For a world without hunger

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Food Systems assessment & Feasibility Study

Climate-Resilient and nutrition-sensitive sesame value chain in Lahj Governorate, Yemen

1. About Welthungerhilfe

Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V. (WHH) is one of the largest Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) in Germany operating in the field of Humanitarian Assistance and Development. It was established in 1962, as the German section of the "Freedom from Hunger Campaign", one of the world's first initiatives aimed at the eradication of hunger. Welthungerhilfe's work is still dedicated to the following vision: All people have a right to a self-determined life in dignity and justice, free from hunger and poverty.

In Yemen, WHH has been working with local partners, including ADO, since 2025 to address acute and structural drivers of food insecurity and livelihood vulnerability. Building on this engagement, the planned intervention in Lahj aims to combine climate-resilient agricultural production with improved market linkages and value addition, inclusive economic opportunities, and nutrition-sensitive approaches.

2. Background and project context

Yemen – climate vulnerability, agriculture and food security

Yemen is among the countries most vulnerable to climate change globally. According to the 2024 ND-GAIN Index, Yemen has a vulnerability score of 0.629 and a readiness score of 0.2561, ranking it fourth globally in climate vulnerability and among the countries least prepared to adapt – especially in

[1] **ND-GAIN (Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative) Index** assesses countries' vulnerability to climate change and their readiness to adapt. Both are scored from **0 to 1**: for **vulnerability, 0 is best and 1 is worst; for readiness, 0 is worst and 1 is best**. Yemen's scores indicate **high vulnerability and low capacity to adapt**. *Source: University of Notre Dame, ND-GAIN Country Index, 2024 data (link).*

the water (0.799) and food (0.680) sectors[2]. Yemen's 2025 NDC[3] identifies rising temperatures, increasingly erratic rainfall and more frequent and intense climate extremes—including floods, droughts and cyclones—as major threats to water resources, agriculture, health, ecosystems and coastal areas (NDC 3.0, 2025). Around half of Yemen's population is already exposed to at least one major climate hazard with climate change expected to further compound food insecurity, poverty and economic losses (WB CCDR, 2024).

Yemen's agricultural sector, a critical source of food and livelihoods for rural communities, is increasingly threatened by climate change, water scarcity, land degradation and prolonged conflict. According to FAO, approximately 73% of Yemen's rural population relies on agriculture for their livelihoods (FAO, 2022), while productive assets and irrigation infrastructure have been significantly affected by conflict and environmental pressures (FAO, 2025). Agriculture accounts for more than 90% of available water use, with groundwater depletion and inefficient irrigation practices threatening long-term sustainability (UNDP, 2025). Climate variability is also affecting production: prolonged dry conditions and high temperatures contributed to cereal production being estimated at around 15% below average in 2025, with Lahj among the most affected governorates (FAO GIEWS, 2026). Beyond agriculture, climate impacts could reduce Yemen's annual GDP by an average of 3.9% by 2040 under pessimistic scenarios, reflecting losses in agricultural productivity and damage to infrastructure (WB CCDR, 2024).

Food insecurity and malnutrition remain severe in Yemen, driven by economic deterioration, prolonged conflict, declining livelihoods, displacement and reduced humanitarian assistance. According to the 2026 Yemen Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (OCHA, 2026), approximately 18.3 million people face acute food insecurity, while 2.2 million children under five suffer from acute malnutrition, including over 500,000 children with severe acute malnutrition. An additional 1.3 million pregnant and breastfeeding women are affected by malnutrition. Furthermore, 74% of surveyed households were unable to meet their basic food needs (WFP, 2026) and 5.4 million people in government-controlled areas are projected to face severe food insecurity levels (IPC Phase 3 or above) between October and December 2026, including 1.8 million people in extremely critical level (IPC Phase 4) (IPC, 2026). These interconnected challenges continue to undermine household food consumption, nutritional well-being, and community resilience, emphasizing the importance of integrated food security, nutrition, and livelihood interventions that address both immediate vulnerabilities and underlying structural drivers.

Lahj Governorate – climate and impact on rural livelihoods

ND-GAIN (Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative) measures how vulnerable countries are to climate change and how prepared they are to adapt. It looks at six sectors: food, water, health, ecosystems, housing and infrastructure. Both scores range from 0 to 1. For vulnerability, a higher score means greater vulnerability to climate change. For readiness, a higher score means a country is better prepared to adapt.

[3] ok write footnote

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are national climate action plans submitted under the Paris Agreement. They outline countries' commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change.

Lahj Governorate is particularly exposed to the interaction between climate change, water scarcity and dependence on agriculture. Lahj was among the governorates expected to experience the greatest crop-production losses in 2025 due to prolonged dry conditions and high temperatures (FAO GIEWS, 2025).

Agriculture is an important source of food and income in rural Lahj, with livelihood systems combining cereal and vegetable production, livestock and, in coastal areas, fishing (FSAC/FAO Livelihood Zones, 2024). Water scarcity, drought, flood-related erosion and deteriorated irrigation infrastructure have contributed to declining productivity and farmland abandonment in some areas (UNDP, 2026). These production constraints are compounded by wider market-system barriers. A recent market and labour assessment in Tuban District describes a predominantly small-scale and subsistence-oriented local economy, with agriculture and retail trade among the main economic activities. Local businesses face high input costs and acute liquidity constraints, with 98% of surveyed businesses reporting no access to finance, limiting their capacity to invest in equipment, expand production or respond to market opportunities. The assessment also identifies significant capacity gaps, particularly in business management (87%) and technical production skills, alongside constraints affecting access to inputs and enterprise growth. At the same time, it identifies solar-integrated agriculture and food processing among locally relevant economic opportunities (DKH/BFD, 2025).

