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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

SUBJECT:

Engagement of Capacity Development Providers (CDPs) to Support FinRISE Participating Fintechs, Microfinance Institutions, and SACCOs (FMSs) in Credit Appraisal, Alternative Credit Scoring, and Loan Recovery

REF: FinRISE/CDP-FMS/RFP/2026-01

Launching Date: 30th July ,2026

Closing Date: 7th August 2026

1700 Hrs EAT

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

Engagement of Capacity Development Providers (CDPs) to Strengthen Credit Appraisal, Alternative Credit Scoring, and Loan Recovery Capacity for FinRISE Participating Fintechs, Microfinance Institutions, and SACCOs (FMSs).

Programme: FinRISE (African Guarantee Fund / FinRISE Fund, funded by the Mastercard Foundation)
Reference No.: FinRISE/CDP-FMS/RFP/2026-01
Date: 30th July 2026
Countries of Assignment: Kenya & Zambia

1. Background and Context

The **Financial Resilience through Institutional Strengthening and Expansion (FinRISE)** programme is a flagship initiative of the **African Guarantee Fund (AGF)**, supported by the **Mastercard Foundation**, to expand access to affordable and appropriate finance for women- and youth-led micro and small enterprises (MSEs) operating within the agri-food sector across **Kenya, Zambia, and Côte d'Ivoire**. Implemented as a three-year pilot, the programme responds to longstanding structural constraints that limit the ability of underserved entrepreneurs to access productive finance, particularly those operating in rural communities and agricultural value chains.

Women and young entrepreneurs continue to face disproportionate barriers to finance due to limited collateral, inadequate financial records, perceived lending risks, and financial products that are not aligned with the realities of agribusiness. These constraints reduce investment in productive enterprises, limit business growth, and ultimately affect employment creation, food security, and broader economic development. FinRISE was designed to address these systemic market failures by strengthening both the supply and demand sides of inclusive agricultural finance.

The programme adopts a market systems approach that combines innovative financial instruments with institutional capacity strengthening to create sustainable pathways for increased lending to underserved MSEs. On the supply side, FinRISE partners with FMSs (**Fintechs, Microfinance Institutions (MFIs), and Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs)**) to expand their capacity and appetite for financing women- and youth-owned agrifood enterprises. Through the provision of **risk-sharing guarantees** and **concessional liquidity**, the programme reduces the perceived and actual risks associated with lending to underserved market segments while enabling participating financial institutions to increase the volume, affordability, and accessibility of productive credit.

The programme targets women entrepreneurs and youth aged **18 to 35 years**, recognising that these groups continue to experience the greatest exclusion from formal financial systems despite representing a significant proportion of the agricultural workforce and enterprise base. By addressing the financial constraints faced by these entrepreneurs, FinRISE seeks to unlock investment in productive enterprises, strengthen value chains, and stimulate inclusive economic growth.

Recognising that access to finance alone is insufficient to achieve sustainable outcomes, FinRISE places equal emphasis on strengthening the institutional capacity of participating FMSs to sustainably increase on-lending to women- and youth-owned agrifood MSEs. The programme delivers targeted technical assistance focused on the institutional capabilities that directly influence lending performance and portfolio growth. These interventions include gender-responsive product development, credit risk management and appraisal, portfolio quality management, digital financial service delivery, data management and disaggregated reporting, and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems. In addition, FinRISE integrates cross-cutting areas such as environmental and social risk management, safeguarding, and Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) to ensure that FMSs adopt inclusive, responsible, and sustainable lending practices while strengthening their ability to effectively serve women- and youth-owned agrifood MSEs.

On the demand side, FinRISE supports MSEs through market-responsive capacity development aimed at improving enterprise readiness for finance. This includes strengthening financial literacy, business planning, record keeping, loan application preparedness, productivity enhancement, climate-smart business practices, market linkages, and digital adoption. These interventions improve the ability of enterprises to absorb and effectively utilise financing, resulting in stronger business performance, improved loan repayment, increased productivity, business resilience, and employment generation.

