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ECOWAS COMMISSION

Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food

RAAF

Call for applications

Selection of a Financial Analyst of the Regional Program for the Integration of Agricultural Markets (PRIMA)

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1. Background

The governments of the Republic of Benin and the Republic of Togo have agreed with IFAD to establish a regional framework for reflection of which objective is to boost agricultural production through increased agricultural trade between the two countries. The aim is to intensify intra-community trade within ECOWAS in line with the long-term vision of an African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The Regional Agricultural Market Integration Program (PRIMA) responds to requests from the governments of Benin and Togo for a regional agricultural market integration program in the spirit of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) at the sub-regional and continental levels. Both countries emphasize the need for a more integrated agricultural trade area, particularly to better strengthen their position in key ECOWAS trade corridors and in line with the African Union's 2063 Agenda and NEPAD's sectoral strategy.

The design of PRIMA was based on (i) lessons learned from the implementation of IFAD programs in Benin and Togo; (ii) the political priorities and development strategies of the two countries; (iii) the United Nations' SDGs and IFAD's strategic and political priorities; (iv) the African Union's 2063 Agenda; and (v) information exchanges with other technical and financial partners.

PRIMA was approved by the IFAD Executive Board in December 2020.

2. Brief presentation of the program

PRIMA's overall objective is to stimulate regional agricultural trade to create jobs for women and youth, increase incomes, and improve food security and nutrition for the rural poor.

The development objective is to support the sustainable transformation of family farming in Benin and Togo by improving the performance of sub-regional trade hubs and cross-border transport corridors while promoting rural entrepreneurship for youth and women, and fully integrating smallholders into national and sub-regional markets.

PRIMA will be implemented through two national projects (PRIMA-Benin and PRIMA-Togo) over a six-year period (2022-2028), with a particular focus on cross-border trade corridors shared by the two countries and other ECOWAS countries. The regional dimension of PRIMA will be coordinated by a regional technical assistance unit (UniRAT) housed within the Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF) based in Lomé, Togo. It will mainly support the actions of regional coordination, monitoring-evaluation and knowledge management, market integration, policy dialogue and implementation of citizen engagement.

The program has three technical components and a fourth component for coordination and fiduciary management. The technical components are: i) Market integration and rural entrepreneurship; ii) Transformation of family farming adapted to climate change; iii) Policy dialogue and citizen engagement.

Component 1: Market Integration and Rural Entrepreneurship

Component 1 will support activities aimed at improving the performance of existing logistics and marketing infrastructure that facilitates the flow of agricultural products in subregional and cross-border trade corridors by (i) opening up rehabilitated production areas to regional agricultural markets with consistent and permanent accessibility (rural roads), (ii) rehabilitating and improving the quality of existing semi-wholesale markets, (iii) ensuring sustainable management and maintenance of public economic infrastructure, (iv) strengthening the entrepreneurial capacities of youth, women and FOs involved in this regional initiative.

Component 2: Transformation of family farming adapted to climate change

Component 2 is composed of the following three sub-components: (i) Sustainable management of transboundary watersheds; (ii) Development and sustainable management of small-scale irrigation schemes; (iii) Improvement of family nutritional security and support to the integration of women. The potential areas of intervention will be specified during the formulation mission. This component will develop synergy and complementarity with IFAD's current project portfolio by focusing on agro-entrepreneurship.

Component 3. Political Dialogue and Citizen Engagement

This component aims to strengthen regional economic integration, including the participation of farmers' organizations in ECOWAS decision-making bodies and other regional mechanisms for steering agricultural market strategies at the cross-border level. The program will help alleviate trade policy constraints related to interregional trade, particularly non-customs policies. This approach will help identify regulatory gaps (standards, agricultural product quality).

The objective of this component is to build the capacity of PRIMA's target groups and key partners at all levels to advocate for public policies more conducive to market integration. One set of activities will be related to data collection, studies, and analysis to define a policy dialogue agenda. The other will focus on building the capacity of stakeholders to better monitor and evaluate PRIMA implementation with regular proposals on improvements and lessons learned to be integrated into the policy dialogue (citizen engagement).

