

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

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Recruitment of an individual consultant to conduct the baseline assessment of the Agroecology Network to promote the sustainability of food systems in West and Central Africa (RADiUS)

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Opening date: May 15, 2025
Closing date: May 30, 2025

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AMI No. 05-2025

The West African Council and Centre for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF) includes 23 National Agricultural Research Systems (SNRA): Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

The vision of CORAF is to ensure prosperity and food and nutrition security in West and Central Africa (AOC); and, its mission is to sustainably improve productivity, competitiveness and agricultural markets in its field of intervention by satisfying the main demands expressed by groups of clients to the research systems of the sub-region.

The RMRN_RADiUS project is a regional project (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Senegal) led by CORAF with UCAD, UJKZ, UFHB, IRAD, IRC, CIRAD and CRS.

The overall objective of the RADiUS project is to ensure the sustainable security and economic, food and nutrition sovereignty of populations through the support of the agroecological transition of farms in West and Central Africa (AOC) by promoting principles, assessment tools, knowledge and innovative solutions. Specifically, the aim is to make agricultural technologies and innovations available on a regional scale in AOC. The components of the project aim at strengthening the capacities in agroecology of actors by supporting continuing and academic training services, the development of community entrepreneurship and the promotion of a legal and institutional framework conducive to the development and adoption of agroecology in AOC, by deploying standard monitoring-toolsevaluation and advocacy with policy makers at different scales.

The baseline assessment (or initial assessment) is essential to measure the pre-conditions for the RADiUS project, allowing an accurate assessment of the effects and impacts of the project as it progresses.

To conduct this study, CORAF is seeking a senior consultant to establish a detailed baseline by determining the (qualitative and quantitative) baseline values for impact indicators, effects and outcomes in accordance with the project's results framework and

other indicators related to areas that would be directly or indirectly linked to the project activities proposed by the consultant.

The Executive Director of CORAF invites consultants with the required qualifications as indicated in the terms of reference below, to express their interest in this call.

The tasks to be performed and other information are detailed in the terms of reference.

Consultants interested in this call must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform such services (Letter of expression of interest, CV, references regarding the execution of similar contracts, experiences in a similar field, experiences under similar conditions, etc.).

The consultant will be selected according to the selection method based on the consultant's qualification in accordance with the rules contained in the CORAF manual of administrative, financial and accounting procedures.

Interested candidates can obtain additional information from the CORAF Executive Secretariat via f.ouidoh@coraf.org get copy to procurement@coraf.org.

Expressions of interest must be submitted by e-mail to the following address: procurement@coraf.org no later than **May 30, 2025 at 17:00 GMT**.

The Executive Director
Dr. Moumini SAVADOGO

Agroecology Network to promote the sustainability of food systems in West and Central Africa (RADIUS)

TERMS OF REFERENCES

Recruitment of an individual consultant for the baseline assessment of the RMRN RADIUS project

1. Context

1.1. Context and framework of intervention

In West Africa, the agricultural sector is called upon to ensure local food security and contribute to economic growth. The region's economy is heavily based on agriculture, which accounts for about 35% of the region's gross domestic product (GDP) and employs 60% of the labour force. It is also the main driver of poverty reduction on small farms. To achieve the goals of socio-economic development and people's well-being, African agriculture must significantly improve its productivity while maintaining the sustainability of diversified and quality agri-food systems.

Food systems in AOC (West and Central Africa) face complex challenges that compromise their productivity and sustainability. Climate variability and the increase in extreme weather events, such as droughts and floods, have devastating effects on agricultural yields in this region. These events disrupt production cycles, reducing the food security of local populations. Soil erosion and desertification, often exacerbated by unsustainable agricultural practices, result in significant loss of fertility on agricultural land. This degradation reduces the capacity of soils to support productive crops, requiring urgent intervention to restore soil health. Limited access to agricultural inputs and financing is also a significant barrier. Due to poverty and lack of adequate financial services, many farmers in the region are struggling to obtain quality seeds, fertilizers and plant protection products. In addition, the lack of infrastructure for storage, processing and transportation of agricultural products results in significant post-harvest losses. Finally, market access, market instability and low value of local produce make it difficult for farmers to reap the benefits of their crops.

Despite these challenges, AOC food systems offer many opportunities to improve resilience and sustainability, and the adoption of agroecological practices is a promising path. Crop rotation and association, agroforestry and compost use can improve soil fertility, increase biodiversity and reduce negative environmental impacts. Crop and variety diversification is another key strategy.

