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**WORLD BANK/IFAD PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION UNIT MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA Rural Economic Transformation Project (RETRAP)
1st Floor LIBSUCO Building Japan Freeway (Formerly Somalia Drive),
Gardnersville – Monrovia, Liberia**

LOAN #: P175263; IDA: 69000

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

(CONSULTING SERVICES – FIRMS SELECTION)

Assignment Title: Technical Assistance for the Provision of Capacity Building Support to LACF Grantees on Financial Management, Business Development Services

REOI Reference No: LR-PMU-MOA-367903-CS-

QCBS Background

The Government of Liberia has received support from the World Bank, for the Additional Financing to the Rural Economic Transformation Project (RETRAP-AF). The RETRAP-AF seeks to increase the income of rural poor households through sustainable agricultural livelihood enhancements and improved rural access and agricultural marketing infrastructure services. As its focus, the project will support the value chains of Rice, Cassava, Oil-Palm, Rubber, Horticulture, Poultry & Pig husbandry, and Vegetables. The project will be implemented in all 15 counties of Liberia over a period of five years.

The project development objective is to increase the income of rural poor households through sustainable agricultural livelihood enhancements and improved rural access to agricultural marketing infrastructure services.

The subprojects to be supported through the Liberia Agriculture Commercialization Fund (LACF) will be the agribusinesses (SMEs), cooperatives and other service providers who benefit from the Matching Grants. The subprojects are expected to receive business service development trainings, business service support and other financial management support to upgrade the business knowledge and position of the subprojects.

Scope of Services

The Consultant should support the grantees in areas of tailored education, training, systems upgrade, exposure, investment management and mentorship to growth-oriented businesses (“growth entrepreneurs”, “Impact entrepreneurs”, “gazelles”, the “economic accelerators”). The goal is to help the grantees grow their business, and scale market outreach, technology and impact. The service delivery will focus primarily on grantees approved by FAC for funding under the LACF.

The activities will focus on the following elements:

- a. **Productivity enhancement:** Supporting farmers to increase crop yields and production through introduction of new technology, good agriculture practices (GAPs), climate-smart agriculture innovations, extension services, utilization of improved inputs (e.g., planting materials, fertilizers and agrochemicals), small production and processing equipment and tools, advisory services, and expansion of current household's areas under cultivation to a minimum of two (2) hectares). The focus will be mainly on rice, oil palm, and horticultural value chains while taking into consideration climate smart practices, environmental, social safeguards and gender inclusivity.
- b. **Setting up structured and functional out-grower systems:** Provide Technical Assistance (TA) to firms/companies to strengthen their capacities to better engage out-growers, improve on their relationship and also enhance their operational capacity
- c. **Training on postharvest management:** Training farmers on postharvest handling and management at the farm level, covering proper harvesting, drying, threshing/shelling, winnowing, basic storage hygiene and good storage management.
- d. **Construction of food storage facilities:** This activity builds on postharvest management training and will mainly involve the construction of small granaries to serve as food banks at the household level. The beneficiaries will receive advisory services while they provide building materials and labor as their in-kind contribution. Where demand and clear guidance on ownership, use rights, management, operation and maintenance etc. exist, the project will fund communal/group storage facilities at strategic locations. These will be constructed on a cost-sharing basis with the beneficiaries. Attention will be accorded to operation and management of such storage facilities

Objective of the assignment

The objective of the assignment is to provide Technical Assistance for Capacity Building Support to LACF Grantees on Financial Management and Business Development Services

The shortlisting criteria, based on Qualitative Assessment methodology, are:

- a) **Core Business of the firm and Number of Years in Business**
- b) **Technical and Managerial Organization of the Firm**
- c) **Description of Similar Assignments** (The firm must have Seven (7) years' experience in delivering Agri-business development/advisory services to growth-oriented agri ventures in Liberia; regional, global experience and World Bank funded projects is an added advantage)
- d) **Experience in developing and/or managing incubation/acceleration programs** for growth oriented agri ventures for at least three different globally recognized clients in the past.
- e) **Experience in Similar Conditions**
- f) **Availability of Appropriate Skills among Staff or within the firm**

