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**THE CONSOLIDATED IFAD PROGRAMMES IMPLEMENTATION UNIT**

**(CPIU-IFAD)**

**Terms of Reference:**

**Selection** **of Service Provider to Support Conservation Agriculture Activities within** **Talent Retention for Rural Transformation Project**

Ref No:*51/24 TRTP*

**Foreword**

These terms of reference have been prepared by Consolidated IFAD Programmes Implementation Unit 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](http://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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| TRTP/IFAD VIII | |
| PP 2024 | MDA-2000002242-0010-CS-QCBS |
| Ref. AWPB Nr. | 1.2.2.6; |
| Component | 1 |
| Category | 1 |
| Loan/Grant | AF grant |

**Terms of Reference:**

**Selection of Service Provider to Support Conservation Agriculture Activities (research, curriculum, training, etc.) within Talent Retention for Rural Transformation Project**

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| **Abbreviations**: |  |

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| TRTP | Talent Retention for Rural Transformation |
| CPIU IFAD | Consolidated IFAD Programme Implementation Unit |
| AF | Adaptation Fund |
| CA | Conservation Agriculture |
| SP | Service Provider (selected for accomplishing this assignment) |
| MAFI | Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| ToT | Training of Trainers |
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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 Talent Retention for Rural Transformation Project (TRTP)*.*

1. **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. Agriculture is a central pillar of the Moldovan national economy and the main source of livelihood in rural areas. The last years are marked by drought, which highlighted another major vulnerability of the country - increased exposure to climate shocks. Climate change and its consequences on agriculture and forestry in Moldova are the key topics discussed at Government level.

Shortcomings in Moldova ‘s investment climate has limited the profitability of businesses, and the prospects of attracting new investments in technologies aiming to overcome climate change negative impact on agriculture.

In this context, IFAD has designed and launched in Moldova the TRTP Project that is fully aligned with IFAD’s Climate Change Strategy aiming to maximize the impact on rural poverty in a changing climate through: (i) access to productive infrastructure; (ii) the availability of incentives, funding and training for smallholder farmers to shift to climate-resilient water efficient systems; and (iii) building in-country capacity for climate resilient and conservation agriculture through scholarships, research, consultations and dissemination of key lessons with a strong focus on smallholder farmers.

1. **Background on project**

Talent Retention for Rural Transformation Project (TRTP), the eighth Project in Moldova (IFAD VIII), financed by IFAD and Adaptation Fund (AF), and local contribution, was designed to be implemented during 81 months period, starting from 13th of January 2021 and completing 30th March 2027. The TRTP is joint GoM and IFAD response to the significant challenges facing the rural poor and strengthening resilience to climate change, increasing competitiveness and economic opportunities for small farmers in rural areas.

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| **Project** | Talent Retention for Rural Transformation (TRTP) |
| **Project launch** | 13/01/2021 |
| **Project end** | 30/03/2027 |
| **Project objectives** | * 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 group** | * 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. |
| **Project components** | **Component 1. Resilient Economic Transformation**:   * 1. *Enhancing Climate Resilience*   2. *Agribusiness Development*   **Component 2. Entrepreneurship Finance**:   * 1. *Affordable credit for youth and women*   2. *Rural Finance sector development* |

1. **Background on the assignment**

Conservation Agriculture (CA) is a concept for resource-saving agricultural crop production that aims to achieve acceptable profits, high and sustained production levels and is based on the principles of on-farm water conservation and enhancing natural biological processes above and below the ground. Mechanical soil tillage is reduced to an absolute minimum, and the use of external inputs such as agrochemicals, nutrients of mineral or organic origin are applied at an optimum level and in a way and quantity that does not interfere with or disrupt the biological processes. CA is characterized by three principles, which are linked to each other, that are:

* + Minimum mechanical soil disturbance throughout the entire crop rotation.
  + Permanent organic soil cover.
  + Diversified crop rotations in case of annual crops or plant associations in case of perennial crops.

CA is reportedly increasingly being adopted by farmers in Moldova mainly because of its low input costs but it also provides many benefits in terms of water conservation and improving soil structure and resilience to climate events. At present however, the Government of Moldova (GoM) does not have an overview of the extent of CA adoption across the country and a national consensus on the definition of CA and what this means in technical and practical terms among educational and research circles is still lacking.

The Subcomponent 1.1. (Enhancing Climate Resilience) of the TRTP project will support activities related to development of Conservation Agriculture in Moldova, namely developing of the CA curriculum and incorporation it in the national educational program, training of CA professionals and students.

