



**COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND  
SOUTHERN AFRICA**

Approved  
28/02/2025

*Tamar*

**CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR THE POST OF TECHNICAL OPERATIONS  
COORDINATOR AT COMESA UNDER THE REGIONAL FOOD BALANCE SHEET  
INITIATIVE**

**February 2025**

## 1.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND:

The lack of cohesive and transparent information in agricultural markets is a problem that challenges farmers, traders, processors, investors, governments, and donors throughout Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Developing a common understanding of food production, consumption, and balances is essential to improve evidence-based decision-making across these actors and to promote regional food security and long-term inclusive agricultural transformation and resilient food systems. The need for timely and reliable information is critical considering emerging and recurring shocks from increasing climate variability (currently manifesting itself as a historic drought across the Horn of Africa) and cyclical shocks such as locust outbreaks. When combined, these issues have the potential to dramatically increase food insecurity for millions of vulnerable people in the COMESA Region .

Without reliable information about the spatial and temporal dimensions of commodity availability and demand, including production estimates, stocks, trade flows, and market information, there is a risk that governments will enact unnecessary export bans, stocking requirements, import duties, or other non-tariff barriers which perpetuate an unpredictable operating environment for private sector, farmers, traders, input suppliers, and industry associations. These measures are instigated to address concerns over either too much production or too little food produced. This is especially relevant to how these volume fluctuations impact on food price and availability. This environment disincentivizes long-term investment in private aggregation and trade infrastructure, and in the case of smaller actors dissuades many from formalizing their businesses at all. The RFBS is able to provide up to date information on the supply and demand for food commodities.

In addition to a more stable environment, timely and trustworthy food balance data can help private actors understand areas of comparative advantage and the extent to which production systems are “keeping up” with the emerging agri-food transition and domestic demand. These data are essential in showing surplus and deficit areas, thereby providing a signal to private traders, millers, or other aggregators to inform when and where to source, where to ship food commodities, or other business and investment decisions

In recognition of the lack of reliable, timely, and accurate data on food balances in many SSA countries, AGRA and COMESA are co-leading the development and implementation of a digital regional food balance sheet (RFBS) initiative with initial funding support from USAID, FCDO, the Gates Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation. The vision of the RFBS initiative is to develop and maintain a user-centric digitally enabled web platform that uses near real-time data feeds to generate intuitive and value-additive analytics and dynamic visualizations. The objective of the RFBS is to support the increased use of near real-time and future estimates of critical food balance data to inform decisions around production support, trade policy, stock management and emergency response by governments, private sector actors, and donors in East and Southern Africa (ESA).

To do so COMESA has worked with AGRA and a team of implementing partners including Tetra Tech, NASA Harvest, the Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (BFAP) to develop the project architecture and build the RFBS platform. To date, we have defined the project governance structure; identified initial data sources (from government, analytics partners, and a machine learning model); defined national structures for user engagement and data contribution; began ingesting information into the RFBS platform; and built the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) of the digital tool. The MVP contains information for:

- a) Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Malawi, and Zambia;
- b) Maize, beans, and rice;

- c) Six food balance sheet modules (production, imports, stocks, exports, utilization, prices); and
- d) Dashboards to visualize the above, along with key messages and short narratives

The user-centric digitally enabled web platform ingests data from a variety of public and private sources and then leverages advanced analytics and tools to develop near real-time and forward-looking food balance estimates and produce intuitive and dynamic visualizations across several data modules.

To ensure sustainability, both the platform and the outputs to be developed must fit into existing workflows and meet the needs of specific public and private user groups. In addition, there is need to incorporate some of the previously articulated user requirements/requests such as expansion of commodity and country coverage, development of mobile application including incorporating a user-friendly interface with the RFBS system.

The ambition is to expand the tool to five additional countries and four additional commodities in the near future and ultimately to all the 21 COMESA Member States. The RFBS initiative is now at a critical junction, we need to improve its operations and data flows to ensure that the platform delivers upon the expectations of the users including Member States and meets its overall objectives.

COMESA Secretariat is therefore looking for a Technical Operation Coordinator for the successful delivery of the RFBS initiative.

The successful Technical Operations Coordinator shall support the design, enhancement, and deployment of the RFBS mobile and web applications and play a key role in expanding the platform’s geographic and commodity coverage, supporting user engagement, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the project.

The COMESA Secretariat , therefore , invites applications from qualified candidates to be considered for the position of Technical Operations Coordinator as described in the job descriptions below:

<b>No.</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
1.	Technical Operations Coordinator	Professional Level

## **2.0 JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE POSITION**

- JOB TITLE** : **Technical Operations Coordinator**
- GRADE** : Professional Level
- SALARY** : USD 60,000 p.a- all inclusive
- PROGRAMME** : Regional Food Balance Sheet (RFBS) Initiative
- DUTY STATION** : COMESA Secretariat, Lusaka, Zambia

- CONTRACT DURATION** : The contract duration shall be from the date of signature of the contract up to the end of the programme duration, which is 30<sup>th</sup> November 2027.
- REPORTING TO** : The Technical Operations Coordinator shall be supervised directly by RFBS Project Manager under the overall supervision of the Director of Industry and Agriculture .

