CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
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Partnership for Agricultural Research, Education and Development (PAIRED) in West and Central Africa.
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Recruitment of a firm/team of consultants
To conduct a mid-term assessment of CORAF’s Institutional Transition Strategy
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Opening Date: July 24, 2020
Closing Date: August 10, 2020
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CEI No. 09-2020

CORAF is an international non-profit association of national agricultural research systems (NARS) of 23 countries, covering over forty percent of Africa’s population, thus making it the largest sub-regional research organization on the African continent. It was created in 1987 and assigned the responsibility to coordinate and facilitate ground-breaking and cutting-edge research outputs needed to unlock the agricultural potential of West and Central Africa. The vision and mission of CORAF are to achieve sustainable reduction of poverty and food insecurity through improved competitiveness, productivity, and agricultural markets in West and Central Africa.

In 2016, at the request of its Governing Board, CORAF underwent an institutional audit which examined key aspects of its operations including but not limited to redefining the organizational structure of the Executive Secretariat, an assessment of its Human Resources Management System, an analysis of the functionality of its Governance and Management bodies, a fiduciary analysis, a technical diagnosis of its program components and a review of the ICT system. The results of the 2016 institutional audit highlighted the growing number of challenges CORAF had encountered including financial sustainability that threatened its existence beyond 2018, unless significant efforts were made to restructure the organization.

Twelve strategic recommendations from the audit were validated by CORAF under three areas. The first area is “Strategic Planning and Orientation/Governance” which has provided CORAF with its 2nd Strategic Plan and 3rd Operation Plan. The second area is “Financial Sustainability” that aims to provide CORAF with instruments and capacity for modern and capable financial management. The third area is “Organizational Structure and Efficiency” which will provide CORAF with a cost-effective staffing and networking structure and sound operating procedures. These key areas formed the fundamentals of CORAF’s Institutional Transition Strategy.

CORAF is mid-way through its Transition Strategy and a reflection on how effective the organization has been in its implementation is highly sought after to appreciate and document the successes, gains as well as lessons learned. It is against this backdrop that CORAF is inviting firms and/or team of consultants meeting the qualification criteria as indicated in the terms of reference, to express their interest for this call to conduct a mid-term assessment of CORAF’s Transition Strategy (2018-2022).
The firms/teams of consultants interested in this call must submit an expression of interest indicating that they are qualified to perform such services (Understanding of the terms of reference, methodology, references concerning the performance of similar contracts, publications, CVs of proposed experts and other experiences in similar conditions).

Qualified firms/team of consultants will be selected according to the rules contained in the CORAF Administrative, Financial and Accounting Procedures Manual.

Interested firms/team of consultants can obtain additional information on the Institutional Transition Strategy and other details from the CORAF Executive Secretariat by sending correspondence by e-mail to n.amoah@coraf.org.

Proposals must be submitted by e-mail to the following address: procurement@coraf.org no later than August 10, 2020 at 4.30 p.m. GMT at the latest.

Dr Abdou TENKOUANO
Executive Director
1. CONTEXT
In 2016, at the request of its Governing Board, CORAF underwent an institutional audit which examined key aspects of its operations including but not limited to redefining the organizational structure of the Executive Secretariat, an assessment of its Human Resources Management System, an analysis of the functionality of its Governance and Management bodies, a fiduciary analysis, a technical diagnosis of its program components and a review of the ICT system. The results of the 2016 institutional audit highlighted the growing number of challenges CORAF had encountered including financial sustainability that threatened its existence beyond 2018, unless significant efforts were made to restructure the organization. Twelve strategic recommendations from the audit were validated by CORAF under three areas. The first area is “Strategic Planning and Orientation/Governance” which has provided CORAF with its 2nd Strategic Plan and 3rd Operation Plan. The second area is “Financial Sustainability” that aims to provide CORAF with instruments and capacity for modern and capable financial management. The third area is “Organizational Structure and Efficiency” which will provide CORAF with a cost-effective staffing and networking structure and sound operating procedures. These key areas formed the fundamentals of CORAF’s Institutional Transition Strategy.

