



TRTP/IFAD VIII	
PP 2022	C4
Ref. AWPB Nr.	1.2.2.5; 1.2.2.6;
Component	1
Category	1
Loan/Grant	AF grant

Terms of Reference:

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

Abbreviations:

TRTP	Talent Retention for Rural Transformation
CPIU IFAD	IFAD Consolidated 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
RI	Research Institute

1. Client

IFAD Consolidated Programme Implementation Unit.

2. Country background

Moldova is a small lower middle-income country highly dependent on agriculture, which is the main source of livelihood in rural areas where live approximately 75% of the population. Agriculture is an important employment sector in rural areas, where other jobs are not sufficiently developed.

Despite the fact that in the past decade Moldova has made a considerable progress in socio-economic and welfare development, it is still one of the poorest countries in Europe and there still remain some segments of the population who still face significant disadvantages, including smallholders, women and youth.

Individual farmers on household plots of 10 hectares or less represent above 99% of the total number of farmers from Moldova (according to Agricultural Census 2011) and produce about 60% of the country's agricultural output. However, their profitability and efficiency are highly compromised by the lack of access to modern technologies and other factors one of the main being the vulnerability to climate change related risks.

Food security is recurrently affected by weather conditions. Drought, floods and other extreme events such as heavy rain, hail, wind and frost occur regularly and have a significant impact on rural livelihoods and the economy as a whole.

Shortcomings in Moldova's investment climate have 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.

A significant part of the TRTP activities will be financed by the Adaptation Fund grant within the TRTP-Adapt project, which is integrated in TRTP and which implementation will be executed by CPIU IFAD.

3. Background on project

Project	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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Enhancing Climate Resilience 1.2. Agribusiness Development <p>Component 2. Entrepreneurship Finance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. Affordable credit for youth and women 2.2. Rural Finance sector development

4. 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 conducting National CA inventory, developing of the CA curriculum and incorporation it in the national educational program, training of CA professionals and supporting research institutions 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), research institutions and other relevant organizations.

5. 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.

6. Objectives of the assignment

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

- conduct a nationwide survey on adoption of conservation agriculture practices by Moldovan farmers and, based on that, will develop a White Paper on the general picture of CA in Moldova.
- organize a national CA convention to review the findings of the white paper and set out to work towards a national consensus on CA.
- organize workshops or expert panel of technical specialists to design a CA curriculum and identify the appropriate international textbooks to use.
- 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.
- assist selected by CPIU¹ institutions with preparing the grant application packages and conducting feasibility studies for the CA machinery and demo plots.
- review the existing CA master programs² and propose a list of the most suitable ones for participation.

7. Scope of work

7.1. Conservation Agriculture National Inventory and White Paper

For the implementation of this activity, the Service Provider with a team of experts will lead the **national quantitative survey of CA in Moldova**. The team will comprise experts in CA, water management, surveys and enumerator training. The SP will:

¹ CPIU IFAD will select a research institution to provide grant for CA machinery and demo plots

² CPIU IFAD will support two post-graduate scholarships to study CA abroad

- Propose an adequate comprehensive methodology on executing a representative survey in order to reach the project's goals. The methodology will include the sample size (and its justification, including error margin and confidence level) of the farmers to be interviewed, proposed data collection method, approach to secure representativeness of the survey; number of enumerators, logistical aspects of the survey.
- Provide report on the number, size and location of farms and hectares of land already under CA in Moldova.
- Collate the practices being used and categorise them accordingly.
- Report on the number of farms that have access to a source of irrigation or rainfed agriculture among the farmer practicing CA.
- Assess the general knowledge of CA among the farmers practicing CA.

Based on the results of the national CA survey CA will produce a **White Paper** analyzing the existing situation of CA in Moldova and make recommendations as to the most appropriate form of CA for Moldova and the best way for the GoM to move forward in further developing CA.

