ECSA-02 - Support Implementation of a Regional Nutrition Knowledge Sharing Platform for the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC)

Terms of Reference (ToRs)

Nutrition International is committed to the fundamental principles of equal employment opportunity. Women are encouraged to apply.

Background

Technical Assistance for Nutrition (TAN) is a project supported by UK aid from the UK government, which seeks to improve the capacity of SUN countries to design, deliver, and track the progress of nutrition programs and to generate, learn from and adopt knowledge of what works. Nutrition International is contributing to TAN by coordinating the provision of technical assistance to help national SUN focal points in select countries to overcome gaps in capacity for the design and delivery of multi-sectoral national nutrition plans, tapping into its global hub to source and deploy the expertise needed and to generate, learn from and adopt knowledge of what works.

The East Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC) is an intergovernmental organization that was established in 1974 to foster cooperation in health in the region. Its mandate is to promote and encourage efficiency and relevance in the provision of health services through advocacy, capacity building, coordination, inter-sectoral collaboration, and harmonization of health policies and programs. The nine active member states of the ECSA-HC are Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Apart from the 9 member states, ECSA-HC has been working with other countries located in the East and Southern Africa region including Botswana, Burundi, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Mozambique, Seychelles, Namibia and Somalia to address the health challenges in the region. ECSA-HC works within the mandate given by the Conference of Health Ministers’ and member states. Through the cluster of Non Communicable Diseases, Food Security and Nutrition (NFSN), ECSA-HC taps into regional and international expertise to promote sharing of experiences and best practices, identifying priorities, building capacity of member states and advocating for improved policies and programmes that contributes to the reduction of the burden of malnutrition in the region.

Since the launch of Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) movement, 8 out of 9 ECSA-HC member states have joined. These countries are: Eswatini, Lesotho, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Countries in the region have also developed multi-sectoral nutrition policies, strategies and plans in addition to implementing several nutrition specific as well as sensitive actions to tackle the
existing nutrition challenges. Undernutrition, increasing overweight and obesity rates in both children and adults, stunting prevalence of (>20%) in 8 of the countries and micronutrient deficiency in children under five and pregnant and lactating women are still public health concerns of interest. Countries in the region continue to make good progress; for example, both Kenya and Lesotho are working towards the establishment of nutrition Multi Sector Platform (MSP). Despite these and many other successes, the burden of malnutrition in the region, remains high. While some countries are on track, others are lagging in the implementation of nutrition actions. This could be attributed to limited repackaging, sharing of good practices and scaling up of knowledge, lessons and evidence resulting from implementation of these actions among countries within the region. Thus, nutrition coordination and knowledge management are identified as important aspects in addition to continued political will and prioritization of nutrition on all agendas.

ECSA- HC aims to use its position as a regional hub that connects the Ministries of Health of its member States and partner States to fill some of the above gaps in knowledge management, facilitating the sharing of lessons learnt among key stakeholders in the scaling up of nutrition actions. To do so, NITAN is providing ECSA-HC with TA in two phases, with Phase I having ended in February 2020, and Phase II consisting of the activities under this ToR.

Phase I (Support Development of a Strategy on Regional Nutrition Forum and Knowledge Sharing for the East, Central and Southern Africa Region Health Community (ECSA-HC)) identified and prioritized the various stakeholder groups involved in scaling up nutrition in the region, and with the potential to contribute significantly more to that effort if supported effectively by a regional learning platform. Those stakeholder groups, and their learning needs, were identified through a consultation of actors in government and academia of ECSA-HC member and partner countries, staff of technical and financial partner agencies active in the region, and experts in capacity development and adult learning active in nutrition globally. Three of those groups were particularly prioritized for support by ECSA-HC (see table 1), most notably decentralized nutrition planners.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder group</th>
<th>Learning and sharing needs. Relevant specificities.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Often called “the real implementers”, nutrition planners and managers at the regional, district/ county levels of government are at the center of delivering nutrition interventions at scale and over time</td>
<td>These actors need support to solve a wide variety of real-world, on-the-ground implementation challenges, including technical, logistical, financial, organizational, and relational obstacles. Successfully scaling-up nutrition and impacting nutrition at the local level requires them to adapt national plans to local needs and resources; budget, raise and manage funds from local and national government, and from partners; plan and coordinate implementation with a limited and patchy resources network of actors; and monitor and report on activity. Networking these actors is challenging for several reasons: in the region they number in the hundreds or even thousands, they rotate from job</td>
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Researchers in nutrition-related topics who work for public and private universities, where they also teach, or research institutes in nutrition, health, and agriculture. They are increasingly in SUN networks. Despite their good intentions, these researchers can often not advance their research for a number of reasons, from a lack of funding, to limited access to international journals. And even when they are able to perform their research, their findings are not widely disseminated to influence policy and programs.

Recent graduates of degree and postgraduate nutrition programs

Young professionals have difficulty identifying job opportunities, whether in their own country or another country in the region, in government or in national or international organizations. There are also next to no internship opportunities, which could be hosted by UN agencies and NGOs. Finally, they have little exposure to networking and international opportunities, with membership in societies and attendance at conferences being unaffordable.