The programme is implemented through an integrated results framework that combines financial inclusion, institutional strengthening, and enterprise development to achieve sustainable development outcomes. By addressing both financial market constraints and enterprise capacity gaps, FinRISE seeks to create a commercially viable ecosystem in which financial institutions are better equipped to serve underserved market segments, while women- and youth-led agrifood MSEs gain access to the finance, knowledge, and business support required to grow sustainably.

Ultimately, FinRISE aims to demonstrate a scalable model for inclusive agricultural finance that strengthens financial systems, promotes gender equality and youth economic empowerment, enhances rural livelihoods, and contributes to resilient agricultural value chains across Africa.

2. Purpose and Objectives of the Assignment

Purpose of the Assignment - Inclusive Credit Appraisal, Alternative Credit Assessment, and Loan Recovery for Women- and Youth-Owned Agrifood MSEs

The purpose of this assignment is to engage qualified **Capacity Development Providers (CDPs)** to strengthen the capacity of participating **Financial Market Stakeholders (FMSs)** to enhance their credit appraisal, alternative credit assessment, and loan recovery systems for women- and youth-owned and led agrifood MSEs in Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, and Zambia. The assignment will support FMSs to adopt inclusive, risk-based, and market-responsive credit appraisal methodologies that accurately assess the creditworthiness of underserved agrifood enterprises while considering the unique characteristics of agricultural value chains, seasonal cash flows, and non-traditional business models.

The assignment will strengthen the institutional capacity of FMSs to improve credit assessment processes, cash flow-based lending methodologies, alternative approaches to assessing creditworthiness, and responsible loan recovery practices that increase access to finance while maintaining portfolio quality, reducing default risk, and promoting institutional sustainability.

As a cross-cutting priority, the assignment will integrate FinRISE Contextualised Safeguarding and Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) principles throughout the credit appraisal and loan recovery lifecycle to ensure that lending decisions, customer interactions, and recovery practices are inclusive, equitable, responsible, and aligned with the programme's commitment to "Do No Harm."

Specific Objectives

- Strengthen the capacity of FMSs to design and implement inclusive, risk-based credit appraisal methodologies tailored to women- and youth-owned and led agrifood MSEs.
- Strengthen the capacity of FMSs to apply cash flow-based lending approaches that reflect agricultural production cycles, enterprise performance, and value chain dynamics.
- Build the capacity of FMSs to adopt alternative approaches to assessing creditworthiness where conventional collateral and formal credit histories are limited.
- Strengthen institutional loan recovery systems through the adoption of proactive portfolio monitoring, early arrears management, customer engagement strategies, and responsible recovery practices that preserve long-term client relationships.
- Strengthen the integration of FinRISE Contextualised Safeguarding principles throughout the credit appraisal and loan recovery lifecycle to promote responsible lending, ethical customer engagement, customer protection, confidentiality, and the application of the "Do No Harm" principle.
- Strengthen the integration of GEDSI principles within credit assessment and loan recovery processes to reduce bias, improve equitable access to finance, and ensure fair, transparent, and inclusive lending practices.
- Support FMSs to operationalise enhanced credit appraisal and loan recovery systems through practical tools, operational guidelines, staff capacity building, coaching, and implementation support,

3. Scope of Work

The CDP shall provide targeted technical assistance to participating FMSs to strengthen institutional credit appraisal systems that support sustainable lending to women- and youth-owned and led agrifood MSEs. The assignment will focus on improving institutional capacity to assess credit risk using inclusive, evidence-based, and value chain-responsive methodologies while maintaining sound portfolio quality.

3.1 Inclusive Credit Appraisal for Women- and Youth-Owned Agrifood MSEs

The CDP shall support FMSs to strengthen their end-to-end credit appraisal systems by introducing inclusive, customer-centred, and value chain-responsive approaches that improve lending decisions while maintaining prudent risk management.

