



**LEADER DE L'INNOVATION AGRICOLE EN
AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST ET DU CENTRE**

LEADING AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION IN
WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA



CORAF's M&E POLICY



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ACRONYMS

AR4D	Agricultural Research for Development
AWPB	Annual Work Plan and Budget
CEMAC	Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa
KIC	Knowledge and Impact Communication
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
KM	Knowledge Management
MELIA	Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Impact Assessment
NARSs	National Agricultural Research Systems
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
SP2	CORAF Strategic Plan (2018-2027) (SP2)
RBM	Results-Based Management
SROs	Sub-Regional Organizations
WCA	West and Central Africa



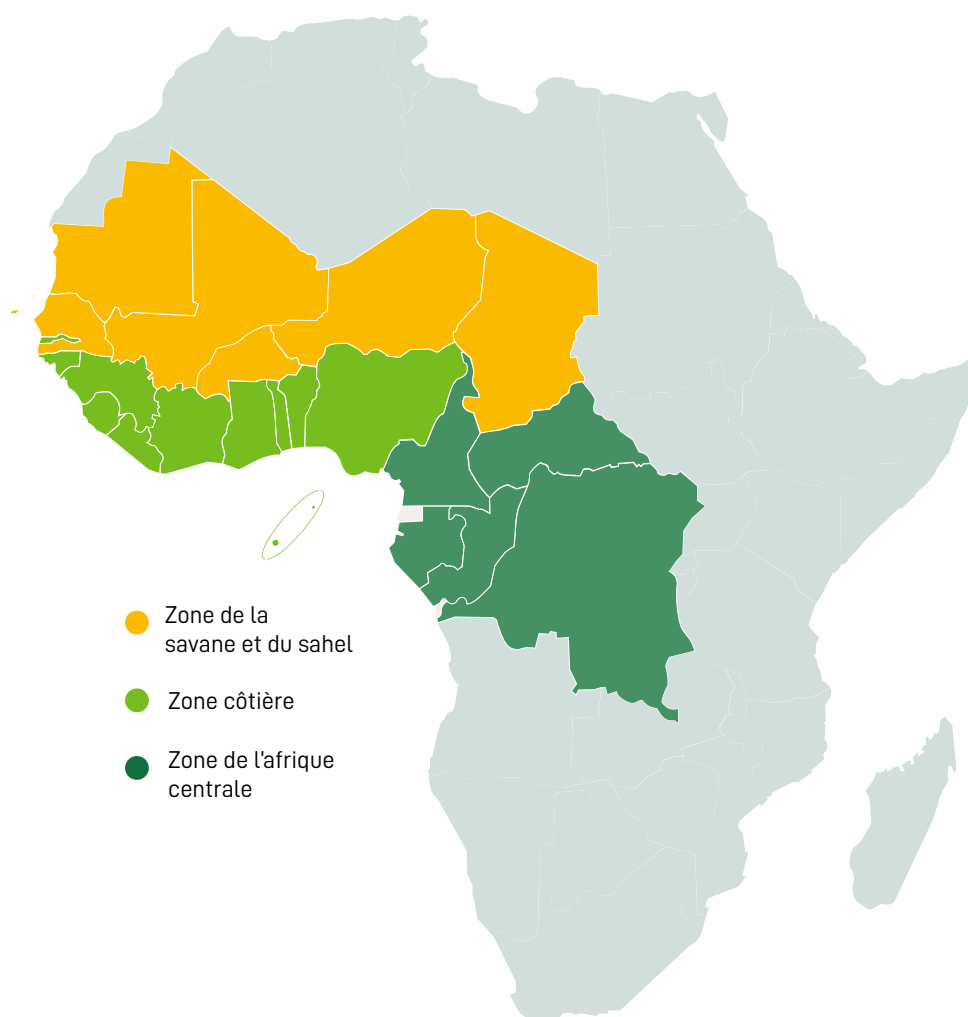
BACKGROUND



The West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development, CORAF, was originally established in 1987 as the Conference of Heads of African and French Agronomic Research Institutions. Membership of CORAF was expanded in 1995 to include 23 National Agricultural Research Systems (NARSs) from 23 countries in West and Central Africa (WCA)¹ .

CORAF is the largest of the four Sub-Regional Organizations (SROs) under the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA – the apex body).

The primary objective of CORAF is to improve livelihoods in West and Central Africa through sustainable increases in agricultural production and productivity, as well as promoting competitiveness, and markets. This objective is achieved through addressing the critical issues of food and nutrition insecurity, chronic poverty, and youth unemployment building on core functions of Coordination and Capacity Strengthening, Scaling Up Technologies and Innovations, Creating an enabling regional environment at regional for technology flows and increased trade, and Knowledge Management and Learning.



1. Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Cote D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.



RATIONALE FOR THE M&E POLICY



Since 2007, CORAF has embarked on a performance-based approach through the implementation of a ten-year Strategic Plan. The current SP (2018-2027) advocates the development and promotion of pathways for scaling up and disseminating high impact agricultural technologies and innovations. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plays a crucial role in the implementation of CORAF's Strategic Plan and Operational Plans. Indeed, CORAF has a strong institutional vision in terms of learning from its development programs and is committed to integrating Monitoring & Evaluation and Impact Assessment approaches in all its coordinated projects.

