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**Terms of Reference for Consultancy for exploring the potential of nutrition sensitive Conservation Agriculture in Zambia**

1. **Introduction**

Concern Worldwide is a non-governmental international humanitarian and development organization that is committed to helping families in poor communities improve their lives and achieve substantial reductions in extreme poverty. Concern Worldwide has been working in Zambia since 2003 and is currently implementing projects in Western and Central Provinces to improve food and nutrition security, promote sustainable livelihoods, increase agricultural production, and empower women and girls.

Since 2010, Concern has implemented a Conservation Agriculture[[1]](#footnote-1) (CA) project in three districts of Western Province. The project works with farming households, predominately women, to encourage their adoption of CA through training and asset transfers in order to both increase and diversify household crop production of cereals and pulses. The program also provides farmers with a measure of resiliency against droughts that are a frequent occurrence in Western Province.

While there is strong evidence of the potential for CA to increase productivity, CA implementation and research remains largely a production-oriented methodology. The primary goals of CA revolve around the sustainable intensification of agriculture through better soil fertility management. Accordingly CA research has largely been agronomically-oriented, measuring primary indicators such as increase in productivity, returns on labour, etc. An initial review of existing literature suggests that the understanding of the impact of CA on the nutritional status of household members is still very limited and there is very little discussion as to how CA interventions can become more nutrition sensitive.

1. **Objective of the consultancy**

To address, these issues, the specific research objectives of this proposed consultancy are;

1. To assess whether CA has the potential to impact nutrition security at the household level and nutrition status of pregnant and lactating women and children under 2 years;
2. To identify and describe which pathways between agriculture and nutrition are influenced under the current promotion of CA and to develop a conceptual pathway model for CA and nutrition which outlines potential as well as actual pathways;
3. To identify opportunities and make recommendations to increase the nutrition sensitivity of CA interventions and share these widely amongst stakeholders within Zambia.
4. To make recommendations for future research related to CA and nutrition.
5. **Process and Methods**

The study will comprise of a desk study and a qualitative field survey. The desk study will review existing literature on the impact of CA on nutrition, key learning from the RAIN project[[2]](#footnote-2) and identify nutrition-sensitive opportunities for CA.

The field study will consist of a set of key informant interviews with staff from Concern and the Conservation Farming Unit (CFU) and other agencies that are practicing CA, case studies of selected households and focus group discussions with male and female CA farmers. The qualitative methodology will use participatory tools; matrix ranking to determine preferences, income and expenditure trees to understand decision making and field observations. There will be purposive sampling to select respondents from different categories of the community; female headed households (FHH) and male headed households (MHH) and from different socio-economic groups, the extreme poor (the target group for Concern Worldwide) and smallholder farmers. Gender considerations in CA adoption, extension, control over resources, workload and decision making will be an explicit part of this study.

Initial discussions will also be held with key stakeholders to frame and refine the research questions and methodologies and then the field study will be conducted in up to four districts in two different provinces of Zambia (Central and Lusaka provinces) in order to capture differences in agro-ecological context, access to markets and services and variations in CA practice.

1. **Deliverables**

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| **Deliverable and proposed number of days** | **Due date** |
| Workplan and data collection tools prepared and reviewed by Concern | February 2015 |
| Literature review (6 days) | February, 2015 |
| Key informant interviews with agriculture and nutrition extension agents (1 day) | March, 2015 |
| Field work (13 days) | March, 2015 |
| Validation of initial findings with key stakeholders (1day) | March, 2015 |
| Report maximum 25 pages excluding annexes. The report should include an executive summary, objective and methodology of the research, main findings for the literature review and field, conclusion and recommendation. (5 days) | March, 2015 |
| Research Brief of 4 pages produced for dissemination (3 days) | April, 2015 |
| Conduct dissemination event for stakeholders (1 day) | April, 2015 |

1. **Required Qualification**

The consultant is expected to have a second degree in Public Health Nutrition or related area and should have practical experience with participatory research and qualitative research methodologies along with demonstrable experience working on the agriculture/nutrition continuum. A sample of previous work will be required.

1. **Time frame**

The proposed consultancy will be completed in 30 days, with a final deadline of end April 2015. Due to funding restrictions this deadline is not negotiable.

1. **Reporting line**

The consultant will report to the Nutrition Coordinator throughout the assignment. However, he/she is expected to work closely with the Conservation Agriculture Coordinator.

1. **Submission details**

Interested applicants should send financial and technical proposals including CV by 13th February 2015 to: Rebecca Stich, [rebecca.stich@concern.net](mailto:rebecca.stich@concern.net) and copy to Dorah Chisambi, [Dorah.Chisambi@concern.net](mailto:Dorah.Chisambi@concern.net)

**Programme Participant Protection Policy and Concern Code of Conduct**

Concern's Programme Participant Protection Policy and the Concern Code of Conduct have been developed to ensure the maximum protection of programme participants, especially beneficiaries, from abuse and exploitation, and to clarify the responsibilities of Concern staff, partner organisations, and anyone engaged by Concern or visiting our programmes, and the standards of behaviour expected of them.

1. Also known as Conservation Farming [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. www.concern.net./rain [↑](#footnote-ref-2)