

IFAD V	
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Componenta	
Categoria	IV
Loan/Grant	Grant

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Project Impact Assessment at Completion Rural Financial Services and Agribusiness Development Project (RFSADP) ASSIGNMENT DURATION: JUNE TO AUGUST, 2016

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Rural Financial Services and Agribusiness Development Project (RFSADP), the fifth IFAD funded project in Moldova became effective on the 4th of July 2011 and is implemented during a 60-month period. The project is in its final stage of implementation, with the completion deadline set for September 2016.

The goal of RFSADP is reduction of income poverty and malnutrition among poor rural people in Moldova. The Project's objectives are:

- (i) To improve in a pro-poor manner the efficiency of agriculture-related value chains, particularly through support to the introduction and establishment of internationally-recognized quality and food-safety standards and support to the development of contract farming;
- (ii) To increase the access of poor rural people to credit through support to appropriate, affordable, rural financial instruments;
- (iii) To alleviate or remove infrastructural bottlenecks to improving the assets and incomes of poor rural people.

The RFSADP's activities are implemented through three main components:

- (i) **Pro-Poor Agribusiness Development** – support and target rural people through linking them more profitably, either as producers, small or medium entrepreneurs or employees to agricultural high-value commodity chains through:
 - 1.1 Contract Farming Development;
 - 1.2 Conservation Farming Development;
- (ii) **Rural Financial Services** – contribute to alleviating the problems of lack of access to financing through:
 - 2(a) longer term financing of SME investments in agricultural value chains supported by RFSADP;
 - 2(b) medium to longer term financing of young entrepreneurs' investments in agricultural value chains;
 - 2(c) short to medium term financing of rural microenterprises' investments in productive assets and working capital for such enterprises
- (iii) **Small-Scale Rural Infrastructure** –contribute to removing infrastructure bottlenecks which inhibit the participation of poor commercially/market-oriented small farmers and economically active rural poor in Project-prioritized value chains and consequently their access to the corresponding benefits.

SCOPE OF WORK

The objective of the assignment is to perform final impact evaluation of the project (implementation period July 2011 – September 2016) by assessing to what extent has the project achieved its intended goal, development objectives and outcomes, through capturing the direct and indirect impact of the project interventions. The assessment will: i) compare socio-economic situation of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries (control group) at project start and completion, ii) assess the outcomes of implemented

technologies and investments. The aim is to understand and quantify the impact of various project components individually and collectively and to provide an economic and financial analysis of the project. Available baseline data will be provided by the CPIU. When baseline data is not available, these should be gathered from the secondary data sources such as censuses, Living Standards Measurement Surveys (LSMS), etc. or by using the 'recall' method (coinciding with the project start time) for both beneficiaries and the control group. Information on outputs of the project as will be provided.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT PER COMPONENT:

Component 1: Pro-Poor Agribusiness Development

Sub-component 1.1: Conservation Farming Development

Under this sub-component, activities have been directed towards implementation of resilient agriculture technologies Mini-till and No-till. The approach has been implemented through creation of 4 demo plots, where, with support of national experts, the technology has been introduced and monitored. The technology dissemination has been done through training seminars with farmers from the region, being trained a total of 1194 people. The impact assessment shall include, but not be limited to: i) desk review of expert reports: agronomist, economist and soil science specialist; ii) focus group discussions with the respective experts and demo plot owners; iii) survey of trained farmers regarding the adoption of technology, dissemination and outcomes after implementation.

Sub-component 1.2: Contract Farming Development

Under this sub-component, efforts have been made to group farmers with similar characteristics and products into small working groups in order to consolidate their production, processing and marketing capacities. National experts in the respective domains have been assigned to each of the group, in order to guide and monitor the implementation process. By the end of the project, cumulatively, have been created 13 groups of producers. The impact assessment shall include, but not be limited to: i) desk review of expert reports; ii) focus group discussions with the respective experts and members of the contract farming groups.

