Terms of Reference

A baseline of the Plantwise Project in Burundi

1. Background

1.1 Plantwise to Support Smallholder Farmers in Burundi

Plantwise is a global programme led by CABI that aims to increase food security, alleviate poverty and improve livelihoods by enabling male and female smallholder farmers around the world to lose less of what they grow, produce more and improve the quality of their crops. Since its inception in 2011, Plantwise has been introduced into 34 countries, working in partnership with over 175 partners, including; governments, NGOs, civil societies and farmers’ associations. Burundi becomes the latest country to join the list of countries where Plantwise interventions are being implemented.

1.2 The Plantwise Programme Approach

Plantwise defines a plant health system by four key components: (1) extension, which delivers available knowledge to improve plant health; (2) research, which develops new knowledge about plant health and is often linked to higher institutions of learning; (3) input suppliers, who deliver knowledge and agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, biological and other crop protection products; and (4) regulation and institutions (organizations and rules), which govern the sale and use of agricultural inputs, protect countries from new and emerging pests, including invasive species, and regulate produce trade requirements. The key premise of the Plantwise Theory of Change (ToC) is that plant health systems function to reduce crop losses and promote plant health. The entire Plantwise approach focuses on providing knowledge to farmers through plant clinics and complementary methods of outreach, such as plant health rallies (PHRs) and mass extension campaigns (MECs).

Plantwise in Burundi will contribute to addressing some of the challenges identified in the National Plan of Agriculture Investment (PNIA 2017-2022) and National Development Plan of Burundi (PND 2018-2027) in the agricultural sector, such as diseases and pests. The sustainable agriculture production aspect of the Strategies proposes key priorities about disease and pest management, which include; putting in place an early-warning system to communicate disease and pest threats; communicating disease and pest control practices and strengthening the capacity of farmers’ organizations in disease and pest identification, and management, to enable at least 30% of farmers to know and practice effective pest and disease control methods in their fields.

1.3 Plantwise Burundi Implementation Approach

Plantwise Burundi is being implemented jointly by various partners, led by Institut des Sciences Agronomiques du Burundi (ISABU), with support from CABI. ISABU is the National Responsible Organization (NRO) for Plantwise in Burundi. Funding for the project was provided by NUFFIC and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Burundi (EKN Burundi).
Implementation of activities in the country commenced in October 2020, and the project will be implemented for three years. The project will support the establishment of a network of plant clinics\(^1\) to improve farmers’ access to information on sustainable management of plant health. In addition, the project helps with the development of a data collection and management system that enables plant health stakeholders in Burundi to more effectively monitor production constraints at the field level and coordinate higher-level responses to key plant health problems.

### 1.4 Objective of Plantwise Burundi

The overall objective of Plantwise Burundi is to strengthen the capacity of agricultural advisory systems in the country to support farmers in managing plant health challenges through an environmentally friendly and cost-effective manner, using practices that promote integrated crop management.

Introducing Plantwise into Burundi aims to help achieve the following:

i. Improved farmers’ knowledge on effective and practical methods of managing plant health with measurable outcomes to be demonstrated through monitoring and evaluation

ii. Developing the skills capacities of farmers’ advisors through innovative training to serve as plant doctors, operate plant clinics and embed good practices in their advice to farmers

iii. Develop skills of local experts to develop extension information material for the country.

iv. Adopt the use of ICT-based processes to make advisory services more efficient, with data-driven decision making on prioritization of actions to manage plant health, to help farmers achieve household food security and crops-based income.

### 2. Project Baseline

A project baseline survey is being commissioned to establish baseline conditions of the project stakeholders before the project interventions can start to affect these conditions, which are assessed through the project key performance indicators (refer to results framework). Subsequently, the baseline information will form the foundation for the mid-line and end of project impact assessments.

#### 2.1 Objectives and Evaluation Questions

Plantwise uses innovative approaches and tools with an emphasis on the accurate diagnosis of causal factors to plant health problems as a requisite for effective recommendations that farmers need to manage various crop pests. It has a strong focus on production practices of smallholder farmers and is premised on the assumption that agricultural extension staff, present the best opportunities for delivering advice to farmers to strengthen the capacity of existing agricultural advisory systems for improved plant health management, including through the use of integrated crop management, to improve the level of productivity for smallholder farmers.

