
**Memorandum of understanding between the
Committee on Sustainability Assessment, the
International Security and Development Center, the
Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in the
Republic of the Sudan and IFAD**

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Action: The Executive Board is invited to approve the recommendation contained in paragraph 19 of this document.

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Memorandum of understanding between the Committee on Sustainability Assessment, the International Security and Development Center, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in the Republic of the Sudan and IFAD

I. Background and purpose of the memorandum of understanding

1. The Committee on Sustainability Assessment (COSA), a recipient of a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grant, is piloting an agile data monitoring initiative in IFAD-funded projects that aims to leverage the application of agile technology for modernizing food systems resilience and monitoring and evaluation in fragile contexts. The Sustainable Natural Resources and Livelihoods Programme (SNRLP) in Sudan, for which the lead implementing agency is the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Sudan (MoAF), has been selected as one of the projects in which this initiative will be implemented.
2. COSA is subcontracting the International Security and Development Center (ISDC) to support the development of a methodology and tools that will be utilized to execute the agile data monitoring initiative.
3. The purpose of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) is to establish a mutually beneficial framework for cooperation between IFAD, COSA, ISDC and MoAF, with a view to facilitate collaboration in common areas of interest, particularly to:
 - (a) Advance and operationalize agile methods and tools for understanding food systems resilience in fragile settings; and
 - (b) Provide governments and actors in fragile contexts with near real-time data to plan, target and deliver support to food system actors to enhance the resilience of food systems and supply chains more effectively.
4. The Financial Controller's Division has conducted the required financial crime screening for COSA and ISDC and, in the absence of any financial crime alerts, has assigned the parties a low risk rating. The Global Engagement, Partnership and Resource Mobilization Division (GPR) has also conducted a comprehensive environmental, social and governance due diligence screening of COSA and ISDC. No adverse environmental, social or governance risks were identified; therefore GPR has assigned the parties a low risk rating.
5. The MOU will be effective from the date of its signature and will remain in effect until changed or terminated by any of the parties through mutual consent.

II. Committee on Sustainability Assessment

6. COSA is a non-profit learning consortium working with more than 100 partner institutions around the globe. It has advanced on a preliminary stage of this work by developing a preliminary low-cost, easily accessible and actionable resilience measurement tool that will be adapted to serve as a common basis of understanding among many of the existing institutional silos of practice now operating.
7. COSA is currently developing agile monitoring, evaluation and learning approaches. These approaches offer rapid insights to facilitate timely decision-making throughout project implementation, rather than only post-completion, thus

promoting mutual and adaptive learning and enhancing investment or intervention outcomes. To ensure data integrity, agile data rapidly deploys smart metrics through short-duration surveys conducted in a cost effective manner and at various intervals. These are combined with targeted and context-appropriate field technologies such as computer-assisted telephone interviewing, interactive voice response, apps and chatbots that employ human or artificial intelligence to provide automated data validation, analysis and feedback loops to users.

8. By actively engaging data subjects more purposefully and with accurate information, agile data permits mutual iterative learning that differs from common monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approaches that are compliance-oriented and carried out ex post.

III. International Security and Development Center

9. ISDC is a non-profit academic institute committed to improve lives and livelihoods shaped by violent conflict, fragility and humanitarian emergencies.
10. With a belief in data's capacity to alleviate suffering, ISDC is a global leader in the conduct and delivery of micro-level quantitative research in fragile and conflict-affected situations. Collaborating across the United Nations system and with governments globally, ISDC delivers policy-relevant research, recommendations and innovative measurement tools for assessing fragility and its impact on decision-making, livelihoods and behaviour.
11. ISDC's expertise in fragility measurement, applied microeconomics and research provides the theoretical foundation and validation for these measurement tools.

IV. Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in the Republic of the Sudan

12. MoAF is a federal ministry in the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and the technical lead agency for the IFAD-funded projects. MoAF aims to promote positive change in rural areas through increased production, farmer training, promoting agricultural entrepreneurship, promoting products processing techniques, job creation in agriculture and non-agricultural rural areas, and capacity-building within producer organizations.
13. Additionally, the Ministry is responsible for formulating strategies, policies and legislation that enable agricultural development. As mentioned, MoAF is the lead project agency for the IFAD-financed Sustainable Natural Resources and Livelihoods Programme (SNRLP). The SNRLP development objective is to increase production, secure access to natural resources for vulnerable users and improve the sustainability of livelihoods dependent on natural resources. This is achieved through scaling up community-based natural resources governance and management practices, technologies and business models.
14. The Ministry has an oversight role in the implementation of SNRLP, and is responsible for carrying out changes to the implementation of the project in partnership with IFAD based on M&E data about project performance and based on the changes in the external environment. This ensures project relevance, effectiveness and compliance with the provisions outlined in the signed financing agreement.

