

COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO

Agence Régionale pour l'Agriculture et l'Alimentation
ARAA



ECOWAS COMMISSION

Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food
RAAF

**Project:
Supporting national rice platforms to deliver on rice import
substitution.**

**Request of expression of interest
Individual Consultant**

Inventory on scalable (small-scale producer relevant) mechanization solutions for the rice sector including financing options.

Reference:

ARAA/BMGF/2023/SCI/036

Funding source

BILL AND MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

Publication date:

August 25th, 2023

Submission deadline:

September 12th, 2023 – 5 PM GMT

1. Background

Increasing population growth, urbanization and changing consumer preferences have continued to widen the gap in supply of rice, and no country in West Africa has been able to achieve rice self-sufficiency despite having the right agro-climatic conditions and water availability to meet regional demand. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission adopted the ECOWAS Rice Offensive in 2014, as a strategic framework to engender a sustainable and sustained revival of rice cultivation in West Africa and to provide support for the National Rice Development Strategies of Member States towards achieving rice self-sufficiency by 2025. To accelerate the implementation of the Rice Offensive, a Regional Rice Action Plan was developed in 2020 to ensure that the region meets the goal. To achieve this goal, ECOWAS, together with several development partners, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, BMZ-GIZ, AfricaRice, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), FCDO, AGRA, JICA/CARD, the World Bank, and others, established the ECOWAS Rice Observatory" (ERO). The aim of ERO is to achieve synergy and better coordinate rice sub-sector-related programs, public and private investments, and provide inputs for policy harmonization for key decision making. At the national level, ERO is establishing national rice platforms comprised primarily of private sector stakeholders across the value chain, with additional representation from research, government, and civil society to coordinate country-specific investments and policies.

2. Context

Through an online survey and a subsequent virtual workshop organized by the ECOWAS Commission, on key country-specific issues and opportunities as well as regional priorities, the rice sector stakeholders of the member states, regional and international actors, provided insights on key priorities to catalyze the development of the rice sector. The top 3 constraints facing the rice industry across all the countries surveyed were **access to finance, competition from imported rice, and access to mechanization. Despite** numerous investments in the rice sector across West Africa, the lack of coordination and efficient allocation according to priorities.

ERO is made up of four technical committees that provide sound insight and make recommendations to the board based on strategic priorities identified within the rice sector at both the national and regional levels, and thereby facilitate specific research studies to better influence decisions that contributes to the development of the region's rice sector. The ERO technical committee on finance, mechanization and donor alignment have therefore prioritized the assessment of existing mechanization solutions that are sustainable for small scale producers in the rice sector.

In recent times, efforts have been made on the issues of mechanization of smallholder agriculture and the knowledge base has improved considerably. The overall purpose of this study is therefore to draw specific lessons and recommendations for an approved rice sector rice sector mechanization in the ECOWAS region. The study will add real value and not duplicate what is already known.

3. Objectives

This assignment aims at carrying out desk and field research of accessible mechanization solutions for actors in the rice sector. The specific objectives are as follows:

- Develop a comprehensive overview of existing mechanization equipment, internationally, fabricators and service providers in the ECOWAS region.

- Identify and recommend mechanisms for financing equipment's including the business options offered by equipment exporting countries.
- Identify and suggest business models that local equipment companies (fabricators) can use to increase smallholder farmers, associations, and agribusinesses access to their services.
- Identify gaps in technology, vendors, and local manufacturing capacity. Develop innovative options for addressing these gaps.

4. Activities Scope

The contractor must utilize available literature and ensure that the job is done in stages. Small-scale producers, their access to inputs, markets, and mechanization are all priorities. The following services are to be provided:

- Identification of scalable mechanization innovations for small scale rice farmers and small and medium processors in West Africa. From rice field **preparation, weeding, harvesting, and processing of paddy**. (To be used by small scale producers (1-5 hectares) and other actors along the value chain)
- Create a catalogue reporting a comparative market analysis on the identified equipment, stating the price, capacity, requirements, user experience, after sales services and other relevant criteria.
- Highlight offerings/services, operating regions, and market availability of services by the supplier (Import conditions, financing mechanisms for export) and current economic challenges.
- Document sustainable business models for mechanization services provision in the rice sector (mechanization as a service).
- Identify appropriate and affordable financing mechanisms in the ECOWAS region for mechanized rice production and processing. (Leasing, rent to own, risk sharing models)
- Develop an investable concept note that aims to enhance availability and financing of mechanized solutions for the rice sector at all levels along the value chain.

