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***Terms of reference***

Individual Consultant

 for the position of

Agribusiness Development Specialist

**Ref No: 36/25 TRTP**

**Date: 17.06.2025**

**Terms of Reference (TOR)**

**Individual Consultant**

**for the position of** **Agribusiness Development Specialist**

**1. Client**

The client for the services requested under the Terms of Reference (ToR) is the Consolidated Programme Implementation Unit (CPIU IFAD) for projects funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

**2. Context of the country**

The IFAD projects are implemented in accordance with procedures established and approved by IFAD in agreement with the Government of the Republic of Moldova. The Consolidated Programme Implementation Unit for IFAD Programme (UCIP IFAD) was created in 2000 by a Decision of the Government of the Republic of Moldova and is responsible for the administration, implementation and monitoring of IFAD Programme activities along various projects, as well as the coordination of activities with the institutions and organizations participating in the implementation of the projects. The activities under the projects are implemented by CPIU IFAD in collaboration and/or through accredited service providers and partner financial institutions, depending on the specific activities implemented.

**3. Context of the project**

The Talent Retention for Rural Transformation Project (TRTP) was launched in 2021 with an implementation period of 6 years. The project aims to stimulate large-scale rural economic growth and reduce poverty through complementary investments.

The project aims to enable the rural poor, especially young people, women and small farmers, to increase their productive capacity, resilience to economic, environmental and climate risks and ensure their access to markets.

The climate resilient infrastructure sub-component is designed to support investment in productive rural infrastructure, resilient rural economic transformation by removing bottlenecks and strengthening small farmers (up to 50 ha owned + rented) and rural businesses by promoting the implementation of climate smart technologies. Eligible types of infrastructure under this sub-component will include investments in public infrastructure such as irrigation infrastructure (small-scale irrigation systems and water storage ponds for irrigation) and village feeder roads (linking the village to production areas and households).

**4. Context of the Task/Activities**

The assignment centers on the strategic coordination, implementation, and oversight of the Agribusiness Development sub-component under the IFAD-financed TRTP Project in the Republic of Moldova. Embedded within the CPIU IFAD structure, the role is essential in delivering tangible results in agricultural value chain development, rural entrepreneurship, and inclusive economic growth, in line with the Financing Agreement, Project Implementation Manual (PIM), and IFAD’s operational principles.

Working under a results-oriented framework, the Agribusiness Development Specialist (ADS) is expected to lead the technical and operational planning of all sub-component activities, including the preparation and execution of Annual Work Plans and Budgets (AWPBs) and the provision of targeted support to agribusiness investments. The role requires a sound understanding of agri-food systems, value chain development, and rural market infrastructure.

A key responsibility of the Specialist is to ensure full alignment of activities with agreed selection criteria, feasibility standards, and grant conditions, while maintaining close coordination with technical consultants, national stakeholders, and private sector actors. This includes field-level supervision, quality assurance of deliverables, and guidance throughout the entire cycle — from grant application to implementation of business plans and civil works.

The Specialist plays a central role in supporting project visibility, stakeholder engagement, and knowledge sharing. By ensuring transparent processes, adherence to eligibility rules, and consistent progress reporting, the ADS contributes directly to the project's impact — fostering resilient agribusiness development, generating rural employment, and reinforcing IFAD’s strategic focus on inclusive and sustainable rural transformation.

**5. General and specific objectives**

The Specialist will operate under the day-to-day supervision of the TRTP Project Coordinator and the strategic oversight of the CPIU IFAD Project Director. The Agribusiness Development Specialist (ADS) is tasked with ensuring the effective design, coordination, and implementation of all activities under the Agribusiness Development sub-component. This role directly supports the project's overarching goal of fostering inclusive rural development by enabling investment in value chains and scaling up agribusiness initiatives that improve livelihoods and local economic resilience.

The Specialist’s core responsibilities include:

• *Sub-Component Planning and Technical Coordination*

The ADS is responsible for the development of annual work plans and budgets (AWPB) related to the agribusiness sub-component and for coordinating the technical and operational activities required for its implementation. This includes liaising with public institutions, private sector stakeholders, consultants, and service providers to ensure coherent and timely execution of project deliverables.

• *Support to Inclusive Agribusiness Investment*

A key function of the Specialist is to oversee the implementation of TRTP financial products and grant opportunities, ensuring alignment with eligibility criteria, technical feasibility, and financial sustainability. The ADS assesses business plans, providing guidance and recommendations throughout the entire rural financing approval process in collaboration with rural finance specialists.