\(^1\) Plant clinics primarily focus on diagnosis and disseminating of advice on how to deal with plant health problems. The is a demand-driven service where farmers seek for advice. Plant clinics are set up in public accessed areas, such as, markets and other public places. Farmers present to the plant clinics crop samples that are affected and, or infected by various pests and diseases for diagnosis and recommendations on appropriate control measures.
The main objective of the baseline study is to deliver baseline data for the project KPIs as articulated in the project results framework. Therefore, it is critical that the design of the baseline survey and methodology are sufficiently rigorous to enable the assessment of impact at the end of the project.

2.2 Scope and Learning Questions
For the proposed project baseline, it is crucial to survey comparable project and non-project sites, or at sites that are likely to be included in any future scaling-up of the project. This will enable comparison of the outcome indicators between project and non-project sites (intention-to-treat), in subsequent assessments. Some of the identified project sites in Burundi, include; Bujumbura, Gitega, Kayanza, Cibitoke, Mwaro, Muramvya, etc. Therefore, the baseline study shall establish a benchmark against which to assess the project impact.

The baseline among other things shall cover the following socio-economic aspects, which shall as much as possible be disaggregated by male and female gender, and be in alignment with the project results framework;

- Demographic characteristics of households; age, gender, education, household size, land holdings, land utilization, key sources of household livelihood, etc.
- Sources of advice and information on agricultural advisory services and plant health, for the farmers.
- Knowledge test questions on key pests in the country that are likely to be presented at the plant clinics and general knowledge of farmers on integrated pest management (IPM), so that the improvement in knowledge can be assessed at the end of the project.
- Practices of farmers that tackle crop pest problems leading to reducing crop losses from the pests, including practices of farmers in handling and use of pesticides to manage crop pests.
- Farmer level approaches to climate-smart crop production.
- Existence of producer organizations and farmers belonging to such organizations.
- Crop production, productivity, losses and incomes, for the targeted crop enterprises.
- Household food security situation through the average number of months households have access to sufficient food, and food insecurity experience scale (FIES).
- Location characteristics (including GPS coordinates) of the surveyed households to help trace them for the end-line assessment.

3. Approach and Methodology
The methodology of the baseline study is expected to be appropriate for the Plantwise interventions and should provide rigour to the study. The Consultants will examine the project’s approach vis-à-vis the development challenges being addressed, relevance, and is expected to employ a variety of data collection and analysis techniques for both quantitative and qualitative data to ensure a comprehensive exercise. This shall include, at the least:

- **Document review**: Review of existing documentation, including; the project document, theory of change (ToC) and project results framework.
- **Survey**: Application of structured survey questionnaires with a representative, random sample of the target sample population, to gather data for baseline indicators.
- **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)**: Consult key project stakeholders and partners to obtain their expert opinion on plant health, agricultural extension advisory services,
provision of pest control inputs, and players in the agricultural advisory services delivery.

4. Expected Deliverables and Timelines

All written documentation is to be submitted in English using Microsoft Word in both soft and hard copy. The main body of all reports should be written in simple, non-technical language, with any technical material to be presented in annexes. All primary data collected and analysis conducted for the study shall remain the property of CABI and ISABU, and must be submitted electronically, and in a clear and comprehensible format in Excel, and any other statistical software.

The study shall begin no later than July 2021, with the Consultant(s) expected to take a total of 60 working days from the day of contracting to complete the assignment.

The Consultant(s) shall provide the following deliverables to the project team led by CABI within the timeframe stated:

a. Inception Report: Within [10] working days of baseline study launch, the Consultant(s) shall submit to CABI for approval a detailed report of the proposed approach to the study. The report should provide a detailed description of the survey design, methodology and tools, research questions, expected outputs, budget with a breakdown of costs and detailed work plan for the entire assignment. This, with any draft questionnaires or interview checklists, shall also be submitted for review at this stage, before the main survey exercise begins.