With the appropriate reforms in the above areas, it was expected that the Executive Secretariat would emerge from the transition period with a leaner and more agile structure, a rejuvenated staff force supported by modern management tools, and a stronger position as the leading facilitator and broker of partnerships (CORAF/WECARD, 2017). It was expected that the organization will resume financial growth in 2018 onwards, backed by the programmatic clarity and institutional authority required for changing the face of agriculture in West and Central Africa through reinvigorated agricultural research and development. Subsequently, various donors assisted CORAF in its efforts to restructure the organization and build its reputation as a credible high-quality service provider in the agriculture ecosystem in West and Central Africa.

In June 2017, the USAID West Africa Mission awarded CORAF, US$ 15million to facilitate the implementation of a five-year program dubbed: Partnership for Agricultural Research, Education and Development (PAIRED) in West and Central Africa. PAIRED was designed to undertake the needed reforms, with the aim of transforming CORAF into a structurally sound and financially stable organization to take the lead in agricultural research for development in West and Central Africa. Through Component 1, a Strategic Plan (SP 2018-2027), an Operational Plan (OP 2018-2022) and a Resource Mobilization Plan were developed and adopted by the CORAF General Assembly in April 2018. Other donors such as the European Union Commission and the World Bank have been equally instrumental in supporting CORAF implement the strategy and achieve the goals of the Institutional Strategy.

CORAF has made significant strides in the restructuring and implementing its Transition Strategy. The improved strength of CORAF today has enabled it to leverage funding from the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA), the World Bank, European Union (EU), African Development Bank (AfDB), the Department for International Development (DFID), the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Islamic Development Bank, etc. in delivering impactful results. As CORAF is mid-way through its Transition Strategy and a reflection on how effective the organization has been in its implementation is highly sought after to appreciate and document the successes, gains as well as lessons learned. It is against this backdrop that the CORAF Governing Board approved to conduct a mid-term assessment of CORAF’s Transition Strategy (2018-2022).

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1 The Strengthening CORAF’s Institutional Capacity Roadmap 2018-2022 refers to the Transition Strategy for CORAF’s Institutional Strengthening
2. PURPOSE OF THE ASSESSMENT
The purpose of the mid-term assessment of CORAF’s Transition Strategy is to measure, assess and analyze the progress made by CORAF towards achieving the goals and results of its Transition Strategy and the sustainability of these results. The areas to be examined in the mid-term assessment include:

Area 1: Strategic Planning and Orientation/Governance
- CORAF’s Strategic Plan/SP2 (2017-2026) and Operational Plan/OP3 (2017-2021)
  - Review the progress of implementation and impact of Strategic Plan/SP2 (2018-2027) and Operational Plan/OP3 (2018-2022) towards achieving CORAF’s mission.
  - Assess the effectiveness of CORAF’s dynamic funding strategy and lean institutional architecture within the core Executive Secretariat.
- CORAF’s Governance
  - Evaluate the effectiveness and contribution of its Governing and Management bodies in driving forward the strategic direction of CORAF and ensuring effective governance.
  - Appraise the pertinence of CORAF’s new legal status and juridical personality and make recommendations.
- CORAF’s Organizational Capacity
  - Review CORAF’s organizational strengthening/capacity development plan and whether it comprehensively structures and orchestrates the strategic initiatives needed to strengthen CORAF to achieve its optimal sustainability.
  - Analyze and evaluate of the quality, safety, and cost-effectiveness of the current ICT system in place towards enhancing work-flow process across the organization.

Area 2: Financial sustainability
- Core Staff in relation to CORAF’s Vision, Mission and Core Functions
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of CORAF’s efforts towards the planning, staffing, development, appraisal, rewarding and management of effective staff relations (HR Management).
  - Examine the HR policy and assess the effectiveness of the HR Management system in place.
- Sound Financial Management Systems
  - Assess the efficiency and analyze the quality, productivity, and safety of the administrative and financial management system and CORAF’s strategy and efforts towards financial sustainability and viability (cost recovery).
- Public Outreach, Business Development, and Resource Mobilization
  - Review and evaluate the implementation of the Resource Mobilization strategy as well as Communications and Public Outreach strategy.

