



**Strengthening Agricultural Knowledge & Innovation Ecosystem for Inclusive Rural Transformation & Livelihoods in Eastern Africa (AIRTEA)**

**Terms of reference for the recruitment of the pool of experts to constitute the Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC) for the AIRTEA Project**

*Version June 2021*

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACP	African, Caribbean, and Pacific
ACP-IF	African, Caribbean, and Pacific Innovation Fund
AIRTEA	Strengthening Agricultural Knowledge & Innovation Ecosystem for Inclusive Rural Transformation & Livelihoods in Eastern Africa
ARD	Agricultural Research for Development
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa
EAFF	Eastern Africa Farmers Federation
EC/EU	European Commission/European Union
FARA	Forum for Agricultural in Africa
FOs	Farmer organizations
GDP	Gross Domestic Production
IAR4D	Integrated Agricultural Research for Development
IEC	Independent Evaluation Committee
IP	Innovation Platform
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OACPS	Organisation of African Caribbean and Pacific States
PPP	PowerPoint Presentation
R&I	Research and Innovation
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
TAU	Technical Assistance Unit
WP	Work package

## 1. BACKGROUND & DEFINITIONS

A consortium consisting of FARA, ASARECA, and EAFF<sup>1</sup> is implementing the project *Strengthening Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Ecosystem for Inclusive Rural Transformation and Livelihoods in Eastern Africa (AIRTEA)* sponsored by the Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States (OACPS) through the ACP-Innovation Fund which itself is funded by the European Union (EU) through the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund (EDF). The OACPS is supported by a Technical Assistance Unit (TAU) – who oversees the management of the OACPS Research and Innovation Programme (<https://oacps-ri.eu>).

The consortium, through the AIRTEA Project, will technically and financially support multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) from Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda to develop proposals and implement projects that promote demand-driven agricultural research and innovation. The consortium believes that science, technology, and innovation in agriculture in Africa in general, and Eastern Africa in particular, constitute the major driver for economic development. This is because the agricultural sector is still the main employer providing jobs to the largest proportion of the population of Eastern Africa and contributes to over 35% of the GDP in the three selected countries.

The theory of change of the AIRTEA Project is that the research-policy interface will create a conducive policy ecosystem in the three targeted countries that will, *inter alia*, enable knowledge generation, exchange, and learning; technology transfer, uptake, and scale-up; and business development through capacity building. These will lead to innovations with socio-economic benefits and impacts.

For the sake of gaining a common understanding and vision, it is important to clarify some concepts and terminologies that we frequently refer to in this call for proposals and that may be used by applicants in their proposals. The concepts are defined using different sources.

According to the Guidelines for Grant Applicants of the ACP-Innovation Fund (2019)<sup>2</sup>:

- **Innovation** is a process, idea, invention, initiative, or product that is i) genuinely new and ii) creates value or more effective solutions. Innovation can be fueled by science and technology, can entail improved ways of working with new and diverse partners, or can involve new social and business models or policy, creative financing mechanisms, or path-breaking improvements in delivering essential services and products.

- **Research and innovation uptake** refers to how knowledge generated from research and innovation activities can contribute to societal development.

- **Inclusive innovation** refers to developments that marginalised groups take part in and benefit from. Technologies and their benefits must be accessible and well-adapted, particularly for use by the poorest or most vulnerable, and they must ultimately be integrated into local contexts that will vary economically, politically, and culturally.

- **Local and indigenous knowledge** is intended as locally embedded knowledge that is context-specific, accumulated over time, and unique to a given culture, society, or local community.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.faraafrica.org](http://www.faraafrica.org); [www.asareca.org](http://www.asareca.org); [www.eaffu.org](http://www.eaffu.org)

<sup>2</sup> ACP-IF, Guidelines for grant applicants, 2019 (<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?ADSSChck=1618481743947&do=publi.welcome&searchtype=RS&orderby=upd&orderbyad=Desc&aofr=166663&nbPubliList=15&userlanguage=en>)

- **Frugal innovation** is intended as the development of affordable, adaptable, and accessible solutions to serve and fulfill the needs of underserved populations or market segments.

- **Knowledge transfer** is the process of transferring skills, knowledge, and/or technologies between universities and other institutions to ensure that scientific and technological developments are accessible to a wide range of users who can then further develop and exploit the technology to generate innovations.

- **Technology transfer** refers to the process of conveying results stemming from scientific and technological research to the marketplace and the wider society, along with the associated skills and procedures; it includes the complex processes of sharing knowledge and adapting technology to meet local conditions, along with the associated management demands.

The Dutch funding mechanism known as the **Applied Research Fund (ARF)** second-round launched in 2016<sup>3</sup>, gives a clear definition of the concept of innovation and co-creation:

- **Innovation** is the process of developing new value-adding ways to meet existing, new or inarticulate needs. Innovation is accomplished through more effective products, processes, services, technologies, policies, or ideas that are readily available to governments, markets, and society.

