

Terms of Reference

Gorta-Self Help Africa Strategic Plan and Programme Evaluation 2011-2015

1 Background

Gorta-Self Help Africa works with local communities to help them improve their farms and their livelihoods. Gorta-Self Help Africa works with smallholder farmers and their families to make sustainable improvements in their livelihoods from both intensification and diversification of agriculture and greater integration into markets. As a result of our experience and learning we aim to influence the policies and ways of working of other actors to enable smallholder farmers in Africa to prosper. Our core values underpin our approaches: working in partnership, community-led development and integrated solutions. Gorta-Self Help Africa believes that this is key to building local capacity to sustain change and scale up good practices.

The Self Help Africa five-year strategic plan (2011-2015) is the basis of the programme funding agreement with Irish Aid, an obligation of our funding from Irish Aid is to conduct an independent evaluation of the programme in 2015, the evaluation will both inform GSHA and Irish Aid of progress against our projected results and inform the meta-analysis that Irish Aid will conduct in 2016 to assess the impact of the programme funding scheme.

The five-year strategy was ambitious seeking to scale up and sustain the work we do and improve the quality and effectiveness of our programmes and our organisation.

2 Purpose

This evaluation serves three core purposes in relation to learning and accountability:

1. An independent analysis of progress towards the three strategic objectives (SO), what has/has not worked and why and who has been involved, the three SOs are:
 - SO1: To enable smallholders to achieve viable livelihoods from intensification and diversification of agriculture and greater integration into markets.
 - SO2: Influence others to enable smallholder farmers in Africa to prosper.
 - SO3: Continue to be fit for purpose

2. The evaluation contributes in general towards our accountability towards our stakeholders – donors (both organisations and individuals), partners and beneficiaries. During this strategic planning period Irish Aid has been a significant strategic donor via its Programme Funding Grant (IAPF)¹. IAPF has invested over €10million in Gorta-Self Help Africa’s strategy through its Country Strategy Papers in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi and Zambia². A results framework, aligned to the strategy has been developed to monitor and measure outputs, outcomes and impact against SO 1 and SO2 of the strategy. The evaluation will not only assess the achievement of the objectives set out in Self Help Africa’s Strategic Plan, but also provide an evaluation of the utilisation of IAPF towards achieving outcomes and impact. The evaluation will be shared with Irish Aid to inform its review of IAPF for design of future funding schemes.
3. In July 2014 Gorta-Self Help Africa merged with Gorta to form Gorta–Self Help Africa, an interim programme strategy has been developed to cover the current joint commitments. The evaluation will inform the development of the next Gorta-Self Help Africa strategic plan. The evaluation is intended to contribute to an improvement/refinement of our policies, processes and methods.

3 Objectives

The evaluation is being undertaken in 2015 as it corresponds with end of Self Help Africa’s 2011 to 2015 Strategic Plan and the planned end of the Irish Aid Programme Funding Grant³.

The overall objectives of the evaluation are:

- To independently evaluate the implementation and results of Self Help Africa’s 2011 to 2015 Strategic Plan and the IAPF Grant that has partially supported the implementation of the strategy.
- To provide analysis of the impacts of our country programmes and their effectiveness in relation to our target group – smallholders.
- To review changes in organisational capacity and assess whether there is evidence that this has resulted in more efficient and effective delivery of outcomes for beneficiaries.
- To present strategic conclusions and recommendations that the newly merged organisation Gorta-Self Help Africa should consider in the formulation and implementation of its new strategic plan.

¹ The Programme Grant is governed by a 4-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU was negotiated on the basis of a proposed programme of work and Irish Aid’s contribution to that programme. The MoU focuses on the high level results to be achieved and the contribution of both Irish Aid and the Gorta-Self Help Africa to the achievement of these results. The MoU also sets out commitments around public engagement and communication over the four-year period.

² The IAPF has not been invested in West Africa. However, the PPA grant includes West Africa.

³ A one year extension to IAPF was communicated in November 2014 to enable IA to review the current scheme and its strategy for future NGO funding.

4 Subject and focus (scope)

The evaluation will focus on Self Help Africa’s implementation of programmes through:

- Five countries and one regional programme in Africa.
- Headquarters in Ireland and UK
- Over 100 projects
- Over 50 implementing partners

There are a number of related documents that frame the evaluation. The table below summarises the scope and focus of the evaluation. The scope is primarily bounded by the desired objectives, outcomes and results as well as location of programmes.

