



End of Project Evaluation

Terms of Reference

“Supporting the resilience of MFIs and their clients: Technical Assistance  
in response to COVID-19 crisis”

November 2021



## 1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The [European Microfinance Network](#) (“EMN”) is looking to hire an evaluation consultancy agency/service or independent consultant (“evaluator”) to conduct an external and independent final evaluation of the project “Supporting the resilience of MFIs and their clients: Technical Assistance in response to COVID-19 crisis” (“the project”).

The project was developed and designed in March 2020, at the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. At that time the impact of the pandemic on national economies was becoming a tangible reality in several European countries and worldwide, affecting citizens and enterprises alike. Micro-entrepreneurs were particularly affected by the impact of the pandemic crisis due to the nature of their activities (micro and small businesses) and their socio-economic background.

As a result of these developments EMN drafted a project to build the capacity of microfinance institutions (“MFIs”) to be able to serve micro-entrepreneurs in this new context.

A summary of the project’s key features is provided below:

Duration: 25 months, (1 June 2020 to 30 June 2022)

Objective: to build the capacity of the MFIs receiving Technical Assistance (“TA”) to ensure continuous, efficient, and adapted support to entrepreneurs in the COVID era.

Beneficiaries: six MFIs were selected as direct target group of the project activities: Adie (France), Credisol (Brazil), Fundación Oportunitas (Spain), PerMicro (Italy), Pro Mujer (Argentina), and SEF (South Africa). The project’s ultimate beneficiaries are micro-entrepreneurs: existing or potential clients of the six above-mentioned MFIs.

Key activities: selected MFIs were offered a TA package that encompassed a mix of trainings, consultancy services, and peer-to-peer learning. Relevant experts were identified and hired to deliver training and consultancy services based on an ongoing training needs analysis conducted by EMN with all the MFIs involved.

Additional activities implemented by EMN were: i) a series of webinars in order to foster the sharing of good practices among project partners and ii) the periodic update of a webpage where all relevant information that could support MFIs in responding to the COVID emergency were gathered.

Please see the initial basic logic model that was developed near the beginning of this programme in Annexe A for more details.

Implementing organisation: EMN is responsible for the overall coordination and implementation of the project. Specifically, EMN took on all the above-mentioned key activities and the organisation of the project’s final event.



EMN is a member-based non-profit organisation based in Brussels (Belgium), which promotes microfinance as a tool to fight social and financial exclusion in Europe through self-employment and the creation of microenterprises. It is the Network's mission to facilitate capacity building and to advocate on behalf of the microfinance sector.

Budget: the project budget is EUR 538,508 – fully funded by JPMorgan.

## 2. EVALUATION STAKEHOLDERS

The results of this evaluation are primarily intended for internal use by EMN to inform the future design of new project/programmes. Results and findings will also be shared with the funder, JPMorgan. Relevant results and lessons learnt will be shared with other stakeholders including targeted MFIs, a selection of the experts involved, and other actors within the inclusive finance sector at EMN's discretion.

## 3. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this evaluation are to:

### 1. Undertake an evaluation to assess the project following the OECD criteria:

Evaluation criteria	Key Questions
<p><b>Relevance:</b> The extent to which the project's objectives, design, and implementation responded to the needs and priorities of project recipients, and the extent to which they will continue to do so, if circumstances change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What were the main issues faced by the selected MFIs at the time of the project's design and implementation?</li> <li>-What support did the MFIs require?</li> <li>-What support was agreed with them?</li> <li>-What has this support achieved (or what is it expected to achieve) as regards to MFIs' borrowers?</li> <li>-How did the project's design help the achievement of these objectives?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Effectiveness:</b> The extent to which the project achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and the required results.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What were the key expected project outputs, outcomes, and goals?</li> <li>-To what extent were they achieved and in which area? If not, why were they not achieved?</li> <li>-Were the various components of the project well designed and interconnected and did they support the achievement of the overall outcome?</li> <li>-What have been the most effective approaches used by EMN to help MFIs deal</li> </ul>