- **Co-creation** is a form of cooperation in research where different parties (stakeholders, target groups) in the knowledge (demand and supply) process are engaged in interaction and joint learning on the problem definition, formulation of possible solutions, design of the research, conducting the research, the assessment of the results, and the translation of these in new practices and products. The diversity of perspectives and the type and level of knowledge is seen as an asset that can be addressed in a constructive way of mutual learning and design.

FARA defines an **Agribusiness Learning Alliance**<sup>4</sup> as a market-centric learning milieu that enables connection, co-creation, and capacity-strengthening among its users in an open and inclusive process along specific developmental pathways.

**Research for Development** refers to research targeted to an identified area of development. This usually implies that a gap of knowledge, skills, or technology has been identified to hinder attaining the results of a development program. The research is done to address the issue.

The PAEPARD project (2010)<sup>5</sup> considers **agricultural innovation** as a process that requires the collective effort of different actors with different roles as defined below:

1. Actors whose demands drive the innovation process and who thus have a *direct stake* in the results (e.g. producers, processors, traders, retailers)
2. Actors whose support is needed to make the innovation work (e.g. technical, financial, and business support services, policymakers, schools, training centers, universities), including research actors with the knowledge and competencies needed to help the other actors develop new answers to their joint challenge and take informed decisions.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?ADSSChck=1618481743947&do=publi.welcome&searchtype=RS&orderby=upd&orderbyad=Desc&aofr=166663&nbPubliList=15&userlanguage=en>

<sup>4</sup> Munoko, K. 2021. Agribusiness Learning Alliances," FARA Working Paper.

<sup>5</sup> PAEPARD call for support to MSP that promote demand-driven agricultural research and innovation, December 2010

3. Brokers or innovation facilitators who bring actors together around a shared challenge or opportunity, facilitate the interactions, negotiations, and knowledge sharing between the actors, help level the playing field and strengthen actors' capacities.

According to PAEPARD, a successful innovation process requires much more than research. Because for research to contribute to agricultural innovation, it must be integrated within the innovation process. Researchers and other actors need to continually share knowledge, learn together and mutually re-adjust their actions to ensure that results are relevant.

In the case of the AIRTEA Project, youth and women, among others, may also position themselves as service providers for capacity and business development services within the learning community along commodity value chains. They will be identified, and their capacity strengthened.

In the context of this call for proposals, we understand by **innovation platform (IP)**: systematic processes or mechanisms, usually involving ongoing face-to-face and/or virtual interactions, through which stakeholders engage to diagnose problems, identify opportunities, and find ways to achieve their goals. IP is crucial and relevant in the AIRTEA Project as the base of the organization of stakeholders along value chains for knowledge and innovation.

These guidelines set out the rules for submission, evaluation, and implementation of multi-stakeholder partnership (MSP) projects funded under this call for proposals.

The AIRTEA Project is expected to produce a series of outputs that include but not limited to the following:

- i. Capacities of youth and women involved in East Africa's innovation platforms strengthened (Output 1.1);
- ii. Innovation Platforms and linkages along country priority value chains established and supported (Output 1.2);
- iii. Technologies, innovations and management practices generated or adapted to address challenges of marginalized rural communities (Output 2.1);
- iv. Knowledge products and solutions developed or sourced to address challenges of marginalized rural communities (Output 2.2);
- v. National ABLA platforms established (Output 2.3);
- vi. Collaborative partnerships within ABLA supported (Output 2.4);
- vii. Technology transfer and uptake developed and made available for dissemination of knowledge products among value chain actor (Output 2.5); and
- viii. New business services offered by operators along the value chain (Output 3.1).

## **2. RATIONALE & JUSTIFICATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The AIRTEA Project will launch a call for multi-stakeholder partnership proposals for ARD stakeholders from Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. The demand-driven proposals must address one or more of the four priorities (foci) listed below:

1. To harness digital technologies and tools to promote sustainable and resilient agri-food systems in the three countries.
2. To facilitate the engagement of youth and women in economic and entrepreneurial activities and support farmers by increasing their access to finance and output markets.
3. To establish or enable synergies in the research and innovation ecosystem, including with the private sector and policymakers; facilitate conditions for technology transfer; promote R&I uptake, knowledge co-creation and knowledge sharing.

4. To promote local and indigenous knowledge and its use in combination with formal knowledge systems and practices.

Specific issues expected to be addressed by multi-stakeholder partnership projects encompass among others: the adoption of appropriate technologies, the institutional and policy environment conducive to farming as a business, the skills for on-farm economic decision making, cash flow management and investment planning.