Key Tasks

Institutional Assessment

- Assess existing credit appraisal policies, procedures, governance structures, operational workflows, and institutional readiness.
- Review existing credit appraisal tools, approval processes, and lending decision frameworks for agrifood finance.
- Identify institutional gaps and opportunities for strengthening inclusive credit appraisal.

Strengthening Credit Appraisal Methodologies

- Develop or strengthen credit appraisal methodologies that reflect the realities of women- and youth-owned agrifood MSEs, including agricultural production cycles, seasonal cash flows, enterprise performance, and value chain relationships.
- Strengthen cash flow-based lending methodologies as alternatives to traditional collateral-based lending.
- Develop practical appraisal tools that support consistent, objective, transparent, and commercially sound lending decisions.

Alternative Credit Assessment

- Develop practical approaches for assessing creditworthiness using alternative sources of information, including:
  - Enterprise performance
  - Cash flow analysis
  - Agricultural production records
  - Digital transaction history
  - Supplier and buyer relationships
  - Value chain participation
  - Savings behaviour
  - Group lending history
  - Repayment behaviour

Strengthening Loan Recovery Systems

- Review existing loan monitoring, arrears management, and loan recovery policies and procedures.
- Develop or strengthen early warning systems to identify emerging portfolio risks and delinquent accounts.
- Strengthen loan recovery strategies that promote proactive customer engagement, timely follow-up, loan restructuring where appropriate, and responsible recovery practices while maintaining long-term customer relationships.
- Develop or update loan recovery procedures, recovery monitoring tools, and portfolio performance dashboards.
- Build the capacity of credit teams to implement effective recovery strategies while adhering to FinRISE Contextualised Safeguarding and client protection principles.

Integration of FinRISE Contextualised Safeguarding

- Integrate FinRISE Contextualised Safeguarding principles throughout the credit appraisal process to strengthen responsible lending, ethical customer engagement, confidentiality, informed consent, customer protection, and grievance management.
- Ensure appraisal processes minimise risks of discrimination, exploitation, harassment, exclusion, and unintended harm.

Integration of GEDSI

- Embed GEDSI principles within credit appraisal methodologies to promote equitable, objective, and transparent lending decisions.
- Review appraisal criteria to eliminate barriers that disproportionately affect women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other underserved groups.
- Build institutional awareness of unconscious bias and inclusive lending practices.

Operationalisation and Capacity Building

- Develop or update credit appraisal manuals, appraisal templates, standard operating procedures, and decision-support tools.
- Train the Board, Management, Credit Committee members, Credit Officers, Relationship Managers, and other relevant staff on the application of the enhanced appraisal framework.
- Provide coaching and implementation support during the rollout of the enhanced credit appraisal framework.

Expected Outputs

- Enhanced inclusive credit appraisal framework.
- Cash flow-based credit appraisal methodology.
- Alternative credit assessment toolkit for agrifood MSEs.
- Updated credit appraisal manuals, templates, and operational procedures.
- FinRISE Contextualised Safeguarding and GEDSI principles integrated into credit appraisal systems.
- Board, Management, Credit Committee members, and operational staff trained on inclusive credit appraisal methodologies.
- Improved institutional capacity to sustainably increase lending to women- and youth-owned agrifood MSEs while maintaining portfolio quality.

4. Deliverables, Outputs and Reporting Schedule

In addition to the activity-specific outputs described in Section 3, the CDP shall submit the following deliverables for each participating FMS.