Area 3: Organizational Structure and Efficiency
- Robust Monitoring, Evaluation, Knowledge Management, Learning (MEAL) Systems
  - Evaluate the cost efficiency and effectiveness of the knowledge management and ICT system in place and the functionality of CORAF’s overall M&E system.
- Improved Partnerships & Contract Management
  - Analyze and assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the existing partnership and contract management unit and system.
- Oversight skills of CORAF’s Governing Bodies
  - Assess the effectiveness of the Governing Board’s efforts towards improved Corporate Governance.
  - Examine the existing and required systems and approaches for high-quality information flow and communication at the ES level and Governance Bodies.

The 2016 Institutional Audit findings and recommendations will be used as reference in this assessment along with the USAID-PAIRED Component 1 workplan.
3. EXPECTED RESULTS
This mid-term assessment will enable CORAF document its progress as against the 2018-2022 Transition strategy. The assessment will be driven by three key overarching questions to provide specific learning and evidence for organizational performance and effectiveness:

i. Determine the progress CORAF has made in its organizational performance and capacity strengthening, towards achieving institutional and financial sustainability.

ii. Identify the major challenges and gaps remaining for CORAF to successfully implement the Transition Strategy and outline the corrective actions/interventions that need to be undertaken by 2022.

iii. Highlight the governance and management strengths and weakness.

4. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY
The review will be conducted during the period of July-August 2020. A team of consultants are expected to propose specific and comprehensive technical methods for each of the components of the assignment. The mid-term assessment will use standard evaluation criteria to assess performance, viz: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. It is expected that the incumbent team will cover the following elements at a minimum but is not limited to:

- **Literature Review**: Review of key program documents such as the 2016 Institutional Audit report, Strategic Plan, Operational Plan, the Resource Mobilization Plan and relevant information from donors, NARS, etc.

- **Data collection**: For each of these interviews, the consultants should first develop and present their ideas for the content and format of the interview forms that will be applied to capture the information required, as well as the method to be used in administering them and tabulating the results.

- **Analysis**: Data triangulation and analysis triangulation to validate evidence and arrive at findings.

5. DELIVERABLES OF THE ASSIGNMENT
The team will be expected to deliver the following within a maximum of 40 days.

- **An inception report**, no more than 10 pages, containing the team’s proposed roadmap and timetable of the assignment, following a briefing meeting.

- **An interim report** drawing up all aspects and tasks of the assignment and key emerging findings/issues.

- **A draft evaluation report** for preliminary feedback

- **A final report** taking into account the observations of the draft evaluation report.

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Weeks</th>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contract confirmation and briefing meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inception report, draft revised (10 days)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature review, data collection and analysis (15)</td>
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<td>Drafting and submission of assessment report (30)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Receipt of comments from stakeholders and reference group members (5)</td>
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<td>Revision and submission of Final Report</td>
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6. ASSESSMENT COORDINATION
- The Operations Manager will primarily support the evaluation team daily with respect to providing background information and progress reports and other documentation.
A reference group at CORAF will be established to assist in key aspects of the evaluation process including reviewing evaluation Terms of Reference, providing documents, providing detailed comments on the inception and draft evaluation reports and dissemination of evaluation findings, lessons learnt and recommendations.

This evaluation will be conducted by no more than five (5) evaluators. The Evaluation Team leader will have the overall responsibility for the conduct of the evaluation exercise as well as quality and timely submission of reports.

7. REQUIRED EXPERTISE AND QUALIFICATIONS

**Team Lead (Senior Organizational Development Specialist)**

A. **Education**: PhD, or advanced post-graduate degree in Business Administration, Organizational Development, Economics, International Development, Program Evaluation, Corporate Governance, Social Science or a related field is required.

B. **Work Experience**: Minimum of ten (10) years’ experience working with international/regional organizations. At least 5 years of experience working on African development issues, with experience in agriculture and food security considered an advantage, but not essential. Experience working donor agencies is preferred. Familiarity with CORAF/WECARD and other regional institutions, such as ECOWAS and UEMOA, is desirable. Prior experience as team leader for a large-scale multi-country/multi-institutional evaluation.

C. **Knowledge**: Knowledge of public law with extensive insight into the functioning of the IGOs and NGOs working within the agricultural sector is highly desirable. Knowledge of the West Africa agriculture and food security development environment is required. Must have extensive experience in organizational/program evaluations, and assessment of the agriculture sector; Knowledge of Strategic Planning, Corporate Governance and Organizational development is key.