The second Strategic Plan (2018-2027) (SP2) of CORAF aims to strengthen research for development and stakeholders' capacities. It further aims to build and coordinate communities of practice as well as provide a forward-looking vision to address current, emerging and foreseeable challenges. Therefore, the SP2 outlines a roadmap through which CORAF and its multiple stakeholders can collectively contribute towards the achievement of the vision and mission, in addressing emerging challenges and capitalizing on opportunities in agricultural research for development (AR4D) in West and Central Africa (WCA), as identified through broad multi-stakeholder consultations.

CORAF and its member National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) have been contributing to sustainable improvements in productivity, competitiveness and markets of the WCA food system. CORAF's primary objective is achieved through addressing critical issues related to food and nutrition insecurity, chronic poverty and youth unemployment through the following core functions: (i) Coordination and Capacity Strengthening, (ii) Scaling Up Technologies and Innovations, (iii) Creating an enabling environment at region for technology flows and increased trade, and (iv) Knowledge Management and Learning.

In response to these challenges, and to understand and track how CORAF is achieving or will achieve the strategic objectives of the SP (2018-2027), CORAF is formulating an M&E policy to guide the establishment of effective frameworks. An M&E policy is a key element of sound management and accountability for a regional organization like CORAF. It provides information to: i) support evidence-based implementation of projects and programs; ii) ensure accountability and compliance by demonstrating that the work is carried out as planned, and in accordance with the standards set by CORAF and other donor and stakeholder requirements; (iii) promote transparency and ownership of project and program results; iv) contribute to organizational learning and knowledge exchange v) promote progress and achievements to substantiate new resource mobilizations.

This policy was developed through a participatory consultation process which involved all stakeholders. While considering the specific needs of CORAF, this M&E policy sets out the purpose, concepts, rules and use of M&E within CORAF; the institutional framework as well as roles and responsibilities; the measures taken to ensure independent evaluation and accountability; benchmarks for the funding of the evaluation function; measures to ensure the quality and use of evaluations and subsequent follow-up; and provisions for periodic peer review or external review.

POLICY THRUSTS

CORAF'S M&E POLICY HAS FIVE THRUSTS AS DETAILED IN THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS

1
Objectives and scope of the policy

2
Governance of the M&E system

3
Structural framework and M&E planning

4
Knowledge management, learning and communication

5
Linking of M&E with other CORAF components.





OBJECTIVES OF THE M&E POLICY



This M&E policy is developed to assist CORAF in achieving its vision and mission set out in its Strategic Plan (2018-2027) through the promotion of institutional accountability, continuous learning, and transparent sharing of information on monitoring and evaluation of projects and programs, both within and outside the organization. If this policy is implemented, it will provide decision makers at all levels of CORAF and its partners with relevant information, analysis and recommendations to inform and improve policy making, planning, programming and programs and projects implementation.

Specifically, the CORAF's M&E Policy seeks to:

- ensure that evidence-based monitoring and evaluation is integrated into CORAF's program and project cycles;
- Provide all teams with a common language on monitoring and evaluation in project and program implementation;
- guide project planning, monitoring and evaluation practices and ensure that they address issues of quality, learning and accountability within CORAF;
- strengthen the capacity of program and project implementers to integrate monitoring and evaluation tools into CORAF's design, planning, implementation, dissemination and budgeting processes;
- provide stakeholders with consistent information on the level of achievement or progress of CORAF's project and program results;
- ensure that knowledge gained through learning is captured and disseminated both internally and externally;
- strengthen CORAF's continuous improvement approach, particularly in performance and result management of our projects;
- promote accountability in achieving the objectives through monitoring and evaluation of results, effectiveness, processes and performance of parties involved in the activities;
- promote knowledge transfer, feedback and sharing of lessons learned regarding results and lessons learned.
- foster evidence-based decision-making from M&E to improve future interventions through recommendations, feedback on lessons learned and good practices.

The policy supports CORAF management in monitoring and communicating the progress in operations and strategic achievements of all projects and programs on a more regular basis through the reporting and data requirements of each project team in the beneficiary countries.



POLICY BASIS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE M&E POLICY



1. BASIS OF THE M&E POLICY: RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT (RBM)

CORAF uses RBM as defined by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC) as its management basis. RBM is thus defined as a life cycle management approach to projects and programs that integrates strategy, people, resources, processes and measures to improve decision-making, transparency and accountability. This approach to management emphasizes the achievement of outcomes, performance measurement and reporting, and learning and adaptation. It also incorporates an M&E system defined as a set of processes that includes planning, data collection, analysis, and systematic use of data, synthesis and information dissemination. Implementing RBM at CORAF means ensuring that all of CORAF's project and program management strategies are predicated on management for desired organizational results through incorporating a results-based philosophy and principles into all management aspects, and most importantly, incorporating evidence and lessons learned from past performance into management decision-making.

