





## **Ministry of Agriculture**

# **Tree Crops Extension Project -II (TCEP-II)**

# **Expression of Interest**

## For

CONSULTING SERVICE FOR E-EXTENSION TO HARNESS THE POWER OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY FOR ENHANCED EXTENSION AND ADVISORY SERVICE DELIVERY IN LIBERIA.

Ref No: LIB/IFAD/TCEP-II/CS-004/24

**Issue Date:** September 30, 2024

### Instructions to Consultants<sup>1</sup>

Date: September 30, 2024

CONSULTING SERVICE FOR E-EXTENSION TO HARNESS THE POWER OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY FOR ENHANCED EXTENSION AND ADVISORY SERVICE DELIVERY IN LIBERIA.

The Government of The Republic of Liberia received financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development ("the Fund" or "IFAD") towards the cost of the Tree Crop Extension Project- II(TCEP-II) ("the client" or "procuring entity"), and intends to apply part of the proceeds for the recruitment of consulting services, for which this REOI is issued.

The use of any IFAD financing shall be subject to IFAD's approval, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the financing agreement, as well as IFAD's rules, policies and procedures. IFAD and its officials, agents and employees shall be held harmless from and against all suits, proceedings, claims, demands, losses and liability of any kind or nature brought by any party in connection with TCEP-II Project.

The client now invites expressions of interest (EOIs) from legally constituted consulting firms (not individual consultants) ("consultants") TO CONDUCT E-entension to Harness the power Digital Technology for Enhanced extension and Advisory Service delivery in Liberia. More details on these consulting services are provided in the preliminary terms of reference (PTOR) attached as Annex 1.

Before preparing its EOIs, the consultant is advised to review the preliminary terms of reference attached as **Annex 1**, which describe the assignment and **Annex 2** that details the evaluation of the technical qualifications.

The consultant shall not have any actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest. A consultant with an actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest shall be disqualified unless otherwise explicitly approved by the Fund. A consultant including their respective personnel and affiliates are considered to have a conflict of interest if they a) have a relationship that provides them with undue or undisclosed information about or influence over the selection process and the execution of the contract, b) participate in ore than one EOI under this procurement action, c) have a business or family relationship with a member of the client's board of directors or its personnel, the Fund or its personnel, or any other individual that was, has been or might reasonably be directly or indirectly

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This document refers to legally constituted consulting firms as "consultant".

involved in any part of (i) the preparation of this expression of interest, (ii) the selection process for this procurement, or (iii) execution of the contract. The consultant has an ongoing obligation to disclose any situation of actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest during preparation of the EOI, the selection process or the contract execution. Failure to properly disclose any of said situations may lead to appropriate actions, including the disqualification of the consultant, the termination of the contract and any other as appropriate under the IFAD Policy on Preventing Fraud and Corruption in its Projects and Operations<sup>2</sup>.

All consultants are required to comply with the Revised IFAD Policy on Preventing Fraud and Corruption in its Activities and Operations (hereinafter, "IFAD's Anticorruption Policy") in competing for, or in executing, the contract.

- a. If determined that a consultant or any of its personnel or agents, or its sub-consultants, sub-contractors, service providers, suppliers, sub-suppliers and/or any of their personnel or agents, has, directly or indirectly, engaged in any of the prohibited practices defined in IFAD's Anticorruption Policy or integrity violations such as sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse as established in IFAD's Policy to Preventing and Responding to Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse<sup>3</sup> in competing for, or in executing, the contract, the EOI may be rejected or the contract may be terminated by the client.
- b. In accordance with IFAD's Anticorruption Policy, the Fund has the right to sanction firms and individuals, including by declaring them ineligible, either indefinitely or for a stated period of time, to participate in any IFAD-financed and/or IFAD-managed activity or operation. The Fund also has the right to recognize debarments issued by other international financial institutions in accordance with its Anticorruption Policy.
- c. Consultants and any of their personnel and agents, and their sub-consultants, sub-contractors, service providers, suppliers, sub-suppliers and any of their personnel and agents are required to fully cooperate with any investigation conducted by the Fund, including by making personnel available for interviews and by providing full access to any and all accounts, premises, documents and records (including electronic records) relating to this selection process or the execution of the contract and to have such accounts, premises, records and documents audited and/or inspected by auditors and/or investigators appointed by the Fund.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The policy is accessible at www.ifad.org/anticorruption\_policy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The policy is accessible at <a href="https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/40738506">https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/40738506</a>.