Deliverable	Description	Indicative Due Date
Inception Report	Detailed workplan, implementation methodology, stakeholder engagement plan, implementation schedule, baseline assessment of the FMS's credit appraisal systems, and the proposed approach for integrating FinRISE Contextualised Safeguarding and GEDSI principles.	Within two (2) weeks of contract signature
Credit Appraisal Assessment Report	Assessment of existing credit appraisal systems, institutional gaps, value chain financing considerations, and recommendations for strengthening appraisal methodologies.	Within one (1) month of commencement
Enhanced Credit Appraisal Framework Report	Updated credit appraisal framework, cash flow-based lending methodologies, alternative credit assessment tools, loan recovery methodologies, revised appraisal manuals, templates, operational procedures, implementation guidelines, and evidence of staff capacity building.	Within two (2) months of commencement
Final Assignment Report	Consolidated report detailing activities undertaken, deliverables achieved, institutional improvements, lessons learned, implementation outcomes, recommendations for continuous improvement, and sustainability measures.	Within fifteen (15) days after completion of the assignment

Ongoing Monitoring and Reporting

Throughout the assignment, the CDP shall monitor and report on:

- Progress in strengthening credit appraisal systems.

- Adoption of enhanced credit appraisal methodologies.
- Integration of FinRISE Contextualised Safeguarding and GEDSI principles.
- Capacity-building activities delivered.
- Institutional improvements in credit appraisal practices.
- Lending performance to women- and youth-owned agrifood MSEs.
- Portfolio quality indicators.
- Lessons learned, implementation challenges, and recommendations.

All reports shall include sex-, age-, disability-, and value chain-disaggregated data, where applicable.

5. Assignment Duration and Institutional Arrangements

The assignment shall be completed within **two (2) months** for each participating FMS.

The CDP shall report directly to the **FinRISE Programme Management Team at AGF** and work closely with the FMS's Board, Management, Credit Committee, Credit Department, and designated implementation staff throughout the assignment.

The CDP shall provide regular progress updates highlighting achievements against the agreed workplan, key milestones, implementation challenges, mitigation measures, and recommendations requiring management attention.

The CDP shall participate in periodic technical review meetings convened by AGF to validate key deliverables, incorporate feedback, and ensure alignment with the FinRISE implementation approach and programme quality standards.

6. Reporting Requirements

The CDP shall submit progress reports in the format prescribed by AGF and provide evidence demonstrating progress against the agreed workplan, deliverables, and key performance indicators.

Reporting shall include, at a minimum:

- Progress against agreed workplans and deliverables.
- Status of implementation of the enhanced credit appraisal framework.
- Progress in integrating FinRISE Contextualised Safeguarding and GEDSI principles.
- Number of staff trained and coached.
- Lending performance to women- and youth-owned agrifood MSEs.
- Portfolio quality indicators.
- Data disaggregated by sex, age, disability, and value chain.
- Key implementation challenges, mitigation measures, lessons learned, and recommendations.

All reporting shall comply with AGF and Mastercard Foundation reporting requirements and timelines.

7. Qualifications and Team Composition

Institutional Requirements

Interested firms shall demonstrate:

- A minimum of five (5) years' experience supporting financial institutions to strengthen credit appraisal systems for MSMEs and/or agrifood finance.
- Demonstrated expertise in inclusive credit appraisal, cash flow-based lending, and agricultural finance.
- Demonstrated knowledge of agricultural value chains, including production systems, seasonal cash flows, value chain financing, and the financing needs of agrifood MSEs.

- Demonstrated experience strengthening lending practices for women- and youth-owned enterprises.
- Demonstrated experience integrating FinRISE Contextualised Safeguarding and GEDSI principles into financial sector capacity development.
- Proven experience working with financial institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Demonstrated experience delivering institutional capacity development, coaching, mentoring, and technical assistance.
- Presence, or the ability to deploy qualified experts, within Kenya, Zambia, and/or Côte d'Ivoire.

Indicative Key Experts

- **Team Leader / Inclusive Finance and Credit Appraisal Specialist**
- **Credit Appraisal and Agricultural Finance Specialist**
- **Agricultural Value Chain Finance Specialist**
- **FinRISE Contextualised Safeguarding and GEDSI Specialist**

The proposed team shall collectively demonstrate expertise in inclusive credit appraisal, agricultural finance, cash flow-based lending, agricultural value chains, institutional capacity development, adult learning methodologies, and the integration of FinRISE Contextualised Safeguarding and GEDSI principles into lending systems. Experience supporting FMSs to strengthen inclusive credit appraisal for women- and youth-owned agrifood MSEs will be considered a distinct advantage.

