Invitation to tender: Mid-Term Evaluation of the Transforming Investments in African Rainfed Agriculture (TIARA) initiative in the Zambezi Watercourse (2020 – 2025)

Terms of Reference for Consultancy: ‘Mid-term Evaluation’

About SIWI

The Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) is a policy- and practice-driven institute with a wide range of expertise in water governance and management. It works globally to change how water is understood, valued, and managed. SIWI undertakes applied research, develops capacity, organises stakeholder platforms, and provides policy advice to countries, communities, and companies. SIWI also organizes the world’s leading water conference, World Water Week. Founded in 1991, SIWI currently employs over 90 staff from more than 20 countries. SIWI has its head office in Stockholm, Sweden, and regional offices in Southern Africa (Pretoria, South Africa), Latin America (Bogota, Colombia), and WANA (Amman, Jordan).

SIWI implements and implemented several flagship programmes that aim to improve IWRM and WASH services, such as the UNESCO/SIWI International Centre for Water Cooperation, the UNICEF-supported development of WASH Service Standards for Zimbabwe, the UNDP-supported Shared Water Partnerships and Water Governance Facility, the Governance for Improved Water Security Programme (GO-WATER), and the Action Platform on Source to Sea Management. Our teams have extensive experience in developing programmes, frameworks, and assessment methodologies for water policy and governance analysis, including sector coordination, the water, energy, food, and environment (WEFE) security nexus, forestry and landscape restoration, catchment-based management, financing, and regulatory functions to assist governments and other stakeholders in identifying and applying solutions to improved water resources management and service delivery and creating action plans to implement them.

1. Background

Through the Transforming Investments in African Rainfed Agriculture (TIARA) programme, which supports the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM), SIWI is working to attract financing to farmers in the Zambezi Watercourse. The Strategic Plan for the basin’s development until 2040 identifies livelihood activities as one of four major areas of focus. TIARA works with local partner organisations across the Zambezi Watercourse to develop the business case of how financial support to farmers through investing in rainfed agriculture can significantly improve food security along with soil and water conservation.

The Zambezi River Watercourse is the fourth-largest river in Africa, and its waters are critical to sustainable economic growth, provide environmental goods and services to the region, and are essential to food security and hydropower production. An estimated 65-70% of the population is engaged in small-scale, rain-fed agriculture; many live in extreme poverty, which is often caused by poor agricultural productivity. Tackling poverty and regenerating the rural economies of the Zambezi basin will only be effective if soil is well managed and water is available and efficiently used.
Smallholder rainfed farmers are the front-line managers of water resources, directly impacting rainfall runoff, infiltration, and erosion through their actions. Typically, these farmers have little or no support or training in the management of these scarce rainfed water resources and the land on which they depend. Enhanced rainfed agriculture increases the availability and management of green water through soil moisture retention practices such as in-situ rainwater harvesting techniques, reducing soil and water loss through evaporation, groundwater recharge, and improving soil fertility and structure.

Enhanced rainfed agriculture creates multiple benefits—a win-win scenario with a positive impact on sustainable livelihoods and jobs alongside food and water security and climate resilience. Increasing crop yields in rainfed smallholder farming enables subsistence farmers to commercialise, thereby contributing to agricultural value chains, creating income, and providing a route out of poverty. Increasing crop yields at a farm-by-farm level at sufficient scale also brings positive knock-on effects throughout the rural economy, such as employment and health, enabling a wide range of related off-farm economic activity to develop alongside decreasing catchment degradation. Studies have shown that enhanced rainfed agriculture is cost-effective; the yield per dollar of in-field investment is six times greater for enhanced rainfed agriculture than for irrigated agriculture.

Even with these advantages well known, finding investors supporting enhanced rainfed agriculture is challenging. Irrigation is considered easier and more effective, leaving out many of the small-scale farmers. To change this, the potential of rainfed agriculture needs to be made clear.

2. The Potential of enhanced rainfed agriculture.

This Terms of Reference is intended as a reference for consultancy work to support SIWI’s Africa Regional Centre in South Africa, Pretoria, on the mid-term evaluation of the ‘Enhancing Rainfed Agricultural Systems in the Zambezi Watercourse’ project (the "Project" or "TIARA Zambezi"), which is a component of SIWI’s Transforming Investments in African Rainfed Agriculture (TIARA) advocacy initiative focused on attracting finance to smallholder farmers in the Zambezi watercourse. TIARA is an advocacy initiative working on the basis that over 95% of food production in sub-Saharan Africa relies on rainfed agriculture, yet only 5% of public agricultural water investments support rainfed agriculture. The initiative works with a range of partners to scale up rainfed agriculture by i) understanding the challenges and opportunities of implementing green water solutions; ii) establishing the business case for investing in rainfed agriculture and advocating to decision-makers; iii) catalysing investments in green water across Africa.

Watch our short film Catching Raindrops in Africa created to promote Africa’s frontline water managers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Program</th>
<th>‘Enhancing Rainfed Agricultural Systems in the Zambezi Watercourse’ project (the &quot;Project&quot; or &quot;TIARA Zambezi&quot;)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Mid-term Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geographical coverage</td>
<td>Zambezi Watercourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programme Timeline</td>
<td>2020 – 2025</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project timeline to be Evaluated</td>
<td>1 July 2020 – December 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Report to</td>
<td>TIARA Programme Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>14 days (indicative) from 15 December 2023 until 31 January 2024</td>
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‘Enhancing Rainfed Agricultural Systems in the Zambezi Watercourse’ project is a five-year project (1 July 2020 to 31 December 2025) to increase attention and investment in enhanced rainfed agriculture and scale-up activities across the Zambezi Watercourse. The project is funded by the Leopold Bachmann Stiftung (“The Foundation,” the financing partner). The total value of the grant from the Foundation is EUR 1,200,000 over six years, with annual disbursements of EUR 200,000 to SIWI’s headquarters in Stockholm. The project has additional co-funding of 2,000,000 SEK from Sida Programme Support. SIWI accepts the grants and implements the project in collaboration with the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM), the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), and World Agroforestry (ICRAF). During the project period, SIWI aims to identify at least one additional partner to contribute financially to the project. It is expected that ZAMCOM and individual governments, local NGOs, etc. also make in-kind and/or financial contributions, which will increase the total budget amounts.

TIARA’s effort is to scale up green water and enhanced rainfed agriculture across Africa through financial investments and political leadership. Through TIARA, SIWI supports ZAMCOM, where their Strategic Plan guiding the development of the basin until 2040 identifies livelihood activities as one of four key areas of focus. TIARA is supporting local partners (the prime beneficiaries of the project) to carry out pilot projects on the ground in Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Zambia to collect empirical data for the business case to determine the socio-economic and environmental benefits of enhanced rainfed agriculture. There is a need to effectively package and present these impacts to attract investors, whether they are public or private, for these local partner NGOs and other like them in the region to attract sustainable finance to support their work supporting rainfed farmers.

Enhanced rainfed agriculture is an umbrella term for a range of approaches that increase the availability of green water and soil moisture and increase crop yields and in-field productivity.

Based on a strong advocacy function, TIARA strengthens the rationale for investing in enhanced rainfed agriculture, deepens understanding of its potential role in improving water security in rural areas, and promotes enhanced rainfed agriculture as a transformational solution. In parallel, TIARA delivers national and regional partnerships with governments, River Basin Organisations and Regional Economic Communities, to create an enabling environment for enhanced rainfed agriculture and to mobilise investment in this sector, shifting the flow of investment towards enhanced rainfed agriculture in the Zambezi Watercourse.

3. Outcome objectives of ‘Enhancing Rainfed Agricultural Systems in the Zambezi Watercourse’ project

The immediate outcomes will include increased levels of awareness and understanding of the potential of enhanced rainfed agriculture among decision makers, government officials, investors (public and private), academia, and agricultural support workers, as well as the development of skills and knowledge in these communities and beyond. This will include a deeper understanding of the potential of enhanced rainfed agriculture (and the lack of alternatives), recognition of the costs and benefits, an understanding of “how to” (the technical components related to making enhanced rainfed agriculture happen), and also how to address the broad range of cultural, political, and economic elements that prevent enhanced rainfed agriculture from mainstreaming.
Implementation of the TIARA Zambezi project is now reaching its half-term, thus the need for a comprehensive mid-term evaluation (MTR). This MTR is due for submission to the financier during quarter 1 of 2024.

4. Theory of Change (ToC) and Activities

The theory of change (overall objectives and outcomes) is based around small but catalytic interventions to help unlock the knowledge, skills, awareness, and behaviours that are necessary for enhanced rainfed agriculture practices to happen at scale.
5. Overarching goal of Mid-Term Evaluation

The overall goal of this mid-term evaluation is to assess the progress and performance of the project towards its intended results, outcomes, objectives, and impacts and document the programme’s lessons learned. The evaluation will therefore offer strategic and operational recommendations drawing on emerging best practices and lessons learned for adapting the on-going programme implementation to achieve amplified impact and sustainability. These recommendations must be prospective in nature, evaluating prospects to accomplish TIARA Zambezi objectives and constructing a range of investment alternatives in rainfed agriculture.

Additionally, the evaluator ought to provide suggestions on how to create sustainable rainfed agriculture guidelines and models that might be scaled up to other African basins and sub-regions. Assess the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the project at both policy and basin level focusing on influencing policy and investments towards enhanced rainfed agriculture, and resources use efficiency and environmental compliance aspects of the TIARA Zambezi project. It is important that the following points are included in the evaluation:

- Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme management arrangements and the Project Team, including monitoring and reporting.
- Analyse the achievements made to-date and draw lessons learnt to inform on-going programme implementation.
- Assess the recognition of cross-cutting issues (rural livelihoods support, poverty reduction, gender mainstreaming and youth empowerment) in the programme, and draw lessons learnt for ongoing programme implementation.
- Highlight potential opportunities and risks in achieving the outcomes of the TIARA Zambezi project.
- Provide practical suggestions or recommendations for improving programme implementation and performance to achieve greater impact in the remainder of the programme period and ensure sustainability of outcomes, as well as guidelines for scaling up the programme to other regions.
- The evaluation should also include a selection of testimonies from key stakeholders (such as the local NGO partners, ZAMCOM and its member states) to reflect the impact and results.

The assessment will cover the period from 1 July 2020 to end December 2023.

6. Methodology

The evaluation is expected to use participatory methodologies to generate both qualitative and quantitative data and will be conducted through reviewing project outputs and in virtual discussions with the project partners and beneficiaries. Accordingly, participatory methods such as discussions and in-depth interviews with key informants and programme staff to systematically document lessons, elicit their insights and reflections, and provide examples of success, failure, and lessons learned will be deployed.
Virtual discussions and engagement with the local NGO community in the pilot sites (Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe), implementation partners (including ZAMCOM), and any relevant networks will be undertaken to provide data and insights to understand how well the project is progressing.

The following means will be considered to collect information and could involve the use of mobile devices for interviews and questionnaire surveys. Desktop reviews of relevant documents are also integral to performing this evaluation and the evaluating team will be given access to the relevant documents.

Documents to be reviewed include,

- Leopold Bachmann Foundation-SIWI grant agreement.
- Programme Inception Report
- Program Document including Theory of Change
- Result Matrix and Indicators
- Annual Narrative Reports
- Identified activity-based Reports.
- Program’s achievement documents such as Outcome Harvesting, Case Studies, Stories, research report, etc.
- Communication materials
- Zambezi Rainfed agriculture Investment Forum Report

Any other documents deemed relevant can also be made available to the evaluation team.

7. Deliverables:

Final Mid-Term Evaluation Report
- Table of Content
- Abbreviations
- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Purpose of MTR evaluation
- Description of Methodology used.
- Presentation of Findings (covering evaluation focus/questions asked)
- Integration of cross-cutting issues
- Lessons Learnt and recommendations.
- Conclusion
- References

The Mid-Term evaluation report should be between 20 – 30 pages.
8. Timeline and duration of assignment

The Mid-term evaluation assignment is expected to take not more than 14 days and should be completed by 31 January 2024. The proposed activity breakdown is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Number of person days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Desk review of relevant documents</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Interviews with key informants</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Preparation &amp; Validation of findings at online workshop</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Revision and finalization of report</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
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9. Qualifications: Description of Relevant Experience and Skills

The lead consultant/Researcher must be a Senior Expert in assessment or evaluation of complex programs and hold a minimum of a master’s degree in social sciences or environmental sciences such as Sustainable Development, Natural Resources Management, Water Resources Management and Development, or related subjects and practical knowledge in conducting evaluations. Qualifications must include:

- Extensive experience (minimum 10+ years) in managing, designing, implementing and evaluating projects with experience in water resources management and institutional capacity building in Africa.
- Experience in research and analysis about policy, African institutions, agriculture / food security, water for example in reports, academia or proposal writing.
- Experience in research and analysis around economics, agricultural policy and rural regeneration in the Zambezi catchment an added advantage
- Proven track record in leading study teams and producing quality reports.
- Proven knowledge and skills in monitoring and evaluation methods and techniques including understanding of data collection, evaluation methodology and design.
- Proven ability to work with local partners and Zambezi Watercourse government stakeholders.
- Proven consultancy and/or work experience with NGOs, and other international and bilateral organizations.
- Practical experience on gender issues, gender integration analysis, and human-rights approaches
- Excellent English communication, writing and presentation skills.

10. Tendering

SIWI must have received the tender by 08 December 2023. The tender must contain the following information:
- Maximum two-page summary of how you would respond to this ToR
- A description of your organisation.
- A description of the supplies/services offered, including a description of the methodology for data collection that takes into consideration online based interviews and meetings.
- All prices (net of VAT), and payment terms.
- Estimated delivery time.
- Name and contact information of point of contact.

The tender must be submitted to the following email address: Xanani.Baloyi@siwi.org copying Kasonde.Mulenga@siwi.org

The subject of the email should be: “Mid-Term Evaluation of the TIARA Zambezi Project”.

Yours Sincerely

Anton Earle,

Director

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