



Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food
 Agence Régionale pour l'Agriculture et l'Alimentation
 Agência Regional da Agricultura e Alimentação



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

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Agency:	ECOWAS Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF)
Funding source:	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)
Project:	Project to Promote Integrated School Feeding Models in West Africa (PMAI-AO)
Selection method:	Selection of Individual Consultants (SCI)
Selection reference:	ARAA/PMAI-AO/2025/SCI/41
Subject:	RECRUITMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT FOR THE MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE PMAI – AO
Publication date	November 21, 2025
Deadline for submission:	December 8, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. GMT

I. Context and Justification

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), with financial support from Spanish Cooperation (AECID), implemented a regional agricultural policy support project (ECOWAP/PDDAA) from 2015 to 2022. This program has developed nineteen (19) social safety net instruments.

These instruments have been capitalized on through a combination of cash transfers (monetary, vouchers, etc.) and in-kind transfers (food distribution, agricultural inputs, etc.) with related actions focusing on productivity and social and financial inclusion (access to basic services, AGR, credit, etc.). In addition, school feeding programs based on strengthening local productive capacities and programs to prevent child malnutrition have demonstrated a proven ability to ensure food security, nutrition, and the development of social and economic capital in the targeted areas.

Following this capitalization, ECOWAS organized a seminar in 2021 to share experiences of these achievements in social safety nets, with the participation of member states and national and regional actors involved in the theme of social safety nets. The main conclusions of this meeting were that school feeding remains a regional priority and that actions in this area should be consolidated.

Thus, in 2023, ECOWAS and AECID launched the **Project to Promote Integrated School Feeding Models in West Africa (PMAI-AO)**, co-financed to the tune of €4.5 million covering the period 2023-2027. This project is a continuation of phase 1 of ECOWAP/PDDAA (€5 million) and is a key action of the Regional Support Program for National Social Safety Nets (PRAFNSS), revised in 2022. It promotes an integrated school feeding model that values local production, value chain development (processing, storage, transport), agricultural learning, income-generating activities (IGAs), and economic infrastructure, while encouraging the sharing of experiences among member states in the region. In addition, ECOWAS and AECID plan to strengthen these school feeding initiatives and their institutional anchoring by incorporating them into emergency food intervention mechanisms supported by the Regional Food Security Reserve .

The PMAI-AO covers the 15 states of West Africa, namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. With a duration of 48 months (2023-2027), it aims to improve human capital by ensuring

sustainable access to healthy and balanced food for schoolchildren.

After just over two years of project implementation and with a view to improving its implementation, the ECOWAS Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF) intends to undertake a mid-term evaluation of the project. This is an external evaluation of the project that will identify key recommendations to improve project implementation on the one hand and inform discussions on future prospects on the other .

These Terms of Reference define the conditions for selecting the consultant to carry out the mission.

1.1 Project objectives:

The overall objective of the PMAI-AO project is to improve human capital development in West Africa and, specifically, to improve sustainable access to a healthy and balanced food basket for children in schools.

1.2 Expected results:

The expected results of the project are:

- R1. Integrated school feeding models are promoted and strengthened in West Africa;
- R2. Knowledge of good practices in nutrition, hygiene, basic sanitation, and sustainable natural resource management is strengthened;
- R3. Economic opportunities and economic integration for women are created in communities;
- R4. ECOWAS's operational capacities in knowledge management are strengthened;
- R5. The regulatory and institutional framework and governance of school feeding programs in the region are strengthened.

1.3 Project implementation mechanisms

At the operational level, the project is coordinated by the ARAA through a project team under the supervision of the ARAA's Technical Operations Division. Project leaders implement field sub-projects that enable the project's R1, R2, and R3 outcomes to be achieved. A technical monitoring committee supervises and approves annual activity reports as well as the activities of the annual work plan and budget (AWPB).

II. Objectives and Scope of the Mid-Term Evaluation

2.1 Overall objectives

The main objective of the mid-term review is to:

- Evaluate the overall performance of the project by analyzing its initial design, progress, and ability to achieve results. This review will focus on the relevance of the project in its current context, its effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, as well as the first noticeable impacts, constraints, and lessons learned.
- Assess the degree of ownership of the project by the various stakeholders and analyze the synergy mechanisms enabling ECOWAS to strengthen its support to member states through collaboration with other institutions and organizations working on school feeding issues.

