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Agence Régionale pour l'Agriculture et l'Alimentation

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ECOWAS COMMISSION

Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Monitoring and Evaluation of the Regional Food Security Reserve's interventions
in 2021**

August 2021

1 Background and Rationale

Since 2012, ECOWAS has had a regional food security strategy based on the complementarity of three lines of defence in the face of food and nutrition crises: local storage managed by local communities or producers' organisations, national security stocks managed by the States and, finally, the Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR) created by the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government in 2013.

With the support of the European Union, this strategy has been deployed since 2016, at all three levels. The RFSR consists of a physical stock of cereals of nearly 40,000 tonnes and a financial reserve that is currently being built. It has governance bodies (management committee, detailed procedures) and its technical management is carried out by a dedicated division within the Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food.

Since its creation, the RFSR has intervened on 10 occasions in response to requests from countries facing major food and nutrition crises and which met the Reserve's eligibility criteria.

In order to preserve its capital, the RFSR only intervenes subject to the full replenishment of the food mobilised, and this via three possible modalities: (i) reconstitution "grain for grain" by the beneficiary state; (ii) payment of the intervention by a third party; (iii) regional solidarity, via the ECOWAS Commission's budget (Humanitarian Emergency Fund in particular).

The principle of intervention of the RFSR is to support and contribute to the National Response Plan, and to rely on the national food and nutrition crisis management system, the targeting and distribution methods, and the monitoring and evaluation mechanism adopted by the country facing a crisis.

However, this principle and approach are insufficient to ensure detailed monitoring of the RFSR interventions and to measure their effects and impacts on the food and nutrition situation of vulnerable populations.

In 2020, a methodology for monitoring and evaluating the RFSR interventions was developed, but could not be tested, partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic measures.

In 2021, the region is again facing a severe crisis due to a combination of factors: insecurity, health crisis, climatic shocks, weak and vulnerable livelihoods for a significant proportion of households, etc.

Several countries have requested the mobilisation of the RFSR to help manage the food and nutrition crisis during the lean season. The Executive Board of the Reserve Management Committee decided on 03 August 2021 to allocate 7,372 tonnes of cereals to Mali and 7,599 tonnes to Niger. These interventions will be deployed in August 2021.

The table below shows all technical interventions and rotations from 2017 to 2021.

Country	Quantity (Tonnes) per year					Total (Tonnes)
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Interventions						
Burkina Faso	-	4 303	-	954		5 257
Mali	-		2 856	793	7 372	11 021
Niger	-	6 528	-	678	7 599	14 805
Nigeria	1 130		5 000	3 999		10 129
S/total	1 130	10 831	7 856	6 424		41 212
Technical rotation						
Ghana	'	2 750	-	-		-
Total	1 130	13 581	7 856	6 424		43 962

At the end of 2020, several interventions had been decided upon with funding from the ECOWAS Humanitarian Emergency Fund and the European Commission. In this regard, Niger has benefited from aid in the form of nutritional products targeted at combating child malnutrition (205 tonnes). These products will be distributed as part of Niger's strategy in this area from September 2021.

RFSR interventions decided by the Management Committee or its Executive Board are subject to a memorandum of understanding between the ECOWAS Commission and the beneficiary Member State. This memorandum specifies the commitments of both parties, in particular with regard to the modalities of destocking and quality control of foodstuffs, use of foodstuffs, monitoring of distributions and post-distribution monitoring, reconstitution of the stock, visibility of ECOWAS and its technical and financial partners concerned.

The present terms of reference concern the monitoring and evaluation of the RFSR interventions, in support of the countries' National Response Plans between 2017 and 2021.

2 Objectives of the study and expected results

The study has four objectives:

- Monitor and evaluate in real-time the implementation and effects of the intervention (in the form of cereals and nutritional products) of the Regional Food Security Reserve in Niger and Mali, based on the methodology and tools developed by ECOWAS for the 2021 interventions;
- Identify specific strengths and challenges related to the implementation of RFSR 's support to the National Response Plan in 2018, 2020 and 2021;
- Review the 10 interventions (2017-2021) with a focus on MoU implementation, challenges faced by countries, the importance of RFSR intervention in NRPs, targeting, funding for intervention implementation (transport, distribution, etc.), visibility/communication, monitoring and evaluation mechanism implemented by countries, etc.
- Formulate proposals for improving the methodology for monitoring and evaluating RFSR interventions.

