

USAID West Africa Analytical Support Services and Evaluations for Sustainable Systems in Agriculture, Environment and Trade (USAID/West Africa ASSESS Project)

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (EOI)

Performance Evaluation of the Partnership for Agricultural Research, Education and Development (PAIRED) – Components 2 & 3

INTRODUCTION

USAID/West Africa (WA) and the West and Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF) signed a five-year (2017-2022) Cooperative Agreement to provide support for a program entitled the Partnership for Agricultural Research, Education and Development (PAIRED).

USAID West Africa and CORAF wish to conduct a performance evaluation of the PAIRED program, which ends in June 2022, to measure the successes from this partnership, learn about its challenges and areas for improvement and draw lessons to inform future programming of each partner organization.

The proposed performance evaluation will specifically focus on the two technical components of the program: Components 2 and 3 and complement the evaluation of Component 1 to provide a comprehensive review of the performance of the PAIRED program.

Targeted areas for this evaluation include PAIRED activities in key locations across countries in the region. Priority attention (analysis and documentation of results) should be given to PAIRED's work in the Feed the Future (FtF) focus countries: Benin, Ghana, Senegal, Mali, Niger and Nigeria.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF WORK

This evaluation will assess the performance of the PAIRED Technical Program Components 2 and 3, to determine if planned activities are leading to the achievement of activity objectives and expected outcomes. Evaluation findings will be used by CORAF and USAID to validate progress to date in building the capacity of key regional stakeholders, scaling access to proven agricultural input technologies and good agricultural practices, determining the sustainability of accomplishments to date, and serving as a learning tool on the successes, weaknesses and gaps of the program. Additionally, evaluation findings will be used to inform new activity descriptions for future programs in support of key strategic documents: i.e newly adopted ECOWAS (Economic Community of West Africa States) Regional Integrated Strategy for Inputs; the ECOWAS Agriculture Program (ECOWAP); and the USAID Regional Plan for Global Food Security Strategy for West Africa (GFSS).

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

I. How successful has the PAIRED activity been, in meeting its planned targets?

- a. If certain activity components have not been successful, please explain why (in areas of the program's assumptions, programmatic implementation, gender/youth integration into the seed or fertilizer sector, private sector partnership, staffing, etc.).
 - b. Which areas of performance require CORAF and USAID's remedial attention?
2. What recommendations are there for strengthening, improving and building upon (scale-up) program successes of PAIRED's components and sub-activities post-2022? What is the viability of the approach PAIRED has taken to scale up agriculture technologies and to build supply and/or meet agri-business companies and farmer demand for improved seeds?
3. Is CORAF/PAIRED's leadership in strengthening the seed system and advancing the ECOWAS Seed Regulations regarded as effective (or integral to scaling-up seed input success) by their counterparts such as the International Agriculture Research Centers, and NARIs, or others?
 - a. Are the institutional structures/relationships now in place, for example, within partnership institutions such as the NARIs, or are they being developed to sustain the relationships and investments that are being made by PAIRED?
4. Have CORAF and ECOWAS achieved success in advancing the ECOWAS Seed Regulations with USAID support? If not, please describe and justify what is left to do and what could be considered as success. What are the implications of donors not funding this regulation under future programs?
5. Has the CORAF leadership used the PAIRED activity to forge deeper private-sector engagement in the agricultural inputs system, especially seeds? How has the private sector fulfilled the roles expected of it in the regional seed sector? For example, describe the viability of the private sector and how it is advancing the development, promotion and sale of certified and foundation seed.
 - a. What vulnerabilities/weaknesses/gaps still exist within the private sector and what can be done to address them?
6. To what extent has PAIRED and IFDC/EnGRAIS collaboration been effective in addressing agriculture technologies scale up and availability of quality inputs? What is the value addition of CORAF/PAIRED in this collaboration? Include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of this collaboration as well as recommendations, if any, on how to improve this partnership.
7. How efficient and sustainable are the tools and systems developed and/or maintained by CORAF with the support of PAIRED (i.e WASIX, FeSERWAM, MITA, etc.)? What are the strengths (usefulness, utilization) and weaknesses of each tool/system?

DELIVERABLES

1. Inception Report

The inception report must describe the conceptual framework that will be used to undertake the evaluation and the justification for selecting this approach. It must detail the evaluation methodology (i.e., how each question will be answered by way of data collection methods, data sources and sampling). The report must also contain a work plan, which indicates the phases in the evaluation with key deliverables and milestones and timelines.

2. Initial Debriefing Meeting

Within three working days of completing the field work, the Evaluation Team must meet the contractor to review findings and recommendations, and present draft PowerPoints for the debriefing with USAID/WA, CORAF and the regional stakeholders. This meeting must provide a summary of any analytical results; discuss challenges, successes and the way forward. The Team must present the evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations for each question, prior to finalizing the draft evaluation report. The evaluation team leader will be required to routinely update the evaluation point of contact on the progress of the assignment.

