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Project to Support the Regional Food Security Storage Strategy in West Africa - Stock II

Terms of Reference

For the selection of a Senior Technical Expert in Pastoralism within the framework of the Project to Support the Regional Food Security Storage Strategy in West Africa



1. Context and justification

Economic situation of the region

The population of West Africa is estimated at 435.2 million in 2023. According to estimates, 32.47% of this population lives on less than USD 2.15 per day in 2023, which represents 141.32 million people living in extreme poverty in the region, (ECA, 2023a, p.24).

The West African economy remains dominated by the primary sector, particularly agriculture, which accounts for 22.2 percent of GDP (ECA, 2023b, p. 14). Furthermore, agriculture provided between 22 and 73 percent of employment in each country of the region in 2021 (FAO, 2023). However, the Sahel and West Africa region repeatedly faces food and nutrition crises affecting a significant portion of its population.

Food and nutrition situation in the ECOWAS and CILSS area

Since the first Harmonized Framework (HF) analyses in 2014, the number of people facing high levels of acute food and nutrition insecurity in the region has been steadily increasing, with the exception of 2018. Between 2020 and 2024, the number more than doubled, rising from approximately 22.1 million to 49.7 million (FSIN, 2024, p. 16). The same Harmonized Framework analyses indicate that by November 2025, out of a total of 384 million people analyzed, approximately 36.9 million people, excluding the results from Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, and Niger, are food insecure and require immediate food and nutrition assistance. Without appropriate measures, an additional 10.7 million people could fall into acute food and nutrition insecurity by the lean season of June to August 2026. While the overall prevalence remains relatively stable, at around 9% in the current situation and 2% in the projected situation, it is important to note that 113 million people, or 35% of the analyzed population, are experiencing food insecurity. Countries with at least 10% of their population experiencing food insecurity include Guinea with 1.5 million people (11.9% of the analyzed population), Sierra Leone with 998,608 people (11%), Chad with 1.9 million people (10.7%), and Nigeria with 27.2 million people (12.5% of the analyzed population) (RPCA, Dec 2025).

Data from the Harmonized Framework analyses also highlight a particularly worrying situation for displaced populations, notably in Chad, where nearly 1.6 million people have fled the Sudanese crisis. Among them, 356,000 are already in Phase 3 or worse, a figure that could reach 456,000 during the lean season without adequate interventions. It should be noted that this analysis does not include Burkina Faso, Liberia, and Togo.

The pastoral situation

Pastoralism plays a central role in the livelihoods of millions of people in West Africa and the Sahel. However, the deteriorating security situation observed in recent years, along with increasing constraints affecting transhumance movements in several areas of the region, has profoundly altered the context of pastoral interventions. These developments make it more difficult for herders to access the resources necessary to maintain their herds and reinforce the need for appropriate mechanisms to prevent and respond to pastoral emergencies.

Furthermore, analyses and studies conducted by ECOWAS and ARAA over several years have shown that difficulties in accessing livestock feed constitute one of the main factors contributing to the vulnerability of livestock systems during crises. While some coastal countries have production capacities that could help meet the region's needs, trade remains limited by logistical, commercial, and organizational constraints that reduce the availability of livestock feed in the most vulnerable areas.

Finally, the effectiveness of responses to pastoral crises depends heavily on the quality of available information. To intervene appropriately, it is essential to have reliable data that allows for an assessment of the evolving pastoral situation, the identification of affected areas and populations, and the timely initiation of interventions. Strengthening information and decision-support mechanisms thus appears to be a crucial condition for improving the responsiveness and effectiveness of pastoral emergency response systems in the region.

The main factors of the food crisis

The intensification of conflict and insecurity, the impact of economic shocks, and the effects of extreme weather events continue to fuel acute food insecurity. These interdependent factors

exacerbate the fragility of food systems, disrupt the socioeconomic fabric, and lead to regional population displacements.

- Conflict and insecurity have caused massive internal and cross-border displacement, disrupted traditional agricultural and pastoral practices, as well as the functioning of markets and trade, and hampered the distribution of humanitarian aid. This situation reveals the interconnected nature of food and nutrition crises in these regions (CILSS, March 2024). The situation has led to a gradual increase in regional displacement levels, with 8.4 million forcibly displaced persons in 16 countries in the first quarter of 2024 (UNHCR, 2024; IOM, 2023 and 2024).
- Economic shocks: The economic inability of poor households to access food resulted from a decline in purchasing power, exacerbated by high inflation and weakened economic activity. These economic challenges were compounded by the ongoing effects of COVID-19 and economic and political sanctions in some countries of the region. This led to market disruptions, resulting in shortages of goods, adding inflationary pressure on food prices and the cost of humanitarian assistance, and restricting the mobility of people and pastoral transhumance (CILSS, March 2024).
- Extreme weather events: Every year, climate crises affect populations, with episodes of severe flooding, storms, droughts, fires, epidemics, and diseases. Floods and cumulative rainfall deficits have affected crops in some countries, notably Niger, Nigeria, and in Chad. These extreme climatic phenomena have also affected the availability of pastoral resources, leading to an early start to the pastoral lean season.

