



Invitation procedure: Expression of Interest

Terms of Reference

External Project Evaluation

Transformative Land Investment (TLI) - phase 1

Period of phase: 01.01.2022-30.06.2025

Project Number: 7F-10494.01

Contribution agreement: 81071212

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Terms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFR100	African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative
ARMC	Audit and Risk Management Committee
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BTL	Business Transformation Lab
CEP	Competence Centre for Engagement with the Private Sector
CFS-RAI	Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food
CGIAR	Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centres
CI	Conservation International
CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research
CoP	Community of Practice
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
ESMS	Environmental and Social Risk Management System
FFF	Forest Farm Facility
FMO	The Netherlands Entrepreneurial Development Bank
FOLUR	Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program
G20	Group of Twenty
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GLTN	Global Land Tool Network
GPFS	Global Programme Food Security of SDC
IBAN	Inclusive Business Action Network
ICRAF	World Agroforestry
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
IDH	Sustainable Trade Initiative
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
ILC	International Land Coalition
IO	Intermediate Outcome
IPES	International Political Economy Society
LBI	Land-Based Investment
LCG	Land Core Group
LEI	Land Equity International
MCRB	Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business
MRLG	Mekong Region Land Governance
MRPPA	Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association
MSP	Multi-Stakeholder Platform
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
PMC	CIFOR's Program Management and Coordination team
PPA	Private Plantation Association
Q4I	CIFOR-ICRAF Joint Quality for Impact team
RECOFTC	Centre for People and Forests
RR-M	Risk-Reward Model
RRI	Rights and Resources Initiative
RVO	Netherlands Enterprise Agency
TLI	Transformative Land Investment
VGFSyN	Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition
VGGT	Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Forest and Fisheries

1. **Background**

Most large-scale land investments in Africa and Asia often increase vulnerability of smallholders and convert ecosystems to monoculture crops, exacerbating land tenure, food insecurity, and harming the environment. Transformational changes are needed in land-based investments (LBI) if food systems are to be more sustainable and inclusive. Sustainable food systems are a priority for Switzerland, including the promotion of socially responsible and environmentally friendly private investments in the global South. Currently, LBIs often involve large scale land acquisitions that displace and/or increase the vulnerability of smallholders – in many cases women - and convert fragile ecosystems to monoculture crops. This exacerbates land tenure and food insecurities for rural women and men. In many developing countries, a variety of efforts have been made to reduce the adverse impact of LBI's, but most have fallen short or have revealed new challenges. Centralization of land acquisition processes and the exclusive use of environmental impact assessments have done little to improve protection of at-risk populations and ecosystems.

The Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Forest and Fisheries (VGGT), the CFS Principles on Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI), the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa and the ASEAN Inclusive Business Guidelines provide important guidance to governments and private sector entities looking to promote/develop more impactful LBI's. They are widely known and acknowledged. However, only few companies and governments have to date incorporated such principles into their policies and practices. The lack of capabilities, resources and/or incentives, but also the lack of political will and weak compliance mechanisms contribute to this. With such guidelines generally focusing on *what* business should do, rather than *how*, LBIs also struggle to translate theory into practice, with the necessary technical support structures and partnerships all but absent.

The fact that the private sector is instrumental to a sustainable food systems transition is undeniable. Public resources alone cannot achieve meaningful transformations. This is reflected in the 2030 Agenda and in the recently adopted Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN). Coordinated action between state, civil and private actors is needed to truly transform current agribusinesses approaches into sustainable food systems solutions. This project seeks to promote a paradigmatic shift towards Transformative Land Investment (TLI). TLIs are understood as “investment initiatives that follow VGGT and the agroecological principles with sustainable business models that recognize and respond to the complex interplay between environment, governance, social inclusion and societal priorities”. TLIs help countries advance on a multitude of food systems dimensions. This not only involves respect for local tenure rights and the rule of law, but also development of integrated business solutions that enlarge opportunities for smallholders and ensure women's participation in value chains, while, amongst others, promoting agroecological, climate resilient and circular production practices along the supply chain.