In addition to RBM, CORAF's M&E policy is fully aligned with regional and continental agricultural policies. Such policies include:

- ECOWAP/CAADP agricultural policy through synergetic action and similar objectives with the Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF) as the main operationalizing institution of the said policy in the ECOWAS region;
- the objective of negotiating stimulating and beneficial international agreements for the agricultural and rural sector within CEMAC, CORAF being a major implementing player, specifically in agricultural research in Central Africa.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN M&E

Building on RBM, management and M&E practices within CORAF conform to quality norms and relevant international standards. In addition, CORAF is committed to guiding principles for this M&E policy and all stakeholders must adhere to these principles, which include: transparency, engagement and ownership, responsibility, accountability, usefulness, learning, quality, credibility, gender, ethics, and professionalism.

Transparency

Transparency and consultation with key stakeholders are essential features of the monitoring and evaluation process at all stages within CORAF. This includes communicating clear information to stakeholders about decisions regarding the M&E work program, areas to monitor and evaluate, purpose of M&E, criteria applied, and use of findings. M&E activities should reflect openness, envisage meaningful stakeholder consultation and opportunities for participation in the process. M&E reports should be clear on the information sources, methods and approaches used. M&E documents should be presented in a format that is easy to access and read so as to ensure greater transparency and legitimacy. CORAF will see to M&E data and findings are widely disseminated and accessible to all stakeholders.

Stakeholder engagement and ownership	Within the framework of M&E activities, CORAF will as much as possible engage stakeholders at all stages ranging from planning, learning and decision-making; and contribute therefore to adoption, commitment and ownership. Projects/programs ownership by stakeholders is fundamental in attaining the expected results. In the context of M&E, the ownership aspects covered are the extent to which beneficiaries and other stakeholders understand the project/program objectives, participate in the design of interventions, and understand the parameters that need to be measured over time to ensure that the results achieved are consistent with the overall objectives of CORAF projects/programs.
Responsibility	CORAF's M&E policy promotes responsibility in projects and programs management. Responsibility is the obligation for managers to demonstrate that they assume their responsibilities with regard to both the means used and the results obtained according to agreed expectations. Thus, the implementer must demonstrate that he/she is result-oriented, ie that: i) indicators for expected outcomes and outputs have been established; (ii) monitoring, including data collection on output and outcome indicators, is carried out regularly; iii) management decisions are informed by the data collected and their evaluation; (iv) corrective measures are brought in order to achieve the expected results; and (v) reports on results achieved are supported by evidence.
Accountability	Through its M&E Policy, CORAF commits to reporting that projects and programs have been conducted according to agreed rules and standards. It also undertakes to report clearly and impartially on the results and performance, with regard to the mandate and/or the objectives. For M&E managers, accountability refers to their responsibility to provide accurate, impartial and credible performance assessments and progress reports.
Usefulness	M&E results should be perceived as relevant and useful. They must be presented in a clear and concise manner in order to have an impact on decision-making. M&E should be conducted in a timely manner, that is, at an appropriate moment in relation to the decision-making process.
Learning	Through the M&E policy, CORAF commits to integrating the learning process in all stages of the life cycle of its projects and programs. Learning is the process by which the information and knowledge generated by M&E feeds into reflection and the deliberate and continuous improvement of the stakeholder capacity strengthening process. It must therefore enable projects and programs to generate greater impacts.
Quality	CORAF has developed its own M&E quality assurance system based on an analysis and adaptation of international norms and standards as well as good practices of the international community. Such system outlines the processes and steps for ensuring quality as well as a set of templates and checklists for M&E outputs. The M&E quality assurance system will be consistently applied by M&E managers.

Credibility

The credibility of the M&E process is central to the M&E policy process. It depends on the expertise of the actors, the independence of M&E managers and the degree of transparency of the process. It also requires the triangulation of data in order to generate factual/evidence-based results. M&E should report both successes and failures.

Gender

Universally recognized values and principles of human rights and gender equality should be factored in at all stages of M&E. It is the responsibility of M&E managers and evaluation managers to ensure that these values are complied with, integrated and promoted, in line with the commitment to “leave no one behind”. Thus, the design of any M&E mechanism must specify the extent to which it takes into account CORAF’s commitment to human rights based -approach on vulnerable people and mainstreaming gender issues. CORAF adheres to the principle that in matters of human rights and gender equality, equal opportunity among vulnerable people, results are changes that can be described or measured. Indeed, these results explicitly address the reduction in gender inequalities or the improvement of their equality and between vulnerable people in general. As part of M&E, gender-sensitive indicators need to be defined. In addition, data in the M&E framework should be disaggregated by gender, age for all indicators.

Ethics

M&E activities must be carried out with complete impartiality and objectivity while respecting ethical standards and rules. M&E must be carried out with the highest standards of integrity and with respect for the beliefs and customs of the social and cultural environments in which it takes place; with respect for human rights and gender equality. MM&E managers must ensure that the rights of individuals and institutions to provide information on a confidential basis are maintained, and that sensitive data are protected and not traceable to their source, while avoiding conflicts of interest.