The conclusions of this evaluation will be used to reorient actions and interventions with a view to optimizing the expected results of the project in the long term.

2.2 Specific objectives:

The mid-term evaluation mission has the following specific objectives:

- Analyze the design and implementation approach of the project by:
 - Assessing the quality and realism of the project design, particularly in terms of duration, identification of stakeholders and beneficiaries, institutional framework, and management agreements;
 - Reassessing the relevance and coherence of the project and the implementation methodology;
- Evaluating the implementation and performance of the project by:
 - Evaluating the implementation of activities in relation to the results achieved
 - Measuring progress towards the 2025 interim targets (R1 to R5);
 - Analyzing the results already achieved and the activities carried out in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the sustainability of the interventions;
 - Assessing the project's contribution to improving the nutritional quality of school meals through initiatives such as school gardens, community fields, livestock farming, etc.
 - Analyzing strengths and weaknesses and identifying best practices of the intervention and difficulties encountered in implementation;
- Assess the monitoring and evaluation system, institutional anchoring, and synergy of action by:
 - Assessing the functioning of the monitoring and evaluation system;
 - Assessing institutional anchoring and the degree of effective ownership of interventions by different actors at the country level;
 - Identifying ways to leverage the project's results, innovations, and good practices in existing or developing national school feeding policies and programs;
 - Analyzing synergies with other regional initiatives and partners;
 - Evaluating possible mechanisms for linking school feeding to emergency responses in crisis contexts supported by the ECOWAS regional food security reserve;
- Assessing the effective consideration of gender in the design and implementation of the project by:
 - Assessing the integration of gender in school management mechanisms (presence of gender focal points, representation of women in management committees);
 - Measuring the reduction in schooling gaps between girls and boys in vulnerable areas covered by the project;
 - Assessing the participation of women's cooperatives and small producer organizations in local procurement processes;
 - Analyzing the support provided to income-generating activities (IGAs) for women canteen workers and their economic empowerment;
 - Identifying promising social innovations in gender mainstreaming in school feeding interventions that can be scaled up.
- Analyzing how communication has promoted the sharing of experiences, ownership by national and regional actors, and the promotion of good practices, in particular:
 - Assessing the fluidity and effectiveness of information flow between stakeholders involved in implementation (ARAA, DADR, AECID, project leaders, national ministries, canteen management committees) and analyzing the use of existing channels;

- Assessing the strengthening of project leaders' communication capacities by measuring the adoption of recommendations and validating audiovisual tools before dissemination;
- Evaluate the scope and effectiveness of communication tools to disseminate project results and increase its visibility at the technical and political levels in countries (e.g., video clips on school canteens, gadgets, online publications, sharing links). Measure reach (e.g., number of views, shares on social media).
- Analyze participation in regional and international events (e.g., JAAS in Bangui in March 2025, side event on social safety nets and nutrition at SARA in May 2025), assessing their contribution to the visibility of the project to promote integrated models.
- Formulate recommendations for improving project performance by:
 - Proposing corrective measures and appropriate recommendations to improve project implementation.
 - Formulating recommendations to adjust activities and strategies and maximize impact for the second half of the project (2026-2027) and post-project.

2.3 Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation will involve a critical analysis of the project based on recognized evaluation criteria, namely relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation criteria therefore include:

- **Relevance:** Alignment with the needs of beneficiaries. This concerns the extent to which the project's objectives adequately address the identified problems or real needs.
- **Coherence:** This involves paying particular attention to alignment with regional (ECOWAP, SDG 2) and national priorities.
- **Effectiveness:** Achievement of intermediate targets (e.g., 50 pilot schools, 90% of schools adopting hygiene practices, 10% reduction in food insecurity, etc.) and progress toward achieving the planned objectives.
- **Efficiency:** Optimal use of financial resources, including in-kind contributions (minimum 20%).
- **Potential impact:** Effects on school indicators, nutrition, women's empowerment, and community resilience.
- **Sustainability:** Capacity of interventions to produce sustainable results, particularly through the strengthening of institutional and regulatory frameworks. This will involve analyzing the mechanisms for ownership and integration of good practices by member countries beyond simple reproducibility.
- **Innovation:** Implementation of integrated models (organizational, technical, methodological).
- **Risk management:** Assessment of the relevance and effectiveness of measures to mitigate institutional, organizational, political, environmental, security, health, and sociocultural risks. This will involve linking the mitigation measures proposed in the project document and implemented to the results of the intervention in order to highlight the negative or positive impacts of the choices made.