Phase II will consist of the development of a plan for the knowledge sharing platform that will support these high-priority groups to learn and share experiences from each other, and the implementation of the 'pilot' portion of that plan, while also supporting ECSA-HC to mobilize resources to expand implementation to the remainder of the plan.

Objectives

The overall objective of this TA is to provide medium term support to ECSA-HC to develop, and begin the implementation of, a plan for a regional learning and sharing platform. Considering this, the following objectives are to be attained through this assignment.

Overall objective

This TA will allow ECSA-HC to develop a plan for the implementation of a regional knowledge sharing platform for the benefit of the high-priority stakeholders group and individuals identified and prioritized in Phase I, as listed in the table above. Once the implementation plan has been finalized, and pilot activities prioritized, this TA will support ECSA-HC in the implementation of those pilot activities to engage the prioritized group in the established regional knowledge sharing platform. It is expected that the TA will also strengthen the capacities of ECSA-HC to manage a knowledge sharing platform and to develop proposals for the mobilization of resources for the plan and sustainability of the platform. It is envisaged that the TA will make use of innovative approaches to maximize impact for planning a partnership and coordination platform within the ECSA region.

It is expected that the gender aspect will be taken into consideration throughout the development of the implementation plan. The TA provider will be supported by NI TAN’s Gender Adviser to ensure gender equality considerations are adequately incorporated as appropriate and whenever feasible.
Specific objectives

1. Development of an implementation plan for a regional knowledge-sharing platform, for improved coordination on scaling up multi-sectoral nutrition programs
2. Support to ECSA-HC for the implementation, documentation and sharing of the pilot phase of the regional knowledge-sharing platform and monitor progress
3. Development of proposals for the funding part of the post-pilot portion of the implementation plan

Expected results

This technical assistance is expected to bring a significant contribution to the ability of the targeted stakeholder groups to contribute to the scaling up of nutrition actions in one or more ECSA-HC member and partner countries. It is expected this consultancy will lead to the following results, which the selected consultants should be able to demonstrate by the end of the assignment:

- Strengthening capacity of ECSA HC to manage and share knowledge using the established regional platform
- Strengthening of the capacity of the individuals within the prioritized stakeholder groups (nutrition planners and managers, researchers, including a significative representation of women’s groups) to contribute to scaling up nutrition actions in one or more countries
- Strengthening of the capacity of the countries where these individuals intervene to scale-up nutrition actions
- Sustainability of resource allocation to the regional knowledge learning and sharing platforms

Gender equality

Nutrition International is committed to gender equality. Consultants are required to indicate how they will ensure that gender equality considerations are included in the provision of TA, including how they are incorporated into deliverables. Examples of integration of consideration for gender equality could include but are not limited to: ensuring government departments responsible for women are included wherever possible, gender sensitive indicators are included, emerging data is sex disaggregated, and relevant documentation related to gender is reviewed. To this end, NI has developed the following tools which can be accessed using the links below:

- NI guidelines on Integrating Gender Equality into Technical Assistance
- NI background document on Gender and Nutrition
- NI PowerPoint presentation (Gender 101)
Scope of Work

The consultant(s) will be expected to undertake the following activities and produce the listed deliverables. Further elaboration on the objective-based activities will be expected in technical proposal along with timeline, level of effort required for each activity, in terms of number of days, and roles and responsibilities of each team member.

The consultants should ensure the NI guidance on gender equality considerations is strongly built into the objectives as well as the deliverables required under this TA. The consultant team will develop a plan to integrate gender equality in its activities and deliverables.

The TA may cover planning for web platforms or planning for adapted and innovative use of existing websites or mobile platforms. It is expected that the TA will offer solutions that are practical and maximize use of existing platforms or social media tools that do not involve the development of a new website.

Under Objective 1: Development of an implementation plan for a regional knowledge-sharing platform, for improved coordination on scaling up multi-sectoral nutrition programs

Activity 1 – Focus group and key informant interviews with members of the target stakeholder to identify learnings needs and preferred learning and networking modalities

Deliverables:
- Report from focus group discussions and key informants detailing how the target stakeholders would like to be networked, and what they would like their experience-sharing and learning to focus on

Activity 2 – Facilitation of development by ECSA-HC of detailed implementation of regional platform
- Development of a draft implementation plan
- Organization of validation workshop with ECSA-HC and target stakeholders

Deliverables:
- Implementation plan for a regional knowledge-sharing platform, staggered into phases
- Facilitate the validation workshop

Under Objective 2: Support to ECSA-HC for the implementation and documentation of the pilot phase of the regional knowledge-sharing platform and monitor progress
Activity 3 – On-going support to ECSA-HC for implementation of pilot phase including the design of the regional platform adapted to the preferred learning and network modalities

- Design draft regional platform
- Engage the selected target audience to identify the agenda for discussion in the established knowledge sharing platform
- Integrated into the ECSA-HC nutrition team, the consultant will support ECSA-HC to implement the activities required by the pilot activities of the platform. This will likely include the contracting of technology suppliers, the organization of events, and the development of publications, in turn entailing regular communication with target stakeholders, contacts with suppliers, meetings with ECSA-HC management, and coordination with nutrition partners in the region.
- Coordinate closely with the staff working within other technical areas of ECSA to identify opportunities and synergies for collaboration on knowledge management and capacity building approaches
- Review of mock-up by target stakeholders (virtual or in a workshop)