Professionalism

M&E activities must be carried out with professionalism and integrity. Professionalism should contribute to the credibility of M&E officers, managers, as well as the M&E function.



M&E IN CORAF'S PROJECTS AND PROGRAM CYCLE



1. MONITORING CORAF'S PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

CORAF defines monitoring as the systematic collection and analysis of projects and programs information in order to track progress against established plans, and check their compliance with established standards. Monitoring helps identify emerging trends and patterns, adapt strategies, and guide decision-making in project and program management.

Monitoring planning in projects and programs is done at the design stage and is then reviewed annually. This planning is integrated into documents such as the strategic plan, the operational plan and the annual work plan and budget (AWPB).

Different monitoring types that can be carried out at CORAF include: process monitoring (activities), results-based monitoring, compliance monitoring, context monitoring, beneficiary monitoring, financial monitoring and organizational monitoring.

However, there are many themes that are not always explicitly included in traditional monitoring, but which are of paramount importance in achieving CORAF's objectives. They include gender and climate change to be monitored across all items listed in the typology.

Table 1: CORAF project and program monitoring typologies

Typologies	Définition
Process monitoring (activities)	Process monitoring (activity) focuses on the use of inputs and resources, progress of activities and delivery of outputs. They use it to analyze how activities are carried out and their effectiveness in meeting deadlines and using resources
Results-based monitoring	Results-based monitoring focuses on the project effects and impact and aims to determine if the project or program is on track to achieve the planned results and if it has unintended effects (positive or negative)
Compliance monitoring	Compliance monitoring verifies project or program compliance with donor-defined regulations and expected outcomes, grant and contract terms, local government laws and regulations, and moral values
Context monitoring	Context monitoring is targeted at the project or program environment, including assumptions and risk factors that may affect the project or program implementation, but also unforeseen events.
Beneficiary monitoring	Beneficiary monitoring focuses on the beneficiaries' perception of the project or program.
Financial monitoring	Financial monitoring keeps track of accounts by input and by activity in predefined spending categories.
Organizational monitoring	Organizational monitoring focuses on sustainability, institutional development and capacity strengthening under the project or program and at partner level.

2. EVALUATION OF CORAF'S PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

CORAF defines evaluation as a rigorous process of collecting and analyzing information aiming to make a judgment about a project or program, policy, process or project in order to assist in decision-making. It makes it possible to evaluate both the relevance of the program, the effectiveness with which its objectives are pursued, the efficiency of the means or its profitability, as well as its impact.

Evaluation planning in projects and programs takes place at the design stage. This planning is integrated into documents such as the strategic plan, the operational plan and the annual work plan and budget (AWPB).

Evaluation in CORAF speaks to nine criteria used to formulate evaluation question: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, gender-sensitiveness and equity, governance and implementation.

“Relevance” as a criterion evaluates the extent to which the objectives and design of projects and programs are aligned with the needs, policies and priorities of the beneficiaries, the country, the international community and partners and remain relevant even if the context changes.

“Coherence” describes the extent to which the project or program is compatible with other interventions carried out within a country, a sector or an institution.

“Effectiveness” makes it possible to identify the extent to which the objectives and outcomes of the project or program have been achieved, or are in the process of being achieved.

“Efficiency” aims to evaluate the extent to which the project or program produces, or is likely to produce, results economically and over time.

“Impact” identifies the extent to which the project or program has produced, or is expected to produce, significant and far-reaching effects, whether positive or negative, intended or unintended.

Gender-sensitiveness and equity aims to evaluate the project or program contribution to gender equality and the empowerment of women, youth and vulnerable people.

“Sustainability” describes the extent to which the benefits from the project or program will continue or are likely to continue.

“Governance” as a criterion seeks to examine the planning, coordination and deployment processes of the actions planned by the relevant players. Implementing governance means creating a space where actions are directed, decisions are made, and responsibilities are shared.

Finally, “implementation” looks at how well an intervention works. It seeks to identify the internal and external factors influencing its deployment or progress. It further determine whether the implementation of the intervention is proceeding as planned at the design stage.

CORAF recognizes several types of evaluations of its projects and programs, depending on the timing, the purpose, the origin of the evaluators and the methods used.

Depending on the completion period, CORAF admits ex-ante evaluations, mid-term evaluations, final evaluations and ex-post evaluations. Diagnostic, prospective or ex-ante evaluation is intended to assess the beneficiaries’ needs to ensure a better fit of projects and programs, to increase the chances of success of the project or program and to check the evaluability of a program/project.

Mid-term evaluation focuses on improving performance during the implementation of projects, programs or policies. The final evaluation, carried out at the end of the project or program aims to assess the effectiveness of the action at the end of the intervention, as well as the level of satisfaction of the beneficiaries and/or sponsors. Ex-post evaluation emphasizes the results (consequences), assesses the induced effects (positive and/or negative) of the project/program on the beneficiaries and its environment.