• *Risk Identification and Quality Assurance*

The ADS is expected to identify operational and design-related risks linked to the sub-component and suggest practical mitigation measures. The Specialist also ensures compliance with technical standards, procurement procedures, and grant conditions, maintaining a strong focus on the quality and relevance of interventions.

• *Stakeholder Engagement and Institutional Collaboration*

The Specialist fosters ongoing collaboration with government authorities business service providers, producers’ associations, applicants under TRTP agribusiness development and rural finance component.. Through structured dialogue, knowledge exchange, and technical support, the ADS facilitates alignment and coordination across actors involved in value chain development.

*• Field-Level Monitoring and Technical Supervision*

The ADS organizes and conducts regular field visits to monitor the progress of implementation activities, validate deliverables, and offer hands-on technical guidance to both Service providers and beneficiaries.

• *Capacity Building and Consultant Oversight*

. The Specialist ensures that all services delivered by Service Providers meet the expected quality standards and contribute meaningfully to capacity development of project stakeholders.

• *Reporting and Strategic Communication*

The Specialist prepares timely and comprehensive implementation progress reports, contributing to CPIU’s project reporting obligations to IFAD. The ADS also supports the dissemination of best practices and lessons learned through collaboration with the Knowledge Management and M&E teams.

• *Contribution to IFAD Missions and Component Leadership*

The ADS actively participates in IFAD supervision, implementation support, and review missions, preparing technical materials, organizing site visits, and following up on mission recommendations. The Specialist also assumes a leadership role in managing component-level coordination meetings, workshops, and public information campaigns.

By fulfilling these responsibilities, the Agribusiness Development Specialist directly contributes to the creation of viable rural businesses, the strengthening of agricultural value chains, and the achievement of measurable development outcomes in line with IFAD’s strategic objectives in the Republic of Moldova.

**6. Objectives of the Task/Activities:**

The Agribusiness Development Specialist is responsible for leading the planning, coordination, implementation, and oversight of the Agribusiness Development sub-component within the IFAD-financed TRTP Project. The scope of responsibilities spans several operational domains, each contributing to enhanced performance, sustainability, and development impact of project-supported agribusiness initiatives.

The role requires a solid combination of technical expertise, value chain knowledge, and institutional coordination to ensure that all component activities are implemented in line with the Financing Agreement, the Project Implementation Manual (PIM), and IFAD’s operational standards. The Specialist works to ensure that rural entrepreneurs have access to sound technical support and tailored investment opportunities that foster inclusive and climate-resilient rural growth.

The activities are structured under four core functional areas:

*Strategic Planning and Implementation of Agribusiness Activities*

* Provide technical leadership in the design and execution of agribusiness development activities, ensuring strategic coherence with national policies and IFAD priorities;
* Lead the preparation of Annual Work Plans and Budgets (AWPB) related to the sub-component, integrating proposals from key stakeholders and ensuring feasibility and impact;
* Coordinate with local authorities, private sector actors and consultants to ensure timely and coherent implementation of investment activities;
* Supervise the development and implementation of financing mechanisms available within TRTP including business plans developed and submitted by applicants,;
* Provide technical oversight and follow-up on mission recommendations related to agribusiness and value chain development.

*Monitoring, Evaluation, and Quality Assurance*

* Conduct technical reviews of business plans submitted by program beneficiaries and service providers;
* Monitor field implementation of sub-component activities and coordinate regular site visits to verify progress, assess risks, and validate deliverables;
* Ensure preparation and submission of regular progress reports, including technical updates, risk assessments, and outcome indicators;
* Collaborate with the M&E and Knowledge Management teams to ensure systematic tracking of results, database development for TRTP beneficiaries, knowledge capture, and dissemination of best practices.

*Operational and Administrative Oversight*

* Support the preparation and management of application processes under TRTP financial products, ensuring transparency, eligibility, and alignment with sub-component objectives;
* Maintain up-to-date records of all approved grant investments, including supporting documentation, technical justifications, and implementation timelines;
* Validate reports and service outputs submitted by consultants and service providers, ensuring contractual compliance and technical relevance;
* Work closely with the CPIU financial team to confirm payment authorizations, monitor fund flows, and ensure efficient use of project resources under the sub-component.

