

Terms of Reference for a Consultancy to conduct a Gap Assessment on Early Warning Systems in the SADC region

1) BACKGROUND

The Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA) is a subsidiary organisation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). It was established in 2011 and started its full operations in 2013. CCARDESA has a mandate of coordinating agricultural research and development and contributing to better food security and livelihoods in the region. In the SADC region, climate change and other related factors have been significantly affecting agricultural productivity with negative implications on food security, mainly among smallholder farmers. As part of the response, CCARDESA received a grant from the World Bank to coordinate the regional implementation of the Food Systems Resilience Programme (FSRP). The FSRP overall Programme Development Objective (PDO) is to increase the resilience of food systems and preparedness against food insecurity in the participating countries.

The FSRP is being developed in phases, with the first phase of 6-year duration focusing on Madagascar in Southern Africa, Ethiopia in East Africa. CCARDESA is coordinating the regional FSRP implementation at SADC level whereas Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is focusing on East Africa.

The FSRP focuses on building resilience of food systems of countries and regions by using smart approaches that circumvent the effects of climate change on agriculture. The programme is to deal with and resolve the underlying structural challenges of food insecurity and reduce beneficiaries' sensitivity to unpredictable climate events, crises, and conflicts.

Overall, under FSRP, CCARDESA is expected to promote regional information and knowledge systems for adaptation planning and resilience building by strengthening capacities to implement early warning systems that provide timely climate services and support the preparation and dissemination of information to farmers. The articulation of the value addition should be an apparent pillar of this intervention.

2) JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GAP ASSESSMENT

Southern Africa is home to over 380 million people, many of whom are extremely poor and face significant challenges accessing adequate, safe, and nutritious food daily. The region's food systems are generally beset by low levels of agricultural productivity, a severely degraded and stressed natural resource base, pronounced gender

inequities in food and resource access, and relatively low levels of food trade and regional market integration. The Eastern and Southern Africa region is also among the regions most affected by fragility, conflict and violence (FCV) as well as the effects of climate change. And food system shocks—including ones precipitated by extreme weather, pest and disease outbreaks, political and market instability, and conflict—are generally becoming more frequent and severe, putting more people at risk of being affected by both chronic and acute forms of food insecurity. Shocks to global food and energy systems have the potential to impact food systems in the entire Africa region. Together, the increasing weight of food system shocks in the region and the interdependent nature of the above challenges underscore the need to enhance regional food systems' resilience to recover from setbacks.

Well-functioning and widely adopted information systems can play an important role in helping equip agricultural producers, supply chain actors and service providers for effective climate risk management. The agricultural information systems will enhance producers' and other decision-makers' preparedness by equipping them to adapt not only to seasonal variability in weather, but also to longer-term trends in climate change. Information systems also allow policymakers to monitor climate trends and assess the current state of rural areas and farming, livelihood sources, where people are vulnerable to or have been affected by different kinds of shocks and provide support accordingly. These circumstances change over time along with shifting weather patterns, market and economic dynamics, or migration patterns and need to be monitored continuously for authorities to respond swiftly.

Agricultural early warnings systems exist at national, regional and continental levels supported by partners such Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United States Agency for International Development under the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), among others. Despite, the existence of agricultural early warning systems, famers are still vulnerable to climate induced disasters. CCARDESA intends to strengthen the existing early warning system through the FSRP programme. The first step towards this initiative is to undertake a Capacity Gap Assessment of national and regional agricultural early warning systems in providing adequate and reliable information to end users.

3) OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The overall objective of the consultancy is to conduct an assessment of the current status of agricultural early warning systems at both national and regional levels and provide recommendations to enhance their capacities to provide adequate, reliable and timely information for decision making in the wake of increased climate related disasters in the region.

4) SCOPE OF THE ASSIGNMENT AND SPECIFIC TASKS

4.1 Scope of the Assignment

The scope of this assignment will cover the following:

- i. Situational and capacity gap analysis of the agricultural early warning systems for all 16 SADC Member States:
 - a. Is there a national legal framework in place such as an Act of parliament or Policy that enacts or recognizes the agriculture / food security early warning system?
 - b. What are the current institutional arrangements?
 - c. Are these institutional arrangements functional? If not, what are the present gaps and challenges of these arrangements?
 - d. If known, who are the users of the agriculture / FS early warning systems? Is there a feedback mechanism in place through which the users interact with the system? Are the views of the users considered in product improvement?
 - e. Elaborate on the products and services produced by the system and their effectiveness in policy and decision making.
 - f. Is the agric / FS early warning system part of a group of institutions interdependent of each other? Are there coordination mechanisms in place? Is there a co-production platform in place to produce products and services (advisory information)?
- ii. Identification of all national and international partners supporting the agricultural early warning systems at national levels
- iii. Documentation of agricultural/food security early warning systems available at the regional (SADC) level;
 - a. Who are the producers of such early warning information at regional level? What products and services do they produce?
 - b. Do these producers consider information coming from the national agric / FS early warning systems in their production of the regional early warning service?
 - c. Who are the users of these regional early warning service? Do they share their feedback into the system in an effort to improve the service provided by the system?
 - d. Is the regional setup a system or just regional players interdependent of each other? If it is a system, what co-production mechanisms exist between the early warning information producers and contribution from users in the tailoring of the service provided?
- iv. Identification of challenges and opportunities for strengthening existing systems; and
- v. Identify those actions to be undertaken by CCARDESA, SADC CSC, and development partners to strengthen the capacity of existing systems.