Selected value chain – sesame

Sesame has been identified as the proposed entry value chain based on its existing production in Lahj and potential for income generation, climate resilience and value addition. Sesame is cultivated as a cash crop in livelihood zones covering Lahj (FAO/FSAC Livelihood Zones, 2024) and is recognized among Yemen's high-value and nutrition crops.

A sesame value chain assessment conducted in Lahj and Abyan identifies established production and trade in Lahj, particularly around Tuban, with linkages between farmers, input suppliers, traders, wholesalers, oil extractors and markets in nearby Aden. It highlights demand for sesame seeds and processed products, including sesame oil and sesame cake for livestock feed, alongside competition from imports from Sudan and Ethiopia. Traders and wholesalers facilitate market access and, in some cases, provide agricultural inputs and credit, while existing oil extractors in Aden offer an established processing base. However, the value chain faces constraints related to rising production costs, limited access to finance and agricultural advisory services, pest and disease pressures, and rainfall variability affecting production. The assessment identifies opportunities to strengthen agricultural services, producer organization, access to finance, post-harvest handling and quality management, and linkages with existing buyers and processors (YFCA, 2024).

Sesame's relative drought tolerance and low input requirements may make it suitable for water-constrained farming systems (WHH Opportunity Crops, 2025). Its nutritional value, storability and potential for processing into oil and other products also offer opportunities for local value addition and nutrition-sensitive interventions.

WHH–ADO proposed response

Against this background, Welthungerhilfe (WHH), in partnership with ADO, is exploring a "Nutrition-Sensitive Climate-Resilient Sesame Value Chains" intervention in Lahj Governorate, targeting approximately 2,000 smallholder farmers, with particular attention to women and youth. The proposed intervention aims to strengthen the income, food security and resilience of smallholder farming households through climate-resilient sesame production and improved access to relevant inputs and services (e.g. climate-resilient varieties, water-efficient practices, climate information,

financial and agricultural advisory services), while addressing constraints and opportunities related to post-harvest management, processing and value addition, producer organization and market linkages.

The proposed intervention is aligned with Yemen's National Agriculture and Fisheries Strategy and Investment Plan (NAFSIP) 2024–2030, particularly its priorities on competitive and nutrition-sensitive agricultural value chains, climate-smart agriculture and sustainable natural-resource management, stronger producer organizations, value addition and private-sector engagement. NAFSIP also promotes improved access to agricultural and financial services and energy-efficient and renewable-energy solutions along agricultural value chains, while emphasizing the economic inclusion of women and youth. The proposed intervention also aligns with Yemen's National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA, 2009) prioritises efficient irrigation, rainwater harvesting, climate-resilient crop varieties, sustainable land and watershed management, and improved climate information and early warning systems. Yemen does not possesses a recent National Adaptation Plan (NAP).

The proposed intervention areas, to be further assessed and refined through the feasibility study, are:

1. **Strengthen climate-resilient sesame production**: train farmers on Climate-smart Agriculture (CSA) and establish demonstration plots, increase availabilty of drought-tolerant sesame seeds, establish community seed banks, and facilitate local dissemination of weather forecasts and agricultural advice through SMS and community communication channels.
2. **Support sesame processing, value addition and market access**: establish and equip cooperatives with solar-powered sesame oil extraction units, train members in processing and equipment maintenance, improve product quality, packaging and branding through technical training, product development and support for certification, and facilitate commercial agreements with traders and buyers.
3. **Strengthen cooperatives and economic opportunities for women and youth**: strengthen existing producer cooperatives, train members in governance, financial management and business planning, support cooperative revolving funds, and provide marketing and entrepreneurship training to youth, alongside support for women's sesame-related businesses.
4. **Promote nutrition-sensitive practices across the sesame value chain:** Integrate nutrition-sensitive approaches into agricultural production, processing, marketing and household consumption targeting various actors along the studied value chain. The said stakeholders include women and households of the targeted communities, farmers and their families, Dallalat vendors, sesame dependant cooperatives, etc.

The following intervention areas have been preliminarily identified in the initial project concept and should not be considered final. A key objective of the consultancy is to critically assess and refine the proposed activities based on the food systems analysis, ensuring they respond to identified constraints and opportunities, address underlying causes, build on existing system actors and services, and contribute to sustainable, systemic change.

3. Study outline

The feasibility study will validate and further develop the proposed intervention, including its geographical focus, target groups, value chain focus and intervention model, and provide the evidence and recommendations required to inform the final project design.

3.1. Purpose of the study

Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and ADO intend to develop the proposed "Nutrition-Sensitive Climate-Resilient Sesame Value Chains" intervention based on a topline food systems assessment and feasibility study. The study will assess whether and how the proposed sesame value chain intervention can sustainably contribute to improving the income, food security and climate resilience of smallholder farmers in Lahj, while identifying the most relevant leverage points across the wider food and market system including actors, places, services, policies and institutions to sustainably improve productivity and climate resilience of targeted smallholder farmers. The study should build on ADO's initial project concept and existing evidence on the sesame value chain in Yemen and Lahj, while critically assessing the proposed intervention logic and activities.

