



AfriFOODlinks

Terms of Reference:

Call for Podcast Service Provider

ICLEI Africa invites applications from qualified podcast service providers to produce a podcast series for the AfriFOODlinks project

Applications due: 23h59 (SAST) on 21 September 2025

All applications should be valid for 30 days.

Selection to be completed during first half of October 2025

Bids and technical queries can be sent to: mulesa.lumina@iclei.org and tiago.damasceno@iclei.org

AfriFOODlinks is delivered by: ICLEI Africa (coordinator), ACRA, African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC), Agence de Financement et de Promotion de Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (AFP/PME), Agence du Développement Économique Urbain (ADEU), Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD), City, University of London, Département de Technologie Alimentaire de l'IRSAT, Està - Economia e Sostenibilità, Food Rights Alliance, HIVOS, ICLEI Europe, ICLEI World Secretariat, Inades Formation Burkina, Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD), Institut National de Nutrition et de Technologie Alimentaire (INNTA), Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOOUST), L'institute Agro, Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), Oribi Village, Rete Semi Rurali, Rikolto, Shona East Africa, South African Urban Food & Farming Trust, University of Cape Town, University of Ghana, Women in Sustainable Enterprise (WISE)

AfriFOODlinks – Launched in December 2022, AfriFOODlinks is an EU-funded project coordinated by ICLEI Africa, bringing together 26 partners from across the globe to enhance food security and urban sustainability in more than 65 cities across Africa and Europe. The project applies an urban food systems lens to drive transformative change by promoting shifts toward healthy and sustainable diets, reshaping urban food environments through real-world socio-technical experiments, and fostering inclusive multi-actor governance. By empowering public officials, small businesses, and communities with ownership and agency, AfriFOODlinks enables them to actively shape their food systems. Additionally, the project accelerates innovative agri-food businesses, with a strong focus on women- and youth-led enterprises, to support local value addition and foster inclusive economic participation.

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is a global network of more than 2,500 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 125+ countries, ICLEI influences sustainability policy and drives local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development. The organisations' Members and team of experts work together through peer exchange, partnerships and capacity building to create systemic change for urban sustainability.

Background

The podcast series will serve as an engaging and thought-provoking platform that explores key themes related to urban food systems across Africa. It is intended to spark dialogue, share diverse perspectives, unpack learnings around urban food systems transformation, and elevate voices working at the intersection of food, governance, sustainability and equity.

The main ambition of AfriFOODlinks is to transform not only the governance of urban food systems in Africa, but the governance of research between Africa and Europe. Overall, AfriFOODlinks aims to achieve the multiple and interconnected objectives of food security, health and nutrition, job creation and regeneration of the environment, especially for young people and women, through more inclusive, innovative and balanced governance.

The series is also aimed at introducing the AfriFOODlinks project to a wider audience, primarily focusing on the knowledge the project has generated, as well as key learnings and experiences of those implementing it. This podcast series is a reflection on these experiences and lessons.

The series is intended for a technical audience of food systems practitioners, subject-matter experts, researchers, policymakers, activists and local government officials, and a selection of episodes are targeted at a more general public audience.

Scope of work - production specifications

ICLEI Africa, in partnership with Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), is looking to appoint a podcast Service Provider with proven experience in the full process of production of a podcast series, from conceptualisation to dissemination. The Service Provider is expected to contribute creatively and champion the production of the series. Service Providers that can demonstrate experience in podcasts around the theme of food systems and related sustainability issues will benefit from an advantage.

Please find below details for the scope of work:

1. Tone and format

The podcast series is envisioned to be conversational but journalistic in tone. The episodes will primarily be structured around interviews. Each episode will be shaped by thematic areas that align with the interviewee's experience, expertise and passions. A list of potential interviewees and themes will be supplied to the Service Provider (please see conceptual list of themes below).

The series should have a clear structure, language and feel that establishes a clear and consistent identity across all episodes. The overall feel of the series needs to be representative of urban food systems in African cities. The structure and feel of the series is to be conceptualised and presented by the Service Provider, in light of these requirements, and to be approved by ICLEI Africa and MUFPP. The AfriFOODlinks Consortium, having presence in the various cities of the project and access to the soundscapes of these cities, would be able to support the recording of targeted local soundscapes, if needed.

2. Episodes and episode duration

The Service Provider will be expected to deliver up to 26 audio-only episodes clustered into two packages, each for a different type of audience

- Package - "shorter length": 10-20 shorter episodes (15-30 minutes each), aimed at being more accessible and engaging for the general public. These episodes will concisely unpack overarching themes, interesting facts and compelling narratives related to urban food systems governance and the AfriFOODlinks project generally.
- Package - "longer length": 2-6 longer-length episodes (45-60 minutes each), aimed at practitioners and experts. These episodes will take a deeper dive into more complex thematic areas related to urban food systems transformation and more specific topics, challenges or innovations.

Flexibility in the amount of episodes is given to encourage creative approaches to the series, the concept of which will be used in the evaluation of the bidders.

3. List of themes (high-level themes of conversation)

Below is a high-level list of themes that is indicative of the conversation content that the podcast will be unpacking. The list is not limited nor are these the suggested titles; it is included here to indicate the potential content and thematic areas the podcast will need to cover.

