

DeSIRA-LIFT Terms of Reference

Expert in Communicating Research

(NKE1.27, Cat I)

Service Area 1

Reference: SA1-7.4

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 DeSIRA Pillar 1 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. DeSIRA-LIFT is implemented by member organisations of the Agrinatura and EFARD networks.

2. Rationale of the assignment

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

S/he will work closely with the SA1 core team of long-term experts who develop and implement the whole support service offer for DeSIRA Pillar 1 projects. The SA1 core team is responsible for designing and delivering on-demand and pre-defined support services to ap DeSIRA Pillar 1 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 DeSIRA Pillar 1 projects;
- Service 1.3: Facilitation of cross-project mutual learning and networking;
- Service 1.4: Elaboration of Knowledge and Communication Products.

SA1 offers training and coaching to strengthen four managerial capacities of DeSIRA project management teams:

- Capacities for Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (C4MEL)
- Conducting Action-Research interventions for strengthening Agricultural Innovation Systems (C4SSIS)
- Capacities for open innovation (C4OI)
- Capacities to adapt and respond to innovation needs – implementing adaptive project management (O3MEL)

The SA1 core team is composed of long-term thematic experts, project cluster 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 SA1 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 research and innovation (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 SA1 core team in:

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

3. Scope of the assignment

The Expert in Communicating Research will perform the following tasks under this assignment:

- Design and Implement a course for about 50 DeSIRA project teams on how to communicate research, with a specific focus on three learning products: policy briefs, research briefs and stories of change (SoC);
- Identify and target audiences;
- Implement several training sessions, at least in 2 languages (English and French);
- Provide feedback or coaching to project teams who wish to implement contents of the training at different stages of the process;
- Support the consolidation of a collection of SoC for the publication of two books (one for end 2023 – one for 2024)

4. Deliverables

- Course material (presentations and support material) and facilitation plan for the course to be provided prior to the implementation of the course;
- Recorded on-line sessions;
- Tracking of Briefs and stories developed by the projects, in order to select a collection of stories to be included in books published by DeSIRA-LIFT;
- Two books of a dozen of Stories of Change;
- A final report activity including an overview of all activities implemented.

5. Reporting

The expert will report to the SA1 core team (in particular NKE1.3 – Expert in MEL) on a regular basis for the design and implementation of all her/his activities.

The expert will report to the SA1 leader and Project Director of DeSIRA-LIFT for the validation of her/his workplans, timesheets and 6-monthly activity reports. The deliverables will be approved by members of the SA1 Core Team (NKE1.3) and the SA1 Leader.

6. Duration of the assignment

The assignment will be a maximum of 40 working days, starting 1st June 2023 and to be completed before 31st May 2024.

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

7. Location of the assignment

The assignment will be primarily home-based. Attendance at workshops in the geographical areas of the projects' implementation (Africa, Asia, Indian Ocean, Latin America) and in Europe (France, Belgium) may be required.

8. Required qualifications and experience

The Expert will have:

Qualifications and skills

At least master's degree in a discipline related to International Development, Economics or Social Sciences; with a focus on education and development or communication studies or, in its absence, equivalent professional experience.

General professional experience

At least 12 years' professional experience in areas directly relevant to international development, innovation with a social science perspective, or likewise.

Specific professional experience

- At least 5 years' professional experience in areas directly relevant to communication for development;
- Experience in design and management of research and development projects;
- Experience with Knowledge-to-Policy learning activities;
- Proven track record of development and publication of knowledge products to communicate research (research briefs, policy briefs, stories of change);
- Proven experience with training and coaching to project teams in the field of communication on project impact;
- Understanding of concepts such as innovation process, AIS, action-research, farmer-led research, farmer-led innovation, theory of change, impact evaluation;
- Applying qualitative evaluation tools such as The Most Significant Change technic, for the narration of changes.
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Soft skills

- Ability to work in a team and in a multicultural context;
- Being used to work, communicate and facilitate in a multicultural context;
- Being able to work autonomously: good work organisation, motivation, self-direction and proactiveness;
- Experience with using online tools such as Padlet, Klaxoon, etc.;
- Excellent writing and oral presentation skills in English;
- Working knowledge in one or two other languages: French and/or Spanish.