There should also be at least two video conferences during the evaluation period. They will serve to update the contracting team, to troubleshoot and ensure the evaluation team is on the right path and ensure that the expected results are clear to the Evaluation Team.

3. Final Debriefing

The team will present the major findings of the evaluation in a PowerPoint presentation after submission of the draft report. The debriefing will include a discussion of achievements and issues as well as any recommendations the team has for consideration for future programming. The team will consider comments from the contracting partners and revise the draft report accordingly, as appropriate. The team must present the key findings, conclusions and recommendations.

4. Learning Workshop and Report

A learning workshop must be organized in support of Agency collaboration learning and adaptation methodologies. The focus of the workshop is to generate varied and diverse learning points including useful and actionable suggestions or proposals for addressing recurrent development challenges (based on the specific activity evaluation) in the West African context with the end goal being to enhance achievement of USAID objectives.

5. Final Evaluation Report

The Evaluation Team must submit a final evaluation report that is based on analyzed facts and evidence and fully addresses all the evaluation questions. This will take into consideration all comments and recommendations made on the draft report. The report must be 40-50 pages (excluding table of contents, references and annexes), written in English, single-spaced in Gill Sans MT, size 11 type fonts, and a 3–5 page Executive Summary; it must comply with the Checklist for Assessing USAID Evaluation Reports.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The evaluation is expected to be conducted between February and April 2022.

CONDITIONS OF REMUNERATION AND REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPERTS

The evaluation team will be remunerated at an agreed fixed price per day.

PLACE OF PERFORMANCE

The place of performance includes Benin, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal. The extent of travel will be determined by the evaluation design and data needs as agreed upon by the contracting partners. The performance evaluation is expected to take approximately 10 weeks starting from February 2022.

ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

The consultants will be contracted under the USAID/WA ASSESS mechanism. ASSESS will be responsible for the administrative and technical management of their respective contracts. This will include monitoring of LOE and payments. This will include approval of the consultants' work plan, assigning tasks within the scope of the contract, reviewing technical outputs, and providing feedback.

EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION AND QUALIFICATIONS

USAID/WA has commissioned the Analytical Support Services and Evaluations for Sustainable Systems (ASSESS) mechanism to conduct a Performance Evaluation of the PAIRED program.

To this end, ASSESS is seeking to recruit experts to form the team to conduct this evaluation. It is expected that evaluation team members will have relevant prior experience in West Africa, have substantial experience with agriculture and food security in West Africa, be proficient in both English and French, have familiarity with USAID's objectives, approaches, and operations, and prior evaluation/assessment experience. In addition, team members should have the technical qualifications commensurate with the position sought. The experts include:

1. Team Leader and Agriculture Evaluation Expert
2. Agriculture Research and Technologies Upscaling Expert
3. Inputs Sector Development Expert
4. Agribusiness Specialist
5. Organizational Expert

Team Leader and Agriculture Evaluation Expert Minimum Qualifications

- A minimum of a master's degree in a relevant discipline (Agriculture, Agribusiness, Agric Economics, Agronomy, etc.), and 10 years of experience in the agricultural sector.
- At least 10 years' experience in program evaluation of donor funded development programs; priority will be given to those who have evaluated programs of similar nature.
- Knowledge and understanding of the key institutions and organizations (regional and international, public and private) involved in agriculture technologies scaling up and seed sector development.
- Demonstrated knowledge of and experience in agriculture in West African countries, with a preference for experience with regional dynamics and a knowledge of the current context.
- Demonstrated strong leadership, analytical, management and organizational, communication and interpersonal skills.
- Proven ability to interact effectively with a broad range of internal and external partners, including international organizations, government officials, and NGO counterparts.
- Experience with USAID evaluation projects in West Africa and have demonstrated abilities in applied agricultural analysis.
- Excellent analytical skills with the ability to extract and analyze data from secondary sources.
- Excellent writing skills with the ability to present ideas logically.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills in French and English are required.
- Fully vaccinated (as required by evaluation country) and available for the entire evaluation period including traveling to evaluation countries for data collection

Agriculture Research and Technologies Upscaling Expert Minimum Qualifications

- A minimum of a master's degree in a relevant discipline (Agriculture, Agribusiness, Agric Economics, Agronomy, etc.), and 10 years of experience in the agricultural research and technologies upscaling in West Africa.
- At least 10 years' experience in program evaluation of donor funded development programs; priority will be given to those who have evaluated programs of similar nature.
- Knowledge and understanding of the key institutions and organizations (regional and international, public and private) involved in agriculture technologies scaling up and seed sector development.
- Demonstrated knowledge of and experience in agriculture in West African countries, with a preference for experience with regional dynamics and a knowledge of the current context.
- Demonstrated strong leadership, analytical, management and organizational, communication and interpersonal skills.