D. **Language Proficiency**: English and French

E. **Skills and Abilities**: Assessment of performance management systems, or results-based management of programs and projects, financial analysis and cost effectiveness, and institutional development. Other experience should include: monitoring and evaluation, database management, survey research, responsibility for research methods including interviews, program evaluation, qualitative and quantitative statistical sampling, information analysis, research techniques and methodologies, report writing, use of MS spreadsheets, and familiarity with Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Ability to work with various levels of management and staff and interact with a wide range of stakeholders including but not limited to political leaders, experts, national programs, technical and financial partners and farmer-based organizations. Excellent oral and written communication skills. Ability to work in a multidisciplinary team and environment and deliver timely high-quality results Experience in report writing and technical editing and development issues to enable them to provide relevant background information and engage in dialogue with participants.

F. **Competencies**: Teamwork and experience in leading teams; strategic thinking; strong analytical, reporting and communications skills; results-oriented and excellent drafting skills in English and/or French.

**Financial Management/Audit Specialist (Team Member)**

A. **Education**: Master’s degree in Finance, Financial Management and Sustainability, Business Administration, Financial Operations, or related degree/specialization to the role

B. **Work Experience**: A minimum of 7 years of professional experience working in organizational finance, financial services programs, managing budgets, cash flows, disbursements and financial record keeping. Previous experience in fiduciary analysis and financial sustainability strategies is a plus. A strong background in assisting associations, coordinating bodies and organizations towards become financial independent is preferred. Experience working with donor agencies is preferred.

C. **Knowledge**: A good understanding of how regional West African institutions and organizations operate. Understanding of project management techniques and ability to monitor progress against
objectives. Must have sound knowledge of evaluation and program assessment principles and approaches (using both formative and summative evaluation questions), as well as experience with agriculture institutions. Knowledge of IT and accounting software as well as ERPs to improve overall efficiency for complex organizations. Familiarity with CORAF/WECARD and other regional institutions, such as ECOWAS and UEMOA, is desirable.

D. Language Proficiency: English and French

E. Skills and Abilities: Analytical know-how, ability to communicate, aptitude for financial reporting, and the ability to utilize problem-solving techniques and make independent decisions to improve financial operations and workflow. Keen attention to detail and previous audit experience considered a plus. Ability to write qualitative and quantitative reports that highlight observations in system evaluation.

F. Competencies: Ability to work in a multidisciplinary team and environment and meet tight deadlines.

Human Resources Management Specialist (Team Member)

A. Education: Master’s degree in HR Management, HR Operations, Business Management, HR and Organizational Development, Strategic HR Management, or related degree/specialization to the role.

B. Work Experience: A minimum of 7 years of professional HR experience in the corporate sector, international organizations, NGOs or donor agencies. Experience in workforce planning and employment (developing and implementing recruiting strategy), HR development (Conducting trainings, administering on-the-job training programs and evaluating the effectiveness of training programs), performing job evaluations and job analyses, writing job descriptions, conducting and analyzing compensation surveys, coordinating employee and labor relations in union and non-union environments as well as risk management. Advising C-suite and/or the organization’s leadership in various matters relating to HR, staff wellness and business objectives. Experience in developing HR related communications and policies is a plus.

C. Knowledge: A good understanding of how regional West African institutions and organizations operate. Understanding of project management techniques and ability to monitor progress against objectives. Must have sound knowledge of evaluation and program assessment principles and approaches (using both formative and summative evaluation questions). Knowledge of IT and HR software as well as ERPs to improve overall efficiency for complex organizations. Familiarity with CORAF/WECARD and other regional institutions, such as ECOWAS and UEMOA, is desirable.

D. Language Proficiency: English and French

E. Skills and Abilities: Excellent communication, organizational and training skills. Ability to conduct interviews and analyze survey results; utilize problem-solving techniques and make independent decisions. The ability to collect, evaluate and analyze data relating to human resource functions. Analytical skills required include: Assessment of performance management systems, or results-based management of programs and projects. Must have sound knowledge of evaluation and program assessment principles and approaches (using both formative and summative evaluation questions), as well as experience with research institutions.