The food systems assessment and feasibility study will be conducted in four steps. The first step (**scoping and preliminary assessment**) will review the main assumptions underpinning the proposed intervention. Based on existing evidence and expert consultations, the consultant will assess the relevance of sesame as the proposed entry value chain, identify the most appropriate geographical focus and target groups, and clarify the priority food-system outcomes the intervention should seek to influence, particularly in relation to livelihoods and income, food and nutrition security and climate resilience. This will be done through literature review and expert interviews, with key information gaps identified for further investigation during the field assessment. **The output of Step 1 will be a validated scope for the assessment, including its geographical, target-group and thematic focus and key evidence gaps.**

Building on the scoping phase, the second step **(food systems diagnosis)** will analyse **how and why the sesame food and market system functions or malfunctions**, following WHH's Food Systems Framework. The analysis will map key actors, places, functions and relationships across production, processing, storage, trade and consumption, as well as supporting services, rules and norms, and relevant shocks and stresses. It will consider nutrition, socio-economic/market, governance and equity, and climate/natural-resource dimensions, as further described under Section 3.2. This phase will combine a review of existing evidence with primary data collection through observation, focus group discussions and expert interviews, in close collaboration with WHH, ADO and relevant stakeholders. **The output of Step 2 will be a food systems map and an analysis of key constraints, their underlying causes and potential leverage points for nutrition-sensitive and climate-resilient change to inform Step 3.**

The third step **(leverage points and intervention design)** will use the findings from the food systems diagnosis to identify and prioritise leverage points where the project could contribute to meaningful and sustainable change. The consultant will review and refine the activities proposed in the initial project concept, assessing their relevance, expected impact, feasibility and sustainability, including potential synergies and trade-offs between livelihood, nutrition, climate and environmental outcomes. Particular attention should be given to whether the proposed activities address identified constraints, the roles and incentives of existing system actors, and opportunities to strengthen existing services and market relationships rather than create parallel structures. Alternative or additional interventions should be considered where appropriate.

For each recommended intervention, the consultant should outline the proposed activities, target actors, delivery mechanisms and key sustainability considerations. Step three will include a participatory workshop with WHH, ADO and selected key stakeholders to validate the main findings, prioritise leverage points and agree on the proposed intervention approach. **The output of Step 3 will be a recommended intervention model, including a revised Theory of Change and topline logframe.**

Building on the intervention model developed in Step 3, in the fourth and final step **(feasibility study)** the consultant will assess the revised project design against the OECD-DAC criteria and relevant BMZ feasibility requirements. The study will present the project context at relevant **micro, meso and macro levels** and assess whether and how the proposed approach can contribute to addressing the identified problems for target groups and other stakeholders. The project concept will be critically assessed against the **OECD-DAC criteria** of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, considering key stakeholders, opportunities and risks. Based on the findings, the consultant will provide **concrete recommendations** for adjustments to the project concept, impact matrix and proposed

measures, as well as recommendations for outcome and impact monitoring. **The output of step four will be a feasibility study report.**

Study findings will be used to:

a) **Assess the project context** at micro, meso and macro levels, including relevant climate, food security, nutrition, livelihood and market-system conditions.
b) **Validate sesame as the proposed entry value chain** and assess its relevance for targeted actors in the value chain, including its potential contribution to **income, food security, nutrition and climate resilience**.
c) **Identify systemic constraints, opportunities and leverage points** within the sesame food and market system, including opportunities to improve **availability, access and consumption of nutritious foods** and avoid potential negative effects on household food production and diets.
d) **Assess and refine the proposed interventions** based on their relevance, feasibility, sustainability and potential contribution to **income, food security, nutrition and climate resilience**, including opportunities for nutrition-sensitive value addition.
e) **Assess the targeting approach and stakeholder capacities and incentives**, including the roles of farmers, cooperatives, private-sector actors, service providers and relevant institutions.
f) **Adapt the project design based on evidence**, providing concrete recommendations for the intervention model, Theory of Change, impact matrix, project measures and outcome/impact monitoring.

3.2. WHH resources and frameworks

The consultant is encouraged to use **WHH's Food Systems Toolkit**, including its framework, resources, tools and guidance (http://foodsystemstoolkit.org), to inform the assessment and development of the food systems map. The consultant should also review WHH's **Opportunity Crops** study (Opportunity crops - Welthungerhilfe), particularly the analysis of sesame and its potential contribution to climate resilience, nutrition and agrobiodiversity, and consider its relevance to the Lahj context.