7.2. Curriculum for Conservation Agriculture for University and College and training materials

Based on the white paper the SP will develop the i)CA curriculum that will be used for University and College, and ii) training materials to be used for training of professionals in CA. These shall include the following activities:

- Set up a workshop of CA specialists who deal with CA in Moldova (representatives of MAFL, universities) that will review the findings of the white paper and make recommendations.
- Review the CA aspects from the existing educational curricula in Republic of Moldova.
- Organize a national convention on CA that will comprise a broad spectrum of the institutions that deal with CA in Moldova, including relevant people from MAFL, research institutes, universities, farmers associations, water user associations, relevant UN agencies (FAO) but also international higher-level educational CA experts contracted to attend for technical advice. The convention will discuss the findings and recommendations of the white paper and set out to work towards a national consensus on CA. The output will be a general outline of a national curriculum on CA that can be adopted by all relevant universities and colleges to the extent possible have a gender-balanced focus on smallholder farmers.
- Organize further workshops and/or expert panels to design a CA curriculum for universities and colleges and identify the appropriate international textbooks to use.
- Translate the selected CA textbooks in Romanian language.³

7.3. 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

³ also in Russian language if requested by CPIU IFAD in case there will be identified demand from Russian speaking beneficiaries.

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 and will identify 3 to 5 trainers. 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.
- the SP together with the trainers will organize training of 40 professionals (openly/publicly recruited, based on eligibility criteria set, to join the training program), as well as other specialized organizations and potential service providers that in future also will want to start providing CA related services.

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 remain the intellectual property of CPIU IFAD.

7.4. Supporting research institute in applying for CA grant

The SP will assist the applying research institution⁴ in preparing and submitting the application package for the grant and developing simplified feasibility study for procurement of CA machinery and establishing CA demo plots and soil labs. The simplified feasibility study will include calculations of costs for investment and maintenance, description and reasoning for the equipment to be procured and internal return rate (if applicable).

The estimated number of the research institutes (applicants) that will be assisted by the SP **is three**. CPIU IFAD will select an agricultural research institute for the development of CA research.

7.5. Post-graduate CA scholarship support

The Service Provider shall review the existing CA master programs abroad and suggest the priority themes for scholarship education and the most appropriate countries and universities to be considered by CPIU IFAD when awarding the two post-graduate (Master) scholarships to study CA abroad. The Master scholarships will be for one year in a relatively close-by country at a university specialized in sustainable agriculture.

8. 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.

9. Reports and schedule of deliverables

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

Activity	Task	Period of delivery	Deliverables
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⁴ Pre-selected by CPIU IFAD for CA research and equipment grants

1. Conservation Agriculture national inventory and White Paper	1.1. Prepare detailed survey methodology and questionnaire	Q4, 2022	Detailed survey methodology (in Romanian or ⁵ English) and questionnaire (in Romanian and Russian)
	1.2. Prepare draft survey report	Q1, 2023	Draft survey report (in Romanian or English)
	1.3. Prepare final survey report	Q1, 2023	Final survey report (in Romanian and English)
	1.4. Prepare draft White Paper on CA	April 2023	Draft White Paper on CA (in Romanian or English)
	1.5. Prepare final White Paper on CA	April 2023	Final White Paper on CA (in Romanian and English)
2. Curriculum for Conservation Agriculture for Universities and colleges and CA textbooks	2.1. Organize workshop with CA specialists to review the CA White Paper	May 2023	Event report
			Reviewed CA White Paper
	2.2. Review current CA aspects from the existing educational curricula in RM	May 2023	Report on the current situation related to teaching CA in Moldovan universities and colleges
	2.3. Organising national CA convention to discuss the findings of the white paper and getting national consensus on CA	May 2023	Event report
			Report on conclusions, adopted decisions and general outline of the CA curriculum
	2.4. Organising workshops/expert panels to design CA curriculum and international textbooks to use. Translation of the textbooks	June 2023	Event report
			Developed CA curriculum and list of selected CA textbooks
		July 2023	Selected CA textbooks are translated in Romanian language (and also translated in Russian language if required by CPIU IFAD)
		August 2023	Curriculum and textbooks are presented to the stakeholders (MAFI, Ministry of Education and Research)
3. Training of trainers and professionals in CA	3.1. International CA training specialist assesses the CA extension support landscape in Moldova and develops ToT program	Q3, 2023	Develop the training materials for Trainers program and CA Training in Romanian language (also translated in Russian language if required by CPIU IFAD)
	3.3. CA trainers are identified and trained	Q4, 2023	Event reports
	3.3. CA Trainers train 40 CA professionals	Q1, 2024	Event reports
4. Supporting research institutions in applying for CA grants	4.1. Assisting research institutions in preparing application package for CA grants (estimated 3 RI)	Q1 - Q2, 2023	Submitted RI application packages for CA grant (include feasibility study for procurement of CA machinery, establishing CA demo-plots and soil labs).