V. Alignment with IFAD strategies

15. The principles and objectives of the proposed multiparty MOU are aligned with IFAD's strategic objectives and policies, and with the business model and financing framework for the upcoming Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD13). Furthermore, they contribute to IFAD's efforts to mobilize additional

resources aimed at enhancing food systems and their resilience, particularly in fragile situations.

16. The proposed MOU develops risk mitigation measures to address the following risks: privacy breach vis-à-vis confidential information belonging to MoAF, IFAD, COSA and ISDC; breakdown in communication and internet services (which are key elements used in agile monitoring) and high insecurity levels constraining project delivery, trust building and data generation.
17. The parties to the MOU are committed to implement sufficient and adequate due diligence and other controls to safeguard personal data through applying appropriate security mechanisms, restricting access and retaining personal data only for as long as is necessary. The agile monitoring approach is based on small and frequent rounds of data collection to be carried out promptly when mobile networks are operational.
18. Finally, IFAD's sustained engagement in Sudan aligns with the aim of remaining engaged in fragile contexts. IFAD is prepared to redesign its interventions as necessary, leveraging the downscaled approach to repurpose funding and effectively adapt project delivery to the prevailing situation.

VI. Recommendation

19. In accordance with article 8, section 2, of the Agreement Establishing IFAD, the Executive Board is invited to authorize the President of IFAD to finalize and sign the multiparty MOU between IFAD, COSA, ISDC and MoAF, along the lines described in the document.
20. The signed MOU will be submitted to the Executive Board for information at a subsequent session.

Memorandum of understanding between the Committee on Sustainability Assessment, the International Security and Development Center, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in the Republic of the Sudan and IFAD

This Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter the "Memorandum") is entered into by and between the Committee on Sustainability Assessment (COSA), the International Security and Development Center (ISDC), the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of the Sudan (MoAF) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development ("IFAD") (each a "Party"; together the "Parties").

WHEREAS COSA is a neutral non-profit agency dedicated to helping organizations understand their core sustainability by designing and implementing systems for measuring the performance and impact of sustainable agriculture programmes; COSA is developing and testing agile monitoring systems, blending technology and rigorous metrics that make rapid, evidence-based decisions possible. With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's AgDev Programme, the goal is to help improve outcomes and strengthen the learning or understanding of its investments. A key objective is to get reasonably rigorous data into the hands of decision-makers with much greater frequency than is possible with standard evaluations to improve and accelerate programme outcomes.

WHEREAS ISDC is an independent non-profit academic research institute focused on improving lives affected by conflict, fragility and emergencies. With a belief in data's power to alleviate suffering, ISDC leads micro-level quantitative research in these settings globally. Collaborating with the United Nations and governments, it delivers policy-relevant research and tools for measuring fragility's impact on decision-making, livelihoods and behaviour. Its expertise in fragility measurement, applied microeconomics and research will provide the theoretical underpinnings and validation of the measurement tools.

WHEREAS MoAF is a federal ministry in the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and the technical lead agency for IFAD-funded projects. MoAF aims to promote positive change in rural areas through increased production, farmer training, promoting agricultural entrepreneurship, promoting products processing techniques, the creation of jobs in agriculture and non-agricultural rural areas, and building the capacity of producers' organizations. The Ministry is also responsible for the formulation of strategies, policies and legislation that enable agricultural development. MoAF is the lead project agency for the IFAD-financed Sustainable Natural Resources and Livelihoods Programme (SNRLP). The SNRLP development objective is to increase production, secure access to natural resources for vulnerable users and improve the sustainability of natural resources related livelihoods through scaling up community-based natural resources governance and management practices, technologies and business models.

The Ministry has an oversight role on the SNRLP implementation and is responsible for carrying out changes to the implementation of the project in partnership with IFAD based on M&E data about project performance and based on changes in the external environment to ensure the project remains relevant and effective, and complies with the provisions of the signed financing agreement. The SNRLP became effective on 4 February 2021 and is planned for completion on 31 March 2027.

WHEREAS IFAD is a specialized agency of the United Nations and an international financial institution, established by an international agreement (i.e. the Agreement Establishing IFAD) with the objective of mobilizing additional resources to be made

available on concessional terms for agricultural development in developing Member States. In fulfilling this objective, IFAD provides financing primarily for projects and programmes specifically designed to introduce, expand or improve food production systems and to strengthen related policies and institutions within the framework of national priorities and strategies.