*Procurement, Contract Management, and Consultant Supervision*

* Draft Terms of Reference (ToRs) for national and international experts, service providers, and firms contracted for sub-component activities;
* Oversee procurement processes linked to agribusiness development, including the procurement of services for training, technical assistance, and infrastructure works;
* Participate in the evaluation and negotiation of contracts, ensuring that service providers are aligned with project goals and deliverables;
* Supervise the performance of consultants and firms, provide technical feedback, and ensure corrective actions are implemented when needed.

By fulfilling these objectives, the Agribusiness Development Specialist plays a pivotal role in ensuring that project-supported investments are viable, inclusive, and transformative. Through a proactive and hands-on approach, the Specialist contributes directly to building sustainable value chains, increasing market access for rural producers, and achieving measurable development outcomes in line with IFAD’s mission in Moldova.

**7. Field of activity**

The Agribusiness Development Specialist is responsible for the coordination, implementation, and technical oversight of the Agribusiness Development sub-component under the IFAD-financed TRTP Project in Moldova. This includes ensuring full alignment with the approved Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB), as well as with the operational frameworks set out in the Financing Agreement, Project Implementation Manual (PIM), and IFAD’s strategic guidelines.

The Specialist leads and supervises activities related to equity grant support, value chain strengthening, infrastructure development, and rural entrepreneurship. This involves close collaboration with , farmers, local authorities, service providers, and national institutions. A core aspect of the role includes the technical review of investment proposals, monitoring of implementation progress in the field, and ensuring that all interventions meet quality standards and deliver sustainable results.

By combining strategic planning, rigorous oversight, and hands-on technical guidance, the Specialist ensures that agribusiness development activities contribute meaningfully to income generation, market access, and inclusive rural growth. The role also encompasses capacity building for local stakeholders, coordination with consultants, and the facilitation of dialogue between public and private actors to ensure coherence, efficiency, and long-term impact of project-supported investments.

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

The Agribusiness Development Specialist plays a central role in strengthening the institutional and technical capacity of Producer Groups, local authorities, service providers, and other actors engaged in value chain development. This includes organizing and coordinating targeted training sessions, hands-on technical assistance, and knowledge-sharing events focused on agribusiness planning, post-harvest handling, infrastructure implementation, and compliance with grant conditions.

Through these capacity-building efforts, the Specialist ensures that stakeholders are equipped with the necessary tools, knowledge, and practices to effectively implement and sustain agribusiness activities supported by the project. Emphasis is placed on promoting practical learning, peer exchange, and the dissemination of tested models and best practices that can be replicated and scaled across communities.

In addition, the Specialist is responsible for facilitating the structured transfer of key documents, technical tools, and operational methodologies to institutional partners and beneficiaries. This ensures continuity and ownership beyond the project’s lifecycle, enabling local actors to manage and expand investments independently. All transfers are carried out in a transparent and traceable manner, supported by clear guidance and follow-up, to promote long-term sustainability and impact.

**9. Reports and timetable of results**

The Agribusiness Development Specialist will report directly to the TRTP Project Coordinator and under the strategic oversight of the CPIU IFAD Project Director, ensuring continuous communication and coordination regarding the progress of agribusiness-related activities. Regular updates and analytical inputs will be submitted in accordance with the project’s monitoring and reporting framework, including monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, and annual reports. These reports will cover key performance areas such as grant application cycles, implementation of business plans, infrastructure progress, and overall impact on rural value chains.

An initial performance review will be conducted at the end of the first month of the assignment, focusing on the Specialist’s integration into the team, understanding of project mechanisms, and ability to initiate and coordinate sub-component activities effectively. This probationary evaluation will serve as a two-way feedback mechanism to clarify expectations and address any early challenges.

Subsequent performance evaluations will take place on a biannual basis and at the end of the contractual period. These assessments will evaluate the Specialist’s contribution to project objectives, engagement with stakeholders, technical quality of deliverables, and adherence to IFAD and CPIU IFAD procedures and standards.

**10. Consultant's qualifications and experience**

**Education**
• Master’s degree in agriculture, horticulture, economics, , or other fields relevant to agricultural sciences.

**Professional Experience**
• At least 5 years of experience in agriculture or horticulture value chain development;
• Experience working with international development agencies and in the implementation of donor-funded projects;
• Demonstrated involvement in monitoring and evaluation activities, as well as in reviewing business plans;
• Experience working with national and international stakeholders in the field of agriculture and rural development.

