FONRID Terms of Reference
MEL Consultant to support the FONRID, Burkina Faso

Background

The Science Granting Council Initiative (SGCI) started in 2015 and aims to strengthen the capacities of science granting councils in 16 sub-Saharan African countries in order to support research and evidence-based policies that will contribute to the continent's economic and social development. The SGCI provides a window of opportunity for the Councils to focus on their role as boundary managers and how evidence can be utilised more effectively to support their activities. SGCI does this through programmes focused on management of research grants; the use of evidence to inform STI policy; supporting knowledge exchange with the private sector; and establishing partnerships between Councils and other science system actors. SGCI is also focused on the cross-cutting issues of strategic communication, gender, and inclusivity. The SGCI is a collaborative initiative, jointly funded by the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the UK's Department for International Development (now the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office), the South African National Research Fund (NRF) and the German Research Foundation (DFG).

The SGCI phase 2, Evi-Pol project, has the objective to strengthen the capacity of Science Granting Councils (SGCs) to generate and use evidence in policy and decision-making, and to enhance their roles as policy champions. To achieve the main goal, the specific objectives of the Evi-Pol project are: a) Support SGCs to conduct reviews of national STI policies and deepen their knowledge and understanding of the policy processes; b) Support the Councils to develop robust organizational-level MEL frameworks and plans; c) Support the Councils to develop data management systems and frameworks and systematically collect, analyse and use relevant data/ evidence; d) Promote peer to peer learning and knowledge exchange between Councils and local STI experts.

FONRID is one of the Councils participating in this Initiative. FONRID was set up in 2011 with the mandate do provide financial resources to the national research and innovation, to allow this sector to contribute to solve the several problems of the society.

The Evi-Pol project has funds to contract a number of short term Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) consultants to assist in building MEL capacity in a number of the SGCs involved in the SGCI. In this regard, the African Centre for Technology Studies, as Evi-Pol grant holder (IDRC grant number: 109573), is requesting for applications for a MEL consultant to assist FONRID.

MEL consultant
The MEL consultant will provide technical assistance to the Councils on a part time basis for an agreed time-period and with defined tasks. Councils within the SGCI are requesting support in a range of areas to enable them to build the capacity of their MEL officers, departments and/or systems. Examples of the types of request include:
1. Update Council's MEL frameworks and plans
2. Integrate MEL across all functions of the Council
3. Set up an organisation-wide MEL reporting system
4. Provide technical backstopping in the collection, analysis and write up of MEL data
5. Assist councils in writing their first full MEL report

The scope of the work

The current funding available provides for 12 days of Consultant time for each Council that has requested support. These 12 days are proposed to be broken down as follows:

1. 2 days – initial meetings with Council MEL officers/ designated MEL staff to agree final scope of work including review of existing MEL systems and documents. This includes the finalisation of a work plan for the Council's MEL officer and/or MEL department on upgrading of their data collection, analysis and reporting procedures and systems
2. 8 days – work with the Council to implement the work plan
3. 2 days – technical backstopping of Council's MEL officer/ designated MEL staff member to write the first/ latest comprehensive MEL report

It is important that when considering the design of the MEL systems that they are compatible with the reporting requirements and theories of change of all international development partners and other funders that work with the Council.

Where possible, this work should be conducted face-to-face i.e. where COVID-19 work place rules allow. Where COVID-19 working restrictions are in place, this work will occur virtually by phone, email and online meeting platforms.

Deliverables

These will be agreed during the scope of works but are provisionally expected to include:
1. Finalised and/or updated MEL framework and plan signed off and in use by the Council
2. A MEL report containing the latest MEL data across all (or an agreed number of) functions of the Council that can act as a baseline where no baseline currently exists and/or can assess progress against an existing baseline.

Duration of the assignment

The successful consultants will be given a three-month consultancy contract (estimated to start in mid-late November 2021).

Management

This consultancy will be administered by ACTS under the guidance of the principal investigator working on the SGCI phase 2, Evi-Pol project. The PI is Dr. Rebecca Hanlin.
The day-to-day management of the consultancy will be conducted by the FONRID. The consultant's line manager will be Mr Ardiouma COULIBALY at FONRID.
A monthly progress meeting involving the Consultant, ACTS' PI or representative and the Council's line manager. These will ensure that the tasks are on track, the objectives are being achieved and are in tandem with the support requested by the SGCs.

The SGCI MEL Lead will also be involved from time to time in an advisory role.

Contract value and payment

Each consultancy contract will have a maximum potential value of US$ 3,600 (12 days at US$ 300 a day) inclusive of taxes.
Payment will be made on completion of all work and sign off of deliverables. Total will not exceed the number of days and value of the contract.

Please note all Kenyan consultants will be subject to 5% withholding tax on all invoices while other from outside Kenya will have a minimum of 20% withholding tax removed.

Qualifications of the applicants
- A Master's degree in a relevant subject, for example in development studies, Monitoring and Evaluation, Statistics, Results Based Management related social science fields
- Relevant MEL qualifications or over 10 years' experience managing MEL projects
- Experience in collection, collation and synthesis of data using both quantitative and qualitative methods
- Must be based in sub-Saharan Africa; preferably in Burkina Faso
- Background in training and MEL advising in donor-funded programs and for government officials
- Proven experience in the monitoring and evaluation of capacity building programs and research

In addition, candidates should also outline their competencies in the following areas:
- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- Ability to work on context specific needs/topics
- Flexible when it comes to change and open to receive and integrate feedback

The following criteria will be used to evaluate applications:
1. Experience in MEL, especially in the Council's country
2. Experience working with SGCs or other government agencies
3. Track record of developing MEL frameworks and plans

Application instructions

Qualified applicants (both individual and organizations) are invited to apply and submit:
1. A proposal indicating how they meet the specifications for the consultancy work and the methodology on how such work will be implemented (no more than three (3) pages).
2. Curriculum vitae of the individual indicating their previous experience in similar work
3. Submit at least one example material from a previous work assignment that is similar in nature to this one

Call for applications will close 4 weeks after the call opens. The call opens on 01 October 2021.
If you have queries or questions about the call for applications, please contact: hr@acts-net.org
with 'SGCI MEL consultant' in the subject heading