The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment can be found at the following websites:

- a) www.emansion.gov.lr
- b) [https://vacancies & Career Opportunities | Ministry of Agriculture \(www.moa.gov.lr\)](https://vacancies & Career Opportunities | Ministry of Agriculture (www.moa.gov.lr)) or it is directly requested via email from dkulah@moa.gov.lr

The attention of interested firms is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" dated July 2016, revised November 2017, and August 2018, setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest. Please refer to paragraph 3.17 of the Procurement

Regulations on conflict of interest related to this assignment which is available on the Bank's website at <http://projects-beta.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/products-and-services/brief/procurement-new-framework>

A consulting firm will be selected in accordance with the Consultants Quality and Cost-Based Selection(QCBS) method set out in the Procurement Regulations.

Expressions of interest must be submitted electronically in a format that cannot be altered (pdf format is preferred) to the email address below by 21st July 2023 @ 5:00pm local time.

Note: All expression of interests MUST be submitted to the below email address:

Galah Toto

National Program Coordinator

Program Implementation Unit (PIU), Ministry of Agriculture

Smallholder Agriculture Transformation & Agribusiness Revitalization Project (STAR-P)/ Rural Economic Transformation Project (RETRAP)

1st Floor LIBSUCO Building, Japanese Freeway (Formerly Somalia Drive) Gardnersville – Monrovia, Liberia

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Terms of reference- LACF GRANTEES

Terms of Reference for the selection of an institution/organization/firm to provide Technical Assistance for the provision of capacity-building support to LACF grantees on financial management, and business development services, for the Rural Economic Transformation Project (RETRAP).

A. Background and General Description

The Government of Liberia has received support from the World Bank, for the Additional Financing to the Rural Economic Transformation Project (RETRAP-AF). The RETRAP-AF seeks to increase the income of rural poor households through sustainable agricultural livelihood enhancements and improved rural access and agricultural marketing infrastructure services. As its focus, the project will support the value chains of Rice, Cassava, Oil-Palm, Rubber, Horticulture, Poultry & Pig husbandry, and Vegetables. The project will be implemented in all 15 counties of Liberia over a period of five years.

The project development objective is to increase the income of rural poor households through sustainable agricultural livelihood enhancements and improved rural access to agricultural marketing infrastructure services.

a. Project Components

Component 1: Improving the enabling environment for agribusiness development in Liberia. The objective of Component 1 is to improve the enabling policy and regulatory environment necessary for private businesses to increase investment and commercial activities and enhance the delivery of quality support services that can foster an inclusive and competitive development of the sector. This component will finance combinations of specialized technical assistance, training, works, goods, consulting and non-consulting services, and operational expenses.

Component 2: Enhancing Competitiveness and Market Access through Productive Alliances. The objective of this component is to promote the development of organizations of small sized medium-sized agricultural producers participating in “productive alliances” with selected partners with the aim to be able to operate competitively in selected value chains, with strengthened and more reliable linkages with buyers and markets and increased capacity to manage climate risks. The basic approach is to promote investments and collective actions, with the aim of gaining economies of scale, enhancing bargaining power, facilitating knowledge sharing, and reducing costs of production and service delivery.

Component 3: Agri-markets and road Infrastructure Investments. The objective of this component is to improve access to markets through the rehabilitation of existing roads, construction of short-span critical cross-drainage structures, and improvement of agro-logistics centers. Expected outcomes from such investments are improved quality of products and reduced post-harvest losses, reduced marketing costs and better connection between producers and buyers, and improved competitiveness of the domestic production in supplying food products to major consumption centers and export points.

Component 4: Project coordination and Management and Contingency Emergency Relief. The aim of this component is twofold: (i) ensuring that GoL is better equipped to respond to crises and emergencies; and (ii) establishing appropriate coordination, Monitoring, and Evaluation (M&E), and communication regarding Project implementation.