TLI is aligned with the SDC Programme Framework 2021-2024 of the Food System Section and with other SDC global (ILC, GLTN, IGAD, ASEAN-RAI, etc.) and country/regional programs (Mozambique, Mekong Region). TLI works in 5 countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Laos and Myanmar (in a lesser extent), selected because: (1) they attracted considerable LBI in the past decade; (2) into sectors with significant downstream sustainability and inclusivity pressures; (3) where consortium partners have ample country-level experience and networks on related themes; (4) and are able to exploit increasing political and private sector preparedness to upend the status quo; (5) to address widespread adverse impacts of LBI in these countries. In Myanmar, the project takes into account the current political situation working exclusively with civil society and some private sector actors, and avoiding interactions with official partners.

TLI contributes with hands-on knowledge on business good practices and evidence of effectiveness of policies in Africa and Asia to the global discourse on improving land security through sustainable food systems that shall inform the development and reorientation of national, regional and global policies and business networks. This global policy outreach work

will be closely coordinated with SDC by linking to relevant SDC global initiatives and policy processes (Committee on World Food Security).

TLI was selected through a SDC call for proposals in 2020. The project document has been developed during 2021 in a participatory manner and was consulted with SDC's offices and SECO (in Ghana). TLI is implemented by a consortium of research and development practitioners under the lead of CIFOR/ICRAF. The other consortium partners are: RECOFTC, LEI and SNV. The consortium has carried out a gender analysis, and a cost-benefit assessment.

The goal of the project is to contribute to more sustainable food systems, with gender-transformative and socially inclusive improvements in land tenure security, livelihoods, resilience and ecosystem health, among populations in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Ghana, Laos, Myanmar and beyond. To achieve its goal, TLI works towards three outcomes across all five countries:

1. Land based investors actively integrate potential environmental and socio-economic impacts as standard practice, mitigating the negative and maximizing the positive impacts;
2. National government agencies and ministries adopt and effectively implement policies and regulatory frameworks and incentive mechanisms that better foster TLI;
3. Multilateral and bilateral organizations and initiatives adopt commitments, guidelines and financing strategies that more effectively promote Transformative Land Investment and the "Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure" principles more effectively.

The project will in a first phase, support selected land-based investors in changing their practices in the selected countries, while contributing to an enabling environment at the national and regional level and contributing to harmonized approaches globally. A second phase will up-scale the approach through the regional or continental policy level (for instance with the African Union) and influence global business networks. A third and last phase of consolidation will ensure the sustainability of the approach through self-sustaining business labs as well as documented and replicated global good practices. The end of project vision is that the livelihoods, food and land security of vulnerable population in 5 countries will have considerably improved based on more responsible and inclusive business practices, and enabling policies and frameworks. In view of the exit strategy a facilitation approach will be applied starting from phase 1 so the countries, civil society networks and businesses are firmly in the lead. The consortium partners will be present in each country supported by thematic experts to ensure the coherence of the global initiative. In the first phase, SDC contributes 80% (CHF 8,500,000) of the project costs, while the co-financing of the partners amounts to 20%, coming from existing initiatives and partnerships synergetic to TLI. The partners contributions will increase to 50% from the second phase on. The lead agency is CIFOR/ICRAF, which sub-contracts the consortium members and takes overall responsibility for the technical and financial reporting to SDC.

2. Objective, scope and focus of the evaluation

2.1. Purpose and objectives

Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide to SDC an external and an objective assessment regarding the so far achieved results of the first TLI project phase, which will last until June 2025. The evaluation will have to contribute to the Learning-Accountability-Steering "triangle" as specified in the SDC Evaluation Policy¹, and provide an overall and comprehensive picture on the project results on the short and medium term as well as provide information on possible effects at the longer-term including elements of impacts and sustainability.

Additionally, the evaluation should be prospective, and suggest to SDC on how to support further the transformative land investment in a second phase. The evaluation will have to consider the ongoing internal reorganisation of SDC with the planned topical and organisational readjustment. The links to the Food System approach, the inclusion of nutritional aspects as

¹ SDC Evaluation Policy: https://www.collaboration.eda.admin.ch/en/Documents/Evaluationspolitik_DEZA_EN_03-18.pdf

well as the so called “Elevator Approach” (Liftansatz) need to be taken into consideration for a possible second phase.