National and regional initiatives to address food and nutrition crises

To address food crises, ECOWAS member states, including Chad and Mauritania, regional organizations, and their technical and financial partners have established various response and solidarity mechanisms. Each year, member states develop National Response Plans (NRPs) to ensure access to food, the treatment of malnutrition, and support for the livelihoods of vulnerable populations. However, their implementation remains limited by insufficient resources. The 2025 NRP review, presented at the regional consultation in Dakar (November 17–18, 2025), indicates that 177.9 billion CFA francs have been mobilized, covering only 34% of the needs and revealing a 66% funding gap. Resources have been allocated as follows: 56% for food, 43% for nutrition and livelihoods, and less than 1% for coordination.

Faced with these constraints, countries with at least one area in Phase 3 or higher of the Harmonized Framework can mobilize regional solidarity mechanisms, notably the Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR). A true pillar of the regional response, the RFSR has enabled the mobilization of over 65,037 tonnes of cereals since 2017. In 2025, its total stock is estimated at 69,459 tonnes, distributed among seven storage countries: Niger, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Ghana, and Sierra Leone. ECOWAS continued its interventions in 2025 with the delivery of 500 tonnes to Mali and Sierra Leone, the distribution of 230 tonnes of Supercereals+ to Nigeria, and preparations for the provision of approximately 400 tonnes of nutritional products to Chad, Togo, and Sierra Leone. These efforts, supported by the contribution of the WAEMU (5,000 tonnes) and the activities of setting up the risk financing mechanism, aim to consolidate the physical and financial reserve for more consistent and diversified, faster and more sustainable responses.

Looking ahead, ECOWAS plans to strengthen national responses, combat malnutrition and accelerate the operationalization of the financial reserve, in order to improve regional responsiveness and coordination in the face of food crises.

2. Brief presentation of the Program

Since 2012, ECOWAS has implemented a regional food security storage strategy. This strategy is part of the regional agricultural policy, ECOWAP. It aims to provide a sovereign response to food, nutritional, and livestock crises in the 17 countries of the ECOWAS-WAEMU and CILSS region. It is based on three complementary storage levels: local stocks managed by producer organizations, national security stocks managed by the member states, and finally, the Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR), established in 2013 by the Heads of State and Government.

The Regional Food Security and Agriculture Scheme (RFAS) has a dedicated governance mechanism and its operation is based on precise rules and a clear regulatory framework. The management of this scheme involves the three regional institutions (ECOWAS, CILSS, and WAEMU), all member states, as well as agricultural and livestock producer organizations, civil society, and national storage organizations. Technical management is provided by the Regional

Agency for Agriculture and Food. Funding is provided by the ECOWAS Commission and its partners.

Between 2016 and 2021, the first phase of operationalizing the storage strategy was implemented with financial support from ECOWAS and the European Union, as well as technical assistance from the AFD, AECID, and the AGRHYMET/CILSS Regional Centre. Building on the achievements and lessons learned from this phase, the region has embarked on designing a new phase of deployment for this strategy, in order to address the ongoing deterioration of the food and nutrition situation in the region.

Since 2022, the combination of resources from ECOWAS, WAEMU, AFD, AECID and the World Bank has made it possible to consolidate the three storage lines (local, national and regional) and to engage in an ambitious process of revising the Regional Food Security Storage Strategy based on the lessons of the first phase but also to take into account new factors (increase in the number of people in food insecurity, geographical extension of the affected areas, geopolitical reconfiguration of the region, etc.).

The recurrence of pastoral crises, marked by fodder shortages, the degradation of natural resources, and rising livestock feed prices, has highlighted the need to broaden the system by integrating pastoral resilience, fodder resource management, and animal feed security, in addition to food stocks intended for the population. This evolution aims to strengthen the prevention of and response to pastoral crises through appropriate mechanisms, justifying the use of specialized expertise to support the integration of these issues into the Reserve's interventions.

Today, the RRSA has a stockpile of nearly 70,000 tons of grain. It has intervened 26 times, providing over 65,000 tons of aid to support seven countries facing severe food crises. It has also mobilized nutritional products to address malnutrition among children, pregnant women, and breastfeeding mothers.

A new financing agreement for €16 million has been signed between ECOWAS and the European Union for the period 2026-2029. This financing is implemented by ARAA through two delegation agreements with AFD on the one hand, and AECID on the other.

The overall objective of the action is to improve food and nutritional security for populations in West Africa and the Sahel, and the resilience and sustainability of food systems.

This general objective is broken down into two specific objectives:

- Specific objective 1: The integrated and coordinated implementation of the ECOWAS regional storage strategy is improved.
- Specific objective 2: The regional governance of food and nutrition security of actors of the Sahel and West Africa Club is strengthened, including the link between prevention and crisis management.

