State Institution Agriculture Entrepreneurship Development

Strengthening Resilience of The Agriculture Sector Project (SRASP)

Terms of Reference
Local survey company to support Project Baseline assessment

Background: SRASP aims to support the Government of Tajikistan to successfully transition to a sustainable, more productive, climate resilient, and inclusive model of agricultural sector.

The project will help to:

(i) Increase the availability of improved seeds, seedlings, and planting materials that are climate resilient, affordable, farmer-preferred and well adapted to the different agro-ecological conditions of Tajikistan;

(ii) Improve the access to improved agri-logistic services of farmers and agri-businesses; and

(iii) Strengthen the crisis management, i.e. early warning, preparedness and response capacity of selected public institutions. All activities related to human resource development and capacity building will include topics on understanding climate change better and frameworks, tools, and techniques to facilitate designing and implementing climate adaptation and mitigation approaches. All infrastructure, including buildings, offices, laboratories, and storage facilities, constructed and/or rehabilitated by the project, will be encouraged to utilize energy-efficient and climate-resilient materials and designs. The proposed project aims to thereby strengthen the foundations for more resilient agriculture sector, which will in turn help improve food security and nutrition and accelerate agricultural diversification. It will also contribute to the development of a viable sector of private micro, small and medium enterprises in rural areas and generate employment opportunities for women in regions with few legal alternatives.

THE PROJECT CONSISTS OF 4 COMPONENTS

Component 1:

Strengthen seed, seedling, and planting material systems.

This component will support the development of viable seed, seedling, and planting material systems to ensure the availability of improved, locally adapted, market oriented, farmer-preferred, and climate resilient varieties of these inputs for priority crops, 35 and in sufficient quantity and acceptable quality. Advances in inputs technology are one of the most important channels for improving productivity in agriculture. The GoT recognizes the crucial role of the inputs sector, including seeds, seedlings, and planting materials in achieving not only agriculture production and productivity goals, but also broader development goals, such as food and nutrition security and climate resilience. The availability of improved seeds, seedlings, and planting materials, in sufficient quality and acceptable quality, contributes to enhanced and efficient use of other inputs, including water, fertilizers, pesticides, and insecticides. This component has four subcomponents prioritizing support for improving the enabling environment necessary for the development of viable seed, seedling and planting material

systems; research and development; multiplication; and quality assurance of the production and distribution of high-quality seeds, seedlings and planting materials. The subcomponents are designed in a way to combine a rapid response to the urgent needs of farmers for better seeds (by importing foundation seeds and multiplying them on seed farms for commercial sale) with a gradual strengthening of long-term capacity of both public and private seed sector institutions to increase the availability of seeds, seedlings, and planting materials that are better adjusted to local agroecological conditions and of higher quality.

Component 2:

Support investments in agri-logistical centers for horticulture value chains

This component will support investments in Agri-Logistical Centers (ALCs) to improve competitiveness of horticulture value chains and access to markets (e.g. domestic retail chains and export).

The investments in ALCs will help build resilient food systems, promote agricultural diversification, ensure better market linkages, quality, and food safety standards, reduce food loss/waste, and initiate the development of an efficient distribution system network in Tajikistan.

ALCs were identified by the World Bank and the IFC diagnostics as a missing, yet critical, element to provide incentives for increasing the competitiveness and further development of horticulture value chains in Tajikistan.

The ACP is already supporting the value chains of apples, pears, apricots, lemons, tomatoes, and cucumbers that could potentially benefit from the ALC services to be provided. The in-depth feasibility study and market assessment to identify potential traded volumes of agriculture products, main functions, and business models for the management of ALCs, will encompass consultation, including inclusive group discussions to elicit the demand for ALC functions, with emphasis on group discussions with vulnerable (small, young) producers as well as women farmers and other users.

Component 3:

Strengthen public capacity for crises prevention and management.

This component will strengthen the capacity of relevant public institutions on agricultural crises prevention and management, focusing on selected programs, which can significantly enhance resiliency of agricultural sector. It will enhance the public capacity, thereby allowing institutions to have an early estimate of agricultural production and crop yields, determine potential food shortages, and identify crises and take early preparedness and response actions. It will also support climate adaptation and mitigation measures, generating substantial climate co-benefits. Priority areas for strengthening include:

(i) real-time monitoring of agricultural production and agrometeorology;

(ii) soil testing for improved soil fertility management and precision agriculture;

(iii) crop protection and locust control. The component will consist of the following three subcomponents.

Component 4:

Project management and coordination.

The objective of this component is to support project management, coordination, M&E, and implementation of environmental and social framework (ESF) instruments and fiduciary aspects of the project.
These functions will be undertaken by a project implementation unit (PIU).
The PIU will also manage the project's grievance redress mechanism (GRM) and citizen engagement activities. Enhanced engagement and outreach activities will improve the outcomes of the project. Component 1 will carry out beneficiary satisfaction surveys (using scorecards and other feedback mechanisms) annually. Components 2 and 3 and the project will also conduct ex ante inclusive group discussions to elicit the demand for ALC functions, and for public sector agricultural information and delivery mechanisms, with emphasis on group discussions with vulnerable (small, young) producers as well as women farmers and other users. These will be organized annually as participatory social monitoring activities with the objective to engage with stakeholders.
The PIU will be staffed with the required specialists, including fiduciary and ESF. Activities to be financed under this component include:

(i) procurement, financial management, environmental and social risk management,
(ii) citizen engagement, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting; Project related audits;
(iii) Training and Operating Costs for the Project.