Objectives

- To evaluate the TLI phase 1 according to the DAC/OECD criteria (coherence, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability) against the planned and agreed objectives and outputs.
- To assess how far systemic changes were triggered by the project and if first impact results, susceptible to be sustainable as well as well as replicable at global level can be identified.
- To recommend to SDC on the basis of the results of this evaluation how further support transformative land investments in Africa and Asia as well as at a more global level.

2.2. Scope

The scope of the evaluation shall be limited to the TLI phase 1, however evaluation findings, learnings, and recommendations for the future should encompass as well other similar initiatives, especially those implemented by the consortium partners through other similar projects or by other partners not directly involved in the TLI. Experiences and opinions of the different project players including partners from other donors and other involved in similar initiatives should be taken into account as well.

The geographical scope of the phase 1 includes the following selected countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Lao PDR, Myanmar as well as the global component. While taking into account the results from all these countries, the evaluation will need to select two sample countries for a more in-depth analysis of the country results. The selection of the two countries, one in Africa and one in Asia is foreseen, and will be done in collaboration with SDC. For the appreciation of the global component, global partners such as the AUC, ILC, WB, etc. need to be considered.

2.3. Indicative evaluation questions

The following questions are indicative only, and will need to be completed by a selected consultant in the evaluation inception report.

Relevance – is the TLI doing the right things?

- How far is the TLI project relevant to contribute towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 on a global level, but also and specifically related to the selected countries?
- Are the concepts such as transformational land-based investments, VGGT, RAI, etc. sufficiently clearly defined?
- How far can the TLI principles contribute to improved Food Systems?
- Is it realistic to promote agroecology and improved nutrition via LBI's?
- To what extent did the TLI phase 1 address the main challenges of the countries?
- Does the project address the main issues faced by the rural poor, and especially those who are most left behind such as women and youth in the rural areas?
- Which of the project activities were more relevant to tackle the different objectives of the phase?
- How far were project design, scope, implementation modalities and budget adequate to reach the planned objectives and outputs?
- Where topics such as Gender and Youth sufficiently addressed during the phase 1? Are there good results to be mentioned?
- Could the food system approach be sufficiently be addressed?

Coherence- how well does the TLI fit?

- How far is the project aligned with the program framework of the Global Program Food Security/Food System Section and also with other SDC programs in the countries/region?
- How could synergies with other global programs as well as country/regional programs of SDC be improved?
- Are there promising results at country level, which could be used by the Food system section at global level in policy dialogue?
- To which extent is this program aligned with other donors and how could the synergies, collaboration and cooperation with these other donors and partners be improved in the future?
- How far is the private sector involved and willing to change investment policy and modalities?
- How far are the Governments involved in the project and are there indications for willingness to change or adapt and improve investment policies?

Effectiveness – is the TLI achieving its objectives?

- To what extent were the project results as outlined in the result framework achieved so far?
- Did the project develop and nurture a comprehensive monitoring-evaluation-learning plan in order to keep track of the results?
- Was the selection of the 5 countries effective to promote the TLI approach? Are there indications of better results in other countries?
- Was the process on how to select champions adequate in terms of effectiveness as well as transparency and accountability?
- Appreciate the effectiveness of the different project tools introduced by the TLI project (MSP, RR-Model, Labs, etc.).
- Are there alternative or better tools which could achieve better results?
- Are there examples of best practices and good results which could already be used for policy dialogue at global level?

Efficiency – how well are resources being used?

- Were project resources efficiently utilized to achieve the project results?
- Were the coordination mechanisms fit for purpose to achieve the project results?
- How efficient was the partnerships between the different project actors?
- Based on the risks identified during the planning and implementation period, how did the project mitigate these risks to achieve the project objectives?
- How far did the TLI project coordinate with other interventions by other donors/projects?