It is in this context that the European Commission's Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (D+i) initiative aims to link research and innovation more effectively with local needs. The RMRN_RADIUS project is part of this dynamic by proposing the establishment of an Agroecology Network to promote the sustainability of food systems.

1.2. Presentation of the RADiUS project

The implementation of the RMRN in agroecology in AOC occurs in this context where real opportunities exist but need to be better known, Better organized, valued and channelled to achieve the goal of the broadest possible agroecological transition in West and Central Africa. The RMRN_RADiUS project is a regional project (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Senegal) led by CORAF with UCAD, UJKZ, UFHB, IRAD, IRC, CIRAD and CRS.

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1.3. Theory of Change from RADiUS

The RADiUS project is based on a clear theory of change that guides all activities. This theory of change states that the promotion of an agroecological transition at the farm level, supported by appropriate public policies and a robust accompanying system, will sustainably improve the food security and economic sovereignty of populations in AOC. By promoting the dissemination of agricultural technologies and innovations, the project aims to strengthen the capacities of stakeholders while ensuring that environmental challenges are addressed through agroecological practices.

1.4. Rationale for baseline assessment

The baseline assessment (or initial assessment) is essential to measure the pre-conditions for the RADiUS project, allowing an accurate assessment of the effects and impacts of the project as it progresses. It is a crucial reference point for future comparisons to assess the relevance, consistency, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of project interventions. This evaluation is necessary to guide the implementation of activities and adjust the strategy based on results achieved, and to demonstrate the added value of the project to stakeholders, including funders.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to establish a detailed baseline by determining the (qualitative and quantitative) reference values for impact indicators, effects and outcomes in accordance with the project's results framework and other indicators related to areas that would be directly or indirectly linked to the project activities proposed by the consultant. In addition, it will allow, through the basic data, to adjust the intervention logic of the project if necessary.

Specific objectives of the baseline assessment:

1. Establish baseline values for key RADiUS project indicators, to allow a clear comparison with the outcomes at the end of the project.
2. Analyze current agricultural practices and adoption of agro-ecological innovations prior to project intervention.
3. Identify factors that may influence the success or failure of the project, and risks that could affect its implementation.
4. Analyse the logic of intervention and the relevance of the project in relation to the needs of local actors and regional and national policies.

3. RESEARCH ISSUE

Research questions will guide the evaluation by providing a better understanding of the initial context and guiding the collection of data required for analysis. They focus on specific aspects of the project and will be used to interpret the results of the baseline assessment. More specifically, using the OECD's DAC criteria:

Relevance:

- (i) To what extent does the intervention logic of the project achieve the strategic objectives?
- (ii) What is the agroecological dynamic in the target areas

Effectiveness:

- (iii) What is the level of knowledge in agroecology among the actors concerned, in terms of academic and continuing training, before the intervention of the project?
- (iv) Who are the key actors in the agroecological transition, and what is their current level of engagement?
- (v) What are the dominant agricultural practices?
- (vi) What is the rate of adoption of agro-ecological innovations before the start of the project?

Consistency:

- (vii) To what extent does the project align with national, regional or international policy objectives in the field of agroecological transition?
- (viii) Does the project align with the organizational policies of the different implementing partners (CORAF, CRS, CIRAD, IRC, IRAD, UCAD, UJKZ and UFHB)?

Sustainability

- (ix) What strategies have been put in place to ensure the sustainability of results at the level of research institutions and producer organizations?
- (x) What governance and management systems at the community level need to be put in place to ensure continuity of actions after project completion?

4. EXPECTED EVALUATION RESULTS

The expected outcomes of this basic assessment:

- The starting point of the different indicators (situation before/without) of the RADiUS results framework is established to allow a comparison at the end of the project (situation after/with);
- The baseline of all risks that may influence the implementation of the project is made;
- Factors that may influence the success and/or failure of the RADiUS project in reducing food security and economic, food and nutrition sovereignty are assessed;
- The project's synergies with other actors in the intervention area are identified.

Key performance indicators

The RADiUS baseline study aims to establish the baseline of impact and effects indicators identified within the project's logical framework. These baseline data will measure progress during implementation. The indicators to be documented in this study are:

Table 1: List of performance indicators for which values are to be determined.

