



TERMS OF REFERENCE

DEVELOPMENT OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY OF THE RURAL FINANCIAL SERVICES AND MARKETING PROGRAMME (IFAD IV)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Rural Financial Services and Marketing Programme (RFSMP), the fourth IFAD funded programme in Moldova, has started in February 2009 and was envisaged to be finalized in March 2014. Currently the programme is in the middle of its implementation period.

The goal of RFSMP is to reduce the rural poverty in Moldova through creating enabling conditions for the poorer and poorest members of rural society to increase their incomes through greater access to markets and employment.

The programme aims to improve the participation and employment of the poor in income increasing activities related directly and indirectly to development of Moldovan horticulture value chain.

RFSMP is implemented through its four components:

(i) *Value Chain Development for Rural Poverty Reduction* - this component aims at support of the integrated development of Moldovan horticulture value chain for reduction of rural poverty. The main objective is to increase participation and employment of the rural poor in income increasing activities arising directly and indirectly from an improved horticulture value chain;

(ii) *Rural Financial Services* - the component aims to provide access for small rural-based entrepreneurs to mid and long term financial services. The RFS component is implemented through its four sub-components:

- sub-component 2(a) - proceeds are directed through commercial banks to supporting small scale commercial farmers to finance investments in production of horticultural commodities;
- sub-component 2(b) - proceeds are directed through Rural Finance Corporation for micro loans to poor on- and off-farm rural entrepreneurs for income generating activities;
- sub-component 2(c) - proceeds are directed to processing/marketing enterprises, operating in horticultural value chains, which are likely to generate employment opportunities and increase incomes of small farmers' households.
- sub-component 2(d) - support in capacity building of the Financial Institutions participating in the programme implementation - 64 thousand USD.

(iii) *Pro-poor Market Derived Infrastructure* - this component aims at elimination of infrastructure bottlenecks which inhibit increasing participation of commercially oriented small farmers and economically active poor in prioritized value chains. This component implies adjustment of competitive contributory grants for investment in public infrastructure to enable and enhance private sector investment and activities in rural areas;

(iv) *Programme Management* - overall management of the programme.

CONTEXT AND GENERAL SCOPE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The context of the RFSMP Mid-Term Review, according 2011 IFAD supervision mission recommendation, CPIU-IFAD should contract a national consultant to conduct the program impact assessment as at RIMS¹ requirement.

The objective of consultancy is to perform the impact evaluation of the programme (implementation period February 2009 - December 2011) by assessing how the intervention being evaluated affects outcomes, whether these effects are intended or unintended.

The impact evaluation should provide the assessment of Programme achievements, in terms particularly in the livelihoods of beneficiaries that relate to the implemented Programme activities, and the sharing of lessons learned and development experience.

The assessment of Programme performance should have a special emphasis on:

- *Relevance* - the extent to which the objectives of the development intervention are consistent with beneficiary requirements, country needs, institutional priorities, partners and donors policies, as well as Programme coherence in achieving its objectives;
- *Effectiveness* - the extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved or are expected to be achieved taking into account their specificities (not just physical outputs but also high-level results; explaining factors determining achievements, including change of context; looking at other possible achievements);
- *Efficiency* - a measure of how economically resources/inputs are converted into results, with reference to project benchmarks (include project delays, overruns; technical issues; operational cost ratio, economic rates of return);
- *Sustainability* - the likely continuation of net benefits from a development intervention beyond the phase of external funding support. It also includes an assessment of the likelihood that actual and anticipated results will be resilient to risks beyond the project's life;
- *Rural poverty impact* - the changes that have occurred or are expected to occur in the lives of the rural poor and their community (whether positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended) as a result of development interventions, (i.e. changes in: household income and net assets, human and social capital and empowerment, food security and agricultural productivity, natural resources and the environment, institutions and policies);
- *Gender Equality and Women Empowerment* - design features, implementation features (AWPB and allocated resources), effectiveness (results achieved), sustainability of gender-related results, performance of partners in promoting gender quality and empowerment of women.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS

- Before starting, be thoroughly familiar with the Programme (objectives, outputs and undertaken activities, etc.) from the key background documentation provided by CPIU-IFAD (project appraisal report, supervision mission reports, progress reports, M&E reports and special studies, background information on the project area, etc.);
- Agree with project management on the methodology of the review, in terms of: (i) the level of participation vis-à-vis management on the process of data collection, data analysis, etc. (ii) the sampling methodology to be adopted (interviews, questionnaires, participatory techniques, etc.);
- Per component, assess physical progress, efficiency and adequacy, in terms of delivery of project inputs, outputs and outcomes;
- Assess the relevance and effectiveness of all implemented Programme activities, including technical assistance and training given to Programme beneficiaries/stakeholders in relation to design objectives;
- Analyse which factors and constraints have influenced Programme implementation, including technical, managerial, organisational, institutional and socio-economic policy issues, in addition to other external factors unforeseen during design.

¹ Result and Impact Management System - is the framework adopted by IFAD for measuring and reporting the results and impact of financed programmes.

- Identify whether the Programme needs adjustments in terms of objectives, activities, inputs, organisational/institutional set-up and implementation plan.
- Produce a clear set of lessons learned that can benefit the project in its remaining lifespan.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF INVOLVED STAFF

- Higher degree in economics/ agriculture or closely related discipline
- Extensive knowledge of the rural business development and financing;
- Various methodological skills (local development, empowerment, experience with impact assessment assignment, participatory research, gender competence, etc.);
- At least 5 years of professional experience in working with international preferably related to impact assessment activities;
- Robust analytical skills;
- Excellent report writing skills, as well as the ability to present results in a clear and effective manner;
- Fluent written and spoken Romanian and English;
- Excellent proficiency in computer applications.

DELIVERABLES AND TIMEFRAME

It is expected that the consulting company will conduct the assignment in April - May 2012 and provide the English version of the Programme impact assessment report in no later than 31 May, 2012.

OFFER CONTENT

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

1. *Technical Proposal* will include: the profile of the company, relevant experience for the assignments, staffing (CV of each team member), proposed methodology to perform the assessment, the work plan (activities) and resources (including number of person-day);
2. *Financial proposal* will obligatory include the consulting fee and operational expenditures related to the assignment. The cost of services must be provided in USD².

THE EVALUATION CRITERIA

The consultant 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 60 points.

CONDITIONS FOR OFFER’S SUBMISSION

To be considered interested companies should submit their proposal (technical offer and the financial one) an original and a copy, in separate sealed envelope at the following address: CPIU-IFAD, 162, Stefan cel Mare si Sfint blvd., office 1303, MD-2004 Chisinau, Republic of Moldova no later than 26 March 2012, 17:00. Any request for clarification must be sent in writing by standard electronic communication to office@ifad.md or marina.rusu@ifad.md

² As per the Government Decree no.246 dd. 08.04.2010 procurement of goods and services under the IFAD-funded programmes shall be carried out applying 0% VAT.