Impact – what difference does the intervention make?

- How far did the TLI phase 1 influence already policies in selected countries? How far can these policies be considered transformational?
- Are there examples of investments which changed their policies and or modalities in favor of smallholders or the local population?
- Are there examples of investments which changed their policies and or modalities in favor of the protection of the environment?
- Did any investor adopt agroecology as an approach in its LBI?
- Are there documented examples of any other impact on people's livelihood in terms of social or economic improvements?

Sustainability – to what extent do the TLI outputs contribute to systemic changes?

- How far are the tools and instruments introduced by the TLI (MSP, RR-Model, Labs) sustainable?
- Are there indications that project tools and instruments as introduced by the TLI can be taken up by the country systems and institutionalized?
- How big is the appetite by the private investors to invest time and financial resources in such tools and instruments?

- To what extent are knowledge, information and experiences documented and shared during the project implementation at the local, regional, national and continental level?

Lessons Learned and Recommendations for a second phase

- What lessons can be learned from the phase 1 in regard to relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, and what recommendation could be drawn for the phase 2.
- In view of the forthcoming SDC reorganisation of the Food System Section (decentralisation and merger into the new Health and Food section) and in view of the common program framework 2025-2028, how can the phase 2 of the TLI fit into a logic of healthy diets from sustainable food systems?
- How far was gender mainstreaming considered in the overall design and implementation of this phase, and how could it be improved in the future?
- How far were challenges and opportunities of the youth taken into account in the overall project design and implementation and how could these challenges and opportunities be better taken into account in the phase 2?
- How far were the implementing modalities and the selected partners adequate regarding the achievement of the different results of the phase and could be the design and partner selection improved, respectively fine-tuned.
- How has the private sector been involved in the project design and implementation, and how its role and responsibilities could be improved in a new support?
- Which are the good practices from this phase, which should be replicated and scaled up as far as possible in a new support, and which methods and project activities which should be avoided in the future?
- Make any other recommendation towards SDC/GPFS, which could be useful for the promotion of agroecology as well as EOA at global level Africa together with the choice of partners, the project design, and the activities to be supported, etc.

3. Evaluation method

The evaluation must be participatory, involving all major stakeholders and partners directly or indirectly linked to the project in whatever form. The consultants will use qualitative (observations, text analysis and interviews) and quantitative (M&E data, figures, etc.) methods to gather relevant information to assess project performances, and to draw lessons learned and conclusions. These methods can include among others:

- Desk Review: review of all relevant reports and documents from various sources;
- Key informant interviews and consultations.
- Field visits to the two selected countries (one in Africa and one in Asia) for conducting focus group discussions and interview with implementing national, local partners, communities as well as companies and investors.
- Interviews, questionnaires, surveys, case studies and other means of information collection.

The selected consultants will have to document the methodology and the process to collect the information in the inception report which need to be approved by SDC.

Evaluation team and volume of the mandate

The evaluation is carried out by selected consultants, which might be a firm, an organisation as well as individual consultants. Ideally, the evaluation is carried out by an evaluation team, composed by a principal evaluator, responsible for the final report and interlocutor of SDC; by an evaluator assistant, collaborating with the principal evaluator, and by local evaluators, which are based in the selected countries for the in-country assessments. Form and composition of the evaluation team can be adapted as long as the following number of days are not exceeded:

- Number of days for the principal: 30-35 days
- Number of days for the assistant: 25-30 days
- Number of days for local consultant 1: 20-25 days
- Number of days for local consultant 2: 20-25 days

Process and Timeframe

The following work plan provides suggested dates, responsibilities and resources for the milestone events of the evaluation. A more detailed work plan will be established by the selected consultants in the inception report.

