

## **Terms of Reference for Project Review Committee for the Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative in Kenya**

### **1. Background**

The Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Initiative is an African Union-led continental undertaking currently implemented in nine countries (Benin, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda).

Its overall goal is to contribute to mainstreaming Ecological Organic Agriculture into national agricultural production systems by 2025 to improve agricultural productivity, food security, access to markets and sustainable development in Africa. Mainstreaming EOA includes catalyzing changes in various spheres: public policies and investment plans; technical standards and certification procedures; research agenda and training curricula; advisory and information practices; as well as the organization of markets and value chains. It is implemented under the guidance and oversight of the AU chaired Continental Steering Committee (CSC) to establish an African organic farming platform based on available best practices; and to develop sustainable organic farming systems and improve seed quality.

The Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative has an ongoing call through funding support from Swiss Development Corporation via Biovision Africa Trust. Through the SDC funding, the Project Review Committee will be established to support in shortlisting three most suitable proposals for submission to the National Steering Committee (NSC).

### **2. Purpose**

The aim of this TOR is to recruit five Project Review Committee (PRC) members. The PRC is an independent, impartial team of experts who provide scientific, communications, marketing, networking and partnerships, organizational development expertise to EOA-I on proposals submitted for funding. It is selected to assist the NSC in reviewing, shortlisting and making recommendations for improving the quality of best applications to run EOA projects for the National Platforms and stakeholders.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

The PRC members serving in a personal capacity without respect to professional or institutional affiliation and without acting upon advice or representation of the interests of governments, organizations, or other third-party representatives; shall undertake roles and responsibilities that include:

- Review proposals made available to them through the online applications for their country and provide advice based on assessment criteria (technical and financial).
- Participate in the joint Project Review Committee (PRC) meetings
- Shortlist the best 3 proposals to the National Steering Committee (NSC)
- Provide recommendations to the NSC on the development and implementation of such proposals, based on the review of the proposals
- Ensure that the PRC recommendations and comments have been duly addressed during the review and selection process
- Monitor the progress in the implementation of projects, if possible.
- Keep under review on an ongoing basis the in-house procedural framework related to project implementation and make recommendations on adjustment mechanisms to facilitate speedier and smoother implementation of projects.

#### **4. Composition & Qualifications**

PRC Members will be selected from a pool of applicants based on their professional training, skills, experience and ability to advise on areas of expertise related to the Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA-I) technical areas.

The PRC Members shall be selected by the NSC and shall consist of five individuals possessing a broad range of qualifications relevant to and with a firm commitment to technical areas of EOA-I, and one of whom to be designated as the Chairperson.

All the members should have expertise in at least 2 or more of the main technical areas under review as follows:

1. Research and applied knowledge in the agriculture sector
2. Agricultural information, communication and extension, knowledge management
3. Market systems development, agribusiness, trade, in the agriculture sector etc.
4. Networking and partnership development
5. Organizational development and capacity building
6. Policy, legislation and advocacy
7. Scalability and country implementation
8. Monitoring & Evaluation/Impact assessments

The members of the Committee should have significant, recent and relevant project experience and knowledge.

The PRC members shall be expected to be active, independent and ensure high-quality engagement in discussions and processes related to the PRC mandate.

The composition of the PRC should as much as possible reflect a geographical and gender balance.

#### **5. Working Procedures and Meetings**

The PRC shall meet following consensus on their schedule of reviewing the applications submitted online and have the authority to convene additional meetings in-person meetings or teleconferences, as may be required.

Failure to attend at least 2 consecutive meetings without acceptable reasons to the Committee Chairperson, will give rise to a consideration of continued membership. The Committee shall determine its own procedures.

The Committee may request any member of NSC or platform to attend meetings of the Committee in order to carry out its responsibilities.

The PRC will participate in the proposal review meetings which are convened by the PRC Chair, on average twice during the proposal review process. They should attend at least one meeting in person. The PRC may meet face-to-face, or by telephone/video conference, as is most appropriate for the work of the PRC at that time. Where meetings are held by conference call, PRC Members should make every effort to ensure that a secure line is used and that persons not approved by the PRC Chair do not listen to the proceedings.