Results	Expected result	Indicator to be collected in the baseline study	Data sources
General objective	The economic, food and nutritional security and sovereignty of populations are ensured through the accompaniment of agroecological transition.	Average production of the crops considered in the target countries	Official statistics
		Average income of farmers in target countries	Investigations
Effect 1	The dissemination of agricultural technologies and innovations is scaled up through CORAF's MITA platform.	Number of targeted actors who visited the MITA digital platform at least once (audience)	MITA Platform
		Number of targeted actors using the knowledge and tools of the MITA platform	MITA Platform
Effect 2	Training strengthens the capacity of actors towards	Number of training participants with knowledge in agroecology	Documentary review Investigations

	agroecological transition and entrepreneurship.	Number of participants in training courses who have implemented actions contributing to the agroecological transition, and potentially developed entrepreneurship in this direction	Documentary review Investigations
Effect 3	The actors of the network benefit from a legal and institutional framework favourable to agroecology.	Number of documented cases or public institution adopting agro-ecological practices promoted by the project	Documentary review Investigations Interviews

5. Deliverables

The following deliverables will be expected:

- A detailed methodological orientation report that clearly describes the operational methodology (description of the sampling approach and method), the stakeholders to meet, the data collection tools (quantitative and qualitative) and the detailed implementation plan for the activities;
- An interim report of the survey results;
- A final baseline report;
- Powerpoint presentation of the final report;
- A final database containing all the information collected.

6. METHODOLOGIE

The RADiUS baseline study will be conducted under the coordination of an external consultant, in close collaboration with the project team and stakeholders involved. The proposed methodological approach will be divided into two main phases:

Phase 1: Study Preparation

- **Framing meeting**

A meeting between the consultant, the team and all the implementing actors will be organized to frame and validate the indicators to be studied. This scoping session will harmonize the understanding of the task, the objectives assigned and the expected results of the study.

- **Document review and review of technical documents**

This step will consist of an in-depth analysis of the existing documentation: project documents, previous studies, institutional reports, sectoral data, etc. It will help to contextualize indicators and identify useful secondary data sources.

- **Sampling**

This study will include all the areas, sectors and areas of intervention of the RADiUS project. The target population will consist of two homogeneous groups divided into potential beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Thus, beyond the consideration of target communities, the strategy will use the indicator **Average Farm Income as a parameter to define sample size. However, the latter will be set according to available resources and the level of confidence desired. Finally, stratified random sampling will be used.**

- **Data collection tools**

The consultant will identify the necessary data collection tools in its technical proposal. These tools should be accessible and usable by all staff involved in data collection work. Investigation officers will need to be trained in order to make optimal use of these tools. The project being carried out in several countries, it is strongly recommended to use digital tools that facilitate the speed of data transmission. As such, the consultant will be suggested to use one of the tools: CommCare or KoboCollect.

- **Training of data collection officers**

The training will be provided by the consultant's team, with support from the project team and will include: (i) presentation of the project; (ii) the objectives of the study; the areas of intervention, the sectors to be covered; impact and impact indicators, interim results; (iii) filling out forms through the KoboCollect application and (iv) organizing field work.

After the design of the tools and their deployment on the collection platform, a test will be carried out to ensure their validity, understanding and control of the filling mode. This exercise will allow the data collectors to apply the training received and the trainers to become aware of the various difficulties that may affect the quality of the collected data.

Phase 2: Data collection

The collection will be based on a combination of secondary and primary sources. A literature review will precede the field phase to consolidate existing knowledge and identify priority areas for investigation. Field collection methods will include:

- **Group discussions (focus groups)** to collect collective perceptions of project effects and community dynamics;
- **In-depth discussions** with key stakeholders (institutions, local leaders, technical partners) to explore mechanisms for change;

- **Interviews with key informants** (farmers, support agents, local officials) to shed light on specific issues related to implementation;
- **Individual participant surveys** to generate quantitative data on the defined indicators.

CORAF's Kobo Collect system will be made available for data entry and transmission. CORAF will also facilitate the liaison of the consultant with local researchers in the countries of intervention. These will be able to directly support the field collection, allowing the consultant to coordinate operations remotely (from Senegal, for example), optimizing resources.

The consultant is responsible for data quality assurance. It will have to put in place a rigorous system of supervision, verification and validation of the data. The RADiUS MEL team will be able to provide ad hoc support (e.g. proofreading, final validation, technical support). Each form should be checked for consistency, completeness and reliability.

The consultant will control and validate the field data sent by the collection agents. Each form sent by agents will be reviewed for consistency and completeness.

The consultant will have to adopt a rigorous methodological approach to ensure the quality, credibility and use of the evaluation. Finally, recommendations will be made in response to identified constraints, with the aim of improving project performance over the coming years.

Phase 3: Data Processing and Analysis

After field data collection, the consultant will be responsible for the data processing and analysis phase, in collaboration with the internal MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning) team of the RADiUS project.