THE PARTIES TO THIS MEMORANDUM:

CONSIDERING the common interest of the Parties in promoting, according to their respective mandates, agricultural development and food security in developing countries;

CONSIDERING the Parties' intention to undertake and advance practical and science-based measures to better understand the resilience of food systems value chains in fragile and conflict-affected countries;

CONSIDERING that COSA is piloting agile data systems to improve and enhance the resilience of farmers and supply chains to a changing climate and to related socioeconomic and political shocks and that the Parties are well placed to pilot, test and scale these tools, and disseminate knowledge gained from this initiative;

NOTING that COSA will work closely with IFAD and ISDC to rapidly mobilize the collection and analysis of key data in Sudan and that specific work to be undertaken, beyond sharing information and concepts, will be agreed separately with specific terms of reference and a contractual agreement with the implementing party(ies);

RECOGNIZING the benefits of cooperation between them, as may be consistent with their respective policies and rules, for achieving their shared objectives; and

DETERMINED to establish a strategic and operational cooperation to best serve their common objectives;

Therefore, in furtherance of the aims set forth above, the Parties have entered into this Memorandum of Understanding

I. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this Memorandum is to establish a mutually beneficial framework for cooperation between the Parties, with a view to facilitating collaboration in common areas of interest, particularly to: (1) advance and operationalize agile methods and tools for understanding food systems resilience in fragile settings; and (2) provide governments and actors in fragile states with near real-time data to plan, target and deliver support to food system actors to enhance the resilience of food systems and supply chains more effectively.

II. AREAS OF COOPERATION

- 2.1 In accordance with their respective mandates, policies and rules, the Parties will seek opportunities for collaboration in a number of areas, including but not limited to the application of agile technology for modernizing M&E in SNRLP and understanding food systems resilience. The methodology foreseen will pilot a simplified and agile resilience measurement framework in the context of food systems and value chain projects in fragile and conflict affected situations (FCAS). The plan is to adapt the current IFAD M&E core outcome indicators

(COI) methodology to the context of fragile and conflict affected settings, developing rigorous fit-for-purpose tools. Given the challenges of in-person data collection in FCAS, the methodology will aim to be flexible, agile and focused on key actionable indicators at the macro, meso and micro levels. To this end, the collaboration will entail the following activities :

- **Review the methodology for agile monitoring:** review and conduct a stocktake of existing approaches to food systems resilience measurement in agriculture and fragile contexts. Expected results are agreement about a clear global set of multidimensional resilience indicators to measure value chain and food systems resilience in fragile contexts. The review will also aim at simplifying the IFAD COI questionnaire in the context of FCAS and how to adapt it to measure resilience and adaptation to shocks. Agility will also be achieved by replacing one-off data collection with more frequent and smaller exercises.
- **Pilot agile technology** through the design of technical specifications that permit low-cost and reliable information gathering via an array of tools such as computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI), computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI), interactive voice response (IVR) technology and WhatsApp.
- **Build trust and deliver results:** to build trust, we envision a number of options as applicable in the prevailing context: using face-to-face surveys to gather relevant food systems resilience data and establish a link to respondents and communities; a high frequency, seasonal and modular approach built to not only collect data but also constantly provide data and information to farmers during the overall intervention period to improve delivery of interventions (including advisory) and project effectiveness; and using CATI or IVR technology modes to gather relevant data, which will facilitate high-frequency data collection at lower cost than in-person interviews. Within treatment randomization, trust will be built through information sharing with beneficiaries. Results will allow for identifying whether the re-packaging, analysis and provision of data to the farmers in the form of personalized agricultural advisory assistance via digital extension or advisory services (i.e. providing data and information back to farmers) incentivizes information sharing, increases trust, the perceived quality of advisory services and use of recommended practices.
- **Scale up, share knowledge, and application with critical stakeholders:** Develop and share real-time results through dashboards or using the technology mode implemented in the surveys with key stakeholders so that evidence can be used by implementers, supply chain managers and decision-makers within projects to improve services delivery and engage in adaptive implementation. Further, the group could provide information back to beneficiaries in the form of advisory services or other information to be decided on a case-by-case basis based on need.
Develop discussion papers and knowledge management tools that illustrate the outcomes and insights gained. This includes elucidating the importance of a simplified set of indicators for food system resilience in vulnerable settings and detailing their operation via flexible and agile technologies.

III. CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The Parties will keep each other informed and, whenever necessary, consult each other on matters of mutual interest that, in their opinion, are likely to enhance their collaboration.

IV. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Parties hereto will exchange relevant information and data on matters of common interest to them and collaborate in the collection, analysis and diffusion of such information and data, subject to their respective policies and procedures relating to disclosure of information.
- 4.2 The Parties may disclose to the general public this MOU and information related to this MOU in accordance with their respective policies. However, the Parties agree that all documents or information exchanged between the Parties in the course of the implementation of this MOU will not be disclosed to third parties by the Party receiving such documents or information without prior written consent of the other Party.