These activities will be financed under the TRTP project, from Adaptation Fund funds and will be implemented in tight collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry (MAFI), education institutions and other relevant organizations.

These planned activities are continuation of the activities accomplished by CPIU IFAD in 2023 and 2024, which included the nationwide survey on adoption of the Conservation Agriculture practices in Moldova, developing of a White Book with recommendations on the further steps to develop AC in Moldova and organizing the dedicated national CA convention.

1. **Overall objectives**

The overall goal of the Talent Retention for Rural Transformation (TRTP) Project is reduction in poverty and outmigration from rural areas through the enhancement of smallholder resilience to climate change.

The development objective of the Project is to enable the rural poor (especially youth, women and smallholders) to increase their production capacity, resilience to economic, environmental and climate-related risks and access to markets).

1. **Objectives of the assignment**

CPIU IFAD will hire a Service Provider (SP) who will have the following specific tasks:

* Design a CA curriculum for universities and colleges, identify the appropriate international textbooks to use and (if requested by CPIU IFAD) translate these textbooks in Romanian and Russian languages.
* Recruit international CA expert who will develop a CA Training of trainers program and will train CA trainers. These trainers in their turn will further train 40 CA professionals.

1. **Scope of work**
2. ***Curriculum for Conservation Agriculture for University and College and training materials***

The SP will develop a **model curriculum** for the Conservation Agriculture subject that will be used for Universities and Colleges. This shall include the following activities:

* + Developing a model CA curriculum for universities and colleges, based on the best international and local practices. This model curriculum must be developed according to the local regulations related to developing a disciplinary curriculum. This model curriculum could be further used by universities and colleges in the original design, or can be further adopted by these institutions based on their needs and possibilities. The model CA curriculum shall include:
* The Curriculum itself (in the format approved by the local regulations)
* Teacher’s guidebooks with a detailed developing (didactic materials of the course) of each of the topics.
* List of international textbook/textbooks to be further used in the educational process
  + The structure and size of the deliverables shall be based on the identified demand from the educational institutions interested in including CA in their program and shall correspond to the following requirements depending on the Level of the study:
* **For colleges (post-secondary technical vocational education, level ISCED IV):**

Totally **60 academic hours**, from which 30 direct contact hours (20 lectures, 10 practical work) and 30 hours of individual work.

* **For universities (Cycle I of the studies, Licență):**

Totally **90 academic hours**, from which 46 direct contact hours (24 lectures, 22 practical work) and 44 hours of individual work.

* **For universities (Cycle II of the studies, Master):**

Totally **150 academic hours**, from which 40 direct contact hours (20 lectures, 20 practical work) and 110 hours of individual work.

* + The general requirements towards the curriculum and the didactic materials are the following:
* Curriculum and teaching materials must be developed from scratch,Presented material must be adapted to the conditions of Moldova; in either case the service provider must assert that it has the authority to transfer the copyright of produced material in full to CPIU and any of its designated entities.
* The deliverables shall be presented in Romanian and Russian languages.
* The didactic materials shall be self-sufficient and able to use without the reference to the proposed CA textbooks (the proposed textbooks must be a valuable additional source of information, but not a conditioned requirement for the course).
* All produced curriculum material will be the intellectual property of CPIU IFAD.
* The Curriculum for the **level ISCED IV** must be presented in the format approved by the regulations of the Ministry of Education and Research, namely:
  + - Reference framework of the curriculum for technical professional education: <https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/maketa-curriculum_36pages_1.pdf>
    - Practical guide for developing the curriculum for post-secondary and non-tertiary post-secondary technical professional education: <https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/ghid_practic_web.pdf>
* The Curriculum for the University must be developed in the format of the beneficiary University.
* During the process of elaboration of the curriculum and didactic materials, the implementing team shall organize an expert panel that will include the Providers’ CA expert as well as representatives of the beneficiary educational institutions (three colleges and one university[[1]](#footnote-1)). The scope of this panel is to share the working materials, actively seek feedback and implement reasonable beneficiaries’ proposals concerning the structure and the content of the deliverables. This panel can be organized, based on Service Provider’s proposal, either via periodical physical meetings, or online meeting, or via dissemination of the information (and collecting the feedback) via email. By the end of its assignment the Service Provider shall present a cumulative report describing all the meetings or other interactions with the representatives of the beneficiary educational institutions that will include all the comments and suggestions provided by these experts and the information (with justifications) on whether those suggestions were applied during the development of deliverables or not.
  + **If requested by CPIU IFAD**, the Service Provider shall translate the selected international CA textbooks/manuals in Romanian and/or Russian languages, including the proofreading of the translated textbooks made by local CA experts fluent in Russian and/or Romanian. [[2]](#footnote-2) Besides the translation, the SP shall formate translated textbook in ready-to-print PDF document. The service provider must secure the right to translate and publish in pdf the textbook(s) from the original author(s) and publisher(s).

