REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (REOI)

(CONSULTING SERVICES)

Firms Selection

Climate Resilience and Agriculture Development Project in Albania

Project ID Number: No.**: P178715**

IBRD Loan Number: **94890**

Assignment Title: “Support the establishment and medium term operation of the two clusters, branding of the selected products and placing the products in the market, etc. (F&V cluster) in Dibra Region

Reference: AL-MARD-416091-CS-QCBS

The World Bank is assisting the Government of Albania (GoA) with the financing of the Climate Resilience and Agriculture Development project (CRAD). This project aims to increase competitiveness and climate resilience of priority agri-food value chains focusing on (i) promoting climate smart and resilient value chains, (ii) promoting typical products and value addition (iii) developing Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) IT Platform (iv) modernizing selected irrigation and drainage schemes for high-value agricultural production (v) enhancing compliance with food safety and quality standards and (vi) strengthening evidence-based decision making for resilience and sustainable agri-food systems.

The services required to be contracted aim to support the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) in ensuring successful implementation of the contract “Support the establishment and medium-term operation of the two clusters, branding of the selected products and placing the products in the market, etc. (Fruit & Vegetables cluster)” in the region of Dibra.

The MARD seeks the Consulting Services of a qualified company/firm with the objective to assist MARD with support the establishment and medium term operation of the two clusters, branding of the selected products and placing the products in the market, etc. (F&V cluster). The objective of this activity is to offer technical assistance for the establishment of an F&V consortium in the Dibra region. The primary goals of this consortium are to unite producers and processors into a single entity responsible for F&V production, processing, marketing, branding activities, and interaction with certification bodies. Establishing a F&V consortium in Albania is deemed crucial for enhancing market access and product differentiation.

Specific objective

The Project Development Objective is to /raise productivity, production, and marketable volumes of fruits (such as: apple, plums, pear, cherry, etc.) and vegetables (onions, tomatoes, peppers, etc.), in Dibra geographic district. Fruits and Vegetables have a strong market focus and aim to improve the competitive position of each cluster in market segments identified. These consortia serve as vital platforms for farmers to penetrate the ideal market segments.

The objective of the assignment is to offer technical assistance for the establishment of fruits and vegetables consortium in the Dibra region. The primary goals of the consortium are to unite producers and processors into a single entity responsible for specific of fruits and vegetables production, processing, marketing, branding activities, and interaction with certification bodies. Establishing a of fruits and vegetables consortium in Albania is deemed crucial for enhancing market access and product differentiation.

The Consultant will in particular, be based on the achievement of a preliminary assessment of of fruits and vegetables value chain in Dibra region, build a consortium of of fruits and vegetables producers (a minimum of 50 producers with a minimum of 30 women), develop their technical and marketing capacities and promote quality, branding and commercialization.

Specific Scope of work

The Scope of Work for this Assignment is divided in phases.

Phase I: Establishing of fruits and vegetables consortium.

Note: To enhance efficiency and effectiveness, multiple activities within this phase will be conducted simultaneously.

Specific Scope of work

Under this phase, the Consultant will define the Fruits and Vegetables consortium objectives, participants and operational functioning.

Activity 1: Market study and value chain analysis

The Consultant will prepare a market study and a value chain analysis for the fruits and vegetables sector centered on Dibra region to identify key bottlenecks in the production, post-harvest, processing and commercialization activities to design several scenarios of development for the future consortium.

Activity 2: Development of a strategy and business plan

Based on the previous activities, the Consultant will introduce a conceptual scenario with draft project goals and strategy, concept, key activities, with first estimation of costs, functionalities, and management based.

Activity 3: Support to consortium members selection

The Consultant will support local authorities in selecting the future participants to the technical assistance program leading to the creation of of fruits and vegetables consortium in Dibra.

Phase lI: Capacity building activities for consortium members

Specific Objectives

Under this Phase, the Consultant will be responsible for supporting the establishment and development of the consortium through the monitoring and the deliverance of technical trainings. The Consultant will also provide support with officially registering and getting the license of the consortium through the MARD.

Scope of work

The Consultant will be engaged to develop the capacity of the consortium members for two/three years in order to improve production techniques, of fruits and vegetables quality, processing techniques, food hygiene and safety, marketing, commercialization and branding of the of fruits and vegetables consortium. The Consultant will provide international and local experts to support the activity of the consortium until it reaches its operational capacity. The collaboration between all the different experts will be key to achieve the ambition to build a branded quality FRUITS AND VEGETABLES for Dibra region.

Activity 4: Improve production and post-harvest techniques.

The Consultant will strengthen the capacity of consortium members in of fruits and vegetables cultivation and post-harvest technics to improve final quality of of fruits and vegetables produced and support sustainable management practices (water use, pesticides). The Consultant will provide one expert (agronomist) responsible for organizing on-field trainings and monitoring of the production for two/three years. The expert will be responsible for producing the training program and materials based on phase I preliminary assessment.