The first meeting should be for familiarization of the terms of operations of the committee, selection of chairperson/secretary and agreeing on the process and timelines of reviewing the proposals. The PRC uses the Assessment criteria provided online to assign their scores, rationales and overall assessment of each proposal.

The PRC Members then introduce their assessments proposal by proposal followed by an open discussion per proposal and per assessment area, moderated by the PRC Chair with the aim to arrive at agreed consensus scores, rationales and final recommendation to the NSC. The 2<sup>ND</sup> meeting would be a consensus meeting to agree on the top rated 3 proposals to be submitted to the National Steering Committee (NSC). The PRC should document the meetings and submit the reports of the selections and consensus through the online portal sections provided <https://gms.eoai-africa.org>. The meeting and consensus reports should be endorsed by all the PRC Members.

The PRC Chair shall attend the Proposal review meetings undertaken by NSC to answer any question that might arise

## 6. Authority

The Committee has the authority to request the NSC to conduct investigations into any matters within its scope of responsibility. It is empowered to:

- seek any information it requires from the NSC;
- meet with NSC as necessary; and
- recommend to the NSC that independent experts and other advisors be retained to advise the Committee or assist in the conduct of any review as may be required.
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## 7. Reporting Responsibilities

The Committee shall submit reports of its meetings to the NSC outlining the Committee's activities, findings and related recommendations.

The Committee shall also prepare an annual report on its work and this report should be included in the NSC Annual Report.

## 8. Quorum

The quorum for meetings consists of 3 members of the Committee of which one must be the Chairperson. The Chairperson shall have a casting vote.

## 9. Remuneration

The management of the SDC grants makes provision for remuneration of Committee Members and this is determined according to prescribed rates as formulated by the Executing Agency. This will be communicated to the PRC members after successful recruitment

## 10. Committee Development and Evaluation

The Committee will ensure that members receive continuing education on related areas to enhance their contribution to meetings.

An annual evaluation of the performance of the Committee and individual members will be done taking into consideration the Committee's goals and objectives established at the beginning of the fiscal year.

## 11, Conflict of Interest

Another important issue in the selection of experts is to determine if the individual or their organization has any potential conflict of interest which may compromise the credibility of the assessment of applications. Criteria for excluding certain individuals/organizations from undertaking the evaluation could include:

- not having been involved in the design, implementation or oversight of the activities;

not having received funding from the organization / program in the recent past (such as at least not in the last two years)

- not having a stake in what the assessment uncovers.

Where there is a conflict of interest, the Committee Member so affected shall declare his/her interest to the Committee and the details of the conflict are to be recorded by the Committee Secretary.

The Committee Member who has a conflict of interest shall not participate in the deliberations on the particular matter and will excuse oneself from the discussions in respect of those interests during the period of discussion of the matter.

Members with conflicts of interest shall not participate in any vote at meetings where the transactions are being discussed or exert any influence on the voting on the resolution in respect of the matter under discussion.

In addition to be above, the follow cannot be members of the PRC and hence should not apply:

1. All the people working for organizations who will submit proposals
2. All the members of EOAI National Steering Committee
3. All the staff of Biovision Africa Trust and PELUM Kenya

## **12. Confidentiality of Committee Information**

All information received by the Committee is confidential and is the property of the NSC and cannot be disclosed to parties outside of the Committee without prior approval of the NSC.

The membership, terms of reference and operating procedures of the PRC are published on the EOA project website.

PRC Members in their advisory capacity linked to the proposal review process, may have access to certain information relating to proposal review or grant making processes, which Executing Agency considers to be confidential. PRC Members are therefore required to complete and sign a confidentiality, non-disclosure and impartiality certification form upon signing their contract and are also required to complete and sign declaration of non-canvassing and non-collusive bidding.

PRC meetings are closed to the public.

## **13. Review and Assessment of Terms of Reference**

The Committee will review and assess the adequacy of its Terms of Reference at least every new phase of the EOA Initiative project and request the NSC's approval for proposed changes.

## **14. Application Procedures**

If you are interested in this assignment please submit your application including your CV to [makanya@pelum.net](mailto:makanya@pelum.net) copied to [rosinah@pelum.net](mailto:rosinah@pelum.net)

The closing date for the applications is Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020

For any queries or complains please email the Executing Agency Proposal team: [gms@eoai- africa.org](mailto:gms@eoai-africa.org)