CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Recruitment of a consultant for capacity building in metadata analysis for young researchers from the NARS (National Agricultural Research Systems) of the Food Systems Resilience Programme (FSRP) in West Africa.

Call opening: 19/09/ 2024
Call close: 03/10/2024

AMI No. 17-2024

1. The Food System Resilience Programme (FPRP) is a flagship regional investment programme to strengthen the resilience of the food system in West Africa through a strategic regional approach. The program will fund investments in three mutually reinforcing thematic areas: (1) Digital advisory services for agriculture and food crisis prevention and management; (2) the sustainability and adaptability of the food system's productive base (sustainable land and watershed management, agroecological approaches); and (3) regional food market integration and trade (development of the regional staple food value chain). Each area will be led by a regional institution mandated (AGRHYMET, CORAF and ECOWAS) to ensure coordination and build sustainable capacity.
2. The main objective of this mission is to strengthen the capacities of young researchers in national agricultural research systems (NARS), especially those from different countries of the PRSA in meta-analysis applied to the field of agronomic research.
3. The tasks to be performed and other information related to the conduct of the mission are described in the terms of reference below.
4. The CORAF Executive Director therefore invites interested candidates ("Consultants") with the required profile as indicated in the mandate to express their interest.
5. Interested candidates must provide a notice of expression of interest and an updated CV with references highlighting the performance and experience of similar services.
6. Candidates are advised that the provisions of paragraph 3.14 of the "Public Procurement Regulations for Investment Project Finance Borrowers" of July 2016, revised in November 2017 and August 2018 (the "Regulations") World Bank rules on conflicts of interest will apply.
7. Candidates will be selected based on the consultant's qualifications as described in the "Bank's Procurement Rules".
8. Interested candidates can obtain additional information from the CORAF Executive Secretariat by e-mail on working days at: n.lamien@coraf.org with a copy to procurement@coraf.org .

9. Consultants interested in this call must submit a letter of interest outlining performance and experience from similar contracts and a detailed CV with copies of diplomas and work certificates to the following email address:**procurement@coraf.org** by 03/10/2024 at 5:00 PM GMT.

Dr Moumini SAVADOGO
Executive Director

TERMS OF REFERENCE

For Recruiting a Consultant for Capacity Building in Metadata Analysis for Young Researchers from NARS (National Agricultural Research systems) in the Food Systems Resilience Program (FSRP) in West Africa.

---

1. Background

The Food System Resilience Programme (FSRP) is a flagship regional investment programme aimed at strengthening the resilience of the food system in West Africa through a strategic regional approach. The programme funds investments in three mutually reinforcing thematic areas: (i) Digital advisory services for the prevention and management of agricultural and food crises; (ii) Sustainability and adaptability of the productive base of the food system (sustainable land and watershed management, agroecological approaches); and (iii) Market integration and trade (development of the regional staple food value chain). Each domain will be led by a mandated regional institution (CILSS, CORAF, ECOWAS) to ensure coordination and build sustainable capacity.

The program contributes to strengthen the resilience of food systems in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Togo (Phase 1); Ghana, Chad and Sierra Leone (Phase 2) and Senegal (Phase 3) through investments in regional risk management, trade in basic food and sustainability of the production base.

Sub-component 1.1 plans to strengthen national and regional research centres. One of CORAF's responsibilities is to ensure capacity building of its members in the NARS on emerging and practical thematic areas in agricultural sector. In regards of this role of CORAF, one of the recurring needs often expressed by NARS is the organization of capacity building sessions on topics of interest like advanced statistical analysis among which is the meta-data analysis. Objectives of conducting a metadata analysis are in two-folds: (i) providing a comprehensive picture of what is known in a research domain (i.e., defining its scope overview, identifying inconsistencies, and their probable explanation, and developing a framework to summarize previous research); and, (i) providing directions for future research based on what is not known in that research domain (Paul & Criado, 2020).

Indeed, agricultural research generates a lot of data of various kinds in several sub-sectors and under various themes of agriculture. These data are important for understanding biophysical and biochemical phenomena in agriculture and used to prospect future trends to facilitate decision making.

A statistical analysis of these large volumes of data allows to better understand the dynamics of agricultural systems in time and space, identify the causes and determinants affecting these systems, and to propose solutions for improving not only the productivity of these agricultural systems but also the techniques and methods to generate them.