Activity	Tentative date	Responsibilities
Kick-off meeting	June	SDC, Consultant/s, CIFOR and consortium partners
Draft Inception Report	June-July	Consultant/s
Final Inception Report	June-July	Consultant/s
Data collection, interviews, field visits, etc.	August-September	Consultant/s; CIFOR and consortium partners
Draft Evaluation Report	October	Consultant/s
Feedback by the SDC		SDC, CIFOR and consortium partners
Final Evaluation Report	30 th November	Consultant/s
SDC Management Response		SDC
Dissemination of the Final Evaluation Report	15 th December	SDC

4. Deliverables

- **Inception Report** - The inception report (maximum of 15 pages, without annexes), including proposed detailed methodology, assessment questions, work plan, and other key elements to be determined, should be made available to the SDC signing of the contract.
- **Draft Evaluation Report** - The draft final report (main report maximum of 20 pages, including Executive Summary and excluding Annexes) should be made available to the SDC within three weeks after the data collection. SDC will send consolidated comments within two weeks.
- **Final Evaluation Report** - The consultants will have two weeks to incorporate the comments on the draft evaluation report and send the final report to the SDC/GPFS. After receiving the report, the SDC will send its final comments, within a week from the submission. The final report should be accompanied with a brief presentation of key findings using PowerPoint.
- **The SDC's Assessment Grid of the DAC Criteria:** the SDC assessment grid (see annex) must be completed by the evaluator(s) and attached to the final evaluation report.

In addition to the above-mentioned documents, the selected consultant will hand over to SDC upon request all documents related to this evaluation, including list of interviewed persons; minutes of workshops, slides used for debriefing, pictures, videos, leaflets, case studies, etc. The final report will summarize the relevance of the findings and analysis as well as the potential for meaningful implementation in future interventions. In addition, it will provide a full analysis of intervention logics, structure/legal framework, operating modalities, financial/administrative management, and records of achievement with recommendation for future collaborations with SDC.

5. Reference Documents

Following documents will be provided to the interested consultants in order to develop the technical and the financial proposals as annexes to these TOR's:

- GPFS Program Framework 2021-2024
- TLI Project Document phase 1

After signing the contract, SDC as well as the implementing partner, CIFOR/ICRAF representing the consortium, will share additional documents and lists of potential persons and institutions for the interviews.

6. Competency and profile of the Evaluator(s)

The evaluator(s) are expected to bring along the following evaluation and thematic expertise and experience: conceptual analytical and evaluative skills to conduct independent evaluation and analysis, including familiarity with and experience in the use of various research sources, including electronic sources on the internet, intranet and other databases. Ability to apply judgment in the context of assignments given, plan own work and manage conflicting priorities. Documented evidences of conducting similar evaluations and others required competencies for undertaking this assignment.

Essential qualities are:

- University degree or equivalent in a relevant discipline;
- English proficiency;
- Profound professional experience in project evaluations within the international co-operation framework;
- Experience of working with Governments, global and regional organisations and institutions, private investors, private companies, international development agencies, donors, international finance institutions, local partners and authorities, civil society organisations, farmers associations, cooperatives, etc.;
- Experience in knowledge sharing and management as well as of the participatory approaches and methods;
- Good appreciation and knowledge of the African as well as the South-East Asian context regarding land-based investments, as well as experiences in global land fora.

Desired qualities are:

- Advanced degree or equivalent in a relevant discipline;
- Proven skills and experiences in Food Systems approaches, Sustainable Agriculture, Agroecology, collaboration with the private sector; Land-Based investments, VGGT, RAI;
- Ability to collect data using various methods and conceptual analytical, evaluative skills;
- Proven senior professional experience in programme design, programme review & evaluation in line with the DAC criteria.

7. Administration and reporting

The consultants will be contracted by SDC Headoffice in Bern (Thematic Cooperation). The consultants will report to Valenghi Daniel and Amsalu Andarge of the Thematic Section Food System, based in Addis Ababa, Embassy of Switzerland.

All the reports and documents prepared during the assignment are considered as property of SDC, and cannot be sold, used, shared and reproduced in any manner, without SDC's prior consent.

The TLI project under the lead of CIFOR/ICRAF will assist the consultants in:

- Briefing, planning, debriefing discussions and developing plans for field trips, and review activities;
- Providing all relevant written materials, documents, reports such as Annual Plans and Reports, etc.