Depending on the purpose, evaluations of CORAF's projects and programs can be formative or summative. Formative evaluation aims to enhance knowledge of the project/program implementation in order to provide to decision makers with information to improve the programs. Summative evaluation aims to take stock of the value of a project/program and its means of intervention in order to support the decision-making relating to the interruption or renewal of the project/program based on the results obtained during the evaluation.

Depending on where the evaluators come from, evaluations at CORAF can be internal, external or participatory. The internal evaluation is carried out by the people working within the project/program. External or independent evaluation is entrusted to an external consultant. A mixed or participatory evaluation is carried out according to a collaborative framework involving people from the program/project, external consultants and representatives of the stakeholders.

CORAF evaluations resort to quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. Evaluations using quantitative methods typically use sample data collection to conduct the evaluation. Statistical data analysis methods (univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses) are applied to respond to the evaluation questions. Evaluations using qualitative methods resort to interviews, observations, group discussions to collect evaluation data. Inductive or deductive analytical methods are used to analyze the data and respond to the evaluation questions. Mixed methods evaluations use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to respond to evaluation questions.

Table 2: CORAF Evaluation Guidelines

Projet US\$	<18 months	18 to 30 months	>30 months
>5 millions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial M&E Evaluation Independent mid-term and final evaluations. Recommended: Assessing the evaluability of project design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial M&E Evaluation Annual review Independent mid-term and final evaluations. Recommended: Assessing the evaluability of project design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial M&E Evaluation Annual review Independent mid-term and final evaluations. Recommended: Assessing the evaluability of project design
1 to 5 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Independent Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid-term evaluation (self-evaluated or internal) Final Independent Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Review, Mid-term evaluation (self-evaluated or internal) Final Independent Evaluation
500,000 to 1 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Independent Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Review, Final internal evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Review, Mid-term internal evaluation Final internal evaluation
<500,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final self-evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Review, Final self-evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Review, Mid-term self-evaluation Final self-evaluation

3. META-EVALUATION

In order to maintain quality assurance of the various evaluations, CORAF will conduct an evaluation of the evaluations conducted, each five years, known as meta-evaluation. The meta-evaluation is the indirect evaluation of evaluations, the evaluation of evaluators and represents an ethical obligation. It is used to determine the quality of evaluations, their processes and their results. In particular, the objective is to understand the evaluation practice that is being conducted in order to improve current or future evaluations, to reflect systematically on the strengths and weaknesses of its practice, and to provide information on the credibility of the results.

4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION APPROACH WITHIN CORAF: MELIA

One of the central pillars of CORAF's M&E system will be a robust Monitoring and Evaluation, Learning and Impact Assessment (MELIA) mechanism. The MELIA approach will further strengthen NARS capacities to monitor progress, refine interventions, identify unintended effects and determine the impacts of different initiatives and programs on the beneficiaries' livelihoods in West and Central Africa. The MELIA approach will also help CORAF further demonstrate accountability to stakeholders through effective information sharing, experiential learning and feedback mechanisms. CORAF's MELIA approach will include regular evaluations and special studies. In addition, the MELIA framework will define the scope and function for all interventions and initiatives implemented and coordinated by the Executive Secretariat and CORAF partners, including National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs) and civil society organizations involved in agricultural research for development. The MELIA approach will also adopt the concept of "Theory of Change" (ToC) to facilitate consensus on change processes and trust to ensure ownership of agricultural research results. NARSS and partners will develop MELIA plans, which will include ToCs, research questions and results frameworks based on their specific priority intervention areas. Country-level MELIA plans will be refined and aligned with regional ToCs with support from CORAF. The CORAF Executive Secretariat will provide additional capacity strengthening support to NARSs and partners to ensure that they are able to lead the MELIA process, so as to support learning and generate reliable data on project performance. Finally, CORAF's MELIA framework will enable the establishment of a solid knowledge platform that promotes the scaling up of agricultural technologies and innovations in West and Central Africa.

The table below outlines the goals, responsibilities and tools associated with CORAF's M&E policy items

Table 3: Purposes, responsibilities and tools associated with M&E elements at CORAF

Item	Goal(s)	Responsibilities and tools
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides managers and key stakeholders of an ongoing program or project with indications of the extent of progress in achieving objectives and the use of allocated funds; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Logical framework at program and project level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CORAF develops a logical framework at project/program level; • National project/program management teams develop logical frameworks for the implementation and monitoring of activities.
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helps understand the achievement of expected and unintended results and their impact on stakeholders; - Provides an important source of evidence on the various project/program evaluation criteria; - Serves as a basis for learning and improving decision-making regarding the continued strategic programming of the project/program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theory of change - Logical framework at project/program level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The M&E unit updates the CORAF's theory of change and program logframe as needed; • National project management teams update project/program logframes as needed