⁵ no translation costs will be calculated

5. Post-graduate CA scholarship support	5.1. Reviewing the existing CA master programs abroad	Q3, 2023	List of suitable CA master programs with description, terms of enrolment, fees and recommendations.
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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.

In case of the events (National CA convention, workshops, expert panels, 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
- Copies of participants' diplomas (in case of trainings)

10. Consultant's qualifications and experience

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

QUALIFICATION CRITERIA FOR SHORT LIST

No	Qualification criteria	Evaluation criteria	Points awarded
1	a. Experience in implementing agriculture related quantitative surveys b. Experience in provision of extension services in the rural areas. c. Experience in implementing Conservation Agriculture related projects. d. Previous experience in organizing of ToT and development of trainings manuals, at least one contract.	projects	20 points 10 points 10 points 10 points
2	a. The company/consortium have among their specialists in the fields of relevance to this assignment, minim 5 years' experience (team leader, expert in quantitative surveys, local and international experts in Conservation Agriculture, expert in education, expert in agriculture finance);	Local staff and international experts	50 points
	Total		100 points

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 (with focus on horticulture), 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, economics or

a related field is an advantage. Experience in implementing Conservation Agriculture related projects is an advantage.

Expert in quantitative surveys: experience of minimum five years in managing implementation of quantitative surveys (including developing of survey methodology, organisation of survey logistics, data processing, analysis, report writing). University degree in statistics, sociology, agriculture or another relevant domain is required. Excellent command of Romanian and English. Russian language is an advantage. Experience of implementing agriculture related surveys and knowledge of CA principles and practices are significant advantages.

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 for universities and colleges and to significantly contribute to developing the curriculum 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. The expert shall also contribute development of methodology for the national CA survey and to lead the CA White Paper development. Excellent command of English, Romanian and Russian languages. Academic background is a significant 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. 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. Excellent command of English is required. Academic background is a significant advantage. Experience in international project is an advantage.

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 development of CA curriculum for universities and colleges and to lead the activity of incorporating it into the Moldovan education system. A University (or higher) degree in education is an advantage. Experience in management positions in universities, colleges or the Ministry of Education and Research 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.

Expert in agriculture finance: experience of minimum five years in development of business plans and feasibility studies in agricultural sector. University degree in agriculture, business, finance, management, or another relevant domain is required. An advanced degree in a domain relevant to agriculture finance is an advantage. Experience in implementing Conservation Agriculture related projects is an advantage. Excellent command of Romanian language. Russian and English languages are advantages.

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 particular beneficiaries.

11. 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 and lasts until beginning of 2024. The assignment will have a duration of approx. 15 months.

12. Project coordination

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

13. 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, CA grant conditions and applicants' eligibility criteria, list of farmers who benefited from CPIU IFAD grants for CA machinery.

14. 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, renting the premises of the venue for CA convention, etc.) necessary to execute the project at the due level of quality and in the agreed timeframe.

The Service Provider is also responsible to contract of an international CA expert who has to develop a CA ToT program and ultimately train the trainers.

15. Additional information

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.

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.