	Scope and Focus		
	Self Help Africa Strategic Plan 2011-15	Irish Aid Programme Grant 2012-2015	Gorta-Self Help Africa Post Merger Interim Programme Strategy
Objectives, Outcomes and Results	<p>To achieve our goal, Self Help Africa identified three strategic objectives, which build on the experience of over 25 years working with communities in Africa. For the period 2011-2015, Self Help Africa will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enable smallholders to achieve viable livelihoods from intensification and diversification of agriculture and greater integration into markets <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Increased agricultural productivity of farming households while sustaining ecosystem services. B. Better returns for smallholders in agricultural value chains C. Improved nutrition and reduced vulnerability amongst the rural poor. 	<p>The objective of the programme is to increase smallholder production and return from enterprises through partnerships that support effective policy and practice in the context of a changing climate</p> <p>The programme, at an outcome level intends to Increase smallholder production and return from enterprises.</p> <p>In order to achieve this we will deliver outputs in four interlinked areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased smallholder farmer skills and knowledge to benefit nutritionally and economically from intensified and diversified agricultural production. 2. Increased smallholder skills, 	<p>Mission: Support the development of sustainable and profitable farm businesses that provide gainful employment opportunities and a disposable income for smallholder farmers and their families, to effectively contribute to food security and nutrition.</p> <p>Key Programmes Aims</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To maximise impact ensuring that the smallholder farmers that we work with achieve the best possible gains in wealth and food and nutrition security through an effective and value for money programme approach. 2. To optimise smallholder farmer outreach through the strategic use of our combined resources to achieve scale and leverage through improved learning mechanisms internally and

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	<p>2. Influence others to enable smallholder farmers in Africa to prosper.</p> <p>A. Proven models of good practice scaled up through effective documentation, dissemination and capacity building.</p> <p>B. Greater opportunities for the voice of smallholder farmers to be heard.</p> <p>C. Creation of a favourable policy environment for smallholder farmers, both at national and international levels.</p> <p>D. Increased public awareness in Ireland, UK and USA of aid and development in Africa.</p> <p>3. Strengthen Self Help Africa to ensure we are fit for purpose.</p> <p>A. Strengthened governance to provide strategic oversight and reinforce the organisation's commitment to excellence and leadership.</p> <p>B. Improved long-term stability of the organisation by scaling up and diversifying our financial resources.</p> <p>C. High performing staff, and board members through a supportive culture that recognises and builds capacity and commitment.</p>	<p>knowledge and organisational capacity to support enterprise development.</p> <p>3. Scalable proven good practice approaches for integrating farmers in agriculture value chains documented, disseminated and demonstrably used to inform policies and improve programmes by SHA, partners and other development actors.</p> <p>4. Engagement of smallholders and networks with relevant corporate, national, regional and global policy processes supported, leading to move favourable policy environment for smallholder farmers.</p>	<p>influencing others.</p> <p>3. To provide leadership in a sustainable intensification of agriculture agenda while conserving the natural resource base, with emphasis on enterprise/profitable agribusiness and micro, small and medium enterprises MSME development, and the improvement of nutrition through agriculture.</p> <p>4. To Influence policy at national and international level in areas of: seed sector development, food security & nutrition, natural resource/sustainable land management (watershed), research and extension, business and enterprise development, human rights</p> <p>5. To optimise efficiency in use of resources</p> <p>6. To maximise the combined unrestricted financial resources available to us to leverage additional institutional funding</p>