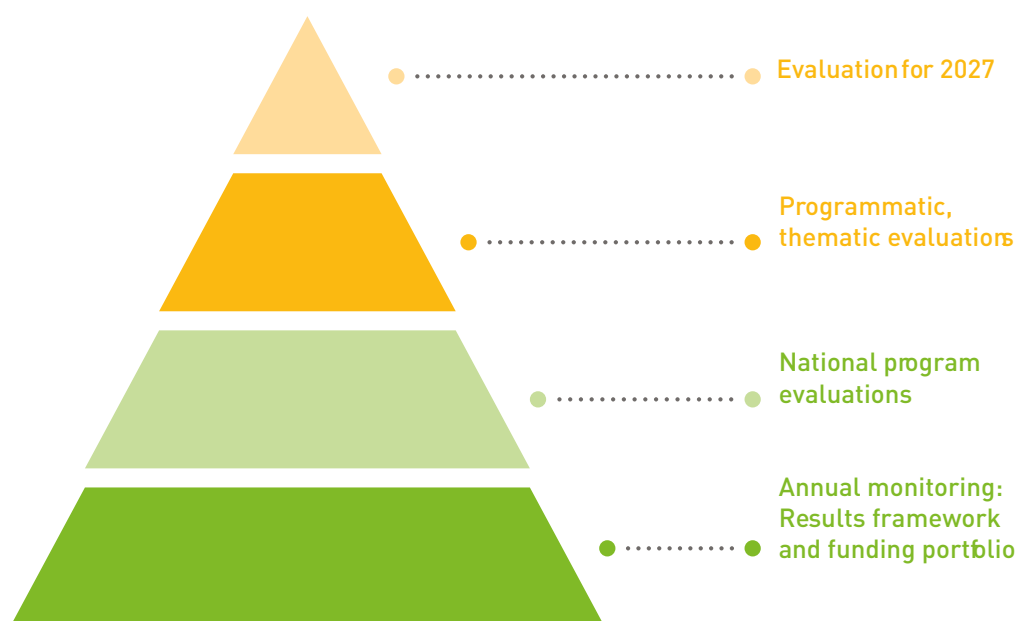
5. STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK FOR CORAF'S STRATEGIC PLAN (2018-2027) EVALUATIONS

The structural framework for CORAF evaluations consists of a series of interconnected evaluations that examine why, how and to what extent the achievements and activities of the partnership influence the results and impacts, i.e. how the items of the theory of CORAF's change contribute to the results of CORAF's partner developing countries in its various areas of intervention. This evaluation framework proposes regular evaluations carried out throughout the implementation of CORAF's new Strategic Plan.

The proposed series of evaluations will be based on two evaluation typologies: one at the end of the funding cycle, and another one will assess the operating model of the CORAF's plan (2018-2022) in a limited number of countries in order to deliver training likely to improve the effectiveness of the activities of the Strategic plan (2018-2027). They will contribute to the summative evaluation of the impact of the various CORAF projects to be carried out in the last year of the Strategic Plan (2027).

Figure 3 below illustrates this differentiated approach to evaluation, which relies on data collected through the monitoring activities of various CORAF projects. However, it should be noted that the scope of the evaluations can be modified according to the ambition and the financial capacities of the CORAF's General Management.

Figure 1: A CORAF monitoring and evaluation pyramid



The table below summarizes the evaluation typologies offered

Table 4: Typologies of evaluations offered

Level	Typology	Purpose and scope
Formative evaluations	Evaluation ² of the main projects of the 2018-2027 Strategic Plan (formative)	Evaluates the state of implementation of CO-RAF's ongoing activities and projects towards the achievement of country-level results.
Summative evaluations	Evaluation of the 2018-2027 Strategic Plan (summative)	Evaluates the contribution of CORAF, as well as its Theory of Change, to results achieved at country level.
Thematic / programmatic evaluations	Thematic evaluations (summative/formative)	Review CORAF's investments in agricultural research for development in specific areas drawing attention to best practices and cost effectiveness of funding.
	Program evaluations (formative/summative)	Evaluate specific funding
Country-level evaluations	Summative country-level program evaluations	Evaluates CORAF's theory of change and the extent to which CORAF achieves intended country-level results through its funding and support to country-level planning and monitoring processes.
Program-level formative evaluations	Prospective country-level evaluations (formative)	Analyzes the process of implementing CORAF's operating model, including the support it provides to planning, policy dialog, and implementation of its funding model throughout the policy cycle, in order to be able to correct the shot if necessary.

2. Evaluations highlighted in yellow are deemed essential; others are recommended



GOVERNANCE OF THE M&E SYSTEM



1. ORGANIZATION CHART: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

CORAF Management, which includes the Executive Director, Director of Research and Innovation and Director of Corporate Services, is the primary user of monitoring and evaluation results. These results are used to improve performance, perform adaptive management, control risk, enable learning and provide accountability. Management is expected to actively participate in M&E activities by collaboratively establishing a work plan, participating in the design, reviewing draft reports, and using the results in decision-making. Management also monitors the implementation of changes recommended by the evaluations.