The purpose of these Terms of Reference is to specify the profile, missions, roles and responsibilities of the Principal Technical Expert in Pastoralism of the Project to Support the Regional Strategy for Food Security Storage in West Africa – AECID component.

The position is based in Lomé (Togo) and is under the supervision of the Regional Coordinator and the Head of Division of the Regional Food Security Reserve.

3. Job Description

3.1. Roles/Responsibilities

He/She will be responsible for:

The Senior Technical Expert in Pastoralism will be responsible for:

A. Technical support for the implementation of project activities

- Ensure the planning and technical execution of the activities of the AECID component of the Project to Support the Regional Strategy for Food Security Storage in West Africa;
- Ensure the preparation of technical documents and reports for the project in the areas of pastoralism and animal feed and nutrition;
- To ensure the implementation and operationalization of RRSA intervention mechanisms in response to pastoral crises linked to fodder deficit;
- To contribute to improving the functioning of the livestock feed market by supporting relevant stakeholders and the implementation of appropriate intervention mechanisms.
- Support the strengthening of the national beneficiary targeting mechanism;

- Supporting the project coordinator in strengthening the integration of the RRSA with school feeding programs,
- Supervise project activities related to strengthening social safety nets for food security;
- Ensure the implementation and synergy/complementarity of activities in common with the other components of the project and other ECOWAS projects operating in the same field;
- Contribute to the timely production of periodic project execution reports as well as reports presented at the Technical Monitoring Committee and the Steering Committee of ECOWAP projects and programs;
- Contribute to the successful execution of any external monitoring and external evaluation mission commissioned by the European Union, AFD, AECID and/or ECOWAS within the framework of the project;
- Ensure the systematic and continuous archiving of the Program's files;

B. Other tasks

- To provide technical support to all ARAA and ECOWAS activities in the context of pastoralism and animal feed;
- Support the planning and operationalization teams of the ECOWAP project steering committees and the ECOWAP project monitoring technical committees.
- Supporting the ARAA teams in the preparation of quarterly and annual reports and the Economic Affairs and Agriculture Department of the ECOWAS Commission.
- Provide technical support and the necessary information to ARAA's cross-cutting services (monitoring and evaluation, communication, administration, etc.) to ensure effective management of the institution.
- Perform all other tasks related to achieving the Project's objectives.

3.2. Qualifications, experience, skills

A. Academic qualifications

- Bac+5 degree (Master or Engineering) in animal production, zootechnics, pastoralism, veterinary medicine, agronomy or equivalent;
- Additional training in the field of animal food and nutrition is an asset;

B. Required professional experience

The candidate must provide evidence of proven experience, presented in their detailed CV and supported by certificates:

a) General Experience

- Have experience in technical capacity building and organizational strengthening in the animal feed and/or pastoralism sector;
- Have proven experience in supporting private sector actors in their structuring and the creation of business opportunities;
- Have experience in a project funded by the European Union or another multilateral donor (USAID, World Bank, IFAD, AfDB, etc.);
- Having proven experience in collaborating with sub-regional institutions (ECOWAS, WAEMU, CILSS) is an asset.

b) Specific experience:

- Have at least 10 years of professional experience in the design and implementation of programs and projects related to animal feed, pastoralism, humanitarian response or natural resource management;
- To have implemented at least one project or program in the field of animal food and nutrition;
- Having a good understanding of regional institutional dynamics related to the implementation of projects and programs, as well as key players in the field of pastoralism and animal feed in the sub-region;
- Have good experience in collaborating with livestock, pastoralist and agro-pastoral organizations in the sub-region;

- Having experience in the implementation of resilience projects and programs, including food security social safety nets, would be an asset.

c) Additional skills

- Leadership, management and communication: Possess strong leadership and multidisciplinary team management skills, as well as excellent written and oral communication skills, including representing ARAA in high-level bodies.
- Ability to conduct strategic analyses and formulate technical recommendations.
- Institutional integration, tools and mobility: Having an understanding of the organizational structure of ECOWAS and regional institutional mechanisms for better integration of the project team, with good computer skills, and availability for frequent travel within the ECOWAS area and beyond.

d) Language skills

- Ability to express oneself perfectly in writing and orally in at least one of the three official languages of ECOWAS and knowledge of a second language would be an asset.

4. General conditions for the position

4.1. Location, duration of the mission

- The staff will be based in Lomé, Togo, at the ECOWAS Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (ARAA);
- The mission will last for the entire duration of the Project after a six-month probationary period. However, the consultant's contract will be signed for renewable 12-month periods, subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory performance, and the Project's needs, over the project's duration (4 years).
- The position is full-time

4.2. Other conditions

- The Consultant must adhere to the objectives and values promoted by ECOWAS;
- The Consultant must work in accordance with the principles and guidelines established within ARAA;
- The Consultant is required to refrain from any situation which could put him/her in conflict of interest within the framework of the mission which would be assigned to him/her.