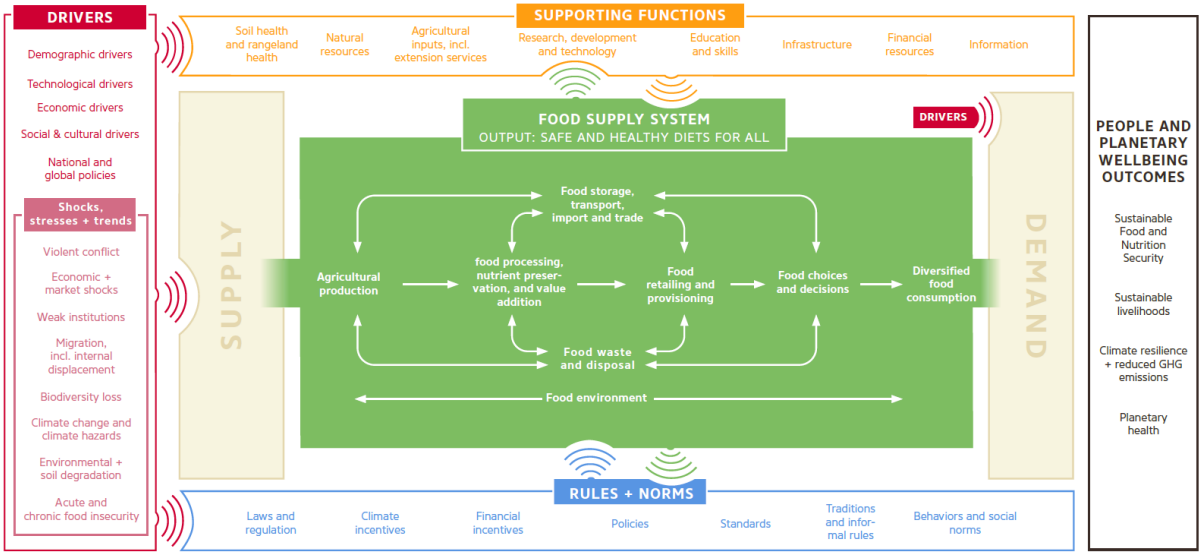


Figure 1: WHH Food Systems Assessment Graphic based on WHH´s Framework

WHH's Food Systems Framework (Figure 1) shows how food production, processing, trade and consumption are interconnected and influenced by demand, supporting services, rules and norms, and shocks and stresses. Applied to the sesame value chain in Lahj, it will guide the assessment of key actors, constraints, underlying causes and inequalities, helping identify leverage points for sustainable improvements in livelihoods, food and nutrition security, and climate resilience. More specific guiding questions are provided in Section 3.3 of this ToR.

The consultant is also encouraged to draw on IFAD's Nutrition-Sensitive Value Chains: A Guide for Project Design (Volumes I and II) to inform the nutrition-sensitive assessment, adapting this guidance to the local context. Applying nutrition-sensitive lens, the assessment should examine how sesame value chain development could contribute to improved household food access, dietary diversity and consumption of safe and nutritious foods, particularly among nutritionally vulnerable groups, including women of reproductive age, pregnant and lactating women, and children under five. It should identify nutrition-related constraints, opportunities and leverage points across production, processing, marketing and household consumption, considering gender dynamics, economic viability, local dietary preferences and potential trade-offs. More specific nutrition-related guiding questions are provided in Section 3.3 of this ToR.

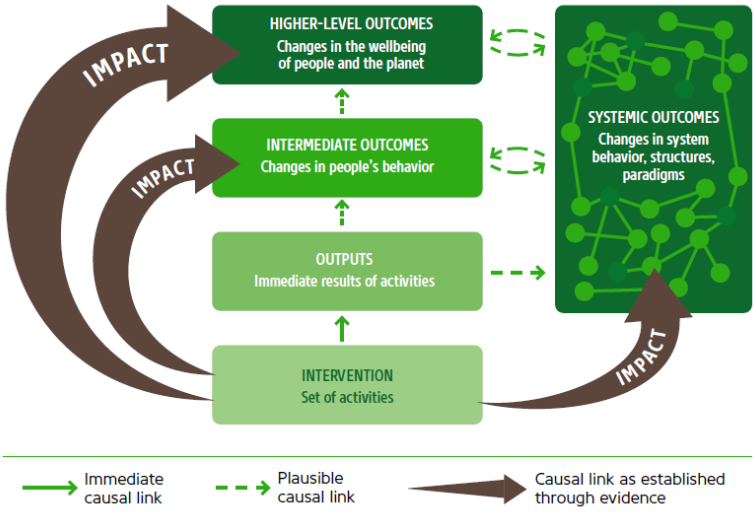


Figure 4: Welthungerhilfe's Impact and Outcome Classification Scheme

In developing the Theory of Change and topline logframe, the consultant should consider WHH's Impact and Outcome Classification Scheme, distinguishing between project-level outputs and outcomes and, where relevant, systemic outcomes, such as changes in the behaviour of key actors, relationships, service delivery or structures within the food and market system.

3.3. Food systems analysis questions

The following are a list of potential questions for the food systems analysis. The list is not exhaustive and the consultant will be expected to determine a final set of suitable questions to carry out the analysis.