- Proven ability to interact effectively with a broad range of internal and external partners, including international organizations, government officials, and NGO counterparts.
- Experience with USAID evaluation projects in West Africa and have demonstrated abilities in applied agricultural analysis.
- Excellent analytical skills with the ability to extract and analyze data from secondary sources.
- Excellent writing skills with the ability to present ideas logically.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills in French and English are required. Fluency in English and local languages spoken in any of the six countries (Benin, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal) is highly preferred
- Fully vaccinated (as required by evaluation country) and available for the entire evaluation period including traveling to evaluation countries for data collection

Agriculture Inputs Sector Development Expert Minimum Qualifications

- A minimum of a master's degree in a relevant discipline (Agriculture, Agribusiness, Agric Economics, Agronomy, etc.), and 10 years of experience in agriculture inputs development in West Africa.
- At least 10 years' experience in program evaluation of donor funded development programs; priority will be given to those who have evaluated programs of similar nature.
- Knowledge and understanding of the key institutions and organizations (regional and international, public and private) involved in agriculture technologies scaling up and seed sector development.
- Demonstrated knowledge of and experience in agriculture in West African countries, with a preference for experience with regional dynamics and a knowledge of the current context.
- Demonstrated strong leadership, analytical, management and organizational, communication and interpersonal skills.
- Proven ability to interact effectively with a broad range of internal and external partners, including international organizations, government officials, and NGO counterparts.
- Experience with USAID evaluation projects in West Africa and have demonstrated abilities in applied agricultural analysis.
- Excellent analytical skills with the ability to extract and analyze data from secondary sources.
- Excellent writing skills with the ability to present ideas logically.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills in French and English are required. Fluency in English and local languages spoken in any of the six countries (Benin, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal) is highly preferred
- Fully vaccinated (as required by evaluation country) and available for the entire evaluation period including traveling to evaluation countries for data collection

Agribusiness Specialist Minimum Qualifications

- A minimum of a master's degree in a relevant discipline (Agriculture, Agribusiness, Agric Economics, Agronomy, etc.), and 10 years of experience in agribusiness development in West Africa.
- At least 10 years' experience in program evaluation of donor funded development programs; priority will be given to those who have evaluated programs of similar nature.
- Knowledge and understanding of the key institutions and organizations (regional and international, public and private) involved in agriculture technologies scaling up and seed sector development.
- Demonstrated knowledge of and experience in agriculture in West African countries, with a preference for experience with regional dynamics and a knowledge of the current context.
- Demonstrated strong leadership, analytical, management and organizational, communication and interpersonal skills.
- Proven ability to interact effectively with a broad range of internal and external partners, including international organizations, government officials, and NGO counterparts.
- Experience with USAID evaluation projects in West Africa and have demonstrated abilities in applied agricultural analysis.
- Excellent analytical skills with the ability to extract and analyze data from secondary sources.
- Excellent writing skills with the ability to present ideas logically.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills in French and English are required. Fluency in English and local languages spoken in any of the six countries (Benin, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal) is highly preferred
- Fully vaccinated (as required by evaluation country) and available for the entire evaluation period including traveling to evaluation countries for data collection

Organizational Development Expert Minimum Qualifications

- A minimum of a master's degree in a relevant discipline (Agriculture, Agribusiness, Agric Economics, Agronomy, etc.), and 10 years of experience in organizational development in the agriculture sector in West Africa.
- At least 10 years' experience in program evaluation of donor funded development programs; priority will be given to those who have evaluated programs of similar nature.
- Knowledge and understanding of the key institutions and organizations (regional and international, public and private) involved in agriculture technologies scaling up and seed sector development.

- Demonstrated knowledge of and experience in agriculture in West African countries, with a preference for experience with regional dynamics and a knowledge of the current context.
- Demonstrated strong leadership, analytical, management and organizational, communication and interpersonal skills.
- Proven ability to interact effectively with a broad range of internal and external partners, including international organizations, government officials, and NGO counterparts.
- Experience with USAID evaluation projects in West Africa and have demonstrated abilities in applied agricultural analysis.
- Excellent analytical skills with the ability to extract and analyze data from secondary sources.
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- Strong verbal and written communication skills in French and English are required. Fluency in English and local languages spoken in any of the six countries (Benin, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal) is highly preferred
- Fully vaccinated (as required by evaluation country) and available for the entire evaluation period including traveling to evaluation countries for data collection

TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The evaluation team will be required to conduct fieldwork in selected countries. Fieldwork activities will include interviewing stakeholders, key institutions and organizations within the program evaluation countries, analyzing data, and interpreting same for an evaluation report.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The objective of this call for expressions of interest is to identify qualified experts for this assignment. Interested candidates should send a 2-3-page expression of interest with a brief description of the proposed methodological approach, considering the evaluation questions, objectives and scope of the assignment. Applications will be evaluated on a rolling basis and the positions may be filled before the close of applications on **January 28, 2022**.