Processing of quantitative data: The quantitative data, collected through surveys and questionnaires (on KoboCollect), will first be cleaned to ensure their consistency and completeness. This process will include:

1) verification of the validity of the answers , 2) coding and **data organization** and 3) statistical analysis **according to the objectives of the study.**

Qualitative data processing: Qualitative data from in-depth interviews, group discussions and key informant interviews will be transcribed and coded for analysis. This phase will include: 1) the Transcript of the group interviews and discussions , 2) the Codification thematique and 3) the Synthesis and interpretation.

The consultant will be responsible for data management and processing with a rigorous approach to ensure quality of results. It will ensure the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data and ensure the production of reports necessary for the assessment of the baseline. The analysis will be conducted in a way that directly responds to research questions, highlighting trends, gaps and relationships relevant to RADiUS indicators.

The internal MEL team of the RADiUS project will provide technical support throughout the analysis process, providing oversight and verifying the consistency of results.

7. QUALIFICATIONS OF CONSULTANT

This basic assessment involves a senior specialist assessor. In the event that there is a team of evaluators, the Senior Consultant will coordinate his/her team with ultimate responsibility for the work as well as the contact function with project respondents.

The consultant will demonstrate the following skills and experience:

- 1 Have an advanced university degree (master's or doctoral) in a relevant field such as agricultural sciences, applied statistics, agro-economics or related disciplines. A proven specialization or experience in agroecology is an asset.
- 2 Demonstrate demonstrated experience in conducting external evaluations (baseline, performance and/or impact assessments) of development projects, particularly in the agricultural or agroecological field.
- 3 Proven expertise in the use of mixed methodologies for the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.
- 4 Have proven experience in coordinating multi-country studies or managing remote field teams, with technical supervision skills.
- 5 Master the entire evaluation process, from methodological design to reporting of results, including clear and actionable reports.
- 6 Knowledge of digital data collection and analysis tools (KoboCollect, SPSS, Stata, R, NVivo or equivalent) is highly desired.

8. DURATION AND LOCATION OF THE MISSION

The consultant's mission will be carried out from June 15 to July 31, 2025 from the contract award date with ten (10) men/days of actual work. The consultant will be based in Senegal and will work closely with the RADiUS project coordination and M&E team. The consultant will carry out the preparation activities, organize the remote survey in the project intervention area, process and analyze the results, develop and submit the different deliverables.

9. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Expressions of interest must be sent to the Executive Director of CORAF and submitted by e-mail to procurement@coraf.org, no later than **May 30, 2025 at 17:00 GMT**.

Only the successful candidate will be contacted for the rest of the selection process.

10. OTHER PROVISIONS

CORAF reserves the right to re-launch the call for expressions of interest in the event that the applications received have not been satisfactory.

FRAUD, CORRUPTION, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, EXPLOITATION, SEXUAL ABUSE AND HARASSMENT

Fraud, corruption: bidders, suppliers, contractors and their subcontractors must observe the strictest rules of professional ethics when entering into and executing contracts. In particular, they must avoid any act of corruption and all fraudulent, collusive, coercive or obstructive manoeuvres for the purpose of granting or obtaining a contract concluded by CORAF. Any deviant behaviour will be subject to appropriate sanctions (cancellation of the contract, exclusion of future contracts concluded by CORAF, dismissal of CORAF staff guilty of these acts).

Conflicts of interest: CORAF rules require that any company involved in a procurement process is not in a conflict of interest situation. Two scenarios can be envisaged:

- The firm provides goods, works or services (other than consulting services) that are a follow-up to or directly related to the consultancy services for the preparation or execution of a project provided by the firm or an affiliated company;
- The company (including its staff) has a close business or family relationship with a CORAF staff member: i) who is directly or indirectly involved in preparing the tender documents or contract specifications, and/or in the evaluation process for that contract; or ii) who may be involved in the execution or supervision of that same contract.

The term “**Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)**” includes the following meanings:

- “**Sexual Exploitation**” (ES), defined as abusing or attempting to abuse a state of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes, including but not limited to monetized profit, the social or political sexual exploitation of another person;
- “**Sexual Abuse**” (SA), defined as any physical intrusion or threat of physical intrusion of a sexual nature, either by force or under unequal conditions or coercion;
- Sexual Harassment (HS) is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, any request for sexual favours or other verbal or physical behaviour with a sexual connotation by the Contractor’s staff towards other personnel of the Contractor or the Client;

Any company that is in a conflict of interest situation, or in a situation of exploitation, abuse or sexual harassment will not be able to obtain a CORAF contract.

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