



**Supporting adaptive management of DeSIRA projects and developing  
a global monitoring of the Desira Initiative  
to improve progress towards the SDGs**

## **Newsletter 8**

13-03-2022

Object: Letter of information of DG-INTPA to DeSIRA project leaders about M&E expectations and support

The DeSIRA Initiative aims to foster innovation through research to contribute to the transformation of agri-food systems in low and middle-income countries with a specific focus on agroecological approaches in several projects for meeting the SDGs. The DeSIRA initiative relies on multi-stakeholder partnerships and participatory research approaches in order to enhance both innovations and capacity development at individual and organizational levels for strengthening agricultural innovation systems in their contexts.

As a consequence, all the DeSIRA projects have some commonalities in their intervention strategies and expected outcomes, which are reflected in their current Logical framework (i.e. "logframe") and/or in their Theory of Change and M&E system for those who already developed it.

Currently the project leaders are being contacted through three different channels to document their logframes on the request of DG-INTPA of the EC. This note aims at providing project leaders with clarifications on the on-going M&E processes led by DG-INTPA.

### **1. DeSIRA- LIFT facility**

The DeSIRA-LIFT<sup>1</sup> facility aims at enhancing DeSIRA projects capacities to manage their activities and resources for impacts. Among others, the DeSIRA-LIFT facility will equip Project teams with monitoring, evaluation and learning tools and approaches, based on their needs and demands.

The service delivery approach of DeSIRA-LIFT is based on two cycles of projects' needs assessment, service delivery and service offer refinement, spread over three years from 2022

---

<sup>1</sup> **The DeSIRA-LIFT project** (Leveraging the DeSIRA initiative for agri-food systems transformation) started in June 2021. One of the specific objectives of this programme is to support DeSIRA project implementers to enhance their impacts on climate-oriented innovation systems in line with sustainable food system transitions.

to 2024. The first cycle started in March 2022 with inception workshops organized around four project clusters based on geographic criteria. The first set of support services will be delivered between May and December 2022, with a mix of tailored coaching activities, trainings and cross-projects mutual learning activities.

Participation in DeSIRA LIFT support services is voluntary. Projects' teams (i.e. project leaders, co-leaders, project managers, MEL<sup>2</sup> managers, and other relevant members of project teams) are invited to engage in workshops, learning events and training activities. DeSIRA-LIFT support services are made to embark the projects on a joint learning trajectory with other projects and further strengthen some of the core management capacities, including MEL capacities, to conduct an impactful Research and Innovation Project in a specific context.

DeSIRA-LIFT support services to projects' MEL systems will help Projects' teams to (re)formulate their Theory of Change if necessary, to improve their intervention strategy and to generate evidence on their outcomes and their contributions to innovation trajectories, to innovation system strengthening and to impact pathways.

As a by-product of DeSIRA-LIFT support, the logical framework of the project could be improved!

## **2. OPSYS digital platform**

As regard to its own needs for monitoring and evaluation of all its interventions including grant contracts, the European Commission put in place a new system called OPSYS, which is an interactive digital platform to better manage all EU interventions (contracts) including the projects' logical frameworks (which is part of the contract). In a short period of time, the EC is requesting encoding of projects (including the DeSIRA projects) on the OPSYS platform, which implies to encode all the logframes and their associated indicators. The EU delegations are in charge of providing the information for encoding the logframes of the Projects under their portfolio. On-line trainings for EU delegations and project leaders are available on the EC website.

This logframe encoding operation aims mainly to improve the accountability of projects. The encoded logframes can be a shorter version of the projects' Theory of Change, including the main outcomes and the more relevant indicators the project wants to report or can report. The encoded logframe can be an improved version of the current logframe included in the initial contract of the project. OPSYS allows for improvements of logframes throughout the life of the project. This encoding operation requires some investments to learn how to manage OPSYS but finally it is an opportunity for documenting a relevant logframe. We are aware that it would have been more efficient if the encoding procedure would take place after the delivery of DeSIRA LIFT MEL support services. But it is not the case, since all the INTPA interventions are being simultaneously included in this new encoding procedure that already started.

## **3 – ASRAFS facility**

The DeSIRA initiative includes about 80 projects (around € 345 million). It is also important to monitor this initiative at the global level to adapt its management and to communicate with

---

<sup>2</sup> Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

partners for accountability purposes. ASRAFS (which is an INTPA technical assistance facility) is currently designing an overarching logical framework matrix for the DeSIRA initiative as a whole. This global logical framework is built upon existing logframes of DeSIRA projects. It includes a set of global indicators aiming at capturing the overall performance of DeSIRA projects in key areas which best illustrate the vision and objectives that underpin the DeSIRA initiative.

The list of global DeSIRA indicators will be communicated/accessible to all projects as soon as possible. The overarching logframe will be informed by external experts based on an analysis of the annual reports of the project and through a survey (about 2 hours of interview/year/project). ASRAFS will first monitor the results achieved by the projects started in 2019.