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NATIONAL CEREALS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (NCRI) BADEGGI

Terms of Reference for Engagement of Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Specialist

Minimum number of years of relevant experience required: 1yr ☐ 5yrs ☐ 15yrs+ ☐

Name:		
Job Title: Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Specialist		
Division/Department: FAO-GEF 8 FSIP		
Programme/Project Number: GCP /NIR/11236/GFF		
Location: Niger and Kebbi States		
Expected Start Date of Assignment: September 2026	Duration :	Initial three years with possible of extension
Reports to: Chief Technical Adviser		
GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF TASK(S) AND OBJECTIVES TO BE ACHIEVED		
Project Title: Transformation to Sustainable Crops, Livestock and Aquaculture Food Systems in Nigeria Programme: GEF-8 Food Systems Integrated Program (FSIP) GEF Implementing Agency: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Executing Entity: National Cereals Research Institute (NCRI) Position: Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Specialist Duty Station: Project Management Unit/NCRI, with regular travel to project landscapes in participating States Duration: Initial 3 years with possibility of extension Reporting to: Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) Works closely with: National Project Coordinator (NPC), State Project Coordinators, PMU technical specialists, FAO Project Manager, FAO Lead Technical Officer, relevant FAO technical units, government institutions and project partners 1. Background The Government of Nigeria, with financing from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and technical support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), is implementing the project “Transformation to Sustainable Crops, Livestock and Aquaculture Food Systems in Nigeria” under the GEF-8 Food Systems Integrated Program (FSIP). The project seeks to contribute to the transformation of crop, livestock and aquaculture food systems through integrated approaches that enhance environmental sustainability, climate resilience, food security and livelihoods while generating global environmental benefits.		

The project promotes sustainable and climate-resilient production systems, integrated landscape management, ecosystem restoration, sustainable value chains, improved institutional governance, private-sector engagement, access to finance, knowledge management, gender equality and social inclusion.

FAO serves as the GEF Implementing Agency, while the National Cereals Research Institute (NCRI) is the national Executing Entity. Project implementation will be coordinated through a Project Management Unit (PMU) headed by the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA), supported by technical specialists and State Project Coordinators.

A robust Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning system is required to track progress towards project outputs, outcomes and GEF results; assess the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions; ensure accountability to stakeholders and beneficiaries; facilitate evidence-based decision-making; and systematically capture and disseminate lessons and good practices.

The project will therefore engage a Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Specialist to establish and manage the project's MEAL system and provide timely evidence to support results-based management and adaptive implementation.

2. Purpose of the Assignment

The MEAL Specialist will lead the development, implementation and continuous improvement of the project's monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning system.

The Specialist will ensure systematic tracking and reporting of project results against the approved results framework, indicators, targets, GEF requirements and Annual Work Plans.

The MEAL Specialist will support the CTA and PMU to use credible evidence for implementation decisions, identify performance gaps, document lessons and results, strengthen accountability to project stakeholders and ensure that project achievements are adequately captured and reported.

The Specialist will also coordinate monitoring data from the participating States and project landscapes and ensure consistency, quality and traceability of evidence supporting reported results.

3. Duties and Responsibilities

A. Development and Management of the MEAL System

The MEAL Specialist will:

- Develop and operationalize a comprehensive project MEAL framework aligned with the approved Project Document, results framework and GEF reporting requirements.
- Prepare a detailed MEAL Plan defining indicators, baselines, targets, data sources, methodologies, responsibilities, reporting frequency and verification mechanisms.
- Develop appropriate tools, templates and protocols for collection, analysis, validation and reporting of project data.
- Establish a systematic project results database and information management system.
- Ensure alignment between the MEAL system, Annual Work Plans and Budgets, project implementation plans and reporting requirements.

- Periodically review and update the MEAL system to reflect implementation realities and emerging information needs.
- Support establishment of clear mechanisms for capturing quantitative and qualitative project results.

B. Results Monitoring and Performance Measurement

The MEAL Specialist will:

- Monitor project implementation against approved outputs, outcomes, indicators, targets and milestones.
- Develop and maintain a project performance monitoring dashboard or results tracker.
- Track progress against annual and cumulative project targets.
- Work with PMU specialists and State Project Coordinators to ensure timely collection of implementation data.
- Consolidate and analyse State-level and national-level project data.
- Identify implementation gaps, delayed results and areas of underperformance and promptly bring them to the attention of the CTA.
- Recommend evidence-based corrective measures to improve project performance.
- Support the CTA in conducting periodic implementation and results reviews.
- Ensure that project achievements are supported by appropriate documentary evidence.

C. Baseline, Midline and Endline Assessments

The MEAL Specialist will:

- Coordinate establishment and validation of project baseline information where required.
- Review existing baseline information and identify data gaps requiring additional assessment.
- Develop methodologies and tools for baseline, midline and endline assessments.
- Coordinate data collection and analysis for periodic outcome assessments.
- Ensure consistency in methodologies to allow meaningful comparison of results over the project implementation period.
- Support engagement of consultants or technical institutions undertaking specialized surveys and assessments.
- Review assessment reports and ensure technical quality and consistency with project indicators.

