

Nutrition Specialist Consultant

Development of the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy (ARNS) 2026 to 2035

Call for proposals: 12th December 2024

Deadline for receipt of proposals: 30th December 2024, 5.00pm EAT



Terms of Reference

Nutrition Specialist Consultant

Development of the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy (ARNS) 2026 to 2035

1. Background

The African Union's (AU) commitment to eradicate hunger and malnutrition stems from the establishment of the African Task Force on Food and Nutritional Development (ATFFND) in 1987, by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the predecessor of the AU. This was in recognition of the importance of nutrition in socio-economic development, the need to accelerate actions to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, and the importance of harmonizing policies and interventions, as well as strengthening collaboration among all stakeholders on the continent. Furthermore, the AU also put in place the African Regional Nutrition Strategy (ARNS) to guide Member States on nutrition policies and programs over a period of 10 years from 1993 – 2004, 2005-2015 and 2016-2025 (EX.CL/Dec.876 (XXVII)). The ARNS 2016-2025 calls on all AU Member States to put together multi-sectoral nutrition action plans, budgets and an expenditure tracking system for effective implementation and monitoring of nutrition interventions, in line with the Abidjan Declaration to "Accelerate investment, implementation and coordination to improve nutrition and food security in Africa", and as part of the implementation of the work plan of the AU Year of Nutrition 2022.

The ATFFND oversees the implementation of the four priority intervention areas of the ARNS 2016-2025, namely:

- i. Defining standards, norms, policies and frameworks for AU Member State adoption and ratification.
- ii. Convening and facilitating consensus ("One voice") on matters regarding nutrition security in Africa.
- iii. Advocating and implementation of nutrition security policies and programs.
- iv. Establishing architecture of decision-making on the implementation of the ARNS 2016 – 2025.

Whilst the African Union Commission (AUC) has recorded some remarkable achievements through the implementation of the ARNS 2016-2025, challenges persist particularly in meeting the ambitious goals related to reducing malnutrition. Recent crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts on the continent, and Russia's war on Ukraine have significantly disrupted Africa's agricultural sector, and rising costs have made a healthy diet unaffordable for millions of people in Africa. Nearly 282 million people in Africa (about 20 percent of the population) are undernourished, an increase of 57 million people since the COVID-19 pandemic began. More than a billion people are unable to afford a healthy diet. Around 30 percent of children are

stunted because of malnutrition¹. Furthermore, the continent is also grappling with the triple burden of malnutrition, with underweight, overweight/obesity and micronutrient deficiencies co-existing in the same geographies.

Both the Continental Nutrition Accountability Scorecard (CNAS), and the fourth Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development (CAADP) Biennial report showed that most countries in Africa are making some progress but are still not on track towards achieving the 2012 World Health Assembly (WHA) six global targets², the Malabo targets³ or 4.

Against the backdrop of competing development and other investment priorities, and a growing population, it is more important than ever that the ARNS 2026-2035 recommends nutrition investments focus on proven, scalable approaches, drawing on the latest available evidence around effectiveness and cost-effectiveness. To maintain the momentum gained in the past years in addressing hunger and malnutrition, the AUC will be developing the new ARNS 2026-2035. The Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (HHS) is seeking the services of a Nutrition Specialist consultant to provide technical guidance to the process.

2. Objective of the Consultancy

The objective of the consultancy is to provide nutrition technical leadership in the development of the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy 2026-2035 that will guide AU Member States in the implementation of nutrition policies and programmes over the next 10 years.

3. Scope of work and responsibilities of the Nutrition Specialist Consultant

In consultation with the Lead Consultant, the Nutrition Specialist consultant will:

- i. Propose the methodology and workplan for development of ARNS 2026-2035.
- Recommend the strategic and technical changes that should be incorporated into the new ARNS 2026-2035, through review of feedback from ATFFND 2024 meeting, desk review of relevant documentation, including the current 2016-2025 ARNS and theory of change, national, regional and global nutrition strategies and plans, and the latest global guidance and lessons learnt related to multisector nutrition and food security programming with a special focus on the **life cycle approach**. Special consideration will be given to proven, scalable, cost-effective and impactful interventions.
- ii. Assess the **implementation and results of the current 2016-2025 ARNS**, through a participatory analysis and review at regional and Member State levels (in the five AU recognized regions),

¹ FAO, AUC, ECA and WFP. 2023. Africa - Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023: Statistics and trends. Accra.

² The WHA six global targets include reducing stunting and wasting in children under 5, halting the epidemic of obesity, reducing anaemia in women of reproductive age, reducing low birth weight and increasing the rate of exclusive breastfeeding.

³ Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agriculture Growth and Transformation (Assembly/AU/ /Decl.1 (XXIII))

⁴ UNICEF, WHO, The World Bank. Levels and trends in child malnutrition: Key findings of the 2023 Edition of the Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates – UNICEF | for every child