- d. Consultants have the ongoing obligation to disclose in their EOI and later in writing as may become relevant: (i) any administrative sanctions, criminal convictions or temporary suspensions of themselves or any of their key personnel or agents for fraud and corruption, and (ii) any commissions or fees paid or to be paid to agents or other parties in connection with this selection process or the execution of the contract. As a minimum, consultants must disclose the name and contact details of the agent or other party and the reason, amount and currency of the commission or fee paid or to be paid. Failure to comply with these disclosure obligations may lead to rejection of the EOI or termination of the contract.
- e. Consultants are required to keep all records and documents, including electronic records, relating to this selection process available for a minimum of three (3) years after notification of completion of the process or, in case the consultant is awarded the contract, execution of the contract.

The Fund requires that all beneficiaries of IFAD funding or funds administered by IFAD, including the client, any consultants, implementing partners, service providers and suppliers, observe the highest standards of integrity during the procurement and execution of such contracts, and commit to combat money laundering and terrorism financing consistent with IFAD's Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Policy.4

7. A consultant will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost Base Selection method set out in IFAD' project procurement handbook that can be accessed via the IFAD website at www.ifad.org/project-procurement.

The shortlisting criteria are: The consulting firm must have extensive and proven solid experience in offering unparalleled blend of expertise in the field of IT architecture and infrastructure management, computer science / engineering, digital technology and eextension amongst others. The firm must have experience in donor-financed projects and provide evidence of a minimum of 2 donor funded projects (as a highly considered asset) and must have successfully implemented at least 1 similar assignment in the past 5 years and a minimum of two reference letters.

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.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The policy is accessible at <a href="https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/41942012">https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/41942012</a>.

Any request for clarification on this EOI including the REOI should be sent via e-mail to:

<u>evah@moa.gov.lr</u> no later than **October 8, 2024**. The client will provide responses to all clarification requests by **October 10, 2024** at **16.00h** GMT.

Submission Procedure: please submit your expression of interest using the forms provided for this purpose. Your EOI should comprise one (1) original copy of each EOI form annexed to this document. EOIs shall be submitted to the address below no later than October 16, 2024 at 16.00h GMT to the address below: <a href="mailto:hnorman@moa.gov.lr">hnorman@moa.gov.lr</a> and <a href="mailto:evah@moa.gov.lr">evah@moa.gov.lr</a>. (ONLY SOFTCOPY). The subject line should read: E-EXTENSION TO HARNESS THE POWER OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY FOR ENHANCED EXTENSION AND ADVISORY SERVICE DELIVERY IN LIBERIA TCEP-II

IFAD PIU/PMU/MOA
Ministry of Agriculture Annex, Libsuco Compound
Somalia Drive, Gardnerville, Montserrado County
Telephone: 0775901977

Yours sincerely,

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## Form EOI-1 **EOI Submission Form**

Re: e-extension to harness the power of digital technology for enhanced EXTENSION AND ADVISORY SERVICE DELIVERY IN LIBERIA TCEP-II

Ref: LIB/IFAD/TCEP-II/CS-004/24

We, the undersigned, declare that:

- 1. We are expressing our interest in providing the consulting services for the abovementioned assignment and have no reservations to the REOI, the instructions to the consultants and any addenda thereto.
- 2. Our expression of interest is open for acceptance for a period of ninety (90) days.
- Our firm, its associates, including any subcontractors or suppliers for any part of the 3. contract, have not been declared ineligible by the Fund and have not been subject to sanctions or debarments under the laws or official regulations of the client's country or not been subject to a debarment recognized under the Agreement for Mutual Enforcement of Debarment Decisions (the "Cross-Debarment Agreement")<sup>5</sup>, beyond those declared in paragraph 9 of this EOI submission form.
- 4. We acknowledge and accept the IFAD Revised Policy on Preventing Fraud and Corruption in its Activities and Operations. We certify that neither our firm nor any person acting for us or on our behalf has engaged in any prohibited practices as provided in ITC Clause 6. Further, we acknowledge and understand our obligation to report to anticorruption@ifad.org any allegation of prohibited practice that comes to our attention during the selection process or the contract execution.
- 5. No attempt has been made or will be made by us to induce any other consultant to submit or not to submit an EOI for the purpose of restricting competition.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The Cross-Debarment Agreement was entered into by the World Bank Group, the Inter-American Development Bank, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, additional information may be located at: <a href="http://crossdebarment.org/">http://crossdebarment.org/</a>.

- 6. We acknowledge and accept the IFAD Policy on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. We certify that neither our firm nor any person acting for us or on our behalf has engaged in any sexual harassment, sexual exploitation or abuse. Further, we acknowledge and understand our obligation to report to <a href="ethicsoffice@ifad.org">ethicsoffice@ifad.org</a> any allegation of sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse that comes to our attention during the selection process or the contract execution.
- 7. The following commissions, gratuities, or fees have been paid or are to be paid with respect to the selection process: [Insert complete name of each recipient, its full address, the reason for which each commission or gratuity was paid and the amount and currency of each such commission or gratuity.]

Name of Recipient	Address	Reason	Amount	Currency

(If none has been paid or is to be paid, indicate "none.")

- 8. We declare that neither our consulting firm nor any of its directors, partners, proprietors, key personnel, agents, sub-consultants, sub-contractors, consortium and joint venture partners have any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest as defined in ITC Clause 5 regarding this selection process or the execution of the contract. [insert if needed: "other than the following:" and provide a detailed account of the actual, potential or perceived conflict]. We understand that we have an ongoing disclosure obligation on such actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest and shall promptly inform the client and the Fund, should any such actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest arise at any stage of the procurement process or contract execution.
- 9. The following criminal convictions, administrative sanctions (including debarments) and/or temporary suspensions have been imposed on our consulting firm and/or any of its directors, partners, proprietors, key personnel, agents, sub-consultants, sub-contractors, consortium and joint venture partners:

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Nature of the measure (i.e., criminal conviction, administrative sanction or temporary suspension)	Imposed by	Name of party convicted, sanctioned or suspended (and relationship to the consultant)	Grounds for the measure (i.e., fraud in procurement or corruption in contract execution)	Date and time (duration) of measure

If no criminal convictions, administrative sanctions or temporary suspensions have been imposed, indicate "none".

- 10. We acknowledge and understand that we shall promptly inform the client about any material change regarding the information provided in this EOI submission form.
- 11. We further understand that the failure to properly disclose any of information in connection with this EOI submission form may lead to appropriate actions, including our disqualification as consultant, the termination of the contract and any other as appropriate under the IFAD Policy on Preventing Fraud and Corruption in its Projects and Operations.
- 12. We understand that you are not bound to accept any EOI that you may receive.

[Authorized signatory]

[Name and title of signatory]

[Name and address of firm]

# Form EOI-2 Organization of the Consultant

**Re:** E-EXTENSION TO HARNESS THE POWER OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY FOR ENHANCED EXTENSION AND ADVISORY SERVICE DELIVERY IN LIBERIA TCEP-II

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[Provide a brief description of the background and organization of your firm/entity and of each associated firm for this assignment. Include the organization chart of your firm/entity. The EOI must demonstrate that the consultant has the organizational capability and to carry out the assignment. The qualifications document shall further demonstrate that the consultant has the capacity to field and provide experienced replacement personnel on short notice. Key staff CVs are not required at the shortlisting stage.]