Food system actors	**Shocks & stresses**	**Enabling Environment**
1. Who are the main actors across the sesame food system, from inputs and production to aggregation, processing, trade and consumption, and what roles and relationships exist between them? 2. Who has access to and control over key resources, services, information and markets, and who is currently excluded or losing out? How does this differ for women, youth and other vulnerable groups? 3. How are the value, costs, risks and benefits distributed across the system? Where are the main power imbalances or dependencies? 4. What are the main services and supporting functions required for the system to work (e.g. inputs, extension, finance, climate information, transport, storage and processing), who currently provides them, and where are the main gaps? 5. What are the main constraints affecting production, aggregation, processing and market access, and what are the underlying causes of these constraints? 6. What are the main markets and sources of demand for sesame and sesame products, and what opportunities exist for commercially viable value addition?	1. What is the main climate, environmental, economic and conflict-related shocks and stresses affecting sesame production and the wider food system, and where are their effects most significant? 2. How are communities and local structures equipped to withstand and respond to these impacts? What skills/capacities are needed to strengthen their resilience? 3. How can food availability and affordability for vulnerable households (smallholders, youth, women and PWDs) in the local communities be improved and stabilized to foster access to adequate and diverse food throughout the year for improved food and nutrition security? 4. What factors currently hinder stable year-round access to healthy and safe food in these communities? 5. Which role do land rights and land use planning play in the food system?	1. What formal and informal rules, policies, institutions and social norms shape how the sesame food system functions? 2. What institutional, infrastructure, or market conditions constrain access to services, finance, markets, and investment? 3. What capacities and incentives do public institutions, cooperatives, private-sector actors and service providers have to address identified constraints, and what prevents them from doing so effectively? 4. Where are the most promising leverage points for sustainable change, and which actors could realistically drive or sustain that change? 5. What initiatives and responses are already being implemented by government, communities, private-sector actors, cooperatives, development/humanitarian actors and other stakeholders to address identified constraints? What is working, what is not, and why?
Conflict	**Private Sector Engagement**	**Climate Resilience**
1. How does conflict affect the functioning of the sesame food system, including production, access to land and water, movement, input supply, transport, processing and market access? 2. Which actors, locations and population groups are most affected, excluded or disadvantaged by conflict-	1. Which private-sector actors are currently involved in the sesame system, including input suppliers, traders, processors, transporters, financial institutions, service providers and buyers, and what functions do they perform? 2. Where are important goods or services	1. Which value chains and economic activities offer potential co-benefits for eco-system services, environmental restoration and climate resilience? 2. What is the current level of awareness and understanding of climate change within actors in the food system? 3. To what extent do practices (production, processing,

related dynamics, and why? 3. How have market actors adapted to conflict, and which relationships, services or coping mechanisms have remained functional? 4. Could the proposed interventions unintentionally reinforce tensions, inequalities or exclusion, and how could these risks be mitigated? 5. What conflict-related constraints and opportunities should be considered when identifying feasible and sustainable leverage points for change? 6. How do external factors influence food systems governance, and what collaborative responses are possible? 7. What practical monitoring and accountability mechanisms can track the fairness and transparency of governance decisions in food system–related conflicts?	currently missing, inaccessible or inadequate, and why is the private sector not providing them effectively? 3. Where could the project facilitate private-sector engagement rather than directly provide or subsidize functions, and what support would be required to make these relationships sustainable? 4. What incentives (tax breaks, subsidies, risk-sharing models) would encourage private sector actors to invest in underserved areas? 5. How can joint ventures between local cooperatives and private companies strengthen processing and marketing within pastoral food systems? 6. What role could digital innovations (blockchain traceability, mobile-based marketplaces) play in building private sector trust in transactions with pastoral producers? 7. How can private sector investment in infrastructure (roads, storage, cold chains) be aligned with communal resource governance to avoid exclusion or conflict?	storage, transport, retailing, waste) in the current food system exacerbate or enable mitigation of climate change? 4. To what extent do current practices in the current food system (production, processing, storage, transport, retailing, waste) limit or enable the capacity of communities to adapt to climate change? 5. To what extent are the following practices employed in production for the food system: conservation agriculture, integrated soil fertility management, agroforestry, permaculture, managed grazing, natural resource management and restoration. 6. To what extent are climate – smart agricultural inputs available in the market? Who are the major private sector players in the agro-input space? 7. What is the extent of usage of renewable energy (eg EVs) or clean forms of transportation for produce in the system? What are the entry points to scale renewable/ clean energy in food transportation? 8. To what extent is renewable energy employed in the cold chain and/or processing component of the food system? (eg solar refrigeration, solar milling etc) What are the entry points to develop renewable energy solutions for storage and processing in the food system? 9. What are the main climate hazards and longer-term stresses affecting sesame production and the wider food system, and which actors and functions are most vulnerable? 10. How suitable is sesame cultivation under local soil, water and climate conditions, considering water requirements, profitability, climate resilience and potential trade-offs with existing crops?
Nutrition		
1. What are the main food and nutrition security challenges, dietary patterns and barriers to accessing and consuming safe, diverse and nutritious foods among targeted households, particularly women of reproductive age, pregnant and lactating women, and children under five? 2. What role do sesame and sesame-based products currently play in local diets, and how could sesame production, consumption and income generation contribute to improved household food access, dietary diversity and nutrition outcomes?		

3. To what extent do current practices in the current sesame value chain (production, processing, storage, transport, retailing, waste) induce nutrient losses of the sesame based end products?
4. What opportunities exist for sesame farmers to diversify agricultural production through the integration of nutrient-rich crops, such as legumes and vegetables, while considering climate risks, water availability and household food needs?
5. How do current sesame post-harvest handling and processing practices affect nutrient retention, bioavailability and food safety? What feasible improvements and technologies could enhance the nutritional quality of sesame-based products?
6. What opportunities exist for cooperatives, women vendors and small-scale processors to develop, produce and market safe, affordable and locally acceptable nutritious sesame-based products? What capacities and support would be required?
7. How do market linkages, product availability, affordability, consumer preferences and women's control over income influence household access to and consumption of nutritious foods? What opportunities exist to strengthen nutrition-sensitive market systems and practices?
8. What potential trade-offs or unintended negative nutrition effects could result from sesame value chain development, including displacement of food crops, competition for household resources, unequal income distribution and increased workloads for women?
9. Where are the most promising nutrition-sensitive leverage points across the sesame value chain, and which feasible interventions, partnerships and measurable indicators could be prioritised to strengthen its contribution to improved household food and nutrition security?