D. GEF Results and Global Environmental Benefits Monitoring

The MEAL Specialist will work closely with the CTA and technical specialists to:

- Monitor progress towards the project's GEF core indicators and other relevant global environmental benefits.
- Establish appropriate systems for measuring results related to sustainable land management, ecosystem restoration, biodiversity, climate mitigation and other approved environmental indicators, as applicable.
- Ensure that methodologies used for measuring GEF results are consistent with the approved Project Document and applicable GEF guidance.
- Maintain supporting evidence for reported environmental results.
- Coordinate data required for annual GEF reporting and project evaluations.
- Support reconciliation of technical monitoring data with information reported through GEF tracking and reporting instruments.

E. Data Quality Assurance and Information Management

The MEAL Specialist will:

- Establish and apply data quality assurance protocols.
- Conduct periodic data verification exercises at State and field levels.
- Review data submitted by State Project Coordinators, technical specialists, consultants and implementing partners for accuracy, completeness and consistency.
- Maintain appropriate source documentation and audit trails for reported project results.
- Ensure secure storage, management and accessibility of project monitoring data.
- Promote consistent use of agreed indicators, definitions and methodologies across all project locations.
- Undertake periodic Data Quality Assessments and document corrective measures.
- Ensure compliance with applicable data protection and confidentiality requirements.

F. Accountability and Stakeholder Feedback

The MEAL Specialist will support project accountability by:

- Establishing mechanisms for systematically collecting feedback from project beneficiaries and stakeholders.
- Work closely with the Safeguards/Gender Specialist and State Project Coordinators to support implementation and monitoring of stakeholder feedback and grievance mechanisms.
- Track stakeholder concerns, feedback and agreed management responses relevant to project

implementation.

- Ensure beneficiary perspectives are reflected in implementation reviews and adaptive management decisions.
- Develop tools to assess beneficiary satisfaction and perception of project interventions.
- Support transparent communication of relevant project results and follow-up actions to stakeholders.
- Ensure accountability mechanisms are accessible to women, youth, vulnerable groups and other project participants.

G. Monitoring of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Working closely with the relevant PMU specialists, the MEAL Specialist will:

- Ensure that project monitoring data are appropriately disaggregated by sex, age, location and other relevant social variables.
- Monitor implementation and achievement of gender and social inclusion indicators.
- Support measurement of participation and benefits accruing to women, youth and vulnerable groups.
- Ensure that gender-responsive indicators and targets are incorporated into project monitoring tools.
- Analyse differential impacts of project interventions on beneficiary groups and provide recommendations to the CTA and PMU.
- Support reporting on gender equality and social inclusion results.

H. Reporting

The MEAL Specialist will:

- Coordinate compilation of results data for monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual project reporting.
- Provide analytical inputs to project implementation progress reports.
- Lead preparation of the project's results-performance sections for reports submitted to NCRI, FAO and GEF.
- Coordinate and consolidate monitoring inputs required for the annual **GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR)**.
- Ensure reported results are consistent with available evidence and supporting documentation.
- Develop concise analytical summaries highlighting progress, challenges, trends and recommended management actions.
- Maintain an updated database of indicators, targets, achievements and supporting evidence.

I. Mid-Term Review, Terminal Evaluation and Other Evaluations

The MEAL Specialist will:

- Coordinate preparation of project data and evidence required for the Mid-Term Review and Terminal Evaluation.
- Facilitate access by evaluation teams to relevant project information, stakeholders and implementation sites.
- Support preparation of evaluation briefs, datasets and supporting documentation.
- Assist the CTA in preparing management responses and implementation plans arising from evaluation recommendations.
- Establish a system for tracking implementation of agreed evaluation actions.
- Support any thematic, outcome or impact evaluations commissioned during project implementation.

J. Learning, Knowledge Management and Adaptive Management

The MEAL Specialist will:

- Establish mechanisms for systematic learning from project implementation.
- Identify and document lessons learned, good practices, innovations, challenges and emerging evidence.
- Facilitate periodic project learning and reflection sessions with the PMU and State teams.
- Support the CTA in using monitoring evidence to adjust implementation approaches where required.
- Produce learning briefs, results summaries and evidence products in collaboration with the Knowledge Management/Communications Specialist.
- Facilitate cross-State learning between participating project States.
- Support documentation of models and approaches with potential for replication and scaling.
- Contribute evidence and lessons to the GEF-8 FSIP global knowledge and learning processes.
- Promote a culture of evidence-based decision-making and continuous learning within the PMU.

K. Capacity Development

The MEAL Specialist will:

- Build the capacity of State Project Coordinators, PMU personnel and implementing partners on results-based monitoring and reporting.
- Train relevant personnel on project indicators, data collection tools, verification methods and reporting requirements.

- Provide ongoing technical support to State-level implementation teams on MEAL functions.
- Develop practical guidelines and reference materials for project monitoring and reporting.
- Strengthen capacity of project partners to collect, manage and use monitoring information.

