# Serbia Competitive Agriculture Project (SCAP)

# Terms of Reference

**Human Resource Capacity Enhancement for IPARD III Fund Absorption and DAP Strengthening**

**Short Term Consultancy**

# Background

The Serbia Competitive Agriculture Project (SCAP), a US$50 million investment, was approved by the World Bank in December 2019 and ratified by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia in February 2020. The objective of the Project is to improve access to markets and information systems for agricultural producers in Serbia. This will be achieved through a) improving productivity of small and medium scale farmers by strengthening advisory and technical support; b) supporting market access of small and medium scale farmers (including finance and business planning capacity); c) improving government systems to strengthen the enabling environment for all agricultural producers (including capacity building for the Ministry, information systems, and data platform).

The Project will provide financial and technical support to all productive investments in agriculture in Serbia through the national rural development program[[1]](#footnote-1) and will not finance direct payments (subsidies). This delimits the scope of Project interventions outside of all IPARD measures that the country has been accredited for or plans to be accredited for and puts it in the center of national rural development program.

Beneficiaries: Small and medium scale agricultural production units (including producers, producer groups, agribusinesses/agro-processors that can provide direct link to smallholder farmers) that has or can have commercial focus and are not covered by accredited IPARD measures. Although large producers will not be directly targeted, the project will also benefit them with the enabling environment it will create through the improvements in information systems and the financial services provided. Small and medium size producers are defined by the economic size of holding expressed in euros of standard output. For the purposes of this project and the context of Serbia, small producers are those with an economic size of up to EUR 8,000; medium producers are those with an economic size between EUR 8,000 and 25,000.

Project Description: The Project activities are structured into three Components. Component 1) will focus on improving the productive and entrepreneurial capacity of small and medium farmers by supporting business and financial planning for productive investments, as well as supporting market access and strengthening sector competitiveness. Component 2) will focus on improving the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (MAFWM) to provide core public goods for improving sector performance. This includes establishing and information system aligned with EU CAP requirements to enable evidence- based policy making and monitoring of results, enhance market information for stakeholders and build capacity for regulatory roles aligned with EU CAP. Component 3) will focus on project management.

By addressing sector needs at the level of producers (Component 1) and the MAFWM (Component 2), the Project will support a broader policy reform process in the agriculture sector through: i) improved targeting of policy instruments to different typologies of producers, ii) strengthened enabling environment for investment for small and medium agricultural producers, by improving the delivery of services to these productive segments (advisory, financial, information, etc.), iii) improving the monitoring of public resources and their utilization, as well as sector performance. It is expected that this will bring about a significant shift in the utilization of public resources in agriculture from subsidies (direct payments) to rural development investments.

# Objective of the Assignment

In this Terms of Reference (ToR), the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Management aims to engage a consultant with specialized expertise in policy analysis. The consultant will undertake a critical role in pinpointing and addressing key bottlenecks that, if resolved, could substantially accelerate the implementation procedures of the IPARD III program. These enhancements are anticipated to be achieved through the strategic employment of new staff within the Directorate for Agrarian Payments (DAP).

The principal objective of this consultancy is to conduct a thorough analysis to identify these critical points that hinder process efficiency within the IPARD III framework. By eliminating such impediments through the reinforcement of the DAP's workforce, the consultant's work will contribute significantly to the optimization of resource absorption capacities and policy development based on evidence within the agricultural sector. This endeavor will not only streamline current processes but will also lay the groundwork for a more agile and responsive administrative structure, poised to effectively manage and implement the ambitious objectives of the IPARD III program.

# Scope of Services

The specific functions and responsibilities of the Consultant are as follows:

* Analyze the implementation of the IPARD II program, focusing on:
	+ The period from the closure of public calls to the announcement of scores and rankings.
	+ The time from the end of public calls to the approval of submitted applications.
	+ The interval from issuing on-site control orders to preparing the on-site control documentation.
	+ The timeline for issuing reference prices for individual projects.
	+ The duration from submitting requests for IPARD subsidy payments to the decision on payment approval or denial.
* Conduct interviews with at least five senior positions within the Directorate for Agrarian Payments to identify employment needs from the perspective of different department heads.
* Assess the necessity for hiring staff for the implementation of the IPARD III program, emphasizing the priority level for employment.
* Prepare a needs assessment report which should contain, among other things:
	+ Specific definition of employment needs within each organizational unit, the required number of new hires, and the priority of employment.
	+ Job descriptions for new hires.
	+ Employment priority defined on a scale from 1 to 3, with priority 1 being for positions that will most contribute to expediting procedures for approving IPARD projects, on-site control, and approving payments of IPARD subsidies.
	+ An expected number of new hires with priority 1 between 15 and 20.
	+ Particular focus on analyzing critical points that significantly influence the speed of approving IPARD projects, on-site controls, and the approval of IPARD subsidy payments.
* Based on the needs assessment report, to draft the terms of reference for hiring new staff to support IPARD III adsorption
* Collaborate with the project team to identify challenges and propose recommendations for achieving project objectives.
* Support PMZ to ensure compliance with the World Bank's monitoring and evaluation requirements, including preparing project monitoring reports and progress reports.
* Support external communications related to project results and progress, including participation in relevant workshops and conferences.
* Contribute to the development of a knowledge management strategy to collect and share project information and experiences.
* Monitor and report on the sustainability of project outcomes and provide recommendations for enhancing the sustainability and efficiency of the project.
* Participate in project team meetings and other relevant events.

# Deliverables

The Consultant shall prepare and deliver the following in the corresponding stages of the assignment.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Deliverables | Due dates | Payment |
| **Deliverable 1 - Initial report:** An initial analysis of the relevant sector and opinions on the proposed activities and anticipated outcomes as described in section 3. Scope of Services. | Up to 30 days after signing the project engagement contract | 25% of the contract value |
| **Deliverable 2 - Draft Needs Assessment:** For the periodic progress report, the Draft Needs Assessment must be submitted and approved. The integral part of the DNA report are the Terms of reference for hiring new staff to support IPARD III adsorption.  | Up to 60 days after signing the project engagement contract | 50% of the contract value |
| **Deliverable 3 - Final Report Submitted and Approved:** The Final Report must contain an assessment of ultimate needs along with the results of all activities described in part 2. Scope of Services. | Up to 90 days after signing the project engagement contract | 25% of the contract value |

The selected Consultant shall be paid the lump sum contract amount linked to the deliverables.

# Reporting

The Consultant will report to the SCAP Project Coordinator, who oversees the Project Management Team (PMT) that has been established to support project implementation. The Consultant shall be responsible for providing information (inputs) and advice as requested by the SCAP Project Coordinator for the satisfactory implementation of project activities related to this Consