

APPRECIATIVE EVALUATION OF USC CANADA'S 2010-2015 SEEDS OF SURVIVAL PROGRAM IN ASIA, AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA

TERMS OF REFERENCE - JANUARY 27, 2015

BACKGROUND TO THE EVALUATION

USC Canada is commissioning an external evaluation of its 2010-2015 Seeds of Survival program in the global south to help identify lessons learned and guide our next program phase.

One of Canada's oldest international development NGOs, USC Canada is today recognized as a key actor in building food and seed security and sovereignty both internationally and at home. Our mission is to **promote vibrant family farms, strong rural communities and healthy ecosystems around the world**. With engaged Canadians and partners in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, we support programs, training and policies that strengthen biodiversity, food sovereignty and the rights of those at the heart of resilient food systems – women, indigenous peoples and small-scale farmers.

Our 2010-2015 program, funded by DFATD and engaged Canadians across the country, is focused on the following 9 countries: **Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Honduras, Mali, Nepal, Senegal, and Timor Leste**. The program builds on the Seeds of Survival program that was first launched in Ethiopia in 1989 and since then has evolved into a global program, both through expansion of USC-supported programming and through an international training program. In 2007, we decided to focus all our programming on the SoS approach, which has allowed us to develop a more coherent and in-depth global program, more able to respond to complex and pressing socio-economic and environmental challenges. It has also allowed us to use our modest resources to replicate an idea that can reach beyond our immediate programming communities to spread this work through strategic processes.

Through our 2010-2015 program, USC Canada's primary goal has been to build food and livelihood security in small-holder farming communities. To achieve our goal, we have focused activities on **five strategic thematic areas**:

1. USC Canada promotes the development of strong local **seed supply systems and the diversification of plant genetic resources**. Farmers depend on farm-saved seeds and other planting materials for their food security; this on-farm conservation of plant diversity is supported through activities such as seed banking, seed fairs and farmer training.
2. **Climate change adaptation and mitigation** activities are a direct response to the climate extremes faced by farmers in programming communities. Improving food crop and biomass productivity on-farm strengthens adaptation and enhances the resilience of food production systems.
3. Long term food security not only requires sustainable food production, but secure and resilient farm livelihoods. Sales of agricultural biodiversity products strengthen family economy and build a stronger agriculture base for more **vibrant rural economies**.
4. **Gender equality** programming is complex and challenging; however, programming that is inclusive – that addresses the knowledge, needs, and priorities of **all** key actors – has a far better chance of being sustained.

5. If we are to encourage **young farmers** to stay on the land and continue farming, we must offer viable alternatives. Though the challenges they face seem daunting, it has been our experience that successful diversity-based agriculture and a vibrant rural economy offer the most promise for young people. We are developing a program to equip them with the skills, knowledge, and incentive they need to continue in their parent's footsteps.

As a cross-cutting theme, USC Canada is also seeking to **spread the impacts and approaches** of the *Seed of Survival* program to new actors and institutions. In all countries, and working across borders through international linkages, USC has supported building linkages with government, NGOs, research and teaching institutions. We also recognize the overarching need to engage in policy work related to land rights and seed and food regulations, legislation, international conventions, and intellectual property rights. Finally USC believes engaging a broad cross-section of Canadian society is crucial to ensuring continued support for this work, and ensuring that increasing numbers of Canadians are informed and engaged, as global citizens, in shaping a more just future for all.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The main goal of the evaluation is *to identify good practice and lessons learned from the 2010-2015 program cycle to improve and strengthen future programming*. The evaluation is meant to complement ongoing results-based monitoring systems, which have generated quantitative data on expected program outputs and outcomes. The evaluation will take a more qualitative approach to assessing the main achievements of the program – at both global and country/community-levels – based on the perspective of the key participants and actors in the program.

The objectives are to:

- Deepen USC Canada's understanding of how and why good results are being obtained and identify lessons learned and recommendations to strengthen future programming.
- Give voice to program participants – including women and young farmers – and their perspectives on the impact of the program in their lives.
- Generate narrative stories and audiovisual content to enable USC to effectively share program achievements and lessons learned with diverse audiences (development practitioners, farmers, donors, USC supporters)
- Produce a solid and well-founded evaluation report to be included in funding proposals and made publicly available to donors, USC partners, and other interested parties

KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The primary intended user of the evaluation is USC Canada. The following key questions will guide the evaluation to meet USC's learning objectives:

1. *What have been the achievements of the program, according to key actors (program participants including women and youth; other collaborators/stakeholders such as local extension services, researchers; local partner NGOs; and USC program staff)?*

2. *How does the perception of achievements/successes differ among program participants (e.g. men, women, youth, or other groups/identities)?*
3. *How do key achievements map out in terms of the thematic areas and expected results of the program? Are there specific programming areas or outcomes under-represented or over-represented in key actors' perceptions? If so, why?*
4. *What factors have contributed to the key achievements identified? How and why has the program worked?*
5. *Are there bottlenecks or constraints that have limited the achievements of the program in certain areas? What strategies were offered to overcome these constraints?*
6. *What overall lessons can be learned/ innovations implemented to strengthen the next phase of programming?*

METHODOLOGY

The evaluator will work with the USC program team to further clarify the evaluation questions and propose an appropriate methodology. Methods could include appreciative inquiry, most significant change, photo/video documentation, or other relevant qualitative approaches.

It is expected that the methodology will draw on both primary and secondary data sources. In-country visits and field work are proposed to be undertaken in 2-3 countries. Tentative countries include: Ethiopia, Honduras and Timor Leste. Interviews with local partners and USC program staff can be arranged in-person and by skype. USC will provide all relevant key program documents (see Annex 1 for list of available documentation).

Specific attention to gender equality and women farmers should be considered in the methodology.

EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

The evaluator will prepare: 1) an evaluation work plan; 2) an evaluation report with Executive Summary; and 3) a database of supporting narratives, photos and/or videos. The primary documents are to be prepared in English and submitted both electronically via e-mail and in hard copy format. French and Spanish Executive Summary would be desirable. The format of the database will be discussed and mutually agreed upon as part of the evaluation workplan.

INDICATIVE TIMELINE

The timeline below will be refined in consultation with the evaluator:

Selection of evaluator	by February 13
Refine methodology and draft workplan	February 17-28
Discuss and finalize workplan with USC team	March 2-6
Data gathering and field trips	March 9-April 20
Presentation of initial findings to USC team	May 4-8
Submission of draft evaluation report and database	May 15
Comments from USC team on draft report	May 30
Final evaluation report and database	June 15
Online publication of the evaluation report	June 30

EVALUATOR QUALIFICATIONS

USC Canada is looking for a consultant with a strong record in conducting innovative and participatory evaluations focused on program learning. The successful candidate will be able to demonstrate the following skills and experience:

- Demonstrable experience of producing high-quality, credible and learning-focused evaluations
- Demonstrable experience of working with/evaluating civil society and grassroots organizations in a collaborative and learning-focused manner
- Demonstrable experience in designing and using participatory, gender-sensitive, and qualitative evaluation methodologies in cross-cultural settings
- Capacity to produce a searchable database of good quality narratives, photos and/or videos and integrate these effectively in the evaluation process
- Familiarity with development programming in at least 2 of the following areas: a) food security/food sovereignty; b) gender equality and women farmers; c) agroecology and sustainable agriculture; d) sustainable livelihoods; e) natural resource management and biodiversity conservation
- Experience of managing evaluation teams, and the capability to handle necessary logistics and, if required and agreed, sub-contracting.
- Ability to produce concise, readable and analytical reports
- Excellent English written and verbal communications skills; ability to work in French and Spanish an asset.
- Experience and understanding of agricultural biodiversity and sustainable agriculture programs (desirable)

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Expressions of interest should be submitted to USC Canada (sdalle@usc-canada.org), and should include:

- Cover letter expressing interest and outlining proposed approach to conducting the evaluation
- CV demonstrating relevant skills and experience
- Names of at least 2 references, preferably from organizations with whom the consultant has conducted similar types of evaluations
- Indicative budget for consultant fees, detailing the activities, number of days and daily rate. Travel expenses will be covered by USC according to Government of Canada's Treasury Board travel directive allowances.

The selection process will be ongoing until an appropriate candidate is found.

ANNEX 1: AVAILABLE DOCUMENTATION

- 2010-2015 program submission to CIDA (2010)
- Logic model and monitoring and evaluation data
- USC Canada annual progress reports to CIDA/DFATD
- Partner progress reports to USC Canada
- Gender Equality Review workshop and synthesis reports
- Program monitoring and evaluation data
- DFATD submission under consideration