The Program will support the integration of more efficient and effective cross-border territorial markets within regional trade corridors leading to a structural transformation of market-oriented family farming to ensure better income for 90,000 vulnerable rural households (516,000 people). Regional trade integration will be achieved through significant investments in the development of a coherent network of economic infrastructure including the rehabilitation and sustainable management of nine cross-border semi-wholesale markets and 18 territorial collection centers and 500 km of rural roads. The beneficiaries will be involved in the management and maintenance. The opening up of the production basins and the growing demand resulting from this regional network of rehabilitated markets will be met by a 30% increase in production (rice, market gardening, associated crops) which will be made possible by the development of climate-resilient agriculture on 16,000 ha of sub-watershed land surrounding 4,000 ha of plains and lowlands. It will also facilitate cross-border natural resource management.

Effective policy dialogue, enriched with timely and inclusive citizen feedback mechanisms, will enable PRIMA to be more strategic, systemic and inclusive. It will do this by (i) filling gaps in existing regional and national policies (i.e., removing physical and non-physical barriers to effective cross-border agricultural trade between the two countries); and (ii) expanding access to other major regional and intra-regional markets for the benefit of small and vulnerable producers, especially youth and women.

From a policy perspective, the program will take a more comprehensive approach necessary for deeper cross-border integration. Indeed, improving infrastructure and facilitating trade procedures are important to boost agricultural trade, as products are perishable and can be quickly affected by inefficient customs or lack of infrastructure. In addition, non-tariff measures will also be needed to boost intra- and extra-regional trade in both countries by harmonizing rules of origin and standards, as well as product standards in line with ECOWAS and WAEMU guidelines. The provision of technical assistance to individual firms (especially small and medium-sized exporters) is essential to help firms comply with regional and international standards. This is vital to improve the quality of exported products and in the production of goods that can be sold on regional and international markets. It is essential to make rules and procedures more transparent on customs websites to reduce the costs of non-tariff barriers and thus allow for easier and more efficient implementation.

The inclusion of youth, women and people with disabilities to benefit from increased business opportunities will involve program activities related to entrepreneurship training and business plan

financing for 540 "agripreneurs" and 1,200 initiatives through rural youth and women's cooperatives.

The program's specific set of pro-nutrition and gender-specific activities, including for women's land rights, gender-sensitive value chains (i.e. moringa, peanut butter) and enterprises (rice processing), as well as the expected increase in income from trade integration areas, will be conducive to improving family food, nutrition and food security of targeted households.

3. Roles/Responsibilities

Reporting to the Head of Administration and Finance of the RAAF, as well as to the Regional Coordinator of PRIMA, the Financial Analyst is responsible for supporting the RAAF in the administrative and financial management of the Program.

The position will be based in Lomé, Togo at the ECOWAS Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF).

In this capacity, he/she will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Support the Project Implementation Units (PIU) in Benin and Togo;
- Monitor and maintain the financial status of the Program;
- Make accounting, analytical and budgetary allocations;
- Reviews supporting documentation for completeness, accuracy and validity in accordance with applicable policies, procedures, rules and regulations;
- Maintain and regularly update accounting documents (journals and books) according to the defined system and keep a computerized accounting by SAP software giving details for each category of expenditure, component, sub-component, beneficiaries and sources of funding (Entering financial and accounting transactions in an exhaustive manner in the respective journals);
- Maintain the accounts of the regional component of the program;
- Produce financial monitoring reports and dashboards for the Program showing disbursements, commitments, invoices received and paid, budget execution, and contract monitoring for each contract or letter of agreement;
- Prepare cash withdrawal requests and all necessary documentation for disbursements in accordance with donor guidelines;
- Ensure that accounts are regularly funded for the timely payment of program expenses;
- Prepare checks and transfer orders for payment of supplier invoices;
- File the accounting records and accounting documents in their respective files;
- Perform monthly bank reconciliations of the Program component accounts and output the cash position;
- Prepare financial statements for audit or other necessary control purposes;
- Be available and provide all necessary information and documentation (in relation to financial and accounting aspects) during audits, controls and during supervision missions;
- Maintain and update the asset register, including required asset changes in the SAP system (disposals, write-offs, master data changes) ;
- Participate in the physical inventory of assets funded by the Program;
- Participate in the budget preparation and follow up on a regular basis in the SAP accounting system;
- Make proposals and contribute to the updating of the procedures manual related to the operations of the accounting department;
- Retrieve and make available relevant supporting documents and information for internal and external audits;
- Ensure the implementation of all other tasks related to the position.

