



CPIU IFAD

Terms of Reference

for

Financial Services and Rural Development Specialist
under Rural Resilience Project

Ref No: **07/23 RRP**

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Foreword

These terms of reference have been prepared by *CPIU IFAD* and are based on the 1st edition of the IFAD-issued standard procurement documents template for terms of reference available at www.ifad.org/project-procurement This document is to be used for the procurement of services in projects financed by IFAD.

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Terms of Reference (TOR)

Financial Services and Rural Development Specialist under Rural Resilience Project (RRP)

1. Client

The client for this assignment is the Consolidated IFAD Programme Implementation Unit (CPIU IFAD), which is responsible for day-to-day management and implementation of two ongoing projects: Rural Resilience Project (RRP) and Talent Retention for Rural Transformation (TRTP) which has established a robust and well-recognised track record of competent and diligent programme management of IFAD's previous and ongoing projects.

2. Country background

Moldova is a small lower-middle-income economy. Although it is among the poorest countries in Europe, it has made significant progress in reducing poverty and promoting inclusive growth since the early 2000s. Despite an aggregate reduction in poverty, the divide between rural and urban poor is widening. Agriculture is a central pillar of the Moldovan national economy and the main source of livelihood in rural areas. Moldova's growth strategy calls for a shift from the current consumption-based growth model towards a growth model based on raising investments, increasing productivity and competitiveness, developing export industries and promoting a knowledge-based society. Consequently, IFAD aligns and supports the Government in its ambition to modernize the rural sector by improving competitiveness and resilience with targeting of climate-vulnerable and poor rural households, with special emphasis on youth and gender issues.

3. Background of the assignment

In order to stimulate the growth of strategic agricultural and business activities in the rural sector of Moldova, the Government of the Republic of Moldova has signed in 2017 an Agreement with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) on the financing of the Rural Resilience Project (RRP), and in 2020 of the Talent Retention for Rural Transformation (TRTP).

Each Project has two mutually reinforcing technical components, supported by a third component on project management and project coordination. The RRP goal is enhanced resilience through investments in productive rural infrastructure and agrosystems; the TRTP goal is enhanced access to financial services and markets for rural transformation.

More details are provided below:

A. Rural Resilience Project (RRP)

Project launch	14/08/2017
Project end	30/09/2023 ASAP Grant completion date extended - 31/03/2024.
Project objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Improving the standard of living of the rural population in the Republic of Moldova, reducing poverty and the flow of migration from rural areas.▪ Strengthening resilience to climate change, increasing competitiveness and economic opportunities for small

	farmers in rural areas.
Project target area and groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The project has national coverage ▪ Target group: small farmers, young entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs, producer groups
Implementation agency	Consolidated Unit for the Implementation of IFAD Programs
Project components	<p>Component 1: Improving the adaptive capacity of small farmers and agricultural enterprises. <i>This component will enhance the smallholder resilience and adaptive capacity, enabling them to overcome critical climatic and productivity challenges through investments in productive rural infrastructure and agri-systems. The component will address the Climate Change adaptation priorities identified by GoM and will operate under two sub-components:</i></p> <p><i>1.1 Climate resilient water management and infrastructure development, which will support investments in productive rural infrastructure to remove the bottlenecks hampering the consolidation and expansion of competitive farms and village-based agri-business and to foster the adaption of climate smart technologies.</i></p> <p><i>1.2 Farmers adaptation through climate resilient investments, which will include: (a) support smallholder farmers in the adoption of climate-resilient crop production systems and technologies, through investment grants and capacity development support; (b) support food/nutrition security and business diversification of women groups in high climate- and poverty-vulnerable areas and (c) support public and private investments in ecological restoration measures aiming to reduce climate-related risks and improve ecosystem services for agriculture.</i></p> <p>Component 2: Support for agricultural business development. The expected outcome of the component is to enhance access to financial services and markets for rural transformation and is implemented through the following sub-components:</p> <p><i>2.1 Term finance for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which will support the investments of micro-entrepreneurs; young entrepreneurs; and small and medium-enterprises.</i></p> <p><i>2.2 Technical support for MSMEs, which will widen and deepen the impacts of other components, including technical support to (1) agribusiness, (2) youth entrepreneurs, (3) vulnerable women, and (4) SCAs development, as well as (5) financial literacy, and (6) knowledge management and targeting.</i></p>