Deliverables:
- Mock-up of the learning platform, including technical requirements for technological aspects, and detailing of events or publications
- Launch of one or more activities from the pilot phase of the implementation plan, with concrete engagement by the target stakeholders

Activity 4 – Monitoring and reporting of implementation of pilot phase

- Develop a methodology for the monitoring of implementation of pilot activities, including client satisfaction
- Application of monitoring methodology during implementation

Deliverables:
- Report on the lessons learnt from the pilot activities implemented, including the results of a client satisfaction survey, and gender equality issues
- Knowledge generation report (using NI template) to provide analysis of learning from the TA process and results.
**Under Objective 3:** Development of proposals for the funding part of the post-pilot portion of the implementation plan

**Activity 5 – Identification of funding agencies and opportunities for specific components of the implementation plan**

- Engagement of key funding agencies in pilot activities to expose them to ECSA-HC's regional platform and work, and to the larger gender sensitive implementation plan for the platform
- Engage key resource persons and affiliated institutions to support in the actualization of specific components in the plan
- Support for the organization and preparation of meetings between ECSA-HC and funding agencies to discuss potential funding opportunities of the platform
- Ensure participation and lobby for buy in of funding agencies in pilot platform activities

**Deliverables:**

- Develop a resource mobilization plan that includes a list of key funding agencies and potential financial partners for ECSA-HC to engage
- Short-list of funding agencies confirmed as interested in contributing to the scale-up of the regional platform
- List of confirmed institutions and resource persons who would contribute to the forum
- Minutes from meetings with funding agencies, highlighting opportunities for funding, requirements for applying for funds, and next steps for ECSA-HC follow-up

**Activity 6 – Submission of proposals to funding agencies**

**Deliverables:**

- Two proposals ready to be submitted by ECSA-HC

**Use of deliverables**

Deliverables produced under this TA are intended for use by staff at ECSA-HC, and ultimately by the prioritized actors.

All deliverables will also be shared with DFID.

**Duty Station/Location**

The consultant will perform part of the work from their home base, and part at ECSA-HC's office in Arusha, Tanzania. It is expected the consultant will spend one work week per month in Arusha.
All travels required under this consultancy will be provided for by Nutrition International. Travel allowances maximums are based on standard rates of the organization.

**Timeline**

The TA will begin on July – August, 2020, and end on May 30, 2021. It is expected that the consultant will dedicate approximately 60 days to this TA.

**Management and Reporting/Coordination mechanism**

The Manager NCDs, Food Security and Nutrition at ECSA HC will be the contact person for purposes of coordinating this assignment. The TA provider will report to the TAN Senior Project Officer, Africa and Manager NCDs, Food Security and Nutrition at ECSA-HC. The ECSA-HC Director General is responsible for approving the final product and any other matters related to the consultancy.

- NI will provide the funding for the assignment, and payment will be subject to performance and reaching deliverables as agreed upon on contract signing.
- NI will be responsible for the coordination of technical guidance and quality assurance of the work being delivered by the consultant.

**Profile/qualifications of consultant**

**Education**

- Post graduate degree in Nutrition, Organizational Development, Adult Education, Public Health, Social Sciences, Health, or related field.

**Professional experience**

- More than 10 years' experience in international development, and/or the design and management of nutrition or health-related programs
- Familiarity with nutrition programs or initiatives in ECSA-HC member countries, or other African countries
- Familiarity with regional and continental nutrition initiatives, and with the SUN Movement
- Working experience in coordinating, leading or managing regional technical entities and groups
- Experience in knowledge management is a key asset
- Experience in working with government institutions, various levels of public services, and international development organizations and donor agencies, or equivalent
- Excellent communication, analytical, planning and writing skills
• Strong client handling skills, including the ability to work confidently across a variety of stakeholders and levels
• Strong facilitation and capacity development skills
• Demonstrated ability to deliver quality results within strict deadlines
• Familiarity with DFID’s Digital Spend Guidance and

**Language skills**

• Fluency in written and spoken English is mandatory

**Application Process**

Interested candidates are invited to submit the following by email to technicalassistance@nutritionintl.org before close of business on June, 9, 2020 at 5pm EST (Ottawa, Canada)

1. Up-to-date curriculum vitae (CV)
2. Technical proposal: not exceeding five pages, describing the consultant’s understanding of the task, proposed methodology, responsibilities of key stakeholders and detailed work plan that breaks down activities and outputs.
3. Financial proposal: including daily fee rate, suggested number of trips/days in-country and any other expenses required to fulfill the terms of the consultancy (field trips, meetings, materials, etc.). Indicate the budget limit for this TA
4. Confirmation email following completion of NTEAM’s Technical Assistance Provider Recruitment Form for all consultants listed on application
5. Please title your application email as: ECSA-02 Application: Name - Regional Nutrition Learning Platform

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