3.4. Feasibility study questions

The feasibility study will focus on a set of questions that address the project's design, including by reviewing the context and problem analysis conducted, analysing the intervention logic and roadmap towards achieving project outcomes, gaining greater understanding of the project's target group and the relevance of project interventions to their needs, mapping the types of stakeholders of interest to this project including defining their own interests and needs, and understanding the capacity of selected project partners to carry out intended activities. All in all, the set of questions for this feasibility study are outlined under the thematic scope of the OECD/DAC criteria as follows:

Relevance: Are the planned project activities appropriate for addressing the problem and needs of the population?

- *Does the project approach address a key development problem or constraint in the target regions?*
- *What is the background that informed the planned project? What has led to the planned project and its impact logic? (context analysis)*
- *What needs have been identified based on the problem analysis? How were these needs identified (or how will they be identified)? What are their causes and how do they impact on the living conditions of population groups? (problem analysis)*
- *Who is the target group for the project? What criteria will be used in the selection of the target group? Are there several target groups that are affected in different ways by the identified challenges?*
- *Do the needs identified as part of the problem analysis match the priority needs of the target group? How can these needs be addressed?*
- *Do the identified key stakeholders in targeted locations share a common understanding of the problem(s) and of the planned project objectives derived thereof?*
- *What changes are planned to have been accomplished by the project after it has been completed?*
- *Is the planned approach to enact these changes in line with the needs of the target groups?*

Effectiveness: To what extent are the suggested activities and modality suitable to achieving the **intended outcomes of the project**?

- *To what extent are the project outcomes attainable given the planned resources, the set activities and intervention logic, and the operational environment in the target locations?*

- *What is the role of the target group(s) in the broader social context and within the bounds of the project intervention? What conflicts of interest could arise between the target group and other non-target groups as a result of the support provided through the project that could hinder the achievement of project outcomes? (target group analysis)*
- *How willing are the various stakeholders to support the planned project? How much influence could they exert on the planned project? Have stakeholders entered into any agreements that could impact project implementation? (stakeholder analysis)*
- *Is the proposed implementing partner suitable for the proposed intervention to drive the achievement of project outcomes? How much capacity do they have in institutional, technical, staffing, and financial terms? What measures are needed to build the potential partner's organizational and general capacity to achieve project outcomes? (Project partner capacity and interest)*
- *What impact logic/impact hypothesis should the project be based on? What could a meaningful project intervention logic (portrayed in a theory of change and linked logical framework) look like, based on recommended changes from the study? (recommended changes to the theory of change)*
- *What innovations can be recommended and embedded in project interventions to achieve project outcomes?*

Efficiency: To what extent does the proposed intervention represents a an economically efficient way to implement?

- *What financial, institutional and human resources will be needed to carry out project activities?*
- *Will it be possible to implement the planned measures within the time allocated for the project and based on the resources that are planned? Will it be possible to achieve the desired impacts, and will all that be possible in an economical and efficient manner (in terms of cost-benefit ratio)?*
- *How can existing resources and inputs be maximized, based on set intervention logic, to achieve project objectives within the set timeframe?*

Coherence: To what extent does the proposed intervention complement existing programs, policies and services?

- *How does the planned project fit in with the broader local/regional/national government development strategy? To what extent are the planned project's objectives realistic given the stance of the responsible authorities? (coherence with governmental approaches and strategies)*
- *How does the planned project fit in with the overall approach devised by other major development/peacebuilding actors operating in the target locations, including other development agencies/organizations? (coherence with inter-agency approaches)*
- *What complementarities can be made between the project and other interventions/projects supported and implemented by WHH in the area? (internal coherence)*
- *What interdependencies or complementarities are to be expected between the project and other interventions/projects supported by the stakeholders? How will this be considered in the project concept? (external coherence)*
- *How can synergies be made with interventions supported by other donors or programs?*

Significance / overarching development impact: To what extent is the proposed porject expected to contribute to the broader, sustainable development impacts?

- *Which overarching objectives and intended impacts have been identified from the problem/needs analysis are to be achieved, and which target groups are expected to benefit?*
- *To what extent will the project address the underlying causes of identified needs, contribute to systemic or structural change, serve as a model, and generate benefits beond the target group ?*
- *Would it be advisable to pursue a multi-level approach (micro, meso and macro levels) in order to strengthen the project's relevance, effectiveness, and potential sustainable impact?*
- *To what extent have aspects relating to gender sensitivity, inclusion of persons with disabilities, cultural sensitivity, conflict sensitivity and human rights been incorporated in the project's objectives and intervention design?*
- *How can the targeting approach be tailored to the needs of the individuals and groups targeted under this project to achieve sustained impact? Should interventions be singled out to separate individuals from across the target locations or should they be grouped and aimed at the same group of individuals to achieve project outcomes in a sustainable way?*
- *Which socio-cultural barriers may impede the achievement of sustained impact, and how can they be overcome?*

Sustainability: To what extent are the project's expected outcomes and positive impact likely to be sustained after the project has been completed (without further external support)?