CORAF's M&E Unit is responsible for coordinating the monitoring and evaluation function of the organization and ensuring the proper implementation of the M&E policy. The responsibility of the unit includes the following activities:

- > **Coordinate monitoring and evaluation activities.**
- > **Set and implement M&E standards.**
- > **Implement the current M&E Policy.**
- > **Work with management to prepare monitoring and evaluation work plans and reports.**
- > **Liaise with CORAF donors for accountability.**
- > **Ensure that monitoring and evaluation tools are in line with international best practices.**

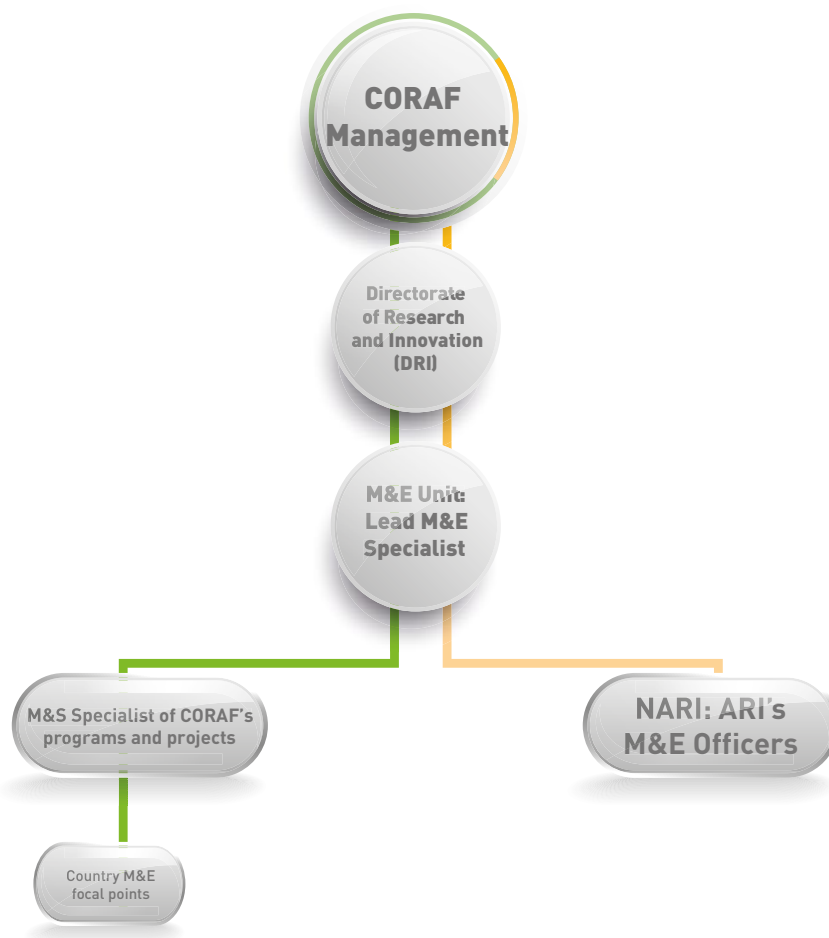
At the M&E Unit level, the Senior M&E Specialist is the person responsible for coordinating M&E. He/She sees to the implementation of CORAF's M&E policy and the centralization of M&E data as well as the periodic reporting of M&E indicators of CORAF's Strategic Plan and Operational Plan. He/She supervises the M&E officers of the CORAF's projects and programs and the National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs). He/She also coordinates the implementation of centralized evaluations and assists M&E officers in the quality assurance of evaluation processes.

The M&E managers of CORAF's projects and programs are responsible for setting up M&E systems for projects and programs, aligning project and program indicators with those of CORAF's strategic plan and operational plan, and feeding periodic data. Under the supervision of the lead M&E specialist, they are also responsible for coordinating the implementation of local evaluations and monitoring the implementation of M&E recommendations.

The M&E officers of the national agricultural research institutes are responsible for setting up the M&E system and activities of their respective NARIs. They ensure the alignment of the national indicators of their NARI with those of the strategic plan and the operational plan of CORAF and feeding periodic data. Under the supervision of the lead M&E specialist, they are also responsible for coordinating at the local level the implementation of evaluations and monitoring the implementation of M&E recommendations.

CORAF has established a regional monitoring and evaluation task force composed of experts from National Agricultural Research Institutes to ensure an effective link between the existing M&E mechanisms in the sub-region. Therefore, the Lead M&E Specialist, Project and Program M&E Managers and NARI's M&E Officers together form the CORAF M&E Network. The objective of this network is to facilitate partners' alignment with strategies for an effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism on progress in Agricultural Research for Development in the region. This group is primarily intended to serve as a taskforce with the technical expertise to deliver the M&E function within the CORAF community.

Figure 2: Organizational charts of CORAF's M&E system



2. M&E OPERATION AND GOVERNANCE AT CORAF

CORAF management is responsible for appointing a head of evaluation with the required professional qualifications, namely the lead M&E specialist. He/She should also foster an environment conducive to M&E practice, which enables the lead M&E specialist to plan, design, manage and carry out M&E activities in line with this policy and international regulations.