B. Talent Retention for Rural Transformation (TRTP)

Project launch	13/01/2021
Project end	30/09/2027
Project objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduction in poverty and outmigration from rural areas through the enhancement of smallholder resilience to climate change and economic risk and ensuring access to markets.

Project target area and groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TRTP has a national coverage and is implemented in the areas controlled by the Government of Moldova (GoM) except the entities registered in Chisinau and Balti. ▪ Target Group: commercially-oriented smallholder farmers and youth entrepreneur’s cultivating up to 10 hectares, especially women farmers.
Implementation agency	IFAD Consolidated Programme Implementation Unit
Project components	<p>Component 1. Resilient Economic Transformation: This component is aimed at enhancing resilient economic transformation in the rural areas and will provide the entry point for addressing constraints related to infrastructure, agribusiness and marketing. Particular attention will be devoted to the promotion of climate-resilient technologies and building the capacity of government institutions for enhancing awareness and technical knowledge about conservation agriculture and strengthening government capacity for economic and market analysis regarding the agribusiness sector for smallholder farmers. This component will have two sub-components; 1.1: Enhancing Climate Resilience and 1.2 Agribusiness Development.</p> <p><u>Sub-component 1.1: Enhancing Climate Resilience</u></p> <p><u>A. Climate Resilient Infrastructure (CRI):</u> The subcomponent is designed to support investments in productive rural infrastructure enhancing resilient rural economic transformation by removing infrastructure bottlenecks</p> <p><u>B. On-farm Climate Adaptive Water Management:</u> The subcomponent is designed to build smallholder farmer’s resilience to climate change by fostering the adoption of climate smart, water saving technologies and building smallholder awareness and capacity in climate adaptive agricultural practices.</p> <p><u>Sub-Component 1.2 Agribusiness Development</u></p> <p><u>A. Strengthening Value Chains for Producer Groups:</u> This sub-component will be focused on enhancing the potential for agri-processing and agribusiness in rural areas aimed at individual farmers willing to undertake agro-processing and agribusiness development through producer groups, farmer associations or cooperatives.</p> <p><u>B. Strengthening MAFI Technical Capacity:</u> The project will strengthen the capacity of MAFI by providing it technical specialists for economic and market analysis. These specialists will be kept informed of the experience of the project in undertaking some of the innovative arrangements in organizing the market facilitation meetings, partnership with private sector entities and the experience of PGs in the equity partnerships.</p> <p>Component 2. Entrepreneurship Finance: This component will consist of two complementary sub-components: 2.1. Affordable credit for youth and women; and 2.2. Rural finance sector development.</p>

	<p><u>Sub-component 2.1. Affordable credit for youth and women:</u> Will be focused on addressing the two main bottlenecks affecting access to credit for the rural youth and women – the cost of capital and lack of collateral to access loans.</p> <p><u>Sub-component 2.2. Rural finance sector development:</u> This sub-component is designed to build capacity and strengthen some of the initiatives of the previous IFAD projects and will further strengthen the SCA sector and the regulatory and supervisory capacity of the National Commission for Financial Markets (NCFM).</p>
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4. Objectives of the assignment

The objective of this assignment is to recruit a Financial Services and Rural Development Specialist (FSRDS), with a background in finance, banking and/or rural development with specific experience in rural finance, to undertake the duties of project activities implementation with a particular focus on activities aimed to facilitate access for Projects **target groups**: smallholder farmers, micro entrepreneurs, women, youth, agribusinesses to loans/grants through **partner financial institutions (PFIs)**: commercial banks, non-banking credit organisations (NBCO), Savings and Credit Associations (SCAs), selected by Ministry of Finance/Office for External Assistance Programs Management (OEAPM) to intermediate the IFAD Project resources.