Component 5: Support to Food Security. The component is focusing on stimulating a food supply response through emergency production support to affected communities, while also addressing the underlying vulnerability to any such future shocks on food security.

To project development objective will be achieved through support for interventions aimed at commercialization of smallholder agriculture and facilitating private sector investment in agribusiness by fostering productive business linkages between smallholder farmers and selected agribusiness firms with capacity strengthened by private business service providers. Agribusiness firms, Nucleus farms and medium-and small-enterprises (MSME) groups will be selected on the basis of their innovative plans and experience working with organized farmers' groups or cooperatives.

As part of activities for enhancing commercialization for the targeted value chains, the RETRAP, through the Liberia Agriculture Commercialization Fund (LACF), will provide matching grants to fund for subprojects based on business plans prepared by eligible beneficiaries, who would have undergone an independent screening and evaluation process to determine their technical, socioeconomic, financial, and environmental viability.

The Project will provide matching grants to Agribusiness firms that have business linkages with smallholder farmers through market orientation, input facilitation or processing. The project will aim at supporting a few agricultural commodity value-chains with significant potential for enhancing competitiveness and creating jobs. While the project is aimed at addressing production constraints, it will also focus on constraints affecting the overall value-chain performance, such as high aggregation costs, high processing and marketing costs, as well as quality issues. It will support skill development and financing modalities to facilitate jobs and entrepreneurship for rural farmers/ youths with a focus on value chain segments.

Furthermore, the project will support public-investment type of activities aimed at building the capacity of smallholder farmers to meet the volumes and quality targets specified by agribusiness firms. This support will also include strengthening the policy and institutional capacity of government institutions responsible for providing public sector services and policy environments conducive for agribusiness development.

Initial assessments of the capacity and finance needs of the agribusiness firms and MSME groups suggests that most of the agribusiness owners have weak business management capacity coupled with low level of education. The project is therefore seeking a Business Development Service Provider to improve capacity gaps of the concerned beneficiaries as a way to make them productive and competitive in their business activities.

B. Scope of the consultancy to undertake the provision of enhanced business development technical assistance services to selected firms.

The Consultant should support the grantees in areas of tailored education, training, systems upgrade, exposure, investment management and mentorship to growth-oriented businesses ("growth entrepreneurs", "Impact entrepreneurs", "gazelles", the "economic accelerators"). The goal is to help the grantees grow their business, and scale market outreach, technology and impact. The service delivery will focus primarily on grantees approved by FAC for funding under the LACF.

a The activities will focus on the following elements:

- a) Productivity enhancement: Supporting farmers to increase crop yields and production through introduction of new technology, good agriculture practices (GAPs), climate-smart agriculture innovations, extension services, utilization of improved inputs (e.g., planting materials, fertilizers and agrochemicals), small production and processing equipment and tools, advisory services, and expansion of current household's areas under cultivation to a minimum of two (2) hectares). The focus will be mainly on rice, oil palm, and horticultural value chains while taking into consideration climate smart practices, environmental, social safeguards and gender inclusivity.**
- b) Setting up structured and functional out-grower systems: Provide Technical Assistance (TA) to firms/companies to strengthen their capacities to better engage out-growers, improve on their relationship and also enhance their operational capacity**
- c) Training on postharvest management: Training farmers on postharvest handling and management at the farm level, covering proper harvesting, drying, threshing/shelling, winnowing, basic storage hygiene and good storage management.**
- d) Construction of food storage facilities: This activity builds on postharvest management training and will mainly involve the construction of small granaries to serve as food banks at the household level. The beneficiaries will receive advisory services while they provide building materials and labor as their in-kind contribution. Where demand and clear guidance on ownership, use rights, management, operation and maintenance etc. exist, the project will fund communal/group storage facilities at strategic locations. These will be constructed on a cost-sharing basis with the beneficiaries. Attention will be accorded to operation and management of such storage facilities.**

The specific objectives are as follows:

- Provision support for Business Plan development at the Business Plan origination stage**
- Provision of BDS Technical Assistance services (marketing, legal, business advice, HR advice, business registration, operations, supply chain management) to RETRAP LACF grantees.**
- Provide tailored, on-site and practice-oriented business development technical assistance services to grantees (MSMES & Cooperatives)**
- Provide education in basic record-keeping and financial management for beneficiaries.**
- Provide guidance on establishment and strengthening of sustainable market linkages and other productive alliances for beneficiaries.**
- Provide on the job training (OJT) to grantees staff members.**
- Get firms "investment-ready" and develop a business growth and investment plan.**
- Facilitate access to any relevant technical knowledge and training – online, workshops, etc.**
- Collaborate with RETRAP and other Projects or Business Hubs in facilitating access to business networks, mentors, and markets.**
- Provide technical guidance, coaching and access to mentoring for grant receiving firms in the implementation of their growth and investment plan.**
- Collaborate with RETRAP to provide internships for young graduates as trainees with Firms and Junior Consultants**
- Identify key and common capacity gaps among RETRAP grantee firms for the development of BDS training programs in subsequent years.**
- Work with grantees to establish out-grower unit as part of their structure and provide training to build the capacity of staff of the unit.**
- Capacity building and mentorship on contracts management between the value chain actors e.g. farmers and off-takers**
- Work with grantees to ensure that relevant data are collected and the MIS system is populated accordingly**

Monitor and document results from the LACF

Ensure implementation of the following by grantees: rolling out of training and extension service plan for their out-growers; rolling out of input technology package and an input distribution plan (and may be more broadly a farming calendar)

Provide training and technical support on issues of standards, post-harvest handling, processing, packaging, etc. with the view of preparing them to participate in the market

Ensuring there are trained artisans to maintain agriculture equipment/tools

Capacity Building on sustainable climate smart farming practices

Coordinate and supervise external TA services - developing of ToR and supervising consultants

Coordinate and monitor the environmental and social safeguard issues of grantees

Coordinate and monitor the gender inclusivity issues of grantees

C. Expected Outcomes

- 1. Selected beneficiaries become investment-ready:**
- 2. Grantees have access to affordable financial products**
- 3. Grantees have access to technical knowledge and utilize systems and innovation in their operations**
- 4. Grantees have access to skilled and certified human capital**
- 5. Grantees have access to business networks, mentors and markets**
- 6. Grantees are capacitated to function as viable commercial agribusiness enterprises.**

D. Indicators and Deliverables

Below are the planned project indicators. Upon selection of the consultants, a refined set of indicators/targets will be discussed and finalized for the contract. The consultant will be responsible for collecting and reporting on Output and Outcome level indicators through the PIU MIS system or an intermediary MIS system.

Impact Indicators:

Agribusinesses in the sectors they operate grow and that smallholder farmers are an inclusive part of building the capacity of Grantees and their staff through Business Development/TA services.

Outcome Indicator:

Strengthened competitiveness and operational effectiveness/efficiency of agribusiness firms/Grantees in the sectors they operate and have increased market share and investor opportunities.

Summary Outputs Indicators:

Grantees complete Capacity Building and have greater understanding of Capacity Building topics and utilize them practically to grow and streamline their businesses where needed and for them to also access finance.

Grantees to implement ICT systems which can capture HR, Financial, Operational records and track performance of their businesses.

Grantees are coached and mentored to identify opportunities; create solutions to challenges; avert challenges when needed; and have improved operational and technical skills.