With regard to implementation management, the aspects to be addressed by the evaluation concern the performance and effectiveness of implementation, in particular the evaluation of the process of

selecting and supporting project leaders, the quality and realism of work plans, the effectiveness and efficiency of operations management in terms of coordination and project leaders, and efficiency in the production of outputs. the effectiveness of the project monitoring and evaluation process, the monitoring of coordination bodies, the quality of the ARAA's support to project leaders, and the project's collaboration with other projects or institutions.

In terms of links with interventions currently being implemented, the evaluation should analyze the different types of field projects and assess their potential in terms of added value to existing programs, as well as their capacity to generate good practices and knowledge. This includes analyzing contracts signed with farmers' organizations and purchases from local suppliers.

In terms of financial resource management, the focus will be on the adequacy of budget allocations to achieve the various project results, the consistency and validity of budget revisions corresponding to budget adjustments, the execution rate, and the budget balance at the time of the evaluation.

Sustainability will need to address considerations for maintaining or replicating the results already achieved, as well as mechanisms for ownership, absorption, and integration of good practices at the national and regional levels.

Cross-cutting issues will address gender mainstreaming, nutrition, communication, and environmental aspects. With regard to gender, the evaluation must analyze the representation of women in canteen management bodies and mechanisms, as well as the socio-cultural constraints affecting their participation. It will also analyze the level of participation of women's cooperatives and producer organizations in the process of supplying canteens with locally produced food. It will assess the support provided to canteen operators and producers, particularly in terms of income-generating activities (IGAs) and capacity building, as well as the implications of the project for their empowerment and workload. Finally, the evaluation will identify promising social innovations in terms of gender mainstreaming in school feeding interventions that could be documented or scaled up.

In terms of nutrition, the evaluation will examine, among other things, aspects relating to the compliance of menus with national recommendations, training organized for cooks and the provision of technical data sheets, the presence of fresh produce (fruit and vegetables) and animal products in menus, nutritional monitoring, and institutionality (nutritional response framework).

In terms of communication, the evaluation will analyze how communication has promoted the sharing of experiences, ownership by national and regional actors, and the promotion of good practices. It will focus on the tools, processes, and impacts observed since the start of the project, based on quantitative indicators (e.g., number of materials produced, publications, distribution channels, etc.) and qualitative indicators (e.g., stakeholder perceptions via interviews). Communication aspects must be addressed from both an internal and external perspective. Internally, the study will assess the fluidity and effectiveness of information flow between stakeholders involved in implementation (ARAA, DADR, AECID, project leaders, national ministries, canteen management committees) and analyze the use of existing channels. It will also assess the strengthening of project leaders' communication capacities by measuring the adoption of recommendations and validating audiovisual tools prior to dissemination. It will also assess the effectiveness of existing communication channels and exchange platforms. From an external perspective, the evaluation will analyze the reach and effectiveness of communication tools in disseminating project results and increasing its visibility at the technical and political levels in the countries (e.g., video clips on school canteens, gadgets, online publications, sharing links). It will

measure reach (e.g., number of views, shares on social media) and analyze participation in regional and international events (e.g., JAAS in Bangui in March 2025, side event on social safety nets and nutrition at SARA in May 2025), assessing their contribution to the visibility of the project promoting integrated models.

On the environmental front, the evaluation will assess technical innovations and the adoption of practices that reduce environmental degradation, eco-friendly cooking methods, and the provision of healthy meals to students.

Finally, the evaluation will consider ways in which ECOWAS should collaborate with partner institutions and governments and identify the main levers it should use to advance school feeding in the West African region.