1. ***Training of professionals in CA***

The selected Service Provider will train professionals in CA who will provide professional services in CA in Moldova to both smallholders and larger businesses. In order to do this the SP will:

* Identify the national priorities in terms of extension support and the existing extension landscape. To do this the recruited by SP international expert will meet with a broad spectrum of national stakeholders including MAFI; active NGOs and agricultural service providers; the farmers’ association; and agricultural research institutes and identify the critical knowledge gaps;
* based on this assessment this international specialist will design a ToT training programme (including development of training materials), will elaborate the eligibility criteria for the trainers (coordinated with CPIU IFAD) and will identify 3 to 5 trainers. These shall be the people with background in agriculture (farmers, extension consultants, lecturers). The SP will ensure that these trainers are available within its extension network and are willing to travel to other areas in Moldova in order to assure national coverage.
* the SP will onboard the identified trainers and the international specialist will train them on CA principles, practices and techniques. Besides the identified trainers, the SP also will additionally train in the same group around of 7-10 lecturers from the university and colleges that will introduce CA module and will teach students in their educational institutions (the contact details of these lecturers will be provided by CPIU IFAD). The total number of the people trained under the ToT training will be 10-15.
* The list of persons to be trained within the framework of this task will be divided in equal parts: representatives of the real sector 50% (agricultural producers), representatives of the educational sector 25% and representatives of companies supplying agricultural inputs 25%.
* The lists of participants will be submitted to UCIP-IFAD for approval at least 2 weeks before the start of the training activities.
* The ToT training shall be provided in Romanian language, however the training materials shall be also translated in Russian.
* The ToT training shall shave a minimum duration of **7 working days**, with the following main topics to cover:[[3]](#footnote-3)
  + Agronomy and agro chemistry in CA- one full working day
  + Soil and its implication in CA - one full working day
  + Engineering (machinery) in CA - one full working day
  + Economics of CA agriculture - one full working day
  + Field visits to different farmers who implement CA in Moldova – 3 full working days
* As continuation of the previous assignment, the SP together with the trainers will identify and train 40 professionals (openly/publicly recruited, based on eligibility criteria set by CPIU IFAD, to join the training program), who can be farmers, as well as other specialized organizations and potential service providers in agriculture that in future also will want to start providing CA related services.
* This trainings of professionals shall be done in Romanian or Russian (based on the concrete demand coming from the professional) and shall be based on a shorter version of the ToT curriculum and materials. The proposed duration of the professionals’ training is **4 working days**, including 3 days of theory and at least one day of filed visit.
* The trainings of CA professionals must be done for minimum 3 (or more) groups of participants, i.e. not a whole group of 40 participants at one time.

All the training materials are subject to the CPIU IFAD approval before their printing and must contain necessary elements (logos/inscriptions) that will be communicated to the SP during elaboration.

The training materials developed during this activity will be the intellectual property of CPIU IFAD.

1. **Capacity building and transfer of knowledge**

The Service Provider has to indicate in the proposed methodology, how it is going to further transfer the accumulated knowledge using its existing extension network.

1. **Reports and schedule of deliverables**

The timing of the expected services to be delivered and the numerical targets to be reached are:

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| **Activity** | **Task** | **Deliverables** | **Maximum period of delivery (calendar days)** |
| 1. Developing curriculum and didactic materials for Conservation Agriculture (CA) for universities and colleges | To develop curriculum and didactic materials in close cooperation with the beneficiary educational institutions  !!! The beneficiary educational institutions must approve the curriculum developed. | Documents: Curriculum for colleges (level ISCED IV) in Romanian and Russian (including list of textbooks/manuals) | **2 months** from the date of signing the contract |
| Documents: didactic materials for colleges (level ISCED IV) in Romanian and Russian. | **9 months** from the date of signing the contract |
| Documents: Curriculum for Universities (cycle I, Licență/bachelor) in Romanian and Russian (including list of textbooks) | **2 months** from the date of signing the contract |
| Documents: didactic materials for Universities (cycle I, Licență/bachelor) in Romanian and Russian | **9 months** from the date of signing the contract |
| Documents: Curriculum for Universities (cycle II, Master) in Romanian and Russian (including list of textbooks) | **2 months** from the date of signing the contract |
| Documents: didactic materials for Universities (cycle II, Master) in Romanian and Russian | **9 months** from the date of signing the contract |
| Documents: report on CA expert panel work describing all the interactions with exerts, suggestions and their implementation. | **9 months** from the date of signing the contract |
| **If requested by CPIU IFAD:** translation of the selected manuals/textbooks in Romanian (and possibly Russian) languages | Documents in Word document format and ready to print **formatted** PDF document | **3 months** from the date of CPIU IFAD request |
| 2. Training of trainers and professionals in CA | Developing curriculum and didactic materials for ToT program in Romanian and Russian. | Documents: curriculum and didactic materials for ToT program in Romanian and Russian. | **3 months** from the date of signing the contract |
| Training of 10-15 trainers in CA | Event report | **6 months** from the date of signing the contract |
| Developing curriculum and didactic materials for program for training of professionals in CA (in Romanian and Russian) | Documents: curriculum and didactic materials for professional's training program in Romanian and Russian. *This is a shorter version of the documents developed for ToT program.* | **3 months** from the date of signing the contract |
| Training of 40 professionals in CA | Event reports and trainee evaluations | **9 months** from the date of signing the contract |