Besides, the selected candidate will participate at the development and/or implementation of mechanisms to strengthen the capacity of target groups, partner institutions and other stakeholders, in accordance with the Implementation Manual (PIM) and the annual work plan and budget.

The specific sub-components concerned by this assignment are:

- a) For RRP project: 2.1 Term finance for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs); and 2.2 Technical support for MSMEs (points)
- a) For TRTP project: 2.1. Affordable credit for youth and women; and 2.2. Rural finance sector development.

5. Scope of work

Taking into account the specific features of each project (RRP and TRTP), the financial services and rural development specialist has to provide high quality projects' implementation support throughout all stages of the projects, thus has the following duties and responsibilities:

Financing activities

1. Consulting interested entrepreneurs (face-to-face, by phone or email) on projects' financial services (loans, grants): financing procedures, terms and conditions;
2. Desk/field evaluation and screening of applications for funding, submitted by PFIs and/or prospective beneficiaries in order to access the funds available under IFAD on-going projects, checking its compliance with the eligibility criteria established in PIM and as a result, as the case may be, the approval or rejection of the financing application,
3. Communication with PFIs representatives to ensure the accuracy of completing the documents submitted for financing;

4. Drafting the Individual Loan Agreement and/or grant agreements to be signed by implementing partners and/or beneficiaries, etc., and the disbursement of funds;
5. Keeping track of disbursements of funds to PFIs according to the signed loan /grant agreements; Cross-checking on disbursed loans, contributions, balances, quality of the portfolio with PFIs;
6. Pre- and post-financing monitoring of the investment projects financed under the Project (field visits and phone conversations), and keeping the track of beneficiary's contributions;
7. Entering information on loans/grants and beneficiaries in the information system and maintaining the data according to the requirements set out in the Project;
8. Submitting at the request the necessary documentation, reports and information to EAPMO, the Ministry of Finance, IFAD and other partners;
9. Issuance of confirmation letters to the beneficiaries of the Projects in order to benefit from VAT exemptions;
10. Other related tasks.

Capacity and rural development activities

1. Identification of capacity building & technical support needs, preparing technical assistance proposals and development/design of the structure and appropriate approach for delivering consultancy services to rural businesses and target groups (youth, women, micro and small entrepreneurs);
2. Design of activities related to capacity development and entrepreneurial technical assistance in accordance with the directions specified in PIM, Gender Action Plan and other Project support documents;
3. Elaboration of the Terms of Reference for the contracting of service providers to conduct technical assistance and capacity building activities for the Project's target groups and other beneficiaries/stakeholders;
4. Supervision of intermediate and final deliverables and quality evaluation of rural financing and development services delivered by companies and consultants contracted by CPIU, with a focus on enterprise development and agriculture;
5. Coordination of activities to create resources for building entrepreneurial capacities, financial literacy, in order to develop the rural agricultural business (Guides, e-learning resources, financial and decision tools) - as carriers of knowledge transfer;
6. Other related tasks.

Other activities

1. Active communication with Project beneficiaries and partners to ensure fair and continuous implementation of the Project;
2. Providing proposals to solve project implementation constraints;
3. Support in designing and development of financial services and products, assistance in the elaboration of the financing methodology and conditions;
4. Participation in the preparation of activity reports, according to project policy and procedures;

5. Assisting IFAD program oversight missions, including the preparation of necessary financial services reports, participating in monitoring visits with IFAD missions;
6. Contributions and inputs to the preparation of the annual work plan and budget;
7. Contributions and inputs to the development of half and annual activity reports, and continuously providing proposals to mitigate project implementation constraints;
8. Contribution to the content of promotional materials: success stories, press releases, informative printed materials, website content related to financial services and rural development;
9. Participation at different forums, round tables, workshops, exhibitions for promotion and dissemination of information on IFAD Project services;
10. Other tasks designated and requested by the Financial Services and Rural Development Manager.