Name of the firm	
Date of establishment	
Country of registration	
Full address of the firm	
Focal point: name, position, contact information (telephone, email):	Name:
	Tel:
	Email:
Number of branches in the country	
Country(ies) of operations with number of branches in each country	
Number of full-time employees	

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Number of part-time employees	
Field(s)of expertise of the firm	
Number of professional staff with experience related directly to the assignment	
Subsidiary and associated companies (wherever applicable): (details in the following format to be provided for all associates) – (i) Name of the company (ii) Nature of business (iii) Address of the company (iv) Website of the company (v) Brief description of company (maximum of 120 words)	
Any other information that the consultant would like to add:	

### Maximum 10 pages

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# Form EOI-3 Experience of the Consultant

**Re:** E-EXTENSION TO HARNESS THE POWER OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY FOR ENHANCED EXTENSION AND ADVISORY SERVICE DELIVERY IN LIBERIA TCEP-II

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[Using the format below, provide information on each relevant assignment for which your firm, and each associate for this assignment, was legally contracted either individually as a corporate entity or as one of the major companies within an association, for carrying out consulting services similar to the ones requested under the preliminary terms of reference included in this EOI. The EOI must demonstrate that the consultant has a proven track record of successful experience in executing projects similar in substance, complexity, value, duration, and volume of services sought in this procurement.

#### Maximum 20 pages]

Assignment name:	Approx. value of the contract (in current US\$):
Country: Location within country:	Duration of assignment (months):
Name of client:	Total No. of staff-months of the assignment:

Address, and contact details (including email address(es)):	Approx. value of the services provided by your firm under the contract (in current US\$):
Start date (month/year): Completion date (month/year):	No. of professional staff-months provided by associated consultants:
Name of associated consultants, if any:	Name of proposed senior professional staff of your firm involved and functions performed (indicate most significant profiles such as project director/coordinator, team leader):
Narrative description of project:	
Description of actual services provided by your staff within the assignment:	
Name of Firm:	

# E-EXTENSION TO HARNESS THE POWER OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY FOR ENHANCED EXTENSION AND ADVISORY SERVICE DELIVERY IN LIBERIA TCEP-II

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#### ANNEX 1

## PRELIMINARY TERMS OF REFERENCE

Currently, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) portfolio in Liberia includes three (3) ongoing projects: (i) The Tree Crop Extension Project (TCEP); (ii) The Tree Crop Extension Project II (TCEP-II); and (iii) The Building Climate Resilience Project (BCRP) in Liberia's Rice and Cocoa Sector. These three projects are contributing significantly to the development of the agricultural sector.

Liberia's agricultural sector plays a crucial role in the nation's economy, supporting the livelihoods of a significant portion of the population. However, the sector faces numerous challenges, including limited access to extension and advisory services. These services are essential for farmers and technical key players to gain knowledge on best practices, new technologies, and access to market and finance.

In terms of digitalization in Liberia, it is rapidly transforming various sectors, including agriculture, education, healthcare, and commerce. This brought a significant growing in recognizing the importance of harnessing digital technologies to drive economic growth, improve service delivery, and enhance social inclusion in Liberia.

When it comes to the digital agriculture, Liberia presents a transformative opportunity to enhance agricultural productivity, improve livelihoods, and achieve sustainable development goals. By leveraging mobile technology, developing digital platforms, and addressing key challenges in crop management and monitoring, monitoring weather patterns and access to finance and market information using emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, drone, and satellite imagery technologies, mobile apps, Liberia can make significant strides towards modernizing its agricultural sector and ensuring food security for its population.

This consulting service aims to leverage combination of digital technology such as AI, drones and satellite imagery to enhance the delivery of extension and advisory services, thereby improving agricultural productivity and sustainability in Liberia. The consulting service is fully aligned to the National Agricultural Development Plan (NADP), as a cross cutting theme supporting the development of the twenty priority crops, enterprises, and sub-value chains. The use of these digital tools will contribute to enhancing smallholders and other medium to large size actors' capacities for increased production and productivity whilst strengthening the capabilities of aggregators, transporters, processors, and marketers in adding value to processing and trading these commodities in a sustainable way. Referenced technologies will be deployed and utilized in a way that it optimizes sustainability from the social, economic, and environmental dimensions.