The work is planned to be carried out within a maximum of 9 months from the date of contract signing, in accordance with the activities described in this ToR.

Each deliverable provided by the SP is a subject of the Client’s approval. If deems so, the Client can request SP to make adjustments in the provided deliverables according to the provisions and objectives of these ToR. Client will require approximately 5 working days (depending on the stage of implementation) to review the deliverables, provide comments or approve acceptance of the deliverables.

\* In case of the events (workshops, trainings) a separate **event report** in Romanian language shall be presented in electronic copy no later than 10 days after the event, which will contain:

* Event agenda
* PowerPoint presentation and other presentations and training materials
* List of participants with contact details, function and signature in PDF format (scanned) and in Excel format according to a template agreed with the Client
* Pictures of the event
* Trainee evaluations of the events
* Copies of participants’ diplomas (in case of trainings)

CPIU IFAD will pay to the Service Provider on a deliverable-based basis, according to the list of deliverables indicated in chapter 9 of this document. The payments will be done only for the accomplished activities with submitted and accepted deliverables (not for the ones that are in progress).

In case the Client decides that some of the activities reflected in these ToR are no more relevant, it can cancel them notifying the Service Provider in advance before the SP starts to implement those activities. Therefore, this ToR and the activities described in it are not considered as Client’s obligation to purchase and pay for the all-mentioned services, which gives to the Client the flexibility to either request execution of all the activities or just a part of them.

1. **Consultant’s qualifications and experience**

The CPIU will select and contract a Service Provider to perform the activities described in these ToR. For the short-listing stage, the selected SP shall correspond to the following criteria:

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| **Qualification criteria** | **Maximum score** |
| 1. Legal entity or consortium of legal entities with at least 5 years of experience in provision of agriculture related extension or education services in Moldova: formal education in agriculture, training, capacity building, coaching, mentoring *(at least 2 contracts (or activities) substantially and successfully executed in the last 5 years)* | 10 |
| 1. Previous experience in organizing Training of Trainers activities and development of trainings manuals, at least one contract in the last 5 years *(at least one contract substantially and successfully executed in the last 5 years)* | 20 |
| 1. Strong capacity and experience in providing services for Conservation Agriculture. *(at least 1 contract substantially and successfully executed in the last 5 years)* | 30 |
| 1. Strong capacity and experience of developing curriculum for agriculture related subjects preferably for universities and/or colleges *(at least one curricula developed in the last 5 years)* | 20 |
| 1. Previous experience working for public sector or international/donor organizations (IFAD, WB, UNDP, FAO etc.) will be an advantage, at least one contract in the years 2019-2022). | 10 |
| 1. Possess staff and network of individual experts with strong experience in education including local and international experts in Conservative Agriculture | 10 |
| **TOTAL** | **100** |

*The service provider will be selected in accordance with the Quality Cost Based Selection Method (QCBS) set forth in the IFAD Procurement Manual. Only the companies that will be selected in the Short List (min 70 points) will be invited to present the technical offer and the financial offer. A minimum of three and a maximum of 6 companies will be shortlisted.*

**Details on the Key staff required**

The proposed team should consist of reasonable number of qualified and experienced professionals:

**Team Leader:** At least five years of team leadership experience preferably in extension services. Good knowledge of Moldovan agricultural landscape, its problems and specifics.Ability to coordinate teams and ensure timely reporting is required along with analytical and problem solving skills. Excellent command of Romanian and English. Russian language is an advantage. Advance degree in agriculture, business, management, education, economics or a related field is an advantage. Experience in implementing Conservation Agriculture related projects is an advantage.