1. Objective of the Assignment

The purpose of the assignment is to conduct project baseline assessment based on the agreed methodology and tools/instruments developed by the Project

2. Scope of services

The scope of the Assignment includes three key parts

- Field testing dehkan farm questionnaire & semi-structured interviews (for focus groups) with drafts provided to the consult before the start of the assignment; and providing recommendations for improvement (clarity, sequence, volume and substance)
- Undertaking actual field work utilizing final versions of the dehkan farm questionnaire and semi-structured interviews
- Delivering a response data base in format and within timelines agreed

For the purposes of this assignment, SRASP intends cover the following key groups of beneficiaries:

- Dehkan farms
- Private seed farms
- Agricultural businesses and agricultural exporters

Geographic coverage:

For the purposes of the baseline assessment, SRASP intends cover beneficiaries in 3 key regions:

- Sogd region
- Khatlon region
- RRS and region directly adjacent to Dushanbe

The choice of tools expected to be utilized by the local company depending on the beneficiary group is presented below:

	Dehkan farm survey	Semi-structured interviews (focus groups)
Dehkan farms	X	
Private seed companies		X
Agricultural businesses and agricultural exporters		X

Expected sample size and the number of Focus groups;

Dehkan farms	100-600 across all 3 regions
Focus Group meetings	12

Focus group meetings are to cover two key Project beneficiaries: Private seed farms and exporters in three provinces (in two largest locations convenient for beneficiaries e.g. in Khujand and Isfara, in Kulob and Bohtar) to be covered by the project. Each focus group will include between 5-7 participants (up to 10 will be invited for each focus group) for each meeting for a total expected number of participants standing at c. 60)

	Private Seed farms	Ag. Exporters/agri-businesses
Sogd	2	2
Khatlon	2	2
Dushanbe (select districts in RRS)	2	2
Sub-total	6	6
Grand total	12	

SRASP has a full list of private seed farms that will be used to identify an actual sample. Data of dehkan farms and agricultural businesses/exporters in the process of being collected by the PIU.

3. **Assignment, role and responsibilities**

Local survey company is expected to work under general guidance from the international consultant and be overseen and report to SRASP PIU.

Specifically, local survey company will be expected to undertake the following

- Review Project baseline methodology and provide comments, if any
- Support international consultant with sample identification based on the developed approach and methodology based on data being collected (help collect data, if needed)
- Translate farm survey and Focus group (FG) semi-structured interview questions into Tajik and Uzbek as required
- Test dehkan farm questionnaire and FG questions to be provided by the PIU/International consultant and provide comments, if any
- Conduct/participate in preparatory training session with international consultant in a lead-up to actual work
- Format and test robustness (sequence, logic, and accurateness) of the questionnaire and ensure it is properly programmed for field work
- Ensure adequate quality assurance and control safeguards are followed (e.g., transaction log and data entry checks, and other control and documentation mechanisms, statistically correct handling of non-responders etc)
- Ensure information security and confidentiality (eg., methods and forms of survey, disclosure of the confidentiality of the respondent and responses, data and security system, studies of personnel qualifications, code of ethics, etc.).
- Clearly outline and provide options to mitigate logistical issues, including escalation mechanisms, if needed (e.g., activity planning, monitoring, resources, advance notification, interviewer selection and training, activity supervision, escalation issue, etc.).
- Undertake field survey and conduct FG meeting following established quality assurance and control measures
- Collect, clean and prepare a data base with dehkan survey responses in format and delivery method agreed with the Client and international consultant
- Prepare required reports, including inception and final report, as well as any other specific reports as may be required by the assignment

4. The consultant's assignment is expected to produce the following deliverables

- Translate questionnaire and field test the proposed dehkan farm questionnaire and propose survey tool modifications, as need
- Clean Baseline data base (in SPSS and excel), code book and data report satisfactory to the Client
- Clearly tabulated and structured responses from Focus group meetings and a stand alone short report summarizing key observations in format and content satisfactory to the Client

5. Reporting requirements

- Short inception report reflecting Consultant understanding of the project and expected challenges & proposed approach to an assignment with clear timelines and milestones
- Weekly reports on the status of the field work in real time
- The final report should be transparent, consistent and based on baseline survey and analysis of survey data.

All reports must be submitted in both printed and electronic form in a language required by the Client (include Tajik, English and Russian)

6. Period of the assignment and key deliverable:

The assignment is expected to be conducted during September 12 to October 30, 2022. The following key milestones are expected to be met by the consultant

	Timeframe
Inception report (outlining project understanding, proposed approach, timelines and results of field testing	By September 19,2022
Field work	No later than October 10, 2022
Cleaned data base and tabulation of Focus group results	No later than October 15, 2022
Focus group summary report	No later than October 20,2022
Final report (completion report)	No later than October 28,2022

7. Qualification requirements:

- At least 5 years of direct experience conducting surveys, and Focus group meetings.
- Availability of own network of field surveyors or professionals in all regions of Tajikistan.
- At least 5 years direct experience working with international projects of agriculture sector in Tajikistan.
- Availability of at least 10 full-time specialists for the proposed assignment with sufficient experience confirmed by CVs and confirmation of availability during the entire timeframe of the assignment.