Component 2: Rural Financial Services

Under the Rural Financial Services Component interventions were directed towards ensuring access to finance for different categories of farmers, starting with the most vulnerable farmers with a status of physical persons which are members of village level Savings and Credit Associations, reaching the strategic young entrepreneurs willing to start or develop a business in agriculture, and the upper part of the target group, the commercially oriented SMEs willing to invest in productive assets. At the same time, trainings were conducted for young entrepreneur pre- and post- financing, and SCA staff was trained in business and regulatory domains. Under this component, during the first three months of 2016, the CPIU has conducted the final impact data collection from project beneficiaries. This includes collection from a sample of project direct beneficiaries, including SCA, young entrepreneurs and SMEs of socio-economic indicators to assess changes in their livelihoods as consequence of project support. Thus, there is available, within the CPIU, an SPSS database with collected results and the model of used questionnaires. The impact assessment exercise shall include, but not be limited to: i) desk review of CPIU RFS annual reports; ii) desk review of CPIU 2015 annual data collection; iii) collection of a sample of beneficiaries as a control group to be used when conducting difference in difference analysis; iv) survey of trained people regarding the adoption of improved techniques, dissemination of information and outcomes of trainings.

Component 3: Small Scale Rural Infrastructure

Small Scale Rural Infrastructure Component has assisted farmers in gaining access to productive infrastructure, including rural village level roads and irrigation systems. Applicants, being mayoralties together with economic entities would team up as a client group in order to get access to IFAD support in rehabilitation of the infrastructure. So far, under this component have been implemented a total of 17 projects), including 11.7 km of reconstructed road(11 projects) and 6 projects of water supply systems to irrigate a total area of 1009 hectares. Under this component, during the first three months of 2016, the

CPIU has also conducted the final impact data collection from project beneficiaries and has available the SPSS database with information on project indicators. The impact assessment exercise shall include, but not be limited to: i) desk review of the CPIU annual reports; ii) review of the data collection database; iii) based on focus group discussions with project beneficiaries, conduct the post-intervention cost-benefit analysis for all 17 supported projects, to assess the performance pre and post implementation and conclude final notes on impact of rural infrastructure by type of projects.(ex. for roads access to markets, crop losses reduction, cost of transportation... etc.)

Note: The CPIU will make available all the above mentioned reports along with the contact data for the respective experts. At the same time, in case of trainings, lists with farmer attendance and contact information will be shared.

Gender

The impact assessment should also reflect on the gender approach and women inclusion, in a separate chapter, including presentation of women participation in the different project activities and the results obtained by women run businesses.

CONTROL GROUP:

For the rural financial services component, in order to better understand the attribution of the project interventions on beneficiaries, a control group (counterfactual) will also be used. This group will be identified based on similar characteristics of the beneficiaries (nearby locations with similar demographics). As an example, the persons whose loan application was rejected can serve as the control group. Statistical techniques such as propensity score matching; double difference, etc. can be used to select the control group. However, care would be taken to ensure that this group does not include indirect project beneficiaries.

SAMPLING STRATEGY:

The **sample size** for the survey based activities will be calculated using standard statistical formulae, using 95 per cent confidence level and with the margin of error at 5 per cent as the first choice. The sample will ensure proportionality and representativeness of the different project activities, geographic distribution and gender. As a guide, the *minimum* sample size for each component can be taken to be as under:

Direct beneficiaries

1. Conservation farming: 290 beneficiary individuals;
2. Rural Financial Services: SME financing: 22 control group SMEs
Young Entrepreneur Financing: 120 control group SMEs
Micro-financing: 200 control group HHS/individuals
SCA staff training: 160 beneficiary individuals
3. Rural Infrastructure: 17 projects

Control group

The sample size should also take into account the non-response rate, based on previous experience in the country, or 10 per cent, as a benchmark.

DELIVERABLES

The following deliverables will be provided to the project upon completion of corresponding phases:

- Inception report and Implementation Plan;
- Raw database for survey based activities (raw dataset);
- Final Report with data analysis.

