
Terms of Reference

Assessing competencies and training of agricultural stakeholders in the use of virtual systems and e-delivery for learning and sharing information in the era of COVID-19.

A. BACKGROUND

The Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA) is a sub-regional organization established as a subsidiary entity of SADC and charged with the responsibility of coordinating agricultural research and development in Southern Africa.

CCARDESA offers vast discussion platforms and networks to key agricultural and nutrition stakeholders across the region, including national, civil society and private agricultural research and extension services, academia and policymakers. Understanding the impacts of COVID-19 responses on agriculture and food security and capacity building fit well and support CCARDESA's mission to set the regional research and development agenda, mobilize resources, support capacity development, foster collaboration and provide agricultural information and knowledge in the SADC. CCARDESA can play a key role in collating, curating, presenting and coordinating ongoing studies and potentially research on COVID-19.

Feedback received from stakeholders through the CCARDESA discussion group on the use of ICT-related innovations to maintain business continuity in the wake of COVID-19 showed a general low aptitude on the use of the communication tools delivered through existing devices. CCARDESA has made significant advances in providing access to information, communication and knowledge management tools and products, including materials on agriculture and food security, and agricultural research for development. CCARDESA is facilitating the dissemination of these resources through the CCARDESA website. CCARDESA also has a mobile application on climate-smart agriculture.

The advent of COVID-19 has disrupted face to face interaction of CCARDESA with its key stakeholders including its ICKM national focal point persons with whom they routinely share ways and means of strengthening the information sharing process in the SADC region. This has made CCARDESA explore ways of engaging its stakeholders virtually. However, the realization that most stakeholders may not have knowledge on how to use the existing virtual platforms, let alone know how to access them. This has prompted CCARDESA to engage a Consultant/s to develop virtual training modules that will capacitate its stakeholders with skills on how to use the virtual systems for learning and sharing information in the era of COVID-19. This calls for capacity building of stakeholders to enable them to engage and derive benefit from these tools to plan and implement actions on the ground.

B. PURPOSE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The main objective of this consultancy is to provide stakeholders experiencing a dearth of information because of COVID-19, with skills in the use of virtual systems and communication using e-delivery tools that will place them in a better position to access and engage via virtual communications.

The purpose is to assess competencies and train agricultural stakeholders in the use of virtual systems, e-delivery and decision support tools for learning and sharing information in the era of COVID-19 as well as place them in a better position to access and engage via these tools.

C. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The specific objectives of this assignment are to:

- Develop a database of agricultural stakeholders including agro- and food processing businesses, farmer groups, youth and women groups to be assessed in consultation with the ICKM focal points in the SADC region.
- Document the level of competencies of identified stakeholders and accessibility of virtual communications and e-delivery tools.

- Develop training modules on virtual communication and e-delivery tools (including virtual common platforms).
- Conduct trainings on virtual communications and e-delivery tools for identified stakeholders.

D. SCOPE OF WORK

The Consultant/s will work closely with the 2 technical staff from CCARDESA to accomplish the task. In executing this assignment, the Consultant will undertake the following specific tasks:

- Identify potential stakeholders including agro- and food processing businesses, farmer groups, youth, and women groups.
- Assess the level of access and competencies of the identified stakeholders on virtual communications and e-delivery.
- Develop modules on virtual communications taking into consideration common online platforms which will be validated by CCARDESA staff.
- Conduct virtual trainings on communications and e-delivery for identified stakeholders.
- What about a virtual validation workshop?

E. METHODOLOGY

The Consultant/s is expected to propose a robust methodology for undertaking the assignment which should be detailed in the expression of interest letter and inception report.

Due to restrictions on travel and meetings, the assignment will be done virtually. The consultancy will commence with an inception meeting with the Secretariat at which the details of the assignment will be explained and the consultant will give a response on their understanding of the task.

F. DELIVERABLES

The key deliverables of this assignment are as follows:

- A detailed inception report spelling out the methodology, a workplan showing agreed dates of delivery of specified deliverables, an outline of the level of access and competencies report and the training report.
- A detailed database of potential agricultural stakeholders
- A report on level of access and competencies of stakeholders on virtual communications, e-delivery and decisions support tools.
- Training modules on virtual communications and e-delivery.
- Training Workshop Report.

G. SUPPORT TO THE CONSULTANTS

CCARDESA will support the Consultants during the implementation of the assignment. The Consultants will work very closely with the contact persons at CCARDESA in the delivery of this assignment. The support will include the following:

- Provide background documents that may be required by the consultant.
- Introduce the consultant to ICKM national focal point persons.
- Support consultant in mobilizing stakeholders to participate in the competence level assessment and the training.

H. QUALIFICATIONS AND WORK EXPERIENCE OF THE CONSULTANTS

For the successful implementation of this assignment, we are looking for a consultant/s with the following knowledge and experience:

- Master's degree levels in Digital Communication or Strategic Communication, Education of related field,

- At least ten years of work experience in capacity building around communication technologies and information systems for international or public and private organizations.
- Familiarity with Microsoft teams, zoom, Skype and any related communication tools.
- Experience in developing training modules that support uptake of e-communication skills.
- Experience in working with international organisations.
- Excellent written and oral English communication skills.
- Capability to prepare and deliver materials in Portuguese and French languages for Francophone and Lusophone stakeholders an added advantage.

The Consultant/s is expected to specify other areas of expertise required, as deemed necessary and appropriate to accomplish the task based on his/her professional judgment.

I. DURATION

The period will be for 20 days in March 2021.

J. Duty Station

The Consultant shall be based at their own place of work or home but interact using online means.

K. REPORTING

The consultant will be supervised by the programmes and Grants Manager or delegated officer at the CCARDESA Secretariat.