3 The main evaluation questions are:

- What is the methodology used to develop the food and nutrition distribution plan by the National Facility?
- Is the potential support of the RFSR integrated at the design stage of the NRP?
- Does the National Crisis Management Mechanism implement the Response Plan directly or does it rely on other structures or operators? Which ones and under what contractual and operational arrangements?
- What is the chosen distribution method (free distribution, sales at moderate prices)?
- How are the costs of delivery, food distribution, monitoring and evaluation of RFSR interventions covered?
- Does the country have a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating crisis response interventions? Is this mechanism implemented systematically or on an ad hoc basis? Is it implemented as soon as the NRP is launched or afterwards (ex-post evaluation)?
- What is the national capacity to monitor and evaluate the NRP as a whole and the RFSR 's contribution to the NRP through the national mechanism in particular?
- What is the method of targeting beneficiary populations, at the level of the NRP as a whole, at the level of the RFSR 's contribution in particular?
- What is the contribution of RFSR interventions to the overall needs of vulnerable populations in general and the specific needs of the populations benefiting from R RFSR interventions?
- What are the direct effects on the beneficiary populations (preservation of livelihoods, mobilised survival strategies, satisfaction of food and nutritional needs in particular) and the indirect effects on non-beneficiary populations?
- What is the adequacy between the products (cereals and nutritional products) mobilised by the RFSR and the food and nutritional needs of the different categories of targeted populations (quantitative and qualitative approach/dietary diversity, nutritional balance)?
- How many households/persons/children have benefited from RFSR interventions? What is the coverage rate of the needs (daily, over the whole crisis phase) of these different categories of the population?
- How are the RFSR 's supports perceived and considered by the main partners of the national crisis management system (strengths, limitations)?
- How is specific visibility and communication about RFSR interventions ensured?
- What were the difficulties in reconstituting grain for grain?

These evaluation questions can be completed based on the consultant's proposal or at the evaluation kick-off meeting.

4 Deliverables

The output will be an evaluation report addressing the four objectives, findings and recommendations, with an executive summary. The report will be provided in draft form to the RAAF, which will forward it to the country authorities for analysis and comment. The RAAF will have three weeks to deliver a synthesis of the stakeholders' comments. The consultant will take the comments into account and provide the final report with all the data collected.

5 Working methodology

The contractor will be an individual consultant with the support of national consultants in the five countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Ghana). The service is implemented in the framework of a partnership between ECOWAS and the beneficiary states. Consequently, it is based on a permanent collaboration between the WARDA and ECOWAS (Representative, Focal Point), the national food storage and crisis management structures (SONAGESS, SE/CNSA, CONASUR, OPVN, DNP-GCA, FRSD, NEMA, OPAM, CSA, NAFCO and the consultant.

The methodology should be based on the guidelines of the study on the monitoring and evaluation of RFSR interventions (available on request from dot@araa.org or abilgo@araa.org).

In practice, it will be based mainly on the following elements:

- Interviews with key stakeholders: SONAGESS, SE/CNSA, CONASUR, OPVN, DNP-GCA, FRSD, NEMA, OPAM, CSA, NAFCO, decentralised authorities and organisations (POs, NGOs, etc.) in the areas surveyed, relevant ministries, technical and financial partners who are members of the national mechanism (framework contract), main actors of the humanitarian community (WFP, FAO, UNICEF, ECHO, NGOs, etc.), CRA/CILSS, LASDEL, etc;
- Surveys in two intervention zones with committees in charge of managing the interventions and with a representative panel of the beneficiary and non-beneficiary households (individual interviews and focus groups);
- Discussion and validation of the main results with stakeholders at the national and regional level;
- Presentation of the results to the RFSR Management Committee or Executive Board.

Given the time required to replenish the stocks made available, the assessment of possible difficulties in implementing the commitments of the Memorandum of Understanding will be based on the analysis of all interventions.

6 Organisation and work plan

The challenge is to ensure the monitoring and evaluation of interventions along the entire continuum from the provision of products to the manifestation of effects on the target populations.

- Week 1: ECOWAS-Beneficiary State-Consultant consultation on the organisation of monitoring and evaluation (videoconference); amendments and validation of the methodology (meeting to launch the service);
- Week 2: Organisation of monitoring and evaluation; information and contacts with stakeholders;
- Weeks 3 to 6: Interviews and field surveys;
- Week 8: Submission of draft report;
- Week 11: Receiving feedback
- Week 13: submission of the final report.

7 Competencies

The consultant should have a very good knowledge of (i) the ECOWAS regional storage strategy and more generally the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP); (ii) the Regional Food Security Reserve; (iii) national food and nutrition crisis prevention and management mechanisms.

He/she should have at least 7 years of experience in the field of food storage and crisis management.

He/she should have higher education (at least 5 years of higher education) in economics, rural economics, rural sociology, nutrition, or any other discipline related to the theme.

8 Reports

The deliverables - provisional and final - must be submitted to the Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF) located at Boulevard de la Paix, 83 rue Pâturage, Lomé (Togo) to the Executive Director in electronic form

at the following address: araa@araa.org, with a copy to the Head of the Technical Operations Division of the RAAF: abilgo@araa.org, and to the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer of the RAAF: rguissou@araa.org, according to the implementation schedule agreed upon at the study launch meeting.

9 Content of the offers

Interested consultants should provide:

- A technical bid including an understanding of the terms of reference, comments on the terms of reference, methodology and timetable, CV including main references relevant to the service.