4. Qualifications, experience, skills

Qualifications

- Have a degree (BAC + 4) in Accounting, Management, Finance, Economic Sciences.
- An accounting degree would be an advantage.

Experiences

- Have at least five (5) years of experience in administrative, accounting and financial management in a private or public structure including at least three (03) years in the accounting of development programs or projects financed by the main technical and financial partners (IFAD, IDA/World Bank, AfDB, AFD, EU, Global Health Fund, etc.);
- Experience in a regional development program will be an asset;
- Familiarity with the accounting and financial operations of IFAD-financed projects will be an asset;
- Have at least some proven experiences in budget and accounting consolidation of multiple data from multiple structures.

Skills

- Skills in financial and budgetary management of development projects;
- Proven skills in procurement and contract monitoring: drafting of administrative procurement documents, drafting of contracts and minutes, definition of award criteria, administrative and financial monitoring, participation in tender evaluation committees;
- Good knowledge of international accounting and auditing standards;
- Excellent knowledge of Excel, particularly in the analysis and reprocessing of databases;
- Proficiency in accounting software - knowledge of SAP software would be an asset;
- Good knowledge of the rules and procedures for disbursement of projects financed by major donors, particularly IFAD, is an asset;
- Moral and professional integrity and a great capacity and ability to work in a multidisciplinary team and under pressure;
- Ability to travel in the field;
- Very good command of office automation tools (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.);
- Fluency in French or English.

5. General conditions for the mission

- The consultant will be based in Lomé, Togo, at the headquarters of the Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food;
- The duration of the contract is one year renewable after its satisfactory evaluation and subject to the availability of resources;
- The mission is full-time and de facto excluded from any other engagement incompatible with this condition;
- The Consultant is called upon to refrain from any situation that could put him or her in conflict of interest in the context of the mission assigned to him/her.

6. Selection procedures

6.1 Eligibility and qualifications

The ECOWAS Commission, through the Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF) hereby invites natural persons to express their interest in providing the required services by providing

information demonstrating that they possess the required qualifications and relevant experience to carry out the mission. Qualification and experience criteria better described in the terms of reference.

The attention of interested individual consultants is particularly drawn to Article 117 of the revised ECOWAS Public Procurement Code ("Offences by Candidates, Bidders and Winners"), which provides information on corrupt or fraudulent practices in competition or contract performance. In addition, please refer to the following specific information on conflicts of interest related to this assignment in accordance with Article 118 of the revised ECOWAS Public Procurement Code.

6.2 Application file

The application file consists of:

- A cover letter, including the availability period.
- A recent curriculum vitae detailing professional experience and similar assignments;
- Three professional references (first and last names, current functions, functions at the time of collaboration with the Consultant, email and telephone contacts);
- Copy of the highest degree in Accounting, Management, Finance, Economic Sciences;
- Copy of the certificates of work or service rendered, listed in the curriculum vitae.

6.3 Receipt of applications

- Deadline for receipt of applications: **May 05, 2023 at 17:00 GMT.**
- Submission links: Applications will be submitted by download to Dropbox <https://www.dropbox.com/request/R3VtuYB16h2OKHpL5ZkQ>
- Application format: The application must be in **the form of a single PDF file.**
- RAAF reserves the right not to consider applications that do not meet the above submission requirements.

6.4 Selection method

A consultant will be selected according to the individual consultant selection method described in the ECOWAS "Procurement Regulations". An interview to assess knowledge, skills and abilities may be arranged with the best candidates. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. For equal skills, female candidates will be privileged. RAAF reserves the right not to act on this advice.

6.5 Request for additional information

Interested consultants can obtain further information by writing to the following e-mail addresses: procurement@araa.org cc: ctienon@araa.org, mnakorba@araa.org with the subject "**SCI016- PRIMA-Financial Analyst**".