

DeSIRA-LIFT Service Area 1

Non-Key Expert

Terms of Reference

Expert in MEL trainings for professionals (NKE 1.18 Cat III)

FR-EN speaking

Reference: SA1-3.4

1. Background

The [DeSIRA Initiative](#), funded by the European Commission (DG INTPA) seeks to enhance an inclusive, sustainable and climate-relevant transformation of rural areas and of agri-food systems, by linking better agricultural innovation with research for more developmental impact. It supports actions in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to strengthen the resilience of their agri-food systems, the relevance of the national and regional research and innovation systems, and the coherence and efficiency of their agricultural public research and extension services related to climate change challenges.

DeSIRA-LIFT is a *service project* (June 2021 – May 2024) to the European Commission (EC), Directorate General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) with the main objective to enhance the impact of the DeSIRA Initiative by providing (on-demand) services to DeSIRA project holders and partners. DeSIRA-LIFT includes three service areas aligned to the three DeSIRA Pillars: *Service Area 1* supports country-led DeSIRA projects to enhance their impacts on climate-oriented innovation systems in line with more sustainable food system transitions. *Service Area 2* supports the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) ex-pillar IV organizations in their Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) related roles. *Service area 3* is providing support to policy makers on themes related to agricultural research for development (AR4D) and innovation policies and programming.

2. Rationale of the assignment

The expert will join the team of **short-term experts** of DeSIRA-LIFT Service Area 1 (SA1).

She/he will work closely with the **SA1 core team** of long-term experts who develop and implement the whole support service offer for Pillar 1 DeSIRA projects. The SA1 core team is responsible for designing and delivering on-demand and pre-defined support services to 69 country-led [DeSIRA projects](#) in four areas:

- Service 1.1: Support to the implementation of in-project MEL approaches and tools;
- Service 1.2: Support to strengthen participatory research, innovation and innovation services in country-based DeSIRA projects;
- Service 1.3: Facilitation of cross-project mutual learning and networking;
- Service 1.4: Elaboration of Knowledge and Communication Products.

The core team is composed of long-term thematic experts, project clusters facilitators and a Community of Practice (CoP) officer. The core team ensures the relevance, responsiveness and efficiency of services by using training & coaching approach of Project clusters for developing a specific set of managerial capacities (<https://www.desiralift.org/service-area-1/>). The core team facilitates alternatively in-project learning cycles and inter-project joint learning events depending on the needs and levels of capacities in place. Most of the joint learning and sharing activities will be facilitated through virtual events and a Community of Practice. The core team is also in charge of tracking progress within project clusters and

produce knowledge for a middle-range theory on how to develop capacities for transformative R&I projects in the global South.

Short-term non-key experts support **DeSIRA project clusters** by enhancing in-project learning depending on the needs and level of capacities in place:

- Delivering on-demand support services;
- Organizing and facilitating coaching sessions, workshops, learning and bridging events;

Short-term non-key experts support the **core team** in:

- Refining the service offer based on projects feedbacks;
- Developing the SA1 learning agenda.

3. Scope of the assignment (responsibilities and tasks)

The *MEL Expert and Trainer* will perform the following tasks under this assignment:

- Support the implementation of the online M&E related trainings in English. At the moment, the identified trainings are: 'Communication of results: designing strategy for research uptake', 'Effective policy engagement and influencing strategies', 'theory-based evaluation and contribution analysis'. The list may change;
- Get organized and implement the M&E related trainings in French;
- Provide some coaching support to DeSIRA project staff in relation to the topics covered;
- Get back to SA1 core team MEL lead and main trainer about effectiveness of trainings and projects staff needs.

4. Deliverables

- Facilitation plan adapted to the context for each training / to be provided prior to the implementation of each training;
- Recorded on-line sessions;
- All presentations and support material produced for the courses and the associated scripts in English;
- After each training, short report including at least the following:
 - o own assessment of effectiveness of the training for the DeSIRA projects' staff: what went well and why, what could have been better and why, potential next steps to improve effectiveness;
 - o short plan detailing coaching sessions;
 - o attendance list annotated with level, needs and expectations of participants;
 - o satisfactory survey/evaluation post training.
- After each coaching trajectory, short report including at the least the following:
 - o Coaching activities implemented: Project and staff being coached; topics and support provided;
 - o Comparison activities implemented vs plan, including reasons for changes;
 - o Assessment of coaching: what went well and why, what could have been better and why.
- All material used to collect and organize information on Projects and projects' support needs;
- Reports on data collected and data analysis;
- Assessment tools developed under this assignment;
- A final activity report including an overview of all activities implemented and tools/document developed, and suggestions on: the next steps to match projects' support needs, improvements of the training-coaching approach; improvements on the service delivery mechanism.

5. Duration of the assignment

The assignment will last for a maximum of 25 days to be completed between 1st November 2022 and 31st March 2023. The expert will start each training only after the 'go-ahead' from the SA1 MEL expert of the core team.

In case of unsatisfactory performance, the assignment may be terminated under specific conditions (to be specified in the contract).

6. Required qualifications and experience

The Expert will have:

Qualifications and skills

Relevant education in a discipline related to economics, social sciences, or agronomy.

General professional experience

- At least 3 years' professional experience in areas directly relevant to international development, innovation with a social science perspective, knowledge and innovation systems, or likewise.

Specific professional experience

At least 3 years' experience in areas in relation to project monitoring & evaluation:

- Trainings for professionals;
- Monitoring, evaluation and learning approaches and tools;
- Facilitating self-developed online virtual and offline physical trainings for professionals
- Experience with digital facilitation and learning tools (Padlets, Klaxoon), matching with professional audiences and expected outcomes;
- Facilitating and coaching on material developed by other MEL experts;
- Expertise in communication and lobby & advocacy is considered an added-value.

Soft skills

- Ability to work in a team and in a multicultural context;
- Excellent communication skills;
- Motivation, self-direction and proactiveness;
- Methodological rigour, priority management and organizational skills.

Language skills

- Good understanding of English;
- Excellent command of French also in writing.

7. Reporting

The expert will report to the SA1 MEL expert on a regular basis for the design and implementation of all her/his activities.

The expert will report to the SA1 leader and the Project Director for the validation of his/her workplans, timesheet and activity reports.

8. Location of the assignment

The assignment will be mostly home-based, done virtually on-line.

Some M&E related trainings could be implemented physically in one of the countries where DeSIRA Projects intervene (Asia, Africa or Latin American regions). Occasional travel to countries in the South may be required. This will be decided after discussion with MEL lead expert and SA1 leader.