	Scope and Focus		
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	D. Strengthened profile, systems, practices and controls, to enhance brand recognition and sustainability, achieve value for money and comply with regulations.		
Target Group	Self Help Africa works with smallholder farmers and their families to make sustainable improvements in their livelihoods from both intensification and diversification of agriculture and greater integration into markets.	The organisation’s primary target group is rural African smallholder farmers. With reference to Africa, the term "smallholder" is often associated with small-scale and subsistence-level family farming in resource-poor conditions operating with few purchased inputs and limited technology.	Target group is ‘able poor’ to the ‘economically developing poor’. We will target smallholder farmers and rural communities. With reference to Africa, the term “smallholder” is often associated with small-scale and subsistence-level family farming in resource-poor conditions, operating with few purchased inputs and limited technology.
Equality and Inclusion	We acknowledge that smallholder farmers are a diverse group of women and men, whose ability to participate in development processes is determined by their access to and tenure of land and resources, age, disability, health and HIV status. We are committed to identifying and removing the barriers that prevent inclusion of more vulnerable groups and ensuring that women and men have equal opportunities to participate and benefit from our programmes.	Across all outputs we are committed to improving participation and benefits for women and marginalised groups (including those affected by HIV and AIDS) through recognition of the particular constraints faced and an identification of how these can be addressed through clear targeting, programme design and implementation.	The target group is a diverse group of women and men, whose ability to participate in development processes is determined by their age, health and HIV status. Our role is to ensure that this group is as wide as possible and that improvements in rural livelihoods are inclusive. In each area we analyse community structures and power relations and put in place methods to reduce barriers to participation.
Countries	5 Country Programmes: Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda & Zambia + 1 West Africa Regional Programme:	5 Country Programmes: Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda & Zambia	The combined programme will cover 10 countries in East, Southern and West Africa from six hub offices. - Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania,

Scope and Focus			
	Self Help Africa Strategic Plan 2011-15	Irish Aid Programme Grant 2012-2015	Gorta-Self Help Africa Post Merger Interim Programme Strategy
	Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo and Benin		Rwanda, Malawi, Zambia, West Africa (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, Benin, The Gambia)

There is a results framework for each country programme. These are aggregated to enable reporting for Irish Aid and DFID. The results framework relates to Strategic Objectives One and Two of the SHA five year strategy.

5 Main evaluation questions

The purpose of this evaluation is to both assess progress against Self Help Africa’s strategic plan and provide a body of evidence for key donors.

5.1 Strategic Plan Questions

In relation to the strategic plan, and its Strategic Objectives, the following questions should guide the evaluation team.

Overall Strategic Programme

- Summarise the evidence that demonstrates whether or not the objectives of the strategy were achieved. How robust is the evidence presented?
- The mid-term-review noted challenges faced by SHA in consistently using a programmatic approach. Is GSHA operating programmatically and effectively integrating projects as part of coherent country and thematic strategies?
- GSHA works in a range of partnership relationships e.g. in PPA consortium with Farm Africa, as a sub-contractor to FHI360 in Uganda and as a donor/lead partner with local NGOs/CBOs/Coops. What have been the key lessons from the different forms of partnership? How can GSHA continue to strengthen its approach to working with others?
- Gorta Self Help Africa is developing a new strategy, given the ambition and focus of the new strategy, highlight the core strengths of country programmes and technical support to build on in the new strategy (i.e. excellence in some countries or programme themes that is lacking in others). Highlight core weaknesses that will need addressing during the next strategy period.

Self Help Africa Strategic Objective 1 – To enable smallholders to achieve viable livelihoods from intensification and diversification of agriculture and greater integration into markets.

- Increased agricultural productivity of farming households while sustaining ecosystem services
 - How effectively is GSHA addressing the challenges of smallholder agriculture in the face of a changing climate? Are there elements of its approach that can be strengthened?
- Better returns for smallholders in agricultural value chains
 - What are the lessons emerging from GSHA’s engagement with private sector in programme implementation?
 - How are sustainability issues associated with cooperatives and agri-enterprises supported by GSHA being addressed?
 - Does GSHA have the expertise, within staff and/or partners at in country and head offices to scale up its work on value chains and supporting the development of agri-enterprises?
- Improved nutrition and reduced vulnerability amongst the rural poor.
 - How effectively, have country programmes, integrated nutrition into project activities? Highlight good practice and barriers to more effective implementation in the future.
 - How effective is the approach to incorporating gender sensitive programming including specific targeting of women and youth in country programmes? How has this developed over the strategy period?

Self Help Africa Strategic Objective 2 – Influence others to enable smallholder farmers in Africa to prosper.

- Proven models of good practice scaled up through effective documentation, dissemination and capacity building.
 - Which are the best examples of good practice that GSHA has scaled up?
 - Does GSHA have the skills and capacity to effectively document and present compelling evidence to practitioners and policy makers?
- Greater opportunities for the voice of smallholder farmers to be heard.
 - How does GSHA ensure that smallholders can influence policy debates locally, nationally and internationally? Is the approach effective? Which are the best examples of good practice?
- Creation of favourable policy environment for smallholder farmers both at national and international levels.
 - Does GSHA have a clear strategy for policy advocacy and a robust way of assessing its contribution to policy change in the six core countries? Which are the best examples of good practice? Given the expertise of GSHA, where can it play a stronger role in operational countries and internationally?
- Increased public awareness in Ireland, UK and USA of aid and development in Africa.
 - GSHA only has an active development education programme in Ireland. What are the strengths and weaknesses of GSHA’s development education programme? Does the work that GSHA is doing within its country programmes integrate effectively with the development education programme?