7. Qualification and requirements:

Higher education in the field of finance, banking and/or rural development with specific experience in rural finance

Good command of written and spoken Romanian, English, Russian,

Competent operation of PC - Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint.

Energetic, organized, disciplined, punctual person, with experience in a similar position, intelligent, resistant to stress, adapted to changing work tasks, with emotional balance, very good ability to communicate and relate, ability to organize time, tasks and workplace, the ability to focus on performing several tasks at the same time, the ability to meet deadlines, attention to detail, pleasure and ability to learn new things, generate new ideas.

Strong ability to work as a team to ensure holistic implementation of projects' activities

8. Capacity building and transfer of knowledge

The FSRDS shall endeavor to build organizational knowledge and exchange lessons with colleagues and other actors in the sector through different formal mechanisms.

8. Consultant qualifications and experience:

The shortlisting criteria are:

Criterion	Weight
1. General qualifications:	[15]
University degree (Bachelor's) in Finance and/or Agriculture economics, or other fields related to rural finance. Master's degree in a relevant domain will be considered as an advantage.	10
Participation in specialized training courses related to agri-business financing.	5
2. Specific previous experience in the field for vacant position:	[30]
At least 3 years of experience in finance, banking and other related fields. Experience in rural and/or agriculture financing will be considered as an advantage.	20

At least 1 year experience in implementation of development projects related to financing of agricultural/rural businesses or in other related fields.	10
3. Competencies (through Interview for candidates that score at least 35 points on the above criteria 1 to 2):	[55]
Excellent problem solving and analytical skills using creativity and innovation	10
Communication (group facilitation skills), networking and coordination skills with various stakeholders	10
Competency technical test (<i>knowledge of the sector and skills in investment financing and monitoring</i>)	15
Language skills: Fluency in Romanian and good command of written and spoken English, good command of spoken Russian	10
Computer management skills especially office productivity tools (Word, Excel, etc.)	10
TOTAL	100

Grade rating: very poor 10-30%; poor 31-69%; satisfactory 70%; good 71-85%; very good 85-100%.

The Specialist will be selected in accordance with the **Individual Consultant Selection (ICS)** procurement method set out in IFAD' project procurement handbook that can be accessed via the IFAD website at <https://www.ifad.org/documents>. The top ranked candidates will be invited in due course to submit a technical and financial proposal that will be evaluated and negotiated. The passing score for shortlisting is 70 points.

9. Location and period of execution

The consultant will be offered a fixed-term employment contract based on 40-hour weekly work programme at the Consolidated Unit for the Implementation of the IFAD Programs headquartered located in Chisinau city, Stefan cel Mare Av. no. 162.

The expected start of the assignment is April 1st, 2023. The contract is **valid one year, with the possibility of expansion, based on positive annual performance evaluation**, to continue the implementation of the financing activity within the TRTP.

For the selected candidate will be set a three-month probation period, which will start from the date of contract signing.

10. Project coordination

The consultant will work under the direct supervision of the Financial Services and Rural Development Manager.

The consultant will work in close coordination with other CPIU staff, i.e. the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Specialists, the Knowledge Management and Communication (KM & C) Specialist, the Gender Specialist, the Value Chain Development (VCD) / Agribusiness Specialists, the Infrastructure Engineers, the Climate Resilience Specialist, the Financial Manager, the Procurement Officers and the Legal Officer.

11. Services and facilities to be provided by client

Working conditions are common, in the office, with short distance trips to the country or to international meetings abroad. Office with conditions according to health safety rules, with equipment specific to office work (computer, xerox, printer, fax, scanner, Internet connection, etc.). For field visits CPIU will provide the Consultant with transport.

12. Services and facilities to be provided by the specialist

The consultant will need to provide for own transportation (to and from office) and personal communication tool