F. Competencies: Ability to work in a multidisciplinary team and environment and meet tight deadlines.

Agriculture Research and Policy Expert (Team Member)

A. Education: PhD, or advanced post-graduate degree in agriculture and/or agricultural economics, agriculture policy research, international development, economics or related field is required.

B. Prior Work Experience: Minimum of ten years’ experience working with agriculture programs and research institutions is required, particularly in the areas of food security and natural resource management, access to markets, and/or water resources. Prior experience as team leader for a large-scale multi-country/multi-institutional evaluation in the field of international development for donor organizations, regional institutions, non-governmental organizations and/or private sector institutions required; Experience working with donor agencies is preferred.

C. Knowledge: Must have extensive experience in program evaluations, and assessment of the agriculture sector; Knowledge of the West Africa agriculture and food security development environment and key sector institutions in the region is required; An in-depth understanding of
performance/results management, program and project design, implementation, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation, in the international assistance arena is required; Knowledge of agricultural research institutions, and insights in improving food security in the Sahel region is preferred. Familiarity with CORAF/WECARD and other agriculture research organizations and regional institutions, such as CILSS, ECOWAS and UEMOA, is desirable.

D. **Language Proficiency:** English and French

E. **Skills and Abilities:** Ability to assess and analyze progress made by the regional agriculture programs towards achieving the program outcome and outputs and the sustainability of the results; determine the impact, both positive and negative, from contribution of the program to the achievement of the outcome. Ability to examine and analyze factors which have positively and negatively impacted on achievement of program outputs and outcome; ability to assess the relevance of the outputs to the effective achievement of the outcome; ability to assess the relevance of the program to national priorities; assess the effectiveness of institutional arrangements and partnership strategies;

F. **Competencies:** Ability to work in a multidisciplinary team and environment and meet tight deadlines.

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**Knowledge Management & Communications Specialist (Team Member)**

A. **Education:** Master’s degree in Communications, Marketing, Journalism, Knowledge Management, Linguistics, Social Science, Business Management or related field or related degree/specialization to the role

B. **Work Experience:** 5 years of work experience required in the field of internal and external communications, media relations and/or journalism. Proven network of relevant international journalistic contacts required; Proven ability to shape messages and stories for media placement and demonstrated track record of success in garnering earned media required; Proven ability to work on deadline. Proven experience leading the development and implementation of communication and outreach/advocacy strategies and plans. Experience evaluating KML and ICT systems within an organization is a plus.

C. **Knowledge:** A good understanding of how regional West African institutions and organizations operate. Understanding of project management techniques and ability to monitor progress against objectives. Must have sound knowledge of evaluation and program assessment principles and approaches (using both formative and summative evaluation questions). Must have sound knowledge of evaluation and program assessment principles and approaches (using both formative and summative evaluation questions), as well as experience with research institutions. Familiarity with CORAF/WECARD and other regional institutions, such as ECOWAS and UEMOA, is desirable.

D. **Language Proficiency:** English and French

E. **Skills and Abilities:** Ability to assess and analyze internal communications systems, ICT and KML systems for complex organizations and projects. Ability to make decisions that align with strategy, vision, and mission. Ability to communicate the value of a product or service; Ability to engage with other agencies and forge productive working relationships; Ability to efficiently handle and share information and knowledge. Ability to originate or edit written content for media and the public to be disseminated through press or other online outlets. Multimedia production skills an asset. The ability to utilize problem-solving techniques and make independent decisions.

F. **Competencies:** Ability to work in a multidisciplinary team and environment and meet tight deadlines.

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**8. HOW TO APPLY**

Firms/teams of consultants interested in this call must submit the following documents / information to demonstrate their suitability for the assignment:

- An expression of interest including understanding of the Terms of Reference, methodology, references concerning the performance of similar contracts, publications, and other experiences in a similar field, etc.);
• Up-to-date Curricula Vitae (CV) for each of the experts proposed to work on this assignment, including past experience in similar projects. CVs must include the names and addresses of 3 (three) resource persons.

Qualified firms/team of consultants will be selected according to the rules contained in the CORAF Administrative, Financial and Accounting Procedures Manual.

Interested firms/team of consultants can obtain additional information from the CORAF Executive Secretariat by sending correspondence by e-mail to n.amoah@coraf.org.

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