**Core Competencies**
• Strong knowledge of agricultural production, horticulture value chains, marketing and branding of produce, business planning, and agro-processing legislation in Moldova;
• Proven capacity to analyze and synthesize technical and operational information;
• Ability to supervise consultants and service providers, and to review and approve technical deliverables;
• Strong communication skills, both written and verbal, and facilitation experience in group settings.

**Language Proficiency**
• Fluency in English, Romanian, and Russian (spoken and written).

**Technical Knowledge**
• Proficiency in using MS Office and experience with web-based management systems;
• Knowledge of M&E and knowledge management practices in development projects.

**Additional Skills**
• Well-organized, detail-oriented, and capable of managing multiple tasks simultaneously;
• Collaborative approach and ability to work effectively with government, private sector, and community stakeholders;
• Creative and pragmatic problem-solving mindset.

These qualifications are essential for ensuring the successful implementation of projects, achieving defined objectives, and contributing to the sustainable development goals of the organization.

**Key criteria for the shortlist:**

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|  | **Evaluation Criteria for shortlisting** | **scoring**  |
| **1** | **General qualifications and experience:*** Higher degree in agriculture, horticulture, agricultural economics, rural development, , or other relevant agricultural sciences.
* Participation in international training programs related to project implementation, rural development, or agribusiness, organized by multilateral or bilateral donors.
 | **20**155 |
| **2** | **Specific experience as an independent expert:*** Minimum 5 years of proven experience in the implementation, coordination, and management of agricultural or rural development projects funded by international donors.
* Demonstrated experience in reviewing agribusiness plans, technical feasibility assessments, and coordinating Producer Groups or rural entrepreneurs.
* Experience in collaboration with government institutions, service providers, and the private sector.
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| **3** | **Skills:*** *Fluency in Romanian and English Russian is an asset;*
* *Strong digital skills – proficient in MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook).*
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| **4** | **Competences demonstrated at interview (for candidates who obtain at least 40 points for criteria 1, 2 and 3 above):*** Theoretical and practical knowledge of agricultural production systems, value chains, and agribusiness development.
* Ability to analyze technical and financial documents (e.g., business plans, feasibility studies).
* Capacity to coordinate consultants, communicate with stakeholders, and lead field activities.
* Problem-solving skills, adaptability, and ownership of results.
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|  | **TOTAL** | **100** |

The consultant will be selected in accordance with the ICS procurement method set out in the Procurement Manual for IFAD Programmes, which can be accessed via the IFAD website at <https://www.ifad.org/documents>. The consultant ranked first in the shortlist will be invited within a reasonable time to submit a technical and financial proposal which will be evaluated and negotiated. The minimum pass mark for the shortlist is 70 points.

**11. Place and period of execution**

The consultant will be engaged under a service provision contract valid until 31 March 2027 or until the completion of the TRTP/IFAD VIII project. The contract includes a probationary period of one month and requires a commitment of 40 hours per week. The services will be delivered at the Consolidated Unit for the Implementation of IFAD Programmes, located in Chisinau, Bd. Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt 162, et. 13.

In addition to the core duties, the Agribusiness Development Specialist may be requested to support complementary activities that contribute to the smooth and effective implementation of the Agribusiness Development sub-component. These may include participating in IFAD supervision and audit missions, contributing to the development of tools, templates, or technical guidelines for business plan assessment or field monitoring, and assisting in the preparation of technical briefs, recommendations, or awareness materials.

The Specialist will also be required to undertake regular field visits to monitor the implementation of sub-component activities, supervise infrastructure works, engage with Producer Groups and beneficiaries, and ensure technical alignment of interventions on the ground.

CPIU IFAD will provide access to project vehicles and the necessary logistical and operational support to facilitate these visits and ensure effective coordination in the field.

Furthermore, the Specialist may be involved in participating in capacity-building or communication events, and ensuring coordination with other project components and externally funded initiatives. Such tasks will be assigned as needed to ensure operational continuity, knowledge sharing, and alignment with the broader objectives of the TRTP Project and IFAD’s strategic framework.

**12. Project coordination**

Coordination and approval of the consultant's activities will be carried out by the Director of the CPIU IFAD and TRTP Project Coordinator.

**13. Services and facilities to be provided by both parties**

The consultant will work in strict accordance with the activities outlined in this ToR and will collaborate closely with all departments within CPIU IFAD to ensure effective coordination and integration of activities across the entity.