**International Expert in Conservation Agriculture:** minimum seven years’ experience in Conservation Agriculture including developing training materials and provision of CA related extension services to farmers. Experienced trainer of trainers over at least 2 assignments. The expert shall be capable to identify the national priorities in terms of CA extension support, to develop ToT program and training materials and to train trainers. The expert shall also be able to significantly contribute to developing CA curriculum and didactic materials for universities and colleges. Excellent command of English is required. Relevant academic background is a significant advantage. Knowledge of Romanian and/or Russian is an advantage. Experience in international project is an advantage.

**Local Expert in Conservation Agriculture:** minimum five years’ experience in Conservation Agriculture including developing training materials and provision of CA related extension services to farmers. Experienced trainer. The expert shall be capable to lead the activity of developing CA curriculum and didactic materials for universities and colleges and to significantly contribute to development of the curriculum and didactic materials for CA ToT program and training the trainers in the topics related to Conservation Agriculture. The expert shall be able to do proofreading of the CA textbooks translated into Romanian and Russian languages. Excellent command of English, Romanian and Russian languages. Academic background is a significant advantage. Experience in developing agriculture-related curriculum and didactic materials for universities and colleges is a significant advantage.

**Local expert in education:** hands-on experience in developing curricula for universities and colleges in Moldova, preferable in agriculture related fields. The expert shall be capable to significantly contribute to development of CA curriculum for universities and colleges and to lead the activity of incorporating it into the Moldovan education system. A graduate or PhD University degree in education is an advantage. Experience in management/faculty positions in universities and colleges or with the Ministry of Education and Research is a significant advantage. Experience as a lecturer in post-secondary technical vocational education (level ISCED IV) is a significant advantage. Experience as a lecturer, preferable in agriculture related field, is an advantage. Good knowledge of Conservation Agriculture principles and practices and experience in CA related projects is an advantage. Excellent command of Romanian. Russian and English languages are advantages.

To be noted that it is not permitted for the same key expert to fulfill more than one role; each key expert must be a distinct individual, assigned exclusively to a single key expert position.

During the implementation of the services described in this ToR, the Service Provider should engage other non-key experts based on the specific area of expertise necessary for successfully completing the contract.

1. **Location and period of execution**

The service will be provided on the territory of the Republic of Moldova in the areas controlled by the Government of Moldova (GoM).

The period of execution starts from the date of contract signing. The assignment will have a duration of approx. 9 months starting from the date of the contract signing.

1. **Project coordination**

The selected Service Provider will coordinate the project execution and the deliverables with the Adaptation Fund Specialist from CPIU IFAD.

1. **Services and facilities to be provided by the client**

CPIU IFAD will provide to the Service Provider informational support necessary to execute the required tasks, e.g. detailed information about project goals, report on the current situation related to teaching CA in Moldovan universities and colleges, study on CA adoption in Moldova and CA White Book with expert’s recommendations on developing CA in Moldova.

1. **Services and facilities to be provided by the consultant**

The Service Provider is responsible for ensuring of all the facilities and logistics (office space, equipment, staff, transportation, software, stationary, meals& coffee breaks, textbooks and training materials’ translation etc.) necessary to execute the project at the due level of quality and in the agreed timeframe. This also includes the cost of accommodation (if needed) and meals for the participants of ToT and training of professionals and cost of transportation during the field visits.

1. **Additional information**

No companies shall be admitted to the competition if:

* they have not fulfilled their obligations and tasks in previous contractual relations with CPIU IFAD;
* they are or will be already involved in more than 3 ongoing simultaneous contractual relationships with CPIU IFAD: to be eligible to be included in the shortlist or sign a contract, the applicant/bidder should not have more than three ongoing contracts signed with CPIU IFAD at the time of issuing the shortlist or signing the contract whichever is applicable.
* If any of the experts is proposed in the bid of another competing shortlisted company or is the staff of another shortlisted bidding company.

1. Comrat State University; Center of Excellence in Horticulture and Agricultural Technologies from Taul; Agroindustrial College from Ungheni; Agricultural Technical College from Svetlîi. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. As at the tender stage the specific textbooks and their volume are not identified, the RFP in the next stage will include a provisional fixed sum to be used by all bidders unchanged to cover for this translation activity. It will be tentatively be the equivalent for translation and proofreading to Romanian and to Russian languages of a textbook with the volumes of 300,000 words in English. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Small reasonable and justified adjustments to this program are allowed [↑](#footnote-ref-3)