III. Expected results

The expected results are the mid-term evaluation report on the implementation of the project in French and English, providing detailed information and analysis on its implementation and on the specific actions and interventions evaluated, in particular:

- **Project design, relevance, and implementation:** An in-depth analysis of the quality and realism of the design (duration, identification of stakeholders and beneficiaries, institutional framework, and management agreements), as well as a reassessment of the relevance, overall coherence, and implementation methodology, taking into account the dynamic context and regional and national priorities.
- **Project performance and progress:** An assessment of the implementation of activities in relation to the results achieved, including measuring the level of progress towards the 2025 interim targets for outcomes R1 to R5; an analysis of the results obtained and the activities carried out in terms of the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the interventions; an assessment of the project's contribution to improving the nutritional quality of school meals through initiatives such as school gardens, community fields, and livestock farming; and an identification of strengths, weaknesses, best practices, innovations, and difficulties encountered in implementation.
- **The monitoring and evaluation system, institutional anchoring, and synergies:** An assessment of the functioning of the monitoring and evaluation system, institutional anchoring, and the degree of effective ownership of interventions by national actors; identification of ways to leverage results, innovations, and good practices in national school feeding policies and programs; an analysis of synergies with other regional initiatives and partners; and an assessment of mechanisms for linking school feeding to emergency responses in crisis contexts, supported by the ECOWAS regional food security reserve.
- **Effective integration of gender and social inclusion:** An assessment of gender mainstreaming in design and implementation, including integration into school management mechanisms (presence of gender focal points, representation of women on committees); measurement of the reduction in schooling gaps between girls and boys in vulnerable areas; assessment of the participation of women's cooperatives and small producer organizations in local procurement processes; analysis of support for income-generating activities (IGAs) of women canteen

operators and their economic empowerment; and identification of promising social innovations in gender empowerment that can be scaled up.

- **A comprehensive assessment of communication:** internal (fluidity of information flows between stakeholders, capacity building for project leaders through the adoption of recommendations and validation of tools) and external (reach and effectiveness of dissemination tools such as video clips, gadgets, and online publications, with measurement of reach); analysis of participation in regional and international events such as JAAS in Bangui in March 2025 and a side event at SARA in May 2025, assessing their contribution to visibility), in order to formulate recommendations to strengthen its impact in the second phase of the project (2026-2027) and promote better ownership and sustainability of initiatives.
- **Recommendations and improvement measures:** Proposals for corrective measures and appropriate recommendations to improve project implementation; formulations of adjustments to activities, strategies, and approaches to maximize impact for the second half of the project (2026-2027) and beyond, incorporating lessons learned, cross-cutting issues (environment, communication), and prospects for sustainability and regional scaling up.

IV. Evaluation Methodology

The mid-term evaluation will adopt a mixed (qualitative and quantitative) approach to data collection and analysis, based on the project's logical framework. Methods will include:

- **A literature review:** analysis of annual reports, narrative reports on field projects, monitoring reports, monitoring and evaluation databases, and reference documents (World Bank Human Capital Index, UNESCO, Harmonized Framework).
- **A review of specific outputs:** annual work plans, other relevant documents and meeting reports, communication content, publications, etc.
- **Semi-structured interviews:** With key stakeholders (ARAA, DADR, AECID, project leaders, ministries responsible for school feeding, canteen management committees, and local authorities).
- **Focus groups:** With beneficiaries (schoolchildren, parents, women involved in AGRs) to gather perceptions on the effects/impact and relevance of interventions.
- **Field visits:** A sample of schools in two or three countries (to be organized with the ARAA) to observe activities (provision of meals, water infrastructure, vegetable gardens, etc.) and evaluate their implementation. Visits will focus on specific sites to optimize resources, with a large part of the assessments conducted online using a clear and detailed methodology presented by the consultant (virtual interviews, online questionnaires, etc.).
- **Quantitative analysis:** Evaluation of indicators against the 2025 interim targets, using data from monitoring reports and databases.
- **Risk analysis:** Assessment of identified risks and mitigation measures implemented, with a focus on security and health contexts.

Sampling will be stratified to ensure fair representation and consideration of different contexts (rural/urban, levels of vulnerability). Data will be triangulated to ensure reliability. The consultant will be required to formulate precise and targeted questions to obtain concrete and operational answers directly related to the defined objectives, avoiding theoretical or philosophical digressions.

V. Deliverables and submission deadlines

- **Initial report:** Detailed evaluation plan, including methodology, timetable, and data collection tools (submitted within two weeks of commencement).
- **Interim report:** Preliminary results based on the literature review and analysis of the initial data collection (submitted 3 weeks after the submission of the first deliverable).
- **Final report :** Comprehensive analysis of progress, effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability, and recommendations, structured according to the evaluation objectives (submitted 3 weeks after deliverable 2). The report will include:
 - Executive summary (2-3 pages);
 - Analysis of indicators against interim targets;
 - The various points analyzed in relation to the expected results of the evaluation;
 - Risk assessment and mitigation measures;
 - Specific recommendations for each result and product;
 - Appendices (raw data, collection tools, list of interviewees).
- **Presentation of results:** PowerPoint presentation, feedback session with the ARAA, AECID, and key stakeholders to discuss results, conclusions, and recommendations.
- **Final report:** Final report incorporating observations.