5. Methodology

The assignment plan will be conducted as follows:

Strategy: The bidder is required to consider the tasks to be performed with reference to the objectives of the services put out to tender. Following this, the bidder presents and justifies the strategy with which it intends to provide the services for which it is responsible.

The assignment plan is to be developed taking into account the Terms of Reference (ToRs) that recognizes the growing body of knowledge on smallholder mechanization in Africa. The methodology adopted should update the preliminary challenges outlined within the ToRs specifying the specific reviewed issues, questions, methods of data collection and analysis that will be undertaken. It should also allow for wide consultation with all interested partners and stakeholders.

The assignment plan should include:

- a) A desk review of all relevant documentation, including (but not limited to):
 - About ERO document.
 - Case studies.
 - Technical Reports

b) Interviews and discussions with value chain actors, service providers, and decision makers to key rice stakeholders involved in the project should be carried out in a participatory manner. A list of key partners and stakeholders should be identified.

c) Electronic interviews through teleconference or written comments e.g. email; where partners cannot be reached.

6. Time Schedule, Reporting and Communication

Based on the scope of the work plan development, it is estimated 40 working days for the completion of this assignment.

The Timeframe (will cover the following aspects but will not be limited to):

No.	Description	Number of days
1.	Inception document	2 days
2.	Desk review of existing documents and equipment providers	5 days
3.	Interviews with target group	21 days
4.	Writing the 1st draft of 'Report and Concept note'	5 days
5.	Debriefing with ERO – Secretariat and TC Finance, Mechanization, Partner donor, Donor Alignment	2 day
6.	Drafting final 'Report and Concept note'	6 days
Total number of days		40 days

This schedule includes travels to meet some partners and stakeholders in the region if required and this will be in agreement with the consultant.

7. Deliverables

- An investable concept notes that aims to enhance availability and financing of mechanized solutions for the rice sector at all levels along the value chain.
- Provide final report and include recommendation of sustainable business models for mechanization services provision in the rice sector (mechanization as a service).
- A comprehensive final report in English and French (that put into consideration all the activities highlighted in the scope)
- PPT deck for public presentations on the findings and concept note

8. Evaluation of the consultant - qualification and experience

This Consultancy will be carried out by an independent regional consultant with experience and exposure to development projects, mechanization and agricultural value chain financing in the West African region.

The consultant must meet the following standards:

- Education/training: University qualification (M.Sc.) in Agricultural Economics, International Trade, or related fields.
- Solid knowledge and experience on the rice value chain and agricultural value chain mechanization and financing issues for regional development.
- A good overview regarding relevant actors and partners within the rice agricultural policy, trade/market, and financial negotiations in the ECOWAS region.
- Good knowledge of the West African region.

- Solid experience of analyzing project planning, management, and development of comparable projects.
- Profound knowledge concerning cost-efficiency and budget related to projects.
- Excellent writing skills and ability to elaborate evidence-based and contextually anchored activities towards the future.
- Full professional proficiency in English and/or French.

9. Selection process

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.

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.

A consultant will be selected according to the individual consultant selection method described in the ECOWAS "Procurement Regulations". The main following criteria will be used to evaluate the candidates:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| • Conceptual note | 10 points |
| • Consultant qualification: | 90 points |
| • Total | 100 points |

10. Requirements on the format of the application

The application must include the following documents:

- **Document 1. Application letter**
- **Document 2. Conceptual note:** The structure of the conceptual must correspond to the structure of the ToRs. In particular, the detailed structure of the organizational concept. It must be legible (font size 11 or larger) and clearly formulated. The concept note shall not exceed 20 pages (excluding CVs).
- **Document 3. CV:** The CVs of the consultant in accordance with qualification and experience sector of the ToRs must be submitted. The CVs must clearly show the position and job the proposed person held in the reference project and for how long.

11. Application submission

Applications must be submitted no later than: September 12th, 2023 – 5 PM GMT, through the Dropbox file request: <https://www.dropbox.com/request/RWlzzZoB2yEMQrM9ZUHQ>

All the documents must be included in **single PDF** file named as follows: "SCI036-Candidate Name."

12. 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, badebowale@ecowas.int with the subject "SCI036- ERO-Scalable Financing solutions ".