	with the challenges posed by the pandemic and to allow them to better support their clients?
<b>Efficiency:</b> The extent to which the project delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.	-Has the project delivered 'value for money'? Measurable indicators have to be identified by the evaluator.
<b>Impact:</b> The extent to which the project has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.	<p>-What happened to the MFIs as result of the project activities and why?</p> <p>-Has the project helped MFIs (or is it expected to help MFIs) be more efficient and/or sustainable (e.g. thanks to the adoption of new digital tools/IT, elaboration of new strategies, etc.)?</p> <p>-Are MFIs better prepared to understand &amp; meet clients' needs (e.g. thanks to product adaptation/ diversification, training of staff, etc.)?</p> <p>-Do the MFIs serve (or are they expected to serve) more clients as a direct result of the project?</p> <p>-What are (or what are expected to be) the MFIs' cost savings as a direct result of the project?</p> <p>-How many MFI staff member/volunteers have been trained (are expected to be trained) as a result of the project? How many MFI clients have been trained (or are expected to be trained) as a result of the project?</p> <p>-Have there been any unintended or unexpected outcomes of the project?</p>
<b>Sustainability:</b> The extent to which the net benefits of the project will continue or are likely to continue.	- To what extent are the benefits of the project likely to continue after donor funding ceases?

- 2. Provide recommendations for continued project interventions and scale-up:** the evaluation shall enable EMN to improve the quality of its TA activities with a view to potentially scaling up these services to a broader number of organisations. The evaluation should be strongly focused on recommendations for improvement relating to the questions outlined above and, in particular, if and how activities could be adapted to better meet the needs of MFIs and subsequently the needs of their entrepreneurs. EMN will

share with the evaluator a list of lessons learnt/challenges identified during the course of the project to help in identify recommendations.

### **3. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

The evaluation should follow a mixed-methods approach that draws on both existing and new quantitative and qualitative data to answer the evaluation questions. For the purpose of the evaluation of the project, the Evaluator must:

Review relevant project documents such as the project proposal, the periodic reports to the funder, the MFIs' needs assessment reports, the training/consultancy reports, the training/consultancy material. This information will be provided to the evaluator by EMN. The Evaluator will also revise any other relevant secondary sources and statistics on the MFIs' operations or the specific context they're working in.

Develop an evaluation approach and data collection tools / methods including:

- A detailed timeline and work plan
- An outline of any proposed changes to the scope of the evaluation
- Key interview questions
- A list of stakeholders to be consulted, and
- The development of associated data collection and evaluation tools.

Elaborate case studies for the MFIs involved (approx. 3 pages each). Case studies shall present the most impactful achievements (in terms of solutions adopted, knowledge generated, etc.) for each organisation and shall highlight changes (occurred or expected) in the MFIs' performance and in the support provided to entrepreneurs as a result of the project activities.

Consult stakeholders – the consultant should include the following group of stakeholders in the evaluation:

- Operational staff & management (where relevant) of the six MFIs involved in the TA activities (working language with Argentinian MFI is Spanish)
- Microentrepreneurs, in the cases where some of the TA activities were organised for the clients.
- A selection of experts who delivered the TA activities
- EMN staff working on the project
- JPMorgan representatives
- Other stakeholders: representatives of other international organisations delivering TA that were involved in the project

All interviews shall be conducted remotely. No field visits are foreseen in the framework of this evaluation.

### **4. DELIVERABLES**

The following outputs are to be delivered in the framework of this assignment:

An Inception Report: the consultant will prepare and submit an inception report. The report will outline the design of the evaluation, how each evaluation question will be answered (proposed methods, proposed sources of data and data collection procedures), and a detailed work plan for the entire assignment. The work plan should include a proposed schedule of tasks, activities, and deliverables and should designate the lead person for each task or product. Interview guides and other data collection tools will be submitted to EMN for review and approval before data collection starts. The inception report must be approved by EMN and should include any improvements to the existing evaluation scope, as outlined in this document.

A Preliminary Evaluation Report: the consultant will submit a draft evaluation report to EMN. The draft report will be reviewed and comments will be provided within three weeks of submission.

A Final Evaluation Report: the consultant will submit a detailed final report (main body should not exceed 40 pages) that should include the following:

- An Executive Summary
- Brief project background
- Main findings relating to the evaluation questions (at least 40% of the final report)
- Conclusions
- Recommendations for future action. Recommendations should be specific and include relevant details for how they might be implemented (at least 40%).

