Terms of Reference for consultancy services to carry out an assessment on the role of ICTs in improving the functions of EAGC RATIN and in particular to support timely information delivery.

1. INTRODUCTION ABOUT EASTERN AFRICA GRAIN COUNCIL (EAGC)

The Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC), a regional private-sector membership based organisation of the grain stakeholders in the Eastern Africa region. EAGC the Voice of the Grain Stakeholders in Africa, is guided by its mission “to advocate for an enabling environment and promote structured grain trade for optimum benefits of its stakeholders”. EAGC’s membership comprises of the regional grain value chain stakeholders including the grain farmers/producers, traders and processors/millers.

The mandate of EAGC is to facilitate efficient, structured and profitable grain trade in Eastern Africa region including Tanzania, Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Zambia, Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Our programme interventions include: promotion of regional structured grain trade including facilitating grain trading through GSOKO, warehouse receipt systems (WRS); enhancing market access through the provision of market information services through the Regional Agricultural Trade Intelligence Network, EAGC RATIN (www.ratin.net); capacity building (Eastern Africa Grain Institute) and strategic support to stakeholders and evidence-based policy advocacy to enhance an enabling environment requisite for a thriving grain industry (ATPAF-ESA) The Council works very closely with governments in the region, regional economic blocs like the EAC, COMESA and SADC and also development partners to address the various challenges in food security. For more information please visit www.eagc.org, www.ratin.net

2. REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL TRADE INTELLIGENCE NETWORK (EAGC RATIN)

Access to relevant market information remains a challenge for most of the stakeholders in the region including farmers, traders, policy makers, service providers and processors. Information on prevailing market prices, trade trends, production and consumption, and demand and supply is often not available, hence an unpredictable market system in the region.

To address this challenge, EAGC with support from various partners, including USAID, Sida and others developed and launched a market information system known as the EAGC RATIN which is a one-stop-shop for timely, accurate, and relevant market information for grain stakeholders in Eastern Africa. RATIN has a network of enumerators based in markets and border points who observe and record the prices of grains in the markets and the cross border trade on a daily basis and report these prices using a smart phone to the
RATIN servers from where the information is processed and disseminated to users through the RATIN portal (www.ratin.net) and through an SMS service, to EAGC members and stakeholders. Grain farmers, traders and processors refer to RATIN to know the prevailing prices of grains in various markets in the Eastern Africa region so as to make buying and selling decisions.

Therefore the EAGC RATIN system plays a key role of providing market information to farmers, traders, process and other stakeholders within the value chain. RATIN endeavors to provide timely, accurate, and reliable information on prices and cross border trade data so as to inform trade decisions and thereby reduce transaction costs and facilitate arbitrage of grains from surplus to deficit markets hence improving regional trade and food availability in Eastern Africa.

EAGC RATIN, has been operational since 2006 and is currently covering six countries and forty markets across Africa, collecting and disseminating information on internal grain market prices at country level, cross border trade flows at border points and warehouse stocks at warehouses. EAGC RATIN has over seventeen (17) products which include daily market prices, supermarket prices, daily cross-border trade flows, real-time warehouse stocks, regional food-balance sheets, parity prices, grain trade news updates, weekly market analysis reports, monthly cross-border reports, daily news updates, interactive maps and historical datasets, RATIN also features a web portal, social media (Facebook and Twitter), has a Short Message Services (SMS) service, is customized for use on a mobile phone, and provides advertising space.

3. RATIONALE & OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

In order to increase the number of users of the EAGC RATIN and also improve on the access of the data, EAGC with support from Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), would like to develop and launch new mobile based ICT tools and applications that would provide additional analytical and presentation capabilities that will enable users interact more with the data in RATIN.

To achieve this EAGC intends to commission a consultancy service to undertake a detailed review of the RATIN system, service, products and solicit feedback from users on their requirements and also scope the market to establish the available and potential ICT tools and capabilities (including mobile technologies) that EAGC can consider using in developing the new RATIN ICT tools and applications that would improve the functions of EAGC RATIN particularly in increasing the speed and reduce the costs of information delivery. EAGC is therefore seeking the services a suitably qualified consultant (firm or individual) with knowledge and experience in market information systems and ICT to undertake the above assignment.

4. EXPECTED OUTPUTS

1. Report profiling the users of the EAGC RATIN services, specific needs, satisfaction levels, and recommendations for improvement.
2. Report on the available ICT tools and applications and innovations in the region
3. Recommendations of data analytics and reporting tools and applications
4. Recommendations for ICT tools and applications (including mobile phone apps) capable of improving functionalities and timely delivery of information to users
5. EXPERTISE AND PROFILE OF THE CONSULTANT
The ideal candidate/firm will:
1. Demonstrate solid professional experience and knowledge in Agricultural marketing information systems in Africa and internationally.
2. Demonstrate experience and knowledge in agricultural trade issues in Eastern Africa, with specific knowledge of the grain sector.
3. Have extensive knowledge and experience with working with ICTs in the Agriculture sector.
4. Possess academic training in ICT, Business Management, Economics etc relevant to carry out the task.

6. REPORTING AND COORDINATION
The consultant will report to the Regional Manager, Marketing Information Systems and Communications, and will also interface with other EAGC staff and partners.

7. SELECTION, EVALUATION AND AWARD OF CONSULTANCY
The evaluation of the proposals and award of the contract (consultancy) will be based on the technical competencies (80%) of the consultant and the budget proposal (20%). EAGC reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal received without offering any explanation.

Applicants should provide:

A technical & financial proposal:
- Proposed detailed methodology to undertake the assignment including a work plan
- Detailed CVs of the proposed team showing qualifications and experience, evidence of handling previous assignments with similar scope and complexity, copies of highest university degree certificates and evidence of other technical trainings related to the assignment
- Financial proposal indicating the proposed consultancy rate per day, the number of days as all other related costs inclusive of all statutory taxes.

Supporting documents:
- Certificate of incorporation and latest returns, copy of search confirming directors.
- Short company description with examples of its previous experiences in similar assignments and contacts of three recent corporate clients.
- VAT certificate, PIN certificate. KRA Tax compliance certificate. Legal Trade/Business licenses.
- Letters of recommendations from previous clients.

8. CONSULTANCY DURATION
The consultancy is expected to run for a maximum of 2 months from the date of award.

9. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL
Proposals must be submitted by email (procurement@eagc.org) by 15th July 2016 at 17:00.

Inquiries for clarifications or more information can be addressed on email to the above address or to the Programs Administration Manager, +254 733 444035/