V. USE OF NAME AND EMBLEM, FORM OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- 5.1 Neither Party shall use the name or emblem of the other Party, or any abbreviation thereof, in connection with its business or for public dissemination without the prior expressly written approval of the other Party in each case.
- 5.2 The Parties will first consult with each other concerning the manner and form of any publicity or acknowledgement of the other Party's support regarding any activities undertaken pursuant to this MOU.
- 5.3 The Partners agree to maintain the privacy of all confidential information belonging to MoAF, IFAD, COSA and ISDC. Such information or data may not be used or disseminated without express approval.

VI. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- 6.1 The Parties will agree in writing on the ownership of any intellectual property rights that may arise in any work or product that may result from the collaborative activities undertaken under this Memorandum.

VII. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 7.1 This Memorandum reflects the views and intentions of the Parties to cooperate on a non-exclusive basis, expressed in good faith, but without the creation of any binding obligation or the incurrance of any liability on the part of any of them.
- 7.2 It is understood and agreed that nothing in this Memorandum: (a) will constitute, or be construed as, an offer, promise or undertaking by the Parties to finance all or in part any activity identified in or pursuant to this Memorandum; (b) shall be construed to create a joint venture, partnership, agency relationship, employment relationship or any

other relationship that may result in vicarious liability between or among the Parties; (c) shall be construed to create any commitment on the part of any Party to give preferred treatment to the other Party in any matter contemplated under this Memorandum.

- 7.3 Any activity that may be identified by the Parties under this Memorandum will, as appropriate, be subject to separate supplementary arrangements or agreements to be concluded between the Parties on a case-by-case basis, which will detail the specific form and content of the activities, address the obligations and liabilities of each Party in relation to those activities and specify the terms and conditions applicable thereto.
- 7.4 The Parties are committed to international standards of personal data protection and to implement sufficient and adequate due diligence and other controls to safeguard personal data processed while carrying out project activities (safeguards include applying appropriate security, restricting access, only sharing where necessary and retaining personal data only for as long as is necessary). Research activities must comply with the Parties' Guidelines for Ensuring Good Scientific Practice. In addition, the collection of primary data must also comply with the Parties' Ethical Principles for Collecting Primary Data and Conducting Fieldwork.
- 7.5 Any differences arising out of, or in connection with, the interpretation or application of any provision contained in this Memorandum will be resolved amicably through consultations between the Parties.
- 7.6 Nothing in this Memorandum, or relating thereto, shall be construed as constituting a waiver, renunciation or other modification of any of the rights, privileges, immunities and exemptions enjoyed by IFAD under the Agreement Establishing IFAD, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations, and under any other document, international treaty or convention, or international customary law.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS AND COORDINATION

- 8.1 Each Party will designate an official (hereinafter referred to as "Official") who will be responsible for conducting relations under this Memorandum on its behalf. For the said purpose and until further notice, COSA will be represented by _____, ISDC will be represented by _____ and MoAF will be represented by the M&E Officer of the SNRLP and the Director if the M&E Unit of the International Cooperation Division of the MoAF. Until further notice, IFAD designates as its Official for the above-mentioned purpose Rasha Omar, Country Director, Sudan and Alessandra Garbero, Lead Regional Economist, Near East, North Africa, Europe and Central Asian Division (NEN).
- 8.2 Any notice or other communication to be given or made under this Memorandum will be addressed and sent to the attention of the Officials at the addresses below or such other address as either Party designates by notice to the other Party:

For:

For IFAD:

International Fund for Agricultural Development
Via Paolo di Dono, 44
00142 Rome
Italy
E-Mail: _____@ifad.org

For COSA:

Address:
E-Mail:

For ISDC:

Address:
E-Mail:

For MoAF:

Address:
E-Mail:

IX. EFFECTIVENESS, DURATION, TERMINATION AND AMENDMENT

- 9.1 This Memorandum shall become effective upon signature thereof by the Parties, following approval by the IFAD Executive Board.
- 9.2 The Memorandum is effective from the date of its signature and remains in effect until changed or terminated by either organization through mutual consent.
- 9.3 The Memorandum may be terminated by either Party by giving at least ninety (90) days’ advance written notice to the other Party. Any termination of this Memorandum shall be without prejudice to the orderly completion of any ongoing cooperation activity and any other rights or obligations of the Parties under any legal instrument executed pursuant to this Memorandum.
- 9.4 The Parties to this Memorandum shall consult each other on any amendment required regarding the terms of this Memorandum. Any such amendment shall be made in writing and shall become effective after signature by both Parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, COSA, ISDC, MoAF and IFAD, each acting through their duly authorized representative, have executed this Memorandum in duplicate, in the English language.

COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Name:
Title:

Name:
Title:

Date:_____

Date: _____

Place:_____

Place: _____

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

FEDERAL MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY, THE REPUBLIC OF SUDAN

Name:
Title:

Name:
Title:

Date: _____

Date: _____

Place: _____

Place: _____