4.2 Specific Tasks

Specific tasks of the assignment include but not limited to:

- i. Review and document the current status of national early warning systems in the 16 SADC Members States;
- ii. Determine the extent to which the existing systems are providing adequate, reliable and timely information to different users in the wake of heightened climate related disasters;
- iii. Identify capacity gaps and challenges within the existing systems that hinder their effective operations and ability to provide adequate services;
- iv. Identify capacity gaps at national and regional level that affect the effectiveness of agricultural early warning systems in providing the necessary support to national systems;
- v. Propose recommendations to improve capacities at national and regional levels; and
- vi. Document the role to be played by FSRP and other agencies in supporting the national, and regional agricultural early warning agricultural information systems.

5) DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The consultant is expected to undertake the assignment within 60 working days spread over a period of 90 calendar days from the date of contract commencement.

6) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND TIMELINES FOR DELIVERABLES

The reporting requirements and timelines for deliverables are as shown in Table 1 below:

Original hard copies together with soft copies of the reports listed in Table 1 below shall be submitted to the FSRP Regional Project Coordinator within the scheduled timelines.

Table 1: Reporting requirements

S/No.	Deliverables/Reports	Timelines after contract commencement	Format of submission
1.	Inception Report	1 week after signing contract	2 hard copies and a soft copy
2.	Draft capacity gap analysis report	7 weeks after approval of inception report	2 hard copies and a soft copy
3.	A final gap analysis report following stakeholder validation	2 weeks after the validation of draft capacity gap analysis report	2 hard copies and a soft copy

- i. **Inception report**, one (1) week after signing the assignment contract, detailing the methodology, workplan (including validation for delivery of final report).
- ii. **A draft capacity gap analysis report**, seven (7) weeks after the approval of the inception report, which addresses all items under the specific objectives and taking into account the scope of work.
- iii. **A final gap analysis report**, within two (2) weeks after the validation of the draft capacity gap analysis report by the Countries. The final report should incorporate comments received from CCARDESA, SADC countries and other key stakeholders.

7) PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The proposed payment schedules based on satisfactory performance of the contract which will be negotiated with the successful consultant will be as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Proposed payment schedule

S/No.	Deliverables*	Timelines after contract commencement	Percentage of the contract amount
1.	Submission and Acceptance of Inception report	1 week	20%
2.	Submission and acceptance of Draft capacity gap analysis report	7 weeks after approval of inception report	30%
3.	Submission and acceptance of final gap analysis report	2 weeks after the validation of draft capacity gap analysis report	50%

8) PRESENTATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS

Upon submission of every report, the consultant is expected to make a presentation of the submitted report to the Client in a scheduled meeting. The consultant will submit a concise written record of the meeting to the client.

9) MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSULTANT'S QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The consultant shall be well qualified and experienced as required and appropriate for execution of the assignment. The consultant should possess the necessary technical capacity and resources to perform the assignment of such nature including relevant equipment and software. The consultant shall have the following minimum qualifications and experience:

- (i) **Education:** At least a master's degree in agriculture, Agricultural Information Management, Meteorology, Environmental Science, or related field.
- (ii) **General Experience:** At least ten years of professional experience in a relevant field: agricultural information systems, early warning systems, climate-smart agriculture, natural resource management, institutional assessment, or vulnerability assessments.
- (iii) **Specific Experience:** Minimum of ten (10) years' experience in leading assessment of policies preferably in Agriculture, five (5) of which must be at regional level.
- (iv) He/she should have demonstrable ability to write concise technical papers and synthesis reports on subjects related to the assignment.
- (v) The consultant should have carried out at least 3 similar assignments during the past 10 years.
- (vi) **Language Requirements:** English will be the working language.

The shortlisting criteria will include the following:

#	Item	Minimum Requirement	Score
1	Education	At least a Master's degree in Agriculture, Agricultural Information Management, Meteorology, Environmental Science, or any related field.	15%
2	General Experience	At least ten years of professional experience in a relevant field: agricultural information systems or early warning systems.	30%
3	Specific Experience:	Minimum of ten (10) years' experience in leading assessments of policies at national and regional levels preferably in Agriculture. He/she should have demonstrable ability to write concise technical papers on subjects related to the assignment. The consultant should have carried out at least 3 similar assignments during the past 10 years.	45%
4	Language Requirements	English proficiency. Knowledge of other SADC languages will be an added advantage	10%
5	Total		100

10)MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The consultant will report to the FSRP Regional Coordinator, who will be responsible

for the assignment's overall technical and administrative issues.

The consultant will, on reasonable notice, participate in meetings and discussions as required by the Regional Coordinator.

All meetings, discussions, presentations, training materials and deliverables shall be in the English language.

11) OBLIGATIONS OF THE CONSULTANT

The consultant is expected to undertake activities that will ensure that outputs are consistent with the professional and legal requirements and are provided in a timely manner.

12) PROPRIETARY RIGHTS OF CLIENT IN REPORTS AND RECORDS

All the reports, data, and information developed, collected, or obtained from the implementing agencies and other Institutions during this exercise shall belong to the Client. No use shall be made of them without prior written authorization from the Client.

At the end of the Services, the consultant shall relinquish all data, manuals, reports and information (including the database, codes, and related documentation) to the Client and shall make no use of them in any other assignment without prior written authority from the Client.