- *How can sustainability of results and impacts be ensured and reinforced (in institutional, economic, social, and environmental terms)? What measures should be incorporated into the project design to reinforce sustainability beyond the project period?*
- *What potential do target groups have for ownership, self-help initiatives and local problem-solving, and how can these capacities be strengthened?*
- *What are the roles and responsibilities of governmental and/or civil society institutions in this project? To what extent will the project be able to build on local potential, institutions, and procedures for these institutions to maintain the functioning of structures instituted through project activities? What measures and instruments are best suited to harness and strengthen local ownership and initiative, participation, and capacity?*
- *How can activities be planned at the meso and/or macro level (multi-level approach) in order to make the project more sustainable and to ascertain that bridges built and structures set up continue functioning post-project closure?*
- *What innovative measures, approaches, and activities could be recommended following this study to ascertain the achievement of project objectives in a sustainable way?*
- *What negative consequences and impacts might result from project implementation? To what extent will it be possible to consider and address these risks in the project/project concept (e.g., Do No Harm approach, conflict-sensitive impact monitoring, etc.)?*
- *What risks are involved in project implementation (personal risk for those implementing the project, institutional and reputational risk, contextual risk)? How can they be minimized?*

For more information on the assessing the planned project intervention based on OECD/DAC criteria, see: https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf

4. Methodology

The feasibility study will be conducted using a combination of data collection methods such as a desk study, key informant interviews, including with both internal and external stakeholders

(representatives from other organizations/agencies, local/regional leaders, etc.), focus group discussions with representatives from the targeted groups, and direct observations. The study will be mostly qualitative in nature given the lines of inquiry highlighted above. WHH Amman Hub will provide the researcher(s) with all necessary documentation around this project and other similarly structured projects, as well as data from past evaluations/monitoring activities as required. Researcher(s) would need to complement internal WHH reports and documents with an external literature review to support their findings with further, relevant, and reliable evidence.

5. Expected Deliverables

The consultant(s)/firm will be responsible for producing the following deliverables as part of the Feasibility Assessment assignment. All deliverables must meet WHH's quality standards and require formal approval by the contracting party.

Deliverable	**Content**	**Length and deadline** (calendar days from contract start date)
1. Inception meeting and report	The inception report will outline the proposed feasibility study design/methodology, data collection methods and tools, demonstrate a clear understanding of the Terms of Reference, and provide: 1. Refined assessment study questions (EQ), unpacking overarching questions if necessary. 2. A detailed study matrix linking questions to methods and tools. 3. Description of data sources and sampling strategies. 4. Draft data collection tools (e.g. questionnaires, interview guides). 5. Tentative fieldwork schedule. 6. Reflections on methodological limitations and feasibility. 7. Consideration of learning-oriented feasibility study approaches. A standard Inception Report outline/template will be provided after contracting. The report must be approved before fieldwork begins.	4–6 pages; Deadline: Day 7
2. Scoping and validation note	Preliminary assessment of sesame's suitability as the proposed entry value chain, identification of the most appropriate geographical focus and target groups, clarification of priority food-system outcomes related to livelihoods, food and nutrition security and climate resilience, and identification of evidence gaps for further investigation during fieldwork.	1–2 pages; Deadline: Day 14

3. Food systems diagnosis and mapping	A food systems map and accompanying analysis identifying: 1. Key actors and relationships across production, aggregation, processing, trade and consumption. 2. Supporting functions, services, rules and norms. 3. Main climate, environmental, economic and conflict-related shocks and stresses. 4. Key constraints affecting the sesame food and market system and their underlying causes. 5. Nutrition, socio-economic, governance, gender and inclusion, and climate/natural-resource considerations. 6. Potential leverage points for sustainable systemic change and gender mainstreaming.	5–8 pages; Deadline: Day 42
4. Intervention design workshop and revised project framework	A half-day participatory workshop (online/in-person) with WHH, ADO and selected stakeholders to review the findings of the food systems diagnosis, validate key constraints and prioritise leverage points. Following the workshop, the consultant will develop a recommended intervention model, including: 1. Revised or additional activities based on identified constraints and opportunities. 2. Proposed target actors, delivery mechanisms and roles of relevant stakeholders. 3. Key feasibility and sustainability considerations. 4. A revised Theory of Change and topline logframe (outcome and output levels).	Half-day workshop and accompanying documents; Deadline: Day 49
5. Draft feasibility study report	The feasibility study report must include: 1. An executive summary (maximum 5 pages). 2. Evidence-based findings, conclusions and recommendations. 3. Analysis organised according to the OECD-DAC criteria and BMZ feasibility requirements. 4. Assessment of the proposed intervention model, including key opportunities, risks and sustainability considerations. 5. Concrete recommendations for the project concept, impact matrix, proposed measures and outcome/impact monitoring. 6. Required annexes (e.g. data collection tools, list of interviewees, bibliography). A standard feasibility study report outline will be shared with the consultant(s). The draft will be reviewed by WHH and ADO for comments.	25–35 pages, including executive summary but excluding annexes; Deadline: Day 63

	The final version of the feasibility study report will integrate all agreed-upon feedback and revisions. It must be approved by the contracting party. In case of disagreement, differences must be documented.	
6. Final report Presentation and handover of study findings	Recommendation Submission of final report that incorporates all prior agreed upon feedback in following formats: 1. Full Report (25-35 pages excluding annexes) for internal WHH use 2. Shorter report of the findings and recommendation with WHH branding (15-20 pages) for public audiences. 3. Meeting with presentation of the main findings to ADO/WHH, conclusions and recommendations to WHH and ADO. The consultant will also submit all relevant supporting materials, including final data collection tools, anonymised quantitative and qualitative datasets, and relevant photographs and documentation.	Presentation and data handover; Deadline: Within 7 calendar days of receiving consolidated feedback on the draft report, tentatively by Day 75