Regional proposals addressing shared challenges at the regional level (in the 3 countries) and promoting regional partnerships/integration are strongly encouraged. These proposals will be assessed/evaluated using the same criteria used to assess country-focused proposals.

Whatever the priority to be addressed and the scope of the proposals (local, country and/or regional), due attention to gender and household decision-making dynamics will be expected to figure out in proposals. Gender integration will be assessed during the evaluation.

### **3. OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The overall objective of the independent experts is to evaluate proposals responding to the call for proposals launched for stakeholders from Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. The specific objectives of this Assignment are:

1. To assess, using the scorecard criteria, all proposals submitted in response to the call and fulfilling the administration criteria after a check done by the AIRTEA coordination.
2. To recommend, for funding, the best proposals to the Project Steering Committee (PSC).
3. To produce a report of the evaluation process and its outcome.

### **4. SCOPE OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The evaluation of the proposals will be carried out by a team of independent experts, called the International Evaluation Committee (IEC), who will work together but recruited individually based on competencies. The team of 6 experts is expected to be complementary in their expertise: research in agriculture, social sciences, and development including gender integration, agribusiness development, planning and policymaking in agriculture, etc.

The scope of the assignment will consist of the following tasks;

- i. Participate in the session that will nominate the chairman and the vice-chairman of the IEC.
- ii. Read, provide review comments, and score all proposals that will be assigned by the chairman and the vice-chairman of the IEC. Each proposal must be assessed by a minimum of 2 evaluators and a maximum of 3.
- iii. Participate in the development of a timetable/timeline/timeframe of the assignment. The assignment is expected to be completed by **16 August 2021**.
- iv. Deliberate/decide on the proposals to be awarded and funds to be allocated based on the scores from different evaluators.
- v. Produce a synthetic but detailed report on each proposal: strengths and weaknesses. And therefore, why was it recommended or not to be funded.

## **5. OUTPUTS TO BE DELIVERED**

The IEC is expected to deliver the following outcomes:

1. At least 10 to 15 best proposals are selected and submitted to the Project Steering Committee for their approval.
2. A detailed report on the evaluation process and outcomes
3. Presentation of the evaluation report to the project coordination and Project Steering Committee.

## **6. DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT**

The IEC will have fifteen (15) working days to carry out the assignment including the submission of the evaluation report. The assignment is expected to be completed by **16 August 2021**.

## **7. LOCATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The assignment will be fully home-based. The IEC team members should ensure strong internet connectivity, teamwork, and speed to avoid delays in the evaluation process.

## **8. PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

The IEC is expected to undertake the evaluation with the highest standards of professional and ethical considerations, competence, and integrity. The IEC is expected to deliver the outputs listed in Section 5 and 6 most effectively and efficiently within the assignment period stated in Section 5 of this document.

## **9. REPORTING**

The IEC will report to the Executive Director of FARA through the Director of Research and Innovation and the Lead Specialist Research, Policy and Investment (RPIIn). The team of experts will meet online with the Director of Research and Innovation and the Lead Specialist for RPIIn who is the focal person for the AIRTEA Project at FARA.

## **10. FACILITIES TO BE PROVIDED BY FARA**

FARA will provide the following information and facilities to the IEC team:

1. An excel sheet listing proposals received by the coordination of the AIRTEA Project which fulfill the administrative compliance.
2. The call for proposals' guidelines presents the evaluation criteria. Explanation of the call document will be provided through a Zoom session.
3. Excel sheet for the assessment of each proposal.
4. Zoom links throughout the evaluation period.



## 11. QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE

Each candidate member to the IEC must possess the following qualifications:

- a) A post-graduate university degree in agriculture, business and administration, economics, development/social science studies, or in any other domains related to agriculture or related disciplines.
- b) At least eight (8) years' experience in ARD (research, policy, planning, gender, development...) in Africa in general and Eastern Africa in particular.
- c) A track record of evaluating similar exercises of evaluating ARD proposals constitutes an added value.
- d) Speak fluently English with working knowledge of French without necessitating the services of a translator.

## 12. APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND DEADLINE

Candidates interested in joining the IEC may obtain further information at the address below during office hours 0900 to 1500 hours. Submission of Expression of Interests (EOIs) and comprehensive CVs on the assignment must be delivered to the address below on or before **July 14, 2021**:

Dr. Yemi Akinbamijo,  
Executive Director  
Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)  
PMB CT 173, Cantonment-Accra, Ghana  
Email: [recruitment@faraafrica.org](mailto:recruitment@faraafrica.org)

**For further information and clarifications ONLY (please do not send applications to this address):**

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FARA Affirmative Action Statement on Recruitment: *there is no discrimination based on gender, race, religion, ethnic orientation, disability, or health status.*