Grantees to implement capacity building plans and growth plans

Grantees have skills to access and sustain finance and complete financial reports

Grantees receive support to penetrate markets through networks, mentors, and BDS/TA

Grantees have a more advanced methodology to Capacity Building and Technical Assistance focused more on informal audit assessments; access to finance and sustaining access to finance modules; coaching and mentoring; and institutional trainings for staff and departments

Grantees have access to skilled and certified human capital

Grantees have the skills acquired from Capacity Building/Technical Assistance to strategically pivot when necessary. Grantees have network linkages with value chain alignment after implementing linkage reports

Depending on the foci of the client/project, any other indicator agreed upon by the project and client

Key Annual Targets

Increase in yield per target value chain per hectare: 20% of the baseline

Volume of annual sales (MT) for the target commodity produced by the beneficiary farmers' group disaggregated by gender: Rice (0.75MT), Oil Palm (4.10 MT), Vegetables (1.60 MT)

Agribusiness capacity strengthened (SMEs and large) during matching grant implementation: 100

Business Development Plans (BDPs) developed: 150

Capacity utilization rate of post-harvest processing facilities: 30

Off-take arrangements delivered and sustained between FBOs and Buyers (by value chain): 30

Farmers adopting improved technology: 10,000

Percentage of farmers using market information: 30

Number of direct project beneficiaries (Number) disaggregated by gender: 30,000

Specific deliverables for the assignment include the following:

Inception report outlining the strategy and preliminary assessment of selected grantees' capacity building plan

Monthly progress update on activities and project gains, and a quarterly progress report on performance against targets.

Growth and investment summary plan for grantees

Final report on project implementation and outcome harvesting report

Time Schedule of Deliverables

Deliverable	Timeline	Percentage payment
Inception report	1 Month after contract Signing	15%
Quarterly Report on activities performance against targets and Business Plans prepared during the period	4 Months after contract signing	20%
Quarterly report on activities performance against targets including Growth and investment summary plan for grantees	7 Months after contract signing	20%
Quarterly report on activities performance against targets	10 Months Days after contract signing	20%
Final report on project implementation and outcome harvesting report. A functional MIS system with all the data collected and analysed for continuity and sustainability	12 Months after contract signing	25%

E. Approach and Implementation Arrangements:

The assignment will be executed by the selected provider who will coordinate all subcontracts and partnerships relating to the delivery. The RETRAP Project Implementation Unit, is the implementing body for the RETRAP and will play a key coordinating and leadership role in ensuring stakeholder entities are engaged in the delivery. The assignment will be delivered through an inclusive nationwide and stakeholder driven approach.

F. Duration of Assignment

The Consultancy shall be for a period of twelve (12) months between July 2023 –June 2024, with potential for extension based on target results and performance.

G. Methodology

To provide in depth coaching and technical assistance to the grantees for a period of 12 months divided in two phases: i) pre-investment, and ii) investment implementation/operationalization.

Dedicated BDS providers and coaches will be assigned who will work with the grantees to understand the opportunities and challenges for Grantees

They will provide in depth technical assistance with an aim to help grantees grow in terms of revenue and investment. The BDS Technical Assistance and coaching will focus on:

Business management and strategic leadership in business: human resources management, accounting (financial systems, capacity, records, bookkeeping and decision), legal, compliance, and networking.

Operations and supply chain management.

Agribusiness market development: market access and information, branding and labelling, promotion, distribution, high-value niche markets

Technology: suitable technology for post harvesting and processing, product design and testing, packaging technology, climate smart technologies

Finance: assessing readiness, seed capital / matching grants, finance for growth

Management support: product showcasing, and early processing

H. Qualification and relevant experience

The Project is seeking to hire the services of an institution/organization/firm that possesses the following attributes:

The ideal consultant/firm for this assignment should provide information to show that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services and should meet the following minimum requirements:

- a) Seven (7) years' experience in delivering Agri-business development/advisory services to growth-oriented agri ventures in Liberia; regional, global experience and World Bank funded project is an added advantage
- b) Experience in developing and/or managing incubation/acceleration programs for growth oriented agri ventures for at least three different globally recognized clients in the past.
- c) Demonstration of management (especially financial management systems), staffing capacity and logistics to execute similar large service contracts including sub-contractors.
- d) Demonstrated linkages with leading local and international partners, including large corporates, certification bodies, investors, technical and business experts (BDS), or leading research and development organizations.
- e) Demonstrate working experience in doing agriculture as a business.
- f) The firm should have capacity to deploy required resources and experts with good technical, analytical and report writing skills;
- g) Demonstrate capabilities and a thorough understanding of the assignment as outlined in the concept note and Terms of Reference (TOR)
- h) Ability to present a clear methodology for implementation.
- i) Comprehensive Technical competencies for the implementation of the activities listed in the TOR with best practices and procedure;
- j) The consultant should have excellent technical proposal writing skills;
- k) In-depth knowledge and experience in agribusinesses and value chain promotion.
- l) Demonstration of deeper understanding and experience in using market systems and value chain development approach, as well as fostering ecosystem building.

Key Staff and Qualification requirements

a) Project Manager (Team Leader)

Qualification: A minimum of post-graduate degree (Master's Degree) in Economics, Project Management, Business, Finance, Agricultural Economics, or related field from a recognized institution. **Experience:** ▪ Have a minimum of 10 years post qualification experience in project management, with at least 5 years of those related to agriculture, rural development and medium sized enterprises development.

▪ Have experience in business development and facilitating the transfer of knowledge to increase productivity and value addition ▪ Good understanding of rural economics, market demand opportunities and entrepreneurship ▪ Experience working with domestic and foreign private sector actors and investors along agriculture value chains; ▪ Knowledge of preparation of business plans that attract grant funding; ▪ Excellent computer skills, knowledge of Microsoft Office Suite especially, Word, Excel and Power Point

▪ Fluency in spoken English and ability to prepare high quality reports and presentations in English is required. ▪ Strong organization skills and ability to work in a team-oriented, dynamic and diverse environment. ▪ Proven track record in working effectively within multi-disciplinary teams, recognize the value of sharing ideas, knowledge and information with others and takes personal responsibility for doing so; ▪ Excellent interpersonal skills, sound judgment, communication skills, training experience, ability to identify and resolve policy and operational constraints; ▪ Ability to handle multiple tasks simultaneously, set priorities and work independently, or under minimum supervision; ▪ A commitment to supporting counterpart staff to achieve the outcomes and objectives of the Project.

b) Agricultural Economist/Agribusiness Specialist:

Qualification: A minimum of post-graduate degree (Master's Degree) in Agribusiness, Agriculture Economics, Agriculture Development, Business Administration, Marketing or related field from a recognized institution.

Experience: ▪ The person should have at least 5 years practical experience in the agribusiness sector, particularly in value chain development and facilitating market linkages. ▪ Experience in agricultural administration, project economic and financial analysis, market and risk assessment, and evaluation of programmes or related activities. ▪ He/She should have a good knowledge of policy developments in the global Agriculture and Agribusiness industry, as well as research efforts in ECOWAS's Agriculture and Agribusiness sectors. ▪ Understanding of the needs and challenges of agribusiness companies, agribusiness SMEs and smallholder farmers and other agribusiness value-chain actors in Liberia or similar contexts, including experience establishing out-grower schemes that incorporate small holder farmers; ▪ Experience in developing or advising agribusiness projects in sub-Saharan Africa or similar (including experience with small-holder out-grower schemes) ▪ Excellent skills in MS Excel and MS Word. ▪ Excellent skills in project management demonstrated in previous jobs. ▪ Proven track record in working effectively within multidisciplinary teams.

c) Investment/Finance Analyst

Qualification: A degree in accounting/finance, economics or equivalent and a professional qualification in accountancy from an internationally acceptable

accountancy body i.e., ACCA, ICASL, ICA GH, and CPA. Experience: ▪ At least 8 years' experience in investment analysis ▪ Track record of sub-Saharan African as well as experience with impact investments ▪ Experience in analyzing investments in the agricultural sector will be an added advantage ▪ Excellent skill in MS Excel and MS Word. ▪ Excellent skills in project management demonstrated in previous jobs. ▪ Proven track record in working effectively within multidisciplinary teams.

I. Facilities to be provided by the Client

Information and any documentation required to facilitate the assignment.