Gorta-Self Help Africa Strategic Objective 3 – Continue to be “fit for purpose”

In addition, and with specific reference to Self Help Africa’s Strategic Objective 3 – Continue to be “fit for purpose” - the

Financial Stability

- Discuss how and why Gorta-Self Help Africa has become more financially stable.
 - What was the strategy to extend the donor base – individuals, community, trusts and foundations and major donors? Which elements were successful? Where do challenges remain? How successful have efforts to increase in-county fundraising been?
 - How has the mix of expenditure changed over time? How did this support / limit the delivery of the 2011-15 Strategic Plan.
- Review the lessons that are emerging from the merger activity that Gorta-Self Help Africa has undertaken.
 - With particular reference to the acquisition of Partner Africa in 2011 and the SHA-Gorta merger in 2014. Have the assumptions that underpinned the rationale for the mergers been borne out in practice?

High performing staff

- Assess the coherence between the strategic plan objectives, country and departmental planning, the scope of the project portfolio, staff structure and individual performance management.

Improved systems

- Review the process of implementing new systems, policies and procedures.
 - How have new systems and processes supported increased consideration of value for money, accountability and transparency?

5.2 Irish Aid IAPF and DFID PPA

To provide evidence to Irish Aid of the impact of their Programme Grant funding the following questions should also guide the evaluation. They are primarily based on Irish Aid’s Programme Grant Programme Cycle Management Guidelines outline and OECD DAC’s standards for evaluation.

5.2.1 Utility

The evaluation should:

- Assess the impact of the programme and how this will be sustained
- Account to stakeholders for the Programme’s achievements/results against the intended purpose/outcomes.

- Identify and share evidence/lessons learnt that would assist in improving Irish Aid support to civil society.
- Assess whether the programme represented value for money in its efforts to deliver results.

5.2.2 Scope

The evaluation should cover the following areas:

(a) Impact and Results

- The overall impact of the programme in relation to its outcome/purpose and how this compares with what was expected on an annual basis.
- The key results against the outputs and how this compares against the targets set out in the results framework.
- Effectiveness of the programme's logic of intervention.
- The ways in which the programme improved practice by providing greater access to quality services for targeted beneficiaries.

(b) Intended Beneficiaries

- Who were the direct and indirect beneficiaries? Have they been disaggregated by: gender, age, disability, HIV/AIDs status?
- Evidence that the programme reached the intended target group(s).
- Evidence that the programme made a difference to the target group(s).

(c) Value for Money

Effectiveness

- Relevance of the programme outcome throughout the cycle given any changes in context.
- If the final programme outcome was not achieved or more work remains, will activities continue?
- Assess if the programme partners added value and delivered value for money.

Efficiency

- To what extent was expenditure guided by Value for Money principles?
- Consider if the programme was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative means.

Economy

- Have unit costs increased/decreased during the programme implementation?
- Was the programme completed within the expected budget? (Under/overspends to be detailed and explained)

(d) Innovation

- Description of any innovative approaches of the programme that have been identified during the programme cycle or evaluation.
- Identify and review the benefits and challenges associated with the consortium with Farm Africa for the PPA funding.

(e) Sustainability

- Aspects of the programme that will continue once programme cycle ends. How will these aspects be funded and by whom (national/local government or other organisation)?
- Aspects of the programme that will cease and the impact this may have.
- Features of the programme that may be replicable elsewhere.
- Identify major factors that influenced the achievement or non- achievement of the programme's sustainability.

(f) Counter-Factual

- Assess what might have happened in the absence of Irish Aid and/or DFID PPA support.

(g) Realisation of Risks

- Assess if risks identified in the original proposal and annual reports materialised. If so, how did the programme manage them in order to reduce any negative impact on results?
- If the risks did not materialise, was this as a result of measures put into place by the programme?