In view of the above mentioned, the MOA seeks to use some of the TCEP-II proceed to recruit a consulting firm for the establishment of E-Extension to Harness the Power of Digital Technology for Enhanced Extension and Advisory Service Delivery in Liberia.

#### 2.0 Objective of the Consulting Services

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The overarching objective of the consulting service is to support the smallholder farmers (including youth and women), but also practitioners in agricultural sector (mostly extension workers), various types of training institutions, and relevant agribusiness stakeholders by facilitating the development and enhancement of agricultural extension and advisory service delivery to improve access to agricultural knowledge and information for farmers in remote and rural areas through AI Chabot and capacity for the technical agricultural extension service delivery to use the digital technologies such as drones and satellite imagery in crop management and monitoring for boosting agricultural production and productivity.

#### 3.0 Scope of Work

The consulting firm will work under the overall guidance and supervision of the Project Coordinator. Specifically, the consulting firm will:

- o Deploy a digital agricultural platform;
- Provide comprehensive training in digital literacy, including how to use the digital platform and other digital tools and emerging technologies relevant to agriculture, to empower farmers including youth and women with information, knowledge and services based on concrete demands:
- Develop a digital agriculture support ecosystem for the smallholder farmers to boost their production through climate change resilient, crop protection best practices, access to market, access to finance and access to insurance;
- Develop innovation capabilities through engage-in programs that include design thinking, business planning, record keeping, and access to startup resources, fostering a culture of entrepreneurship among targeted beneficiaries (based on concrete demands);
- Utilize digital solutions to enhance market access for agri-products produced by farmers in Liberia, enabling them to reach broader markets and improve their income potential;
- Develop a farmer scorecard that rates farmers on their abilities to practice best practices that assists in determining an individual farmer, farming competencies and expertise. This will allow for targeted training of farmers with low farmer scorecards;
- Enhance capacity of the technical extension workers in the use of emerging technologies including AI, drones and satellite imagery in precision farming, crop management and monitoring.
- Prepare and submit end of assignment report including strategic recommendations (actionable plans for the Ministry);
- o Any other needed activity, as discussed and agreed during the assignment.

#### 4.0 Deliverables

The consulting firm will be expected to deliver the following outputs:

- Identify the areas of digital innovations and skills deficits, needs and gaps among farmers and extension workers in the agriculture value chain in Liberia and the state of digital innovation within the sector in general;
- Define the main categories of digital skills and innovation capacity that should be developed, for farmers (including youth and women) and technical experts in AES delivery focusing on AI, drones and satellite imagery;
- Design and develop a demand driven digital skill learning program and innovation tool (example AI Chabot or digital farmer platform) for both groups of beneficiaries (farmers in the prioritized value chains and technical experts) as defined by the in-depth study;
- Training on the digital skills and innovation capacity learning program with the farmers and technical experts based on identified need;
- Testing, piloting and validating AI powered digital extension service provision (with farmers and technical experts);
- Organization of the training on the use of drones and satellite imagery in crop management and monitoring (with technical experts from Government, research institutions and other agriculture key institutions) ensure the digital solution has USSD and block chain capabilities;
- o Present the farmer scorecards of farmers that will be visited on site;
- Train banks and insurance companies on how farmer scorecards can enhance risk assessment for farmers and improve their abilities to receive credit and insurance. Present a report on the importance of farmer scorecards.
- o Development of the promotional materials (stories in text and video format);
- o Broadcasting and sharing of the promotional materials;
- Creation of the promotion and outreach champions as role models in the rural communities and support them in transferring "know-how" among rural communities;
- o Submit draft report to incorporate and reflect feedback from PIU, MOA and IFAD;
- Submit final version of the report for the assignment including key findings, insights and actionable recommendations.

#### 5.0 Methodology

The project is targeting two groups: smallholder farmers (farmer's organization and cooperatives) on AI powered digital agricultural extension and advisory services and technical extension workers from government, research, and academic institutions on advanced emerging technology for crop management and monitoring hands-on knowledge on a real-time basis.