Questionnaires to be provided to interviewees will be submitted in the original completed language

Database and final report to be submitted in English.

COMPETENCIES REQUIRED

- Minimum 6 - years' experience in the implementation of quantitative and qualitative household surveys and impact assessments;
- At least one member of the staff with agricultural experience;
- Expertise in statistical analyses (familiarity with data processing and data analysis software such as SPSS);
- Experience in report writing;
- Be aware of the context of assignment, namely the low institutional capacity of agricultural producers and availability of financial data.

Languages:

Staff sufficiency to cover Romanian, English and Russian language proficiency (oral and written)

TIMELINE

The exact timeframe for this assignment will be negotiated in line with the proposal submitted by the interested party. The methodology proposed for this assignment will influence, to some extent the duration of the assignment. It is envisaged that the study could be completed no later than **11th of August 2016**.

OFFER CONTENT

Interested consulting companies should submit their applications consisting of the following documents/information to demonstrate their qualifications:

1. *Technical Proposal* will include:
 - a. Registration certificate;
 - b. The profile of the company, including total years of experience in consultancy and impact assessments;
 - c. Company relevant experience for the assignment, including brief information on all the quantitative and qualitative studies and impact assessments undertaken;
 - d. Staffing (CV of each team member), including mentions of general qualifications, studies and experience adequate for the assignment;
 - e. Copy of study/training documents confirming experience of proposed personnel in statistics and agriculture;
 - f. Proposed methodology to perform the impact assessment;
 - g. The work plan (activities) and resources used;
 - h. Duration of the assignment(including number of person-day);

Financial proposal will include the budget breakdown by proposed activities. The cost of services must be provided in USD at 0% VAT¹.

¹ As per the Government Decree no.246 dd. 08.04.2010 procurement of goods and services under the IFAD-funded programs shall be carried out applying 0% VAT.

THE EVALUATION CRITERIA

Criteria:	Score:
1. Company relevant specific experience:	10
1.1 Total experience, years	20%
1.2 Experience in implementation of quantitative and qualitative household surveys and impact assessments, years	30%
1.3 Number of quantitative and qualitative studies undertaken	20%
1.4 Number of impact assessments undertaken	30%
2. Proposal and methodology:	30
3. Key personnel, including:	50
3.1 Team Leader	20
General qualifications/studies	30%
Participation in similar assignments	70%
3.2 Expert in agriculture	15
Diploma/certificate in agriculture	30%
Participation in agricultural studies	70%
3.3 Expert in statistics	15
Diploma/certificate in statistics	30%
Participation in quantitative studies	70%
4. Time frame:	10
Total:	100

The consulting company will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the current edition of IFAD Procurement Guidelines, based on selection method “Quality and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS)”, the final score obtained by each company being composed of 70% of the score for the parameter „Quality” (evaluated based on technical bid) and 30% - score obtained for the parameter „Cost” (established based on financial bid). The financial offer will be opened only if the provided technical offer will pass the minimum technical score of 70 points.

CONDITIONS FOR OFFER’S SUBMISSION

To be considered, interested companies should submit their proposal (technical and financial) in original and a copy in separate sealed envelopes. Each envelope will consist of the technical and financial offer sealed in separate envelopes as well (a total of 2 envelopes, each with 2 envelopes inside). All envelopes (4+1) should be marked with the type of offer it contains, name of the bidder, person, telephone number, e-mail address and the name of the bid he is applying for. Offers to be submitted to the following address: CPIU-IFAD, 162, Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt blvd., office 1303, MD-2004 Chisinau, Republic of Moldova no later than **15 June 2016, 10:00**. Any request for clarification must be sent in writing by standard electronic communication to office@ifad.md.

Additional information

CPIU-IFAD is entitled to cancel the tender at any stage of the competition due to the impossibility of financial coverage or due to unconformity of tenders to the requirements set out in the tender documents or other justified reason.