Activity 5: Develop FRUITS AND VEGETABLES quality.

The Consultant will support consortium members in developing unique quality of fruits and vegetables connected to the specificities of Dibra territory and of fruits and vegetables production. The Consultant will provide a quality expert who will develop a training package, theoretical and practical, about quality improvement in of fruits and vegetables processing.

Activity 6: Marketing, promotion, and branding development

The marketing and branding expert will deliver specific trainings to consortium members to improve access to market of local of fruits and vegetables and their subproducts on high-end markets (HoRe Ca, export) through a marketing and communication strategy, the development of a specific branding linked to the of fruits and vegetables and their subproducts characteristics and territory and several Business to Business promotional events. The experts will be responsible for producing the training program based on phase i preliminary assessment and the training material.

Activity 7: Organize a study tour.

The Consultant will be in charge of organizing a study tour in one of the main of fruits and vegetables and their subproducts producer's countries ex. In Turkey, Moldova, Italy, Greece or neighbour’s countries which also have similar typologies and are already advanced and efficient in these types of clusters. The tour will be dedicated to the consortium management staff or representatives (10 persons). The study tour will represent an opportunity to share best practices in of fruits and vegetables and their subproducts and inspire the consortium in its approach to market and their promotion.

CONSULTANT QUALIFICATION

The contract will be awarded following a quality- and cost-based selection procedure with 80:20 ratio in accordance with the Procurement Regulations. The Consultant may associate with other Consultants in the form of a joint venture or of a sub-consultancy agreement to complement their respective areas or expertise, strengthen their technical responsiveness of their proposals, make available bigger pool or experts, provide better approaches and methodologies.

Firm Qualifications

1. The Consultant shall be a firm or group of firms with the following minimum qualifications:

* The Consultant should be a reputable consultancy firm with demonstrable knowledge and at least 10 years with international/regional expertise in sustainable development, exports, market expansion, innovation and competitiveness boosting specifically in sectors such as agriculture, agro-processing, tourism, environment
* Demonstrated expertise in building training programs/accelerators/incubators for similar projects preferably related to of fruits and vegetables sectors and subsectors;
* At least 2 similar contracts are successfully implemented during the last 7 (five) years in the assessment, development of agriculture clusters or consortiums of producers (not necessarily limited to the of fruits and vegetables sector);
* Experience in working in the Balkan region would be considered an asset.

The credibility of mentioned experience shall be presented in a list of the required similar project/contracts as required above, including description of services provided (including information on contract value, contracting entity/client, project location/country, duration, assignment budget, percentage carried out by consultant in case of association of firms or subcontracting and main activities) and accompanied by any possible proof certificates/ publications/links in social media/confirmation of orderly fulfilment of the contracts verified by other party from such contracts.

It is required to provide examples of assignments of similar nature.

The Consultant may associate with other Consultants in the form of a joint venture or of a sub-consultancy agreement to complement their respective areas of expertise, strengthen their technical responsiveness of their proposals, make available bigger pool of experts, provide better approaches and methodologies.

The applicants will be assessed in order to determine a shortlist comprising the most qualified firms. The criteria to be used for shortlisting will be the following:

* Core business and years in business – 30 points
* Past experience in similar assignments – 60 points
* Availability of qualified staff among the firm to perform the assignment – 10 points

The CVs of Key experts will not be evaluated during the shortlisting process.

The shortlisting criteria are:

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| --- | --- |
| Evaluated Grid | Points |
| Core business and years in business | 30 |
| Experience in similar assignments | 60 |
| Firms’ organization and staffing | 10 |
| Total | 100 |

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank’s “Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers” July 2016 revised November 2020 (“Procurement Regulations”), setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflict of interest.

Consultants may associate with other firms to enhance their qualifications but should indicate clearly whether the association is in the form of a joint venture and/or a sub-consultancy. In the case of a joint venture, all the partners in the joint venture shall be jointly and severally liable for the entire contract, if selected.

The consultant will be selected based on Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank’s Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers, Procurement in Investment Project Financing Goods, Works, Non-Consulting and Consulting Services July 2016 (revised November 2020).

Interested Consultants may obtain further information concerning the Terms of Reference at the official website of MARD:https://bujqesia.gov.al/projekti-qendrueshmeria-ndaj-klimes-dhe-zhvillimit-ne-bujqesi/, or at the address below, during office hours 08:30 to 16:00 (Monday to Thursday) and 08:30 to 13:00 on Friday.

Expressions of Interest (EoI) in English language must be delivered no later than September 22, 2024 hardcopy (in person or by mail) to the address below, within office hours, and/or electronically at the below e-mail address.

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

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Attn: Mr. Arben Molla

Project Manager