6. Proposal Content

The proposal must clearly outline the following:

i. Understanding of the Assignment

- A brief description of the consultant's understanding of the feasibility study objectives and requirements, including a proposed start date.

ii. Proposed Approach and Methodology

- Description of the proposed approach, steps, and methodology to be applied.
- Clearly articulate any assumptions made and the expected roles/responsibilities of both WHH and the consultant.

iii. Methodology and Work Plan

- Detailed description of the methodology, data collection methods and tools to be used, and data collection approaches. Financial Proposal
- A work plan with key milestones should be included (e.g., in the form of a Gantt chart).

iv. Financial Proposal

- **A detailed budget that includes breakdown of all costs and personnel fees.**

v. Consultant's Experience and Expertise

- A summary of relevant qualifications and experience of each consultant (include CVs of the consulting team).
- At least two examples of previous assignments similar in nature, scope, and complexity to the current feasibility study.

Proposal Criteria

All submitted proposals will be evaluated using the following weighted criteria:

feasibility study Criteria	Weight
Technical Proposal	45%
Financial Proposal (Price)	35%
Relevant Experience and Expertise	20%

7. Expertise of the Consultants

i. Academic Qualifications

- A graduate degree (Master's or equivalent) in one or more of the following disciplines: Monitoring & Evaluation, Planning, Food System, Food Security and Livelihoods, Development Studies, Development Economics, Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Sciences, Climate Change, or related fields. For consulting teams, the inclusion of a member with specific expertise in nutrition-sensitive programming is an asset

ii. Relevant Experience

- Minimum of 10 years of progressive experience in the design and evaluation of food and nutrition security projects, climate resilience and adaptation, rural development, and related thematic areas.
- Demonstrated experience in integrating cross-cutting themes, including, gender equality and women's empowerment, protection, and social inclusion, into project design, implementation, and evaluation.
- Demonstrated experience in project evaluation, research design, and consultancy assignments, including managing full evaluation cycles from design to reporting.

iii. Community Engagement

- Proven commitment to participatory approaches, including experience working with systems of community participation and accountability.

iv. Research and Methodological Skills

- Strong expertise in mixed-methods research, including both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis.
- Ability to design and implement evaluations that are sensitive to context, gender, protection, and inclusion principles.

v. Analytical and Communication Skills

- Excellent analytical skills with the ability to synthesize complex information, identify lessons learned, and provide clear, actionable recommendations.

- Capacity to develop human interest stories and case studies, and package them into accessible formats such as a booklet of success stories.

vi. Technical and Sectoral Knowledge

- Prior experience with social cohesion activities, nutrition, agriculture, agribusinesses, food systems, climate change and training and awareness-raising is essential.
- Previous experience working in humanitarian contexts, particularly in fragile or post-conflict areas, is highly desirable.
- Previous work with NGOs in sectors related to development.

vii. Reporting and Writing Skills

- Strong report writing skills, with the ability to communicate findings in a clear, concise, and non-technical manner for diverse stakeholders.

8. Structure of the Final Report

The prescribed format of the final feasibility study report should contain the following sections:

- **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**: Summary of the study, with particular emphasis on the main findings, conclusions and recommendations (recommended to only include in the final version of the report).
- **INTRODUCTION**: Description of the study, its logic, history, organisation, and stakeholders. Presentation of the study's purpose and questions addressed.
- **METHODOLOGY**: Description of the sampling strategy and methods used for data collection; description of the limitations.
- **FINDINGS**: Factual evidence relevant to the questions asked by the researcher(s) and interpretations of such evidence (answered study questions).
- **CONCLUSIONS**:
  - Problems and needs (Relevance)
  - Achievement of purpose (Effectiveness)
  - Sound management and value for money (Efficiency)
  - Achievement of wider effects (Impact)
  - Likely continuation of planned project/results (Sustainability)
- **RECOMMENDATIONS** (including on changes to the Theory of Change, overall intervention logic, targeting approach, and nature of project activities planned)
- **ANNEXES (if any)**

9. TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL OFFER

This consultancy will be procured through a tender procedure.

An Invitation to Tender (ITT) accompanies these Terms of Reference and provides the tender reference, submission instructions, required documents, submission deadline and link to WHH's eTender platform. Bidders must read the ITT together with these Terms of Reference when preparing their offers.

Interested consultants or consultancy firms must submit their technical and financial proposals exclusively through WHH's eTender platform, using the tender link provided in the ITT and before the specified deadline.
Bids submitted by email, post or hand delivery will not be accepted. Bidders are responsible for ensuring that their proposals are fully uploaded and formally submitted before the closing deadline.

All requests for clarification must be submitted through eTender in accordance with the instructions and deadlines specified in the ITT.

Please note the following:

i. Costing and Validity

- All costs must be quoted in USD.
- All costs should be inclusive of VAT and taxes.
- Proposals must remain valid for thirty (30) working days from the date of submission.

ii. Format and Flexibility

- Bidders may use their own proposal format and headings, provided all requested information is included

iii. Payments

- **Payment will be made in three instalments:**
  1) 20% upon signing the contract and submission of the Inception Report and an Invoice.
  2) 70% upon submission of the first draft report, raw data collected and an invoice.
  3) 10% upon submission and approval of the final evaluation report and all deliverables as stated in section 5 of this TOR.
- Penalties may apply in cases of delayed submission, in accordance with the contractual terms agreed between WHH Amman Hub and the consultant.