4. Working Arrangements

The MEAL Specialist will report directly to the Chief Technical Adviser

The Specialist will work closely with:

- State Project Coordinators, who will support routine collection and verification of State-level implementation data;
- PMU technical specialists responsible for generating technical results and evidence;
- the National Project Coordinator on institutional and government reporting requirements;
- finance and administrative personnel, where financial and implementation data need to be reconciled;
- safeguards, gender and communications specialists on accountability, inclusion and knowledge management; and
- FAO technical officers responsible for project supervision, results monitoring and GEF reporting.

The MEAL Specialist will not substitute for the technical responsibility of individual project specialists. Rather, the Specialist will ensure that technical results are systematically measured, verified, consolidated and reported against the approved project results framework.

5. Key Deliverables

Deliverable	Indicative Timing/Frequency
Project MEAL Plan, including indicator matrix, data sources, methodologies, responsibilities and reporting schedule	Within first 6 weeks
Standardized monitoring tools, templates and data collection protocols	Within first 2 months
Operational project results database/performance tracking system	Within first 2 months and continuously updated
Baseline review and data-gap assessment	Within first 3 months
Consolidated baseline report/update, where required	As agreed following baseline review

Project performance dashboard/results tracker	Updated monthly/quarterly
State and field-level data quality verification reports	Quarterly
Consolidated project results monitoring reports	Quarterly
Beneficiary/stakeholder feedback and accountability analysis	Semi-annually
Gender- and age-disaggregated project results analysis	Semi-annually
Results inputs to the Annual GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR)	Annually
Updated GEF/core indicator tracking information and supporting evidence	Annually/as required
MEAL inputs to Project Steering Committee progress documentation	For each PSC meeting
Project learning and reflection sessions	At least semi-annually
Lessons learned/good practice briefs	At least annually and as required
Monitoring and evidence package for Mid-Term Review	At project mid-term
Tracking report on implementation of MTR recommendations	Periodically following MTR
Monitoring and evidence package for Terminal Evaluation	Towards project closure
Final project results and lessons-learned report	At project closure

6. Minimum Qualifications

Education

Advanced university degree in Monitoring and Evaluation, Agricultural Economics, Economics, Statistics, Development Studies, Agriculture, Environmental Management, Natural Resources Management, Project Management, Social Sciences, or another relevant discipline.

Additional professional training or certification in monitoring and evaluation, results-based management, data analytics or impact evaluation would be an advantage.

Professional Experience

- At least 7 years of progressively responsible professional experience in monitoring, evaluation, accountability and/or learning for development, environment, agriculture, climate change or natural resource management programmes.

- Demonstrated experience designing and managing results-based monitoring and evaluation systems.
- Experience developing results frameworks, indicators, baselines, targets and data collection methodologies.
- Demonstrated experience in quantitative and qualitative data collection, analysis and reporting.
- Experience conducting data quality assessments and field verification.
- Experience working with multidisciplinary project teams and decentralized implementation structures.
- Experience in gender-responsive and socially inclusive monitoring.
- Experience supporting project evaluations, including mid-term and terminal evaluations.
- Previous experience with GEF-financed projects, FAO programmes or other international development projects would be a strong advantage.
- Familiarity with GEF results frameworks, core indicators, Project Implementation Reports and global environmental benefit monitoring would be an advantage.
- Experience in agriculture, food systems, natural resource management or climate-related programmes would be highly desirable.

7. Technical and Functional Competencies

The successful candidate should demonstrate:

- Strong knowledge of results-based management and MEAL systems;
- Strong quantitative and qualitative analytical skills;
- Ability to develop practical indicators and monitoring methodologies;
- Strong data management, verification and quality-assurance skills;
- Ability to translate complex monitoring information into clear management recommendations;
- Experience with digital data collection and project information-management systems;
- Strong understanding of accountability and beneficiary-feedback approaches;
- Ability to facilitate organizational learning and adaptive management;
- Good understanding of gender equality and social inclusion in project monitoring;
- Excellent analytical writing and reporting skills;
- Strong interpersonal, facilitation and capacity-development skills;

- Ability to work effectively with multidisciplinary and geographically dispersed teams; and
- High standards of integrity, accuracy, accountability and professionalism.

8. Language Requirements

Excellent command of written and spoken English is required.

9. Duty Station and Travel

The MEAL Specialist will be based at the Project Management Unit/NCRI Kebbi Sub Office and will undertake regular missions to project States, landscapes and communities for monitoring, data verification, learning and evaluation purposes.

10. Role Within the PMU

The MEAL Specialist will function as the project's central results-management and evidence focal point.

The CTA will retain overall responsibility for project management and delivery, while the MEAL Specialist will provide the CTA with timely and credible evidence on whether implementation is progressing towards agreed results.

The State Project Coordinators will support State-level data collection and reporting, while the MEAL Specialist will provide the methodology, quality assurance, consolidation and analysis required to ensure consistency across the project.

The MEAL function will therefore support not only compliance and reporting, but also management decision-making, accountability, learning and adaptive implementation throughout the project cycle.

11. Application Link and Deadline

- Link: <https://forms.gle/BnGMFVSDhZoLEV4U8>
- Deadline: 2nd September 2026