8. Selection Criteria

Technical proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria:

Evaluation Criterion	Weight
Relevant institutional experience	30%
Quality of methodology and implementation approach	30%
Qualifications and experience of proposed experts	25%
Financial proposal and value for money	15%

Only proposals achieving the minimum technical threshold established by AGF shall proceed to financial evaluation.

9. Safeguarding and GEDSI Requirements

The CDP shall integrate the FinRISE Safeguarding Framework and GEDSI Framework throughout the assignment.

This includes ensuring that:

- Product design is inclusive and responsive to the needs of women and youth.
- Credit appraisal methodologies minimise bias and promote equitable access to finance.
- Staff are trained on responsible lending, safeguarding, client protection and the **Do No Harm** principle.
- All customer engagement processes respect confidentiality, accessibility, dignity and inclusion.
- Training materials, operational manuals and implementation tools fully incorporate FinRISE safeguarding and GEDSI requirements.

Safeguarding and GEDSI shall be treated as embedded cross-cutting principles throughout the assignment and not as standalone workstreams.

10. Indicative Budget

The assignment shall be financed under the FinRISE Capacity Development budget.

Contract values shall be determined through AGF's procurement process and shall reflect the scope of work, number of participating FMSs and agreed deliverables

11. Proposal Submission Requirements

Interested firms shall submit the following as part of their proposal:

Technical Proposal

The technical proposal should, at a minimum, include:

- A brief profile of the consulting firm.
- Demonstrated experience in undertaking similar assignments.
- An understanding of the Terms of Reference (ToR) and the proposed approach to delivering the assignment.

Statutory Compliance Documents

The following documents should be submitted as annexes to the proposal:

- Tax Authority PIN Certificate.
- Valid Tax Compliance Certificate.
- Certificate of Business Registration/Incorporation.
- Registration with relevant professional bodies (where applicable).
- Any other statutory documents relevant to the assignment.

Financial Proposal

- A detailed cost estimate for the services to be rendered.
- All prices must be quoted inclusive of all applicable taxes and any other statutory obligations.

Key Personnel

- Curriculum Vitae (CVs) of the proposed key experts.

References

- At least three (3) references from clients for whom similar assignments have been successfully completed.

12. Submission of Proposals

Proposals **MUST** be submitted electronically to **procurement@agf.africa** no later than **Tuesday, 7th August 2026 at 17:00 hrs (EAT).**

Expression of Interest

Interested consulting firms are requested to register their interest in participating in this RFP no later than **Tuesday 4th August 2026,** even as they continue working on their proposals by sending an email to **procurement@agf.africa** with the subject line:

"Expression of Interest – [RFP Title] – [Country]"

The email should include:

- Name of the consulting firm;
- Contact person;
- Email address;
- Telephone number; and
- Country(ies) for which the proposal will be submitted (Kenya, Zambia, and/or Côte d'Ivoire).

Only registered interested bidders will receive any clarifications, responses to requests for information, amendments, or addenda issued during the procurement process. Failure to register an expression of interest may result in the bidder not receiving important communications relating to this RFP.

Evaluation and Award

Only the successful firm(s) will be contacted directly via email. The evaluation, shortlisting and selection of proposals shall be conducted in accordance with AGF's Procurement Policies, Rules and Procedures.

Disclaimer

Note:

AGF reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to accept or reject any proposal, in whole or in part, and to annul the solicitation process at any stage without incurring any liability to the participating firms. Such decisions shall be final, and AGF shall not enter into correspondence regarding the evaluation or selection process other than notifying bidders of the outcome.