- **Food in city planning** – Considering the role of food systems in urban development and resilience.
- **Local vs national roles** – Examining what local governments can address that national ones may not.
- **Governance and integration** – Exploring how governance structures can support food systems across sectors.
- **City collaboration and South-South exchange** – Looking at mechanisms and benefits of inter-city and Global South cooperation.
- **Finance, inclusion, and data** – Exploring budgeting, funding, equity, and data in food-related urban policies.

4. Hosting and dissemination

The Service Provider will be expected to put a proposal together for the dissemination plan, detailing among other things: the platforms, the steps, the associated costs and periods of dissemination.

The project envisions two categories of dissemination according to the two packages of episodes:

- The podcast episodes will be hosted on a public podcast platform (e.g. Spotify, SoundCloud, Apple Podcasts), as advised by the Service Provider, and embedded on a dedicated page on the AfriFOODlinks website. The landing page will also include a short written description of the series and each episode.
- Some episodes will be selected to be distributed through platforms that have a focus towards food systems / urban systems experts. Specific podcast channels (like FAO, ICLEI, ACC) will be suggested by ICLEI while the Service Provider can propose other channels.

5. Distinction of roles and responsibilities

A. Role of the AfriFOODlinks team:

- a. Lead the development of the podcast brief and content direction, including defining a series of potential themes for the conversations.
- b. Identify and connect relevant content experts to the Service Provider, ensuring that each episode theme is matched with an appropriate interviewee or expert.

- c. Cater for the graphic representation of the episodes by doing the graphic treatment to the podcast series, advertisement and website publishing.
- d. Propose a list of specific, expertise-focused channels to disseminate the package “long” episodes.
- e. The AfriFOODlinks team will hold the responsibility of approving the episode’s content at all stages of its production, namely: concept and content prior to recording, the recorded and edited version, and the series as a whole. The team reserves the right to order edits to or to remove episodes from the series even after they are complete.

B. Roles and responsibilities of the Service Provider

- a. Provide creative direction and propose the narrative approach, episode structure, and overall listener experience of the podcast series.
- b. Host or facilitate and guide the podcast conversations, including the hiring of any service providers for this within the budget proposed.
- c. Engage with selected content experts prior to recording to co-design the episode structure and identify key talking points. Submit these to AfriFOODlinks for approval prior to recording.
- d. Record, edit and master all podcast episodes for final dissemination, ensuring the audio is high-quality and polished.
- e. Produce text transcripts of each episode.
- f. Develop and propose a dissemination plan for reaching the target audience(s), including possible teaser content.

6. Language requirements

Podcast episodes are expected to be produced and distributed in both English and French as the project is run in these languages. The Service Provider must propose a creative approach to the bilingual nature of the series. This may include recording episodes in both languages, translating episodes, producing written transcripts, or other innovative solutions to ensure accessibility to both anglophone and francophone audiences.

At a minimum, we anticipate that at least 30% of the episodes are originally recorded in each of the two languages.

7. Sound quality during interviews

Please note that the budget does not include any travel and the list of potential interviewees will include individuals based in different countries (primarily across Africa), with varying levels of access to technology and internet connectivity. Proposals should take this into account and outline a simple, low-bandwidth-friendly solution for conducting, recording, and editing interviews, while maintaining high audio quality and a consistent listening experience across episodes. Interviews will likely need to be conducted remotely

using commonly available and accessible platforms (e.g. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, WhatsApp, etc.)

8. Deliverables

The Service Provider will be expected to deliver:

- One (1) concept document including:
 - i. Proposal for the overall structure and listener experience of the series
 - ii. Plan for recording all audio, including interviews, introductions, outros and any other background/ambient sounds.
 - iii. Finalised practical plan for the series that includes number of episodes agreed to, definitions of hosts and their role, definition of language treatment, definition of recording protocol, etc...
 - iv. Finalised detailed budget
 - v. Finalised detailed timeline
 - vi. Finalised dissemination plan
 - vii. Examples of podcast series / episodes that are representative of particular aspects that will be replicated making up a “mood board”
- X number of episodes (up to 26) as agreed in contract, produced according to timeline agreed which could be done in batches of episodes or sections of work. These must include:
 - i. Pre-production process: developing each episode’s content through engagement with the content experts, and submitting a one-pager concept note per episode for AfriFOODlinks approval.
 - ii. Production of the episodes:
 - 1. Recording
 - 2. Editing - must include review and feedback by AfriFOODlinks and re-edit when needed
 - 3. Post-production mastering
 - 4. Issuing final product including transcripts and a short summary of the key ideas of each episode in both English and French
 - iii. Dissemination in public platforms agreed upon with AfriFOODlinks (eg: Spotify, Apple Podcasts, etc...) and support in dissemination in expert channels.