Criteria for acceptance of deliverables: Deliverables must be submitted in accordance with the approved plan, be of good methodological quality (sampling, analysis), answer the evaluation questions, and contain clear recommendations.

IV. Duration and schedule

The mid-term evaluation should be carried out over a period of **two (02) months** according to the following schedule:

No.	Stages of the mission	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8
1	Launch of evaluation, literature review, development of tools.								
2	Data collection and field visits, interviews with key stakeholders (ARAA, ECOWAS, AECID, project leaders, national programs, OPR, other institutions, etc.)								
3	Data analysis and report writing								
4	Submission and Presentation of Results								
5	Integration of comments and final submission								

The consultant will likely be able to begin the evaluation assignment in January 2026.

V. Consultant Profile

a) Qualifications

The consultant must have the following qualifications:

- Hold a university degree (at least five years of higher education) in agronomy, agro-economics, socio-economics, economics, food and nutrition security, rural development, nutrition, management, project management, or any other related discipline.

b) General experience

- Have at least 7 years of experience in evaluating agricultural or rural development projects.

C) Relevant experience for the assignment

- Have carried out at least two mid-term or final evaluations of a project or program funded by partners (AECID, WB, WFP, IFAD, FAO, GIZ, UNICEF, etc.) in the areas of school feeding, food security, social protection, or nutrition.
- Have proven experience in social safety nets, particularly in the context of school feeding programs, or in the field of food and nutrition security;
- Have proven experience in evaluating at least one regional project in the field of food or social safety nets;
- Have participated in or led the formulation of at least one project in the following areas: school feeding, food security, social protection, or nutrition;
- Experience working with regional institutions (ECOWAS, CILSS, or UEMOA);
- Have knowledge or experience in socio-economic analysis;
- Knowledge or experience in gender-sensitive analysis related to food and nutrition security.

Assets

- Have good facilitation skills;
- Ability to work online to gather as much information as possible;
- Have been at least a project evaluation team leader;
- Be able to present high-quality professional reports;
- Have excellent writing skills in English and French.

VI. Recruitment procedure

The consultant will be selected in accordance with the individual consultant selection method of the ECOWAS Procurement Regulations.

Candidates must submit information proving their qualifications and experience.

Applications will be reviewed and ranked in order of merit. An interview may be arranged with the best candidate(s). Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Female candidates will be given preference if they have equal qualifications. The selected candidate will be invited for negotiations on their methodology, implementation schedule, and proposed price. If no agreement is reached, the RAAS will invite the next candidate.

The consultant must comply with Articles 117 (fraudulent practices) and 118 (conflicts of interest) of the ECOWAS Public Procurement Code.

VII. Submission Requirements

The consultant must submit a technical and financial proposal to the ARAA, including:

- (i) a letter of interest** addressed to the Executive Director of the RAAF, (ii) **a detailed and accurate curriculum vitae** allowing for verification of the qualification and experience criteria, a copy of the highest degree obtained, copies of certificates of service or letters of recommendation or contract extracts, (iii) **a schedule for execution;**

- **The technical proposal (maximum 10 pages)** shall briefly present the understanding of the mission, the methodological approach to be used, and the provisional schedule. **The financial proposal** shall provide information on fees and reimbursable expenses (travel, per diem in CFA francs or euros).

Proposals will be evaluated according to the ARAA's criteria, based on experience, quality of methodology, and budget.

VIII. Submission of applications

- Deadline for receipt of applications: **December 8, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. GMT.**
- **Submission links: Applications must be submitted by uploading them to: <https://bit.ly/4r5bxin>**
- Application format: **Applications must be submitted as a single PDF file in the order specified in the application package.**
- The ARAA reserves the right not to consider applications that do not comply with the above submission requirements.

IX. Request for additional information

Interested consultants may obtain further information by writing to the following email addresses: procurement@araa.org ; cc: ctienon@araa.org ; awaki@araa.org with the subject line **"SCI 041-Mid-term evaluation PMAI-AO."**

For the Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF)



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