8. Structure of the offer

Interested consultants should submit an offer including the following:

- Understanding of the assignment;
- Approach and methodology for the assignment;
- Experience with similar assignments (including CVs of all proposed consultants);
- Draft work plan;
- Draft report outline;
- Financial proposal.

The technical proposal should not exceed 15 pages (excluding annexes). The financial proposal should not exceed 5 pages and must include the budget form type A/B (annex). The financial proposal must include all costs related to the assignment and outline the number of days and the daily rates for each proposed consultants, include all necessary travel and accommodation costs for this assignment and be expressed in Swiss francs (CHF) only.

9. Selection criteria's

The technical and financial proposals will be assessed by using following award criteria:

AC	Award criterion	Weighting
AC1	Qualifications of the consultant/consultancy team <i>Verification: Technical proposal</i>	40%
AC2	Methodological understanding & observations <i>Verification: Technical proposal</i>	30%
AC3	Financial offer <i>Verification: Financial proposal (in CHF)</i>	30%
	Total	100%

10. Prior involvement

Bidders for the services mentioned in this document who have provided services to SDC or the implementing consortium in conjunction with the development or execution of the above-mentioned project are expected to disclose this. Prior involvement with the project can be deemed a reason for exclusion, as it may represent a competitive advantage.

11. Formal aspects

Contracting authority: SDC (Thematic Cooperation), Eichenweg 5, 3003 Bern manages the award procedure and is also the direct mandating party for the bidder.

Type of procedure: Procurement in the invitation to offer is in accordance with the Federal Ordinance of 12th February 2020 on Public Procurement, PPO, SR 172.056.11.

The award of contract **cannot** be contested.

12. Additional points to be noted by the bidder

Submission modality: electronic submission only to Daniel Valenghi, daniel.valenghi@eda.admin.ch and to Abate Amsalu Andarge, amsaluandarge.abate@eda.admin.ch with the e-mail subject heading: "TLI Evaluation". The language of the procurement documents, the reports and the offer as well as all the reports to be submitted is English only.

Deadline for Expression of Interest

Interested bidders can express their interest by e-mail, until 30th April, 2024, and will receive the annexes to these terms of reference as per below.

Answering questions

Questions concerning the awarding of the mandate in question can be sent by e-mail to the contact person named above. The answers will be made available by email to all bidders who have at that point expressed an interest in submitting an offer.

Deadline for submitting an offer and validity

The offer must be sent by email to the contact person (to Daniel Valenghi, daniel.valenghi@eda.admin.ch and to Abate Amsalu Andarge, amsaluandarge.abate@eda.admin.ch) **by 31st of May, 2024 (cob. in EAT).**

We recommend that the bidder request a «reading/receipt confirmation» when sending the e-mail, as there is a remote chance that the offer might be removed by a spam filter. The contracting authority will confirm the receipt of the offer within the following 2 working days. Should the bidder remain without confirmation, he can enquire at the following e-mail address: Glauser Marlis, marlis.glauser@eda.admin.ch by 10th of June, 2024.

The bidder must ensure proof of the timelines of the submission of the offer. The offer must remain valid for up to 90 days after the aforementioned date for submission.

The assignment is ruled by the General Terms and Conditions of Business of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) for mandates (type A for employed persons and mandate B for legal persons and institutions). The contract is subject to the prior approval of the credit by FDFA.

Integrity Clause

Bidders undertake to take all necessary measures to avoid corruption, especially not to offer or accept payments or other advantages.

Bidders who violate the integrity clause are required to pay a contractual penalty to the contracting authority amounting to 10% of the contract sum or at least CHF 3,000 per violation.

The bidder notes that a violation of the integrity clause leads as a rule to the cancellation of the award or to early termination of the contract by the contracting authority for important reasons.

The Parties shall inform each other in case of any well-founded suspicions of corruption.

13. Annexes for interested consultants or bidders only

- GPFS Program Framework 2021-2024
- TLI Project Document, phase 1
- Code of Conduct for contractual partners of FDFA
- Budget Form Type A/B
- Assessment Grid for Evaluations