9. Proven experience

The Service Provider will be requested to submit examples of their podcast experience. Podcasts that best represent the concepts described in this document will be prioritised. The judges will be looking for podcasts that:

- Can dive deep into content and make it understandable to and engaging for the general public
- Can engage with Food Systems technical knowledge
- Can demonstrate this experience in both English and French
- Have experience producing a series that has a consistent and identifiable language throughout
- Full suite of services for the entire process from pre- to post-production and dissemination

Timelines and key milestones

The entire series of podcast episodes, including post-production and dissemination through selected platforms, needs to be **completed by 30 April 2026**. The production timelines are to be proposed by the Service Provider considering three important conditions:

- Before recording, concept notes of the episode need to be approved by the AfriFOODlinks team
- After editing the episodes, the AfriFOODlinks team reviews and provides feedback on the episode with potential requests for re-editing
- A final review of all episodes is done in bulk to analyse the series as a whole, with the option for minor edits

Below is an indicative expected timeline for the project.

Milestone	Timeline
Expected appointment completed	Early Oct 25
Submission of concept document	Mid-Oct 25
Completion of all podcasts (including episode reviews)	Mid-Mar 26
Completion of review of podcast series in bulk and sign off by ICLEI Africa	Early Apr 26
Completion of dissemination and close of project	End Apr 26

Budget

The Service Provider will be requested to submit a detailed and itemised budget proposal. The budget will need to be submitted **in Euros**. The total budget must not exceed **€15,000** (excluding VAT), inclusive of all costs. The budget proposal must clarify all of the costs associated with the production of the series, organised into clear categories. The Proposal

is expected to **clarify the number of episodes** of each of the two packages that can be achieved within the budget.

ICLEI Africa will not cover any unbudgeted items. Budget efficiency and value-for-money must be demonstrated and will be considered when selecting the winning bid.

Submission requirements

1. A **conceptual** visual or text-based **storyboard / mood board** for the series including:
 - a. An outline illustrating the overall concept and narrative approach, based on the tone and style outlined above.
 - b. A breakdown of the episode structure, showing the sequence of elements such as intro, segments, interviews, transitions, and outro.
 - c. An indication of how music, sound design, or other audio elements will be used to enhance the listener experience.
 - d. Creative solutions for addressing the **bilingual nature of the podcast series** (English and French), as outlined in the above section, demonstrating how accessibility for both language audiences will be ensured.
 - e. Based on narrative concept in point (a) and the bilingual nature in point (d), if the approach is to include a host for the series, describe the plan on how this would materialise including costs.
2. Examples of **reference podcasts**
 - a. At least three examples of past podcast episodes or series (including ones developed by the Service Provider) from which we can draw inspiration (with a clear indication of the particular inspirational aspect of that podcast/series).
3. **Plan for recording** of episodes within language requirements and taking into consideration the varied online capacities of the interviewees.
4. A proposed **timeline** for the development, production and delivery of the full podcast series by April 2026, indicating key milestones, the organization of the episode recordings and feedback periods.
5. An itemised **budget** that outlines all anticipated costs, including:
 - a. Pre-production, recording, editing and post-production processes
 - b. Soundscapes, music or any other licensed content
 - c. Talent fees (e.g. voice-over artists, hosts, editors)
 - d. Platform hosting and distribution costs (if applicable)
6. A proposal for the potential **hosting platforms** and dissemination of the podcast episodes.
7. **Team composition and bios or CVs** of the key team members who will be involved in the project, highlighting podcasting, hosting, facilitating, knowledge of food systems, language or other relevant experience.

8. If the applicant is a South African Company, they should provide a **B-BBEE certificate**.

Evaluation criteria

The applicants will be evaluated taking into consideration the following criteria:

- Budget distribution and value for money of the application (Project Budget - point 5)
- Creative response to the ToR conditions and proposed methodology (Concept Notes, Work Plan - points 1-4)
- Experience of applicant (CVs / Company Profile / Demonstrated experience - points 2 and 7)
- If the applicant is based in South Africa, B-BBEE status (point 8)

Submission process and timelines

Please indicate interest in submitting a bid by **31 August 2025** so that any responses to queries may be shared with all bidders. Bidders will not be excluded from submitting bids if notice of interest is not indicated, but these bidders will not receive responses to any queries and clarifications raised. Kindly submit your proposal to mulesa.lumina@iclei.org and tiago.damasceno@iclei.org by 23h59 on **21 September 2025**. At all times, please use the subject line, AfriFOODlinks - Podcasts.

See the timelines for the submission process and first meetings below:

25 August 2025	ToR advertised
31 August 2025	Deadline for sending requests for clarification or queries regarding the ToR to ICLEI Africa
5 September 2025	Response to queries from ICLEI Africa
21 September 2025	Proposal submission closing date
1st half of Oct 2025	Expected award to Service Provider

Additional information

ICLEI AFRICA RESERVES THE RIGHT NOT TO APPOINT A SERVICE PROVIDER AS PER THIS TERMS OF REFERENCE.

ICLEI AFRICA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO NEGOTIATE THE FINAL COMPOSITION OF THE CONTRACT, BY MAKING AGREED UPON CHANGES TO THE APPLICATION, TO ENSURE BETTER VALUE FOR THE PROJECT.

Please be aware that if you do not hear any feedback, either ICLEI Africa has decided not to appoint a Service Provider for this piece of work, or you have been unsuccessful in your application.