#### **6.0** Timing of the Assignment

The timing of the assignment is 52 working days (5 days for inception report, 28 days in the field for survey - data collection, 13 days for data analysis and 6 days for reporting) from the date of contract signing. The implementation schedule is detailed in the table below:

No.	o. Activities		Weeks					
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Submit inception report including activity implementation work plan detailing							
	the methodological approach for the entire assignment covering all items							
	under "Scope of Work" prior to the commencement of the assignment.							
2	Desk review and discussion meeting with MOA senior management, PIU and							
	relevant stakeholders to provide information leading to the assignment							
3	Development of the USSD and online e-extension platform (digital agriculture							
	and innovation program)							
4	Deploying, testing, piloting and validating AI powered digital extension							
	service including farmers scorecards							
5	Development of promotional materials (stories in text and video)							
6	Conduct training of farmers, extension / project technicians, etc. in digital							
	literacy including the use of digital tools, use of AI, drone and satellite imagery							
	in precision farming, crop management and monitoring							
7	Submission of draft report with visuals							
8	Submission of final report with visuals							

#### 7.0 Qualification and experience:

The consulting firm must have extensive and proven solid experience in offering unparalleled blend of expertise in the field of IT architecture and infrastructure management, computer science / engineering, digital technology and e-extension amongst others. The firm must have experience in donor-financed projects and provide evidence of a minimum of 2 donor funded projects (as a highly considered asset) and must have successfully implemented at least 1 similar assignment in the past 5 years and a minimum of two reference letters. The firm must have at least 5 key experts with the following stipulated qualification, professional and practical experience as indicated in the table below:

Key Personnel	Qualification	Experience		
Agriculture Extension	$\mathcal{E}$ 1 3	At least 10 years professional experience in		
Expert – Team Lead	formulation and related fields	policy formulation and programs development		
ICT Specialist – Assistant	At least a Bachelor Degree in	At least 5 years proven skills and experience		
Team Lead	computer science / engineering	in developing information management		
		systems		
Data expert	At least a Bachelor Degree in computer science / engineering, data analysis	At least 5 years' proven experience in data- based models and managing large data sets		

Project Management Expert	Advanced degree with project management background	At least five years proven skills and experience in managing agricultural projects	
Communication expert	Advanced degree in communication technology	At least five years proven skills and experience as communication expert	
GIS / Geodetic Expert	At least a Bachelor Degree in Geo- Information Science / geodetic engineering or related field	, I	
Environmentalist	At least a Bachelor Degree in Environmental Science or related field	At least five years of professional and practical experience in conducting environmental and social screening / assessment of water resources projects and familiar with environmental guidelines	
Agriculturist	Advanced degree in agricultural or related field	At least five years of professional and practical experience working in the agriculture sector	

#### 8.0 Facilities and Information to be provided by the client

The MOA and IFAD-PIU is expected to provide the consulting firm with the relevant information / documents to assist in carrying out the required tasks. Also, the IFAD-PIU will facilitate the travel of the consulting firm to various regions and meetings with development partners and stakeholders.

## **ANNEX 2**

**Qualification and Evaluation Criteria** 

Item	Criteria	Points
<b>A.</b>	General experience	30
i	The firm must have experience in donor-financed projects and provide evidence of a minimum of 2 donor funded projects (as a highly considered asset)	10
	The consulting firm must have extensive and proven solid experience in offering unparalleled blend of expertise in the field of IT architecture and infrastructure management, computer science / engineering, digital technology and e-extension amongst others	20
B.	Specific experience	70
i	Experience in successfully implementing at least 1 similar assignment in the past 5 years and a minimum of two reference letters in Liberia or within the Sub-region.	40
ii.	Experience in the Conduct of training for farmers, extension / project technicians, etc. in digital literacy including the use of digital tools, use of AI, drone and satellite imagery in precision farming, crop management and monitoring.	30
	Total Score	100 points
	Minimum points required to pass	70 points