### 3.0 SCOPE OF WORK

Under the close supervision of the RFBS Project Manager in COMESA Secretariat, the Technical Operations Coordinator will work closely with the Project Manager, Delivery Analyst, and RFBS implementing teams to support the design, enhancement, and deployment of the RFBS mobile and web applications. They will contribute to strategic design, stakeholder engagement, and capacity-building initiatives to ensure the success of the RFBS initiative. The coordinator will also be required to play a key role in expanding the platform's geographic and commodity coverage, supporting user engagement, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the project.

The primary duties of the Technical Operations Coordinator shall include but are not limited to the following:

#### ***Technical Development and Operations***

- (i) Oversee the enhancement and maintenance of the RFBS web platform and the development and integration of the RFBS mobile application (iOS and Android);
- (ii) Collaborate with technical teams to implement user-centred design improvements based on stakeholder feedback;
- (iii) Support the development of additional modules and features to expand the platform's coverage of commodities and countries;
- (iv) Ensure seamless and continuous data submission from the member states focal points, data validation, analysis and ingestion on the RFBS platform;
- (v) Coordinate technical support for data ingestion, validation, and integration with analytical tools provided by partners such as NASA Harvest and BFAP.

#### ***Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination***

- (i) Engage with member states to facilitate the development and validation of national Food Balance Sheets (FBS) and ensure alignment with RFBS objectives;
- (ii) Support the engagements and coordination of the RFBS governance structure, including the RFBS Committee and national technical working groups;
- (iii) Collaborate with youth and women-led grid-ironer associations to promote platform utilization and integration with other COMESA initiatives;

- (iv) Organize high-level stakeholder engagement sessions and public-private dialogues to sustain buy-in and enhance platform adoption.

### ***Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing***

- (i) Facilitate training sessions for government agencies, private sector stakeholders, and youth and women-led SMEs on using the RFBS platform;
- (ii) Develop and disseminate user manuals, training materials, and other knowledge products to support stakeholders; and
- (iii) Support the establishment of a regional knowledge hub to share analytical reports, policy briefs, and other relevant resources.

### ***Monitoring, Reporting, and Sustainability***

- (i) Generate targeted reports and policy briefs to inform decision-making processes and support advocacy efforts.
- (ii) Monitor the implementation of the RFBS initiative and track Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- (iii) Assist in developing and implementing a sustainability strategy for the RFBS platform, including resource mobilization and institutionalization within COMESA.
- (iv) Provide regular updates to the COMESA leadership and technical committees on project progress and recommendations
- (v) Perform any other job-related duties as assigned by the Supervisor from time to time

## **4.0 EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS**

- (i) Bachelor's degree in computer science, Data Science, Software Engineering, Statistics, Agriculture, or Project Management
- (ii) A Postgraduate qualification in any of the above fields will be an added advantage.

## **5.0 PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS**

- (i) At least six (6) years of experience in software product management, project coordination, or related fields;
- (ii) Demonstrated experience in the end-to-end development and deployment of digital platforms.
- (iii) Proven ability to coordinate multi-stakeholder initiatives and manage complex digital and analytics projects;
- (iv) Proficiency in human-centred design and agile development methodologies;

- (v) Strong problem-solving and analytical skills, with experience in stakeholder engagement; and
- (vi) Excellent communication skills and ability to produce high-quality reports and knowledge products.

## **6.0 WORKING LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL THE POSITIONS**

- (a) Must be fluent in English and/or French and/or Arabic (speaking and writing).
- (b) A combination of knowledge and use of English with either French or Arabic or all these languages will be an added advantage.

## **7.0 ELIGIBILITY FOR APPLICATION**

- (a) Applicants must be nationals of COMESA Member States and should not be more than 55 years of age at the time of submitting the application.

## **8.0 FINAL DATE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS**

Applications **MUST** be submitted electronically through email on the prescribed **COMESA APPLICATION FORM** which can be accessed at the following COMESA website: <http://www.comesa.int/>, Opportunities, COMESA Job Application Format. Applications without the COMESA Job Application Format will not be considered.

## **9.0 ONLY SHORT-LISTED CANDIDATES WILL BE CONTACTED AND WOMEN ARE HIGHLY ENCOURAGED TO APPLY.**

**Application should reach the address below not later than Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 17:00 hours Lusaka, Zambia time.**

### **The Director of Human Resources and Administration**

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

COMESA Centre

Ben Bella Road

P.O Box 30051

LUSAKA

Zambia

Email: [recruitment@comesa.int](mailto:recruitment@comesa.int)