(h) Contribution to Irish Aid Civil Society Policy Objectives

- Establish linkages/show evidence where the programme has contributed to Irish Aid Civil Society Policy Objectives:
 - To support an enabling environment for civil society to organise and engage with government and its broader constituencies
 - To support the role of civil society in:
 - promoting participation and good governance
 - ensuring pro-poor service delivery and pro-poor growth
 - globally and nationally, to build a constituency for development, human rights and social justice

6 Evaluation approach and methods

The evaluation will be conducted in line with the OECD DAC Evaluation Quality Standards⁴ and compliance needs to be comprehensible in the evaluation.

The evaluation will incorporate both qualitative and quantitative methodologies utilising key informant interviews, focus group discussions, workshops, survey assessments and a desk review. Informal discussions with individuals working in the development-agriculture sector will also form a component of this review. Secondary data will be collected through proposal documents, reports, reviews and evaluations on specific projects under investigation in addition to specific areas of focus for this review, including gender analysis tools and rationale for operations.

The main elements are envisaged to include:

- Inception Phase
- Documentation Review
- Interviews and Workshops with Key Stakeholders
- Country Visits to the West Africa Programme and one other country
- Validation of Findings with Gorta-Self Help Africa team
- Submission of Draft and Final Reports

7 Outline timetable

The provisional timetable is outlined below:

Deadline for submissions of expressions of interest	02 April 2015
Independent evaluator appointed	17 April 2015
Inception phase: document review and preparation	April / May 2015
Inception Report	15 May 2015
Fieldwork and report writing	May – July 2015
Draft evaluation report submitted	17 July 2015
Presentation of findings	31 July 2015
Final evaluation report deadline	14 August 2015

⁴ Quality Standards for Development Evaluation <http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf>

8 Evaluation team

The evaluation will require a team who can work effectively with Gorta-Self Help Africa staff, partners and beneficiaries.

8.1 Expertise required:

- Specialists with a minimum of seven years experience in programme/project delivery in an international development context in Africa
- Proven capacity and experience in development strategic planning, the use of programmatic approaches and the management of complex evaluations, particularly in an NGO environment
- Strong understanding of NGO and donor relationships in “Programme/Strategic Funding” type schemes
- Extensive experience of results-based monitoring and evaluation
- Experience in mainstreaming cross-cutting issues (gender, HIV/AIDS, environment)
- At team members with professional proficiency in both English and French
- Availability within the time frame outlined

8.2 Consultants will be selected according to the following criteria:

- Understanding of the Terms of Reference, proposed methodology and planning of the assignment (30%)
- Experience with respect to the evaluation of complex development programmes, (20%)
- Experience with and understanding of the wider development NGO community (10%)
- Overall balance and complementarity of the skills and experience with respect to the required expertise presented in CVs and the proposed team roles (20%)
- Overall cost (20%)

9 Reports

Three reports will be required: an inception report, final draft evaluation report and a final report. All reports and annexes should be written in English.

In addition, copies of the final draft report and final report should be in French.

The final draft evaluation report and final report need to be structured according to the OECD/DAC criteria and the evaluation questions.

The main body of the evaluation (draft and final version) must be limited to 30 pages, excluding annexes. One of the annexes should consist of a table that summarises the findings and recommendations.

10 Criteria for reviewing the final report

These criteria are used for the assessment of the quality of the evaluation report

- ✓ Were the terms of reference fulfilled and is this reflected in the report?
- ✓ Does the report contain a comprehensive and clear summary?
- ✓ Is the report structured according to the OECD/DAC criteria and the evaluation questions?
- ✓ Are cross-cutting issues (e.g. poverty, gender, environment) indicated in the report separately?
- ✓ Does the report describe and assess the intervention logic (e.g. logframe)?
- ✓ Are the conclusions and recommendations based on findings clearly stated in the report, and are they derivable from the latter?
- ✓ Does the report clearly differentiate between conclusions, recommendations and lessons learnt?
- ✓ Is it comprehensible how the evaluators have achieved their findings?
- ✓ Are the recommendations and lessons learnt realistic and is it clearly expressed to whom the recommendations are addressed to?
- ✓ Are the methods and processes of the evaluation sufficiently documented in the evaluation report?
- ✓ Were the most significant stakeholders involved consulted?
- ✓ Were the most important documents taken into consideration, and is the content of the latter reflected in the report?
- ✓ Does the report present the information contained in a presentable and clearly arranged form?
- ✓ Is the report free from spelling mistakes and unclear linguistic formulations?
- ✓ Can the report be distributed in the delivered form?