Meta-analysis has become essential in scientific research in general and agricultural field in particular. It refers to a quantitative assessment of the progress of knowledge on a given topic. It then appears as a fundamental skill to be acquired beyond the ordinary literature review routines that most of the researchers are used to. Application of meta-data analysis in the field of agriculture could facilitate identification of data gaps and formulate new and strong research questions to be addressed for achieving food security. By combining results from individual or country-level studies meta-analysis arrives to summaries and conclusions that can be used to explain past, current and future regional mechanisms or phenomena. Application of meta-data analysis methodology in a given agricultural topic can contribute to improving resilience and sustainability in food systems through scientific evidence-based decision-making. CORAF through the resilience program, proposes to recruit a competent consultant equipped to lead a regional training workshop in meta-analysis applied to the field of agricultural research.

2. Mission Objective

The main objective of this mission is to strengthen the capacities of young researchers in national agricultural research systems (NARS), particularly those of the various FSRP countries in meta-analysis applied to the field of agricultural research.

3. Methodological approach

The methodological approach to be adopted during this training should be participatory and practical enough to allow participants to understand and master the use of tools and techniques to carry out a meta-analysis independently. Our first intention is the application of R scripts and/or other programming language for conducting step by step meta-data analysis. It will therefore be for the consultant in collaboration with the CORAF technical team to focus on the practical aspects after brief theoretical explanations. The course should be designed not for beginners but researchers with prerequisite or background in basics of literature review, computer science, mainly R programming. Thus, group and individual work should be organized to allow participants to perform practical exercises on their computers. Hands-on exercises on computer must be prepared using topics of interest for FSRP program, mainly topics dealing with the resilience of agricultural systems.

4. Expected Results

At the end of the training workshop the following results are expected:

1. Participants have a good command on common literature review techniques in the agricultural field;

2. The participants have a good command on the application of tools and techniques of meta-analysis applied in the agricultural field
3. Participants are supported after the training.

5. Duties of Consultants

In order to achieve the expected results, the consultant will be primarily responsible for the preparation, organization and facilitation of the training workshop in theory and practice. The main tasks assigned to the consultant are:

1. Develop training syllabuses in support of the methodological approach outlined in these ToRs;
2. Develop the modules and the training manual with a detailed provisional timetable (These documents must first be validated by the CORAF technical team);
3. Prepare training materials, tools and other facilities essential for practical work (These tools must first be validated by the CORAF technical team);
4. Conduct training facilitation (theory and practice);
5. Write a training report after the workshop;
6. Have easy contact (after workshop) to answer the questions of participants and CORAF when needed.

6. Deliverables

1. A start-up report describing the understanding of the mission and the different training modules (the detailed outline of the content of each module), a workshop animation plan indicating the methods and tools of animation to be used and a training manual;
2. Training materials including PowerPoint presentations;
3. Tools and other training elements (codes/scripts; software, programs, etc.)
4. An end-of-workshop report that documents the process and results achieved
5. A post-training plan that describes how the consultant will continue supporting or mentoring participants

7. Consultant Profile

The consultant must:

- Hold a PhD or Master degree in agronomy or environmental science, data science, or any other degree deemed equivalent;
- Have a minimum of 10 years of experience in the application of statistical and computer tools used in agricultural research;
- Have at least 5 years of relevant experience in the application of meta-analysis tools and techniques in the field of agriculture;
- Have to his credit at least 5 meta-analysis articles (on different themes related to the agricultural sector) of which at least two (02) on which the consultant is the first author and/or corresponding author). These articles should already be published in renowned international journals;

- Have a good knowledge of the challenges related to agricultural research and development in West and Central African countries;
- Have proven experience in facilitating regional workshops;
- Have good writing and synthesis skills;
- Mastering French and English is essential for this mission.

8. Duration and location of mission

The mission will have a total of 30 man working days including preparation, workshop facilitation/moderation, reporting and post training activities. All over a period of November 2024. The consultant will work virtually from the location where he is based and will travel to the workshop in the chosen country.

10. Application Process and Selection

Interested candidates should send their expression of interest and full curriculum vitae by email to procurement@coraf.org by 03/10/2024 at 5:00 PM GMT. The consultants will be selected according to the agreement defined in the guidelines "Selection and use of consultants under IBRD loans, IDA allocations and grants by World Bank borrowers" of January 2011.