For M&E specialists under CORAF projects and programs and decentralized activities, CORAF Lead M&E Specialist shall be responsible for establishing a framework which provides guidance, quality assurance, technical assistance and professionalization support.

CORAF management shall ensure the establishment of a competent and appropriately resourced evaluation function, so that it can meet its governance and management needs. The budget allocated to CORAF M&E should be commensurate with the size and function of CORAF. In the case of CORAF's projects and programs which budget exceeds one hundred million CFA francs, 10% of the budget must be systematically allocated to M&E activities. For projects and programs with budgets below this amount, a minimum of five million CFA francs must be devoted to M&E activities.



EXPLOITATION OF M&E DATA



1. INFORMATION SYSTEM

CORAF has an online M&E system (<https://mel.coraf.org/>) to assist in data generation, codification and data and information sharing among stakeholders. The overall objective of the online M&E and data sharing platform is to enable CORAF to monitor the implementation of its Operational Plan (OP) and the projects and programs implemented under this plan. The online M&E platform therefore streamlines CORAF's results-based management and M&E to ensure sound management and accountability. The platform also facilitates information reporting, knowledge sharing and learning on the implementation of CORAF's operational plan and its projects/programs. In addition, the knowledge management portal provides a single location where team staff and members NARS in various countries can access and report on standardized indicators and custom indicators. This web-based M&E platform comes with complementary tools such as the data collection platform (<https://survey.coraf.org/>) used in field data collection operations (baseline survey, evaluation, etc.).

2. DATA QUALITY ASSURANCE

The head of the CORAF monitoring and evaluation unit must ensure that an appropriate quality assurance system is in place. Generally occurring during the design and finalization phases, an appropriate quality assurance system makes it possible to evaluate both the evaluation process and the resulting outputs. Depending on the composition of the evaluation function, this system may be based on internal peer review or external review. In all cases, the head of the monitoring and evaluation unit must ensure unbiased review. Alternatively, quality control may rest with an internal or external specialist who will be responsible for overseeing and guiding the entire evaluation process. Evaluation teams should be selected through an open and transparent process, which takes into account the required skills, diversity of viewpoints and accessibility to the local population. Core team members should be seasoned evaluators.

3. PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

With regard to personal data protection, CORAF will comply with the relevant international protection standards. Indeed, M&E must be carried out according to the strictest requirements in this area. In implementing M&E activities, data collection may involve sensitive identifying information. For each planned data collection, arrangements should be made to ensure that the personal data are protected. Data must be centralized and individual files must be password secured and stored on secure servers. Access will only be granted to the lead M&E specialist. Data analysis and reporting will not use personally identifiable information.



M&E KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, LEARNING AND COMMUNICATION



1. M&E KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Knowledge management covers a wide range of issues and mechanisms, closely related to the dissemination and use of information, the conversion of information into knowledge, advocacy and experiential learning. Recognizing that all of CORAF's areas of focus respond to knowledge management needs as well as its implementation and in order to promote the adoption and scaling up of technologies in West and Central Africa, CORAF has adopted a strategy that places knowledge management (KM) at the heart of the organization's external engagement. It proposes KM as a core function of Knowledge and Impact Communication (KIC), which encompasses communications, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (M&EA) services as well as actual knowledge communications. This integrated approach aims to establish an inclusive structure that propels KM as a cross-cutting issue within CORAF.

In this way, the KM Unit is seen as a cross-cutting unit that needs to collaborate closely with the CORAF M&E Unit in order to have access to all knowledge products generated and produced by the latter. These different knowledge products must be systematically incorporated in the knowledge management activities of the CORAF KM Unit.

2. COMMUNICATING M&E RESULTS

The M&E Unit should in collaboration with the CORAF Communication Unit establish an effective communication and dissemination strategy, aimed at the dissemination and use of M&E results. Through this strategy, the key M&E messages should be clearly communicated to relevant stakeholders as well as to those likely to use the information and knowledge generated.

Effective and proactive communication and dissemination promotes the use of M&E results, not only for accountability purposes, but also for learning and sharing purposes, cross-fertilization from lessons learned and promoting good practices.

Lessons learned from M&E need to be disseminated, through the establishment of effective feedback mechanisms to decision makers, line staff, beneficiaries and the general public.

3. LEARNING

Learning is the process whereby the information generated through monitoring and evaluation feeds into reflection and deliberate, continuous improvement of the capacity strengthening process for the members of an organization. It is intended to help the organization generate greater impact. As such, the learning function is of vital importance to guide the continued implementation of CORAF projects/programs and to ensure their ongoing performance by consolidating the body of knowledge and practices thereof.

As part of the project/program M&E process, CORAF places learning at the heart of the process through: i) sharing of evidence/results to inform adaptive management and implementation of identified best practices, ii) consideration of «failures» as learning opportunities, iii) identification of knowledge gaps that may need to be filled, iv) broad/external dissemination of knowledge to arouse interest and support for projects and programs.

In the context of projects/programs, lessons learned and best practices should be identified through activities such as reflective workshops, focus groups and learning sessions that the project team can organize involving a number of stakeholders.





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