- considering the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of the recommended interventions.
- Assess the **institutional, technical and financial capacities of key stakeholders in the five regions - Africa Regional Institutions, RECs and AU Member States** - to implement multisectoral nutrition programmes, and propose measures for changing and strengthening them, through a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis.
- Lead the technical aspects of a **continental situation analysis**, identifying trends, key issues, vulnerable groups, and regional variations, for each major form of malnutrition, considering the latest global guidance on emerging themes including Adolescent Nutrition, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, Climate Change and Food Systems, the Humanitarian and Development nexus and vulnerable populations. This analysis will also assess the economic and other consequences of the nutrition situation, using new tools such as the Cost of Inaction and Continental Nutrition Accountability Scorecard, to underscore the need for action.
- iii. Support the lead consultant to **develop a draft of and present the ARNS 2026-2035**, including a **theory of change**, and a comprehensive result-based monitoring and evaluation framework.
 - Provide technical support in planning and conducting 3 one-day **consultative meetings** with Member States, RECs and partners, to give feedback on the draft ARNS 2026-2035.
 - Coordinate on an on-going basis with the Technical advisory committee (TAC), **facilitate meetings**, report on progress and consolidate technical inputs and recommendations of the TAC to inform the new strategy.
 - Support in the **development of budget for implementation** of proven, scalable and impactful nutrition interventions in the ARNS 2026-2035.
- iv. Provide technical support in the **presentation of the ARNS 2026-2035** to various platforms, including the (ATFFND and the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Health, Nutrition, Population and Drug Control for review and feedback.


4. Deliverables

The consultant will report and provide the following deliverables (mandatory outputs) to the AUC:

- i. **Inception report** on an understanding of the Terms of Reference (TORs), describing the methodology and approach to be used in undertaking the assignment, including timelines and risk assumptions, and a detailed plan of stakeholders to be consulted.
- ii. A report of the **review** of the implementation of the ARNS 2016-2025, including the review of institutional capacity and needs for strengthening.
- iii. A **situation analysis report** on nutrition and food security on the continent.
- iv. **Briefs** from technical consultation meetings on the ARNS 2026-2035.
- v. The **ARNS 2026-2035** theory of change and M&E framework.



5. Timeline



The assignment will be undertaken over a period of 12 months. Taking into consideration flexibility to plan missions as per convenience and availability of country and regional teams, and time required by the Technical Advisory Committee, ATFFND, STC members and other stakeholder colleagues to review and provide feedback on intermediate products as per proposed timeline. The envisaged timeframe is to produce **an inception report within 4 to 6 weeks** after the start of the assignment, with the **implementation review, situation analysis report and policy brief** produced **within 5 to 6 months** after the start of the assignment.

The draft **ARNS 2026-2035** is envisaged by end September 2025. Following a review and final feedback to the draft by end December 2025, the Final versions should be presented to the AUC Executive Committee by mid-July 2026.

6. Ways of working of the consultant

The consultant will:

- i. Work in consultation with the Lead Consultant and under the overall guidance of the Head of Health Systems Strengthening, Diseases and Nutrition Division, with the support of the HHS nutrition team while maintaining continuous consultation with the members of the Technical Advisory Committee.
- ii. Liaise, through AUC, with regional and Member States focal points on proposed visits, stakeholder consultations and specific interview interests, while accepting guidance from these same colleagues regarding regional and country specific considerations and review/consultation suggestions.
- iii. Coordinate and consolidate technical inputs and submit intermediary products to the TAC on time, for review and consultation with the AUC and other stakeholders and will take into consideration suggestions and requests made by them in the further elaboration of the final products.
- iv. Be available for direct consultation on agreed dates and will explicitly request additional backstopping and/or consultation if so required. Explore and review technical information sources and contact stakeholders over and above those provided by AUC, as relevant to the subject matter.

7. Roles of the AUC

The AUC will:

- Provide technical guidance and support in developing the ARNS 2026-2035 to ensure that the document is comprehensive and reflects the latest evidence on effective nutrition interventions; and is aligned with the national, continental and global goals and objectives.
- i. Ensure that involved TAC experts make themselves available at the agreed dates for review of intermediary product submissions, provision of written feedback and telephone consultation. Additional consultation and backstopping may be provided upon request from the consultant.



8. Expertise Required

The Nutrition Specialist consultant should possess relevant skills, experience, and capacities to undertake the assignment. Range and nature of skills and experience to include, but not be limited to:

- i. Advanced university degree in Nutrition and Public Health or related disciplines.
- ii. Over 10 years of country or regional experience in nutrition, policy and programming or related fields.
- iii. Conversant with the current and emerging nutrition issues/challenges and approaches and frameworks in nutrition, including the 1000 days approach, the lifecycle approach, nutrition specific- and sensitive-interventions, nutrition integration, and Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement.
- iv. Have developed strategic frameworks, strategies, policies or related or reports at least within the last five years.
- v. Experience in collation and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data including for desk reviews.
- vi. Excellent interpersonal and professional skills in interacting with government, development organizations, and other relevant stakeholders.
- vii. Demonstrated cognitive and analytical capacity to synthesize experiences and findings and formulate relevant and cohesive recommendations.
- viii. Proficiency in the use of relevant computer applications including data management and analysis applications.
- ix. Ability to work with minimal supervision.
 - Highly motivated and committed to core values of professionalism, accountability, courage in action, integrity and teamwork.
 - Applicants must have excellent working knowledge of English. Working knowledge of another AU language, especially French, will be an added advantage.

9. How to Apply

Interested candidates should send: Contact details, up-to-date curriculum vitae (CV), a technical proposal not exceeding ten pages, describing the consultant's understanding of the Terms of Reference (TOR), proposed methodology, consultants' role and detailed work plan linked to the deliverables with associated timelines, indicating the level of Effort (LoE) for each activity, at least one similar report by the consultant drafted in the past 5 years, and financial proposal of daily rating.

Proposals should be sent by e-mail and received on or before **30th December 2024 at 5.00pm EAT.**

Any application received after this deadline will not be considered. The application should have the subject line "Consultancy Terms of Reference (TOR) for **Development of the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy (2026-2035)**" addressed to: bidsAfrica@Nutritionintl.org