Expressions of Interest should be submitted by email to medonkor@assess-wa.org with copy to jtchorlyboadi@assess-wa.org

Please specify the position you wish to apply for in the subject line of your application. ASSESS is under no obligation to select a consultant upon receipt of his/her EOI. ASSESS will also not reimburse a consultant for the time and resources used in the application process.

ANNEX I: PROJECT BACKGROUND

The PAIRED program's primary aim is to undertake systemic reforms that will improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and professionalism of CORAF. This will be done to move the organization towards becoming a leading instrument for the regional coordination of agricultural research, and to put it on a path to financial stability and sustainability. The reforms will result in making the organization solid and resilient with a new strategic orientation capable of providing a high-quality, demand-led, core services package. This program derived its legitimacy and urgency from three interconnected realities. First, CORAF needed to build its organizational capacity to deliver more efficiently and effectively on its vision, with robust operational and implementation systems. Secondly CORAF needs to more effectively engage emerging actors (e.g., private sector and Agricultural Research for Development (AR&D) foundations) and facilitate, enable and encourage public and private investments in specific value chains. Finally, the program seeks to ensure much needed adoption of improved agricultural technologies and practices by smallholder farmers, CORAF needs to innovatively work with governmental and non-governmental partners to support and advocate for mechanisms that can persuade the private sector to put in place systems that ensure sustained availability, delivery, and adoption of improved seed, fertilizers and other agri-inputs.

The PAIRED program consists of three mutually reinforcing components that provide CORAF with financial, technical and human resources to execute its core mandate. They include **Component 1: Strengthening CORAF's Institutional Capacity, Component 2: Innovative scaling framework for Agri-input Technologies and Innovations established in West Africa, and Component 3: Use of quality agri-inputs in West Africa increased.**

Component 1: Strengthening CORAF's Institutional Capacity - CORAF has developed a Transition Strategy that will lay the foundation for developing the next generation of priorities and programs over the next five years. The Transition Strategy will focus on three priority areas. The first area is "Strategic Planning and Orientation/Governance" which will provide CORAF with its 2nd Strategic Plan and 3rd Operation Plan. The second area is "Financial Sustainability" that will provide CORAF with instruments and capacity for modern and capable financial management. The third area is "Organizational Structure and Efficiency," which will provide CORAF with a cost-effective staffing and networking structure and sound operating procedures.

Component 2: Innovative scaling framework for Agri-input Technologies and Innovations established in West Africa - Building on CORAF's experience in using the Integrated Agricultural Research for Development (IAR4D) approach, the objective of this component will be achieved through carrying out activities in three areas: Upscaling proven approaches, tools and agroecology-based packages of seed, fertilizer and associated best practices; coordinating the effective management of emerging productivity risks; and strengthening the capacity of stakeholders in the scaling of activities.

Component 3: Use of quality agri-inputs in West Africa increased - West Africa continues to face enormous challenges in the production, distribution, and widespread use of certified seed, fertilizer and pesticide in the region. CORAF will capitalize on its convening power in strengthening and coordinating (i) Consortium of Partners, (ii) ASIWA/West Africa Fertilizer Forum and (iii) COASem-CRSU/West Africa Fertilizer Committee to capitalize on a conducive policy enabling environment. The activities of this component will focus on the following: Enhancing Private Sector engagement in the regional agri-inputs industry, Facilitating the implementation of the regional agri-input policies and regulations, and strengthening the capacity of stakeholders in the production and use of agri-inputs.

Components 2 and 3 are expected to deliver in tandem with an increasingly strengthened CORAF secretariat (Component 1) to foster a progressively conducive policy environment for technology generation, dissemination and adoption across the region and beyond. This is in line with the CORAF theory of change wherein enhanced coordination of a strengthened Executive Secretariat will impact positively on technology generation, dissemination and utilization.

For the PAIRED program's implementation plan, and in light of the fragile institutional situation that CORAF was in at the conception of the program, it was agreed that Year 1 of the award should focus on uniquely on Component 1 to ensure that CORAF fully completes its strategic and operational planning process, develops a robust resource mobilization plan, and undertakes the necessary steps for the organization's long-term sustainability objectives. Subsequent to the finalization and adoption of its new Strategic and Operational Plan, CORAF submitted in August 2018 a revised Program Description for PAIRED which led to a modification of the award and approval of the final scope for moving forward on implementation for Components 2 and 3.

Results Framework (RF)

