencies:

For the team leader: relevant academic background with experience on evaluation of similar projects, relevant experience working on food and nutrition security, behavioral change and poverty reduction. Specific knowledge about organic agriculture will be considered an asset.

For the team members/regional experts (max. 2): a sound knowledge of the local and regional contexts, with experience in food and nutrition security and ideally also in organic agriculture.

The team member(s) shall provide relevant references and successful records of the last 8-10 years. It is important that the competencies of the individual team member are complimentary. It is highly recommended that a local consultant(s) is included as the team member. Added value is a gender balanced team. The evaluation team must be independent from the evaluation object and evaluated activities, and have no stake in the outcome of the evaluation. English is the language of the project, proficiency in any of the local languages of any of the members of the team will be considered an asset.

8. Application process

The applicants need to submit their proposal until **May 15, 2021** to the contact person (see point 9). The proposal shall include all the evaluation team members and be structured as follows:

- Cover page with name and contacts of the consultants proposed for the evaluation team
- Interpretation of the mandate
- Proposal of relevant evaluation questions (according to the evaluation areas defined in chapter 4 of this ToR; questions will be discussed and finalized at the inception meeting/call)
- Methodology
- Timeline
- Budget
- Consultants' expertise
- Annexes: CVs, including a note on possible conflicts of interest
- The consultancy proposal should not exceed 20 pages (excluding annexes)

The selection process for the evaluation team will be carried out jointly by IFOAM-Organics International and SDC.

9. Resources and contact persons

A max. of 35.000,- Euro is available, including all the operational costs for the evaluation team.

Contact person at IFOAM: Alejandro Espinoza, Senior Project Coordinator IFOAM-Organics International, 5 Charles-De-Gaulle-Str. Bonn 53113, email: a.espinoza@ifoam.bio.

10. Annexes

ANNEX 1: Logframe of the project

ANNEX 2: List of project documents (- ProDoc for the Phase I and II, NMA I Evaluation report, Annual narrative reports, minutes from the project steering committee, Communication material (blogs, articles, brochures, etc.)

ANNEX 3: SDC Evaluation Assessment Grid

All the annexes can be accessed here: <https://ifo.am/NMA-Final-Evaluation>