In addition, the final report should contain the following annexes, at least:

- Terms of Reference for final evaluation
- List of people interviewed
- Details of the evaluation methodology
- A list of reviewed documents
- Any other relevant material, including data collection tools.

A two-page summary fact sheet

All deliverables shall be submitted in English.

## **5. EVALUATOR'S QUALIFICATIONS**

Preference will be given to applicants who match the following criteria:

- Demonstrable work experience (at least 5 years) in the areas of project evaluation, especially in capacity building activities.
- Knowledge of the microfinance sector in Europe and emerging countries.
- Excellent track record in designing and conducting quantitative and qualitative research, analysis, and evaluations. This includes experience in data collection and analysis techniques.



- Strong analytical and conceptual skills to clearly synthesise and present findings, draw practical conclusions, make recommendations, and prepare well-written reports in a timely manner.
- Demonstrable and excellent written and spoken communications skills in English and good command of Spanish.

## **6. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND SELECTION CRITERIA**

Application proposals shall include:

- A description of the proposed approach including a clear work plan.
- A detailed budget that includes the schedule of payments.
- A short overview of how the candidate meets the qualification, experience, and skill requirements. In case of a pool of consultants: explain how the different expertise, skills, and experience among team members will be integrated and complement each other and the expected distribution of responsibilities among the team leader and team members.
- Curricula/vitae of the consultant(s).
- A reference from a previous organisation you have worked with including evaluation reports.

Proposals should be no longer than 7 pages excluding CVs, budget, and example piece of work.

The proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Technical and financial proposal (40%)
- Proposed candidate and suitability for the specific assignment (30%)
- Demonstrated experience in the evaluation of capacity building projects and the knowledge of the microfinance sector (30%)

Applications should be submitted electronically to [n.benaglio@european-microfinance.org](mailto:n.benaglio@european-microfinance.org) by 17:00 (CET) on Tuesday 7 December 2021 with “EMN Technical Assistance Evaluation” in the subject line.

Applications will be assessed by a Selection Committee composed of researchers and microfinance practitioners.

If you have any questions about this call for proposals, please send them to the above-mentioned email. Telephone enquiries will not be answered.

## **7. TIME FRAME FOR THE EVALUATION PROCESS**

It is essential that the final report is submitted to EMN by 30th June 2022.

An indicative timeline for the evaluation is provided below:

<b>Key tasks</b>	<b>Time period</b>	<b>Location</b>
Review of background material	January 2022	Remote
Submission of Inception Report	February 2022	Remote
Draft report submitted	May 2022	Remote
Presentation of the key results of the evaluation during the project's final event	mid-June 2022	Brussels event
Final report submitted and results presented in an online meeting	June 2022	Remote

## **8. COSTS**

For budgeting purposes, it is expected that the evaluation will last 20 – 25 working days.

The consultant will be offered a fixed-price contract to include all the activities and deliverables listed above. The consultant will be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred for the participation in the Brussels event in June 2022 and therefore these costs should not be included in the budget for this assignment.

# Annex A

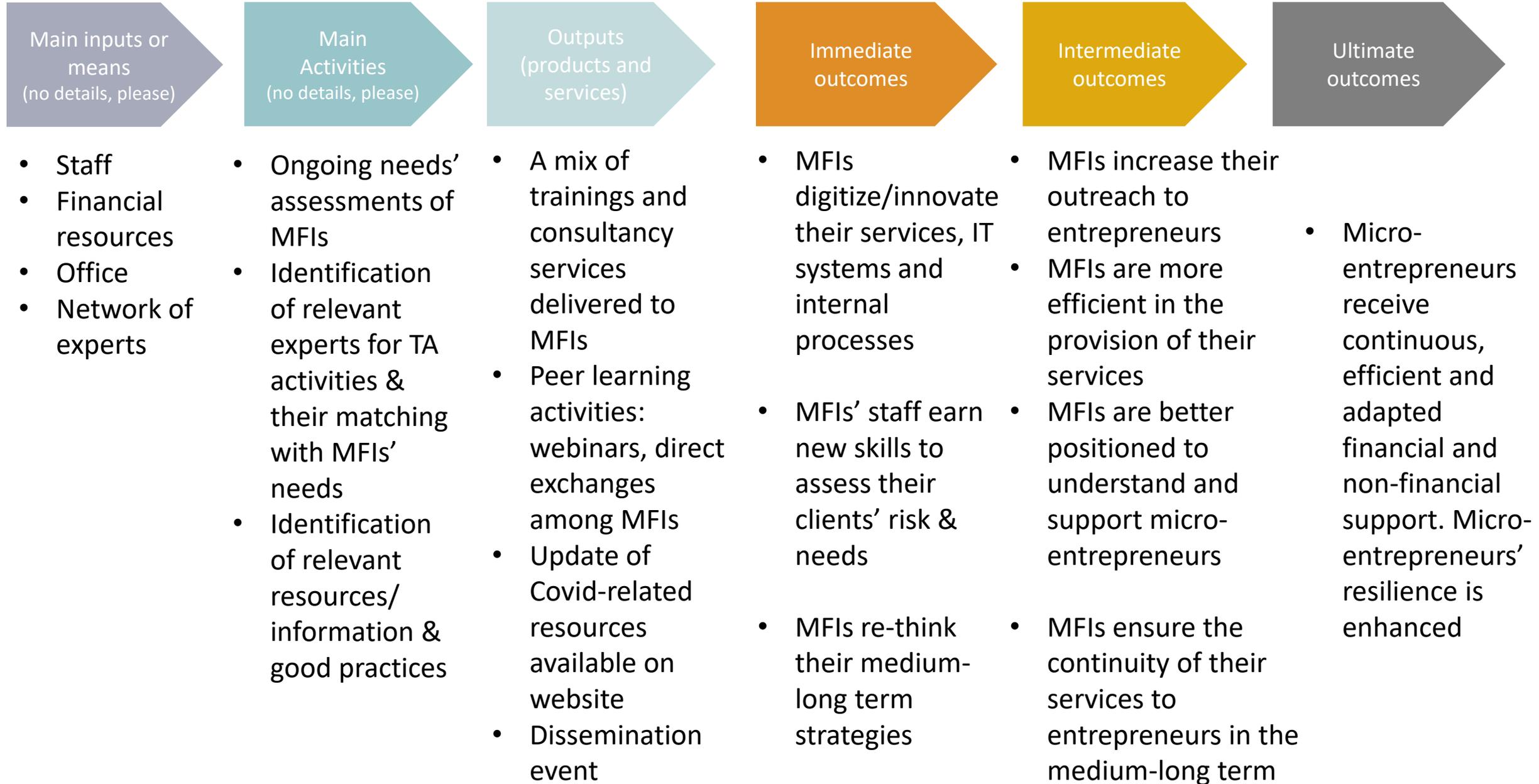
## Supporting the resilience of Microfinance Institutions and their clients: Technical Assistance in response to COVID-19 crisis

Summary of the logic model

# 1. Project background

- Title: Supporting the resilience of Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) and their clients: Technical Assistance (TA) in response to COVID-19 crisis
- Direct beneficiaries: six MFIs based in Europe, Africa and Latin America.
- Indirect beneficiaries: micro-entrepreneurs who are clients of the six MFIs
- Main needs to which the project respond: micro-entrepreneurs' need for financial and non-financial support to launch, sustain and grow their businesses. This is deemed to be particularly important during COVID-19 crisis as the pandemic is expected to have a negative impact not only on micro-entrepreneurs (closure of businesses due to lockdowns, lower volume of clients, liquidity issues, new rules to comply with, etc.) but also on MFIs, who have micro-entrepreneurs as their core target group (higher portfolio risk on existing and potential clients, liquidity risk, innovation & new strategies needed to support their clients in a new scenario, etc.).
- Main goal: to build the capacity of the MFIs receiving TA to ensure continuous, efficient, and adapted support to entrepreneurs in the COVID era.
- Place: Italy, Spain, France, Argentina, Brazil and South Africa. Project management in Belgium.
- Project budget: EUR 535k from philanthropic foundation

# 2. Logic model



# 3. Main indicators