b. Preliminary Report: Within [30] working days of study launch, the Consultant(s) shall present the preliminary survey findings for review and discussion with the project team. This shall include a draft set of project baseline indicator values and recommendations. After the review and discussion, a report incorporating comments and, where necessary, responses will be submitted to the project team.

c. Final Report: Within [60] working days of study launch, a detailed report of the overall findings of the Baseline study shall be submitted for approval. This report shall provide project baseline findings and values for the indicators, incorporating specific, practical and feasible recommendations for improving project delivery and outcomes based on learning from project design. The main body of the report shall contain;
   - An Executive Summary of no more than 2 pages.
   - An outline and rationale for the methodology.
   - The main findings.
   - Conclusions and recommendations.
   - A schedule of baseline values against the outcome and impact indicators.
   - Data collection tools and checklists used in the study, in the annexes.

5. Management and Implementation Responsibilities

The Consultant(s) will report directly to CABI. However, the Consultant(s) will also be expected to work closely with the Plantwise Burundi national partner- ISABU. Any proposed changes to the team composition listed in the application must be approved by CABI.
The Consultant(s) shall be responsible for:

- Survey design and implementation plan, including developing a detailed survey methodology, sampling procedures and determining a sufficient sample size.
- Developing survey tools- the questionnaire and checklists.
- Conducting all desk reviews and field data collection. The use of digital data collection tools is highly recommended.
- Data cleaning and data quality assurance, analysis and reporting, in a clear and accessible format.
- Catering for all his /her expenses and those of the team members, including the enumerators.
- Regular progress reporting to the CABI and ISABU, including responding to any comments or technical inputs within the agreed timeframe.
- Producing deliverables within agreed timelines, and in accordance with quality requirements from the M&E and project management team.
- Seeking comments and feedback from CABI, through the M&E team, insufficient time to discuss and incorporate these into the final report.
- Producing the final Baseline report containing data against all indicators in the project results framework and a summary of recommendations to guide implementation.
- Submitting to CABI clean datasets of the Baseline study.

CABI shall provide:

- Guidance and technical support as required throughout the Baseline study.
- Copies of all key background documents and resources identified.
- Introductory meetings with key partner staff, and other stakeholders.
- Review, comments and feedback on, and approval of all deliverables, within agreed timelines.

6. Essential

Ideally, this assignment requires a competent team of consultants, or a firm, that possess:

- A minimum of 6 years’ experience in implementing project baselines, evaluations and impact assessments, with a focus on agricultural, and extension advisory and information interventions
- Demonstrable academic and practical experience in quantitative and qualitative research methodology, baseline and evaluation design, and implementation
- Strong analytical, facilitation and communication skills
- All team members should be fluent in spoken and written English, French and the main local language-Kirundi
- The Lead Consultant should possess a minimum of Postgraduate qualifications in agriculture, plant health background, environmental or agricultural economics, agricultural extension, development studies, or related subjects
- Experience working with rural communities in conducting project baselines, evaluations and impact assessments.
- Excellent reporting and presentation skills.
Desirable

- In-country knowledge of plant health, public agricultural extension and information services and provision of agricultural inputs.
- A good understanding of the measurement of agricultural extension-based intervention outcomes.
- At least 2 publications in reputable journals within the past 3 years.

7. Proposal for Assignment

Interested candidates or firms are requested to submit:

1. A full proposal detailing their interpretation of the ToR, proposed methodology including, sampling strategy, sample size, work schedule and detailed plan of activities (the proposal should ideally not exceed 10 pages).
2. A Proposed budget, in US Dollars (Propose a realistic budget for this assignment), including a breakdown of the budget and a justification of expenses. The budget should include only those costs that can be directly attributed to the activities proposed, with an explanation of budget line items.
3. Copies of all relevant certificates, Curriculum Vitae (CV) and Company profile.
4. A sample of a baseline report for similar assignments, completed within the last 18 months (this will be treated as confidential, and only used for assessing suitability for the assignment).
5. Three referees, including, one from a most recent assignment.
6. Upon a review of the submission, CABI and ISABU may require additional documentation to fulfil due diligence requirements. Requests for this will be made on a case by case basis, and a timeframe for turnaround agreed.

If interested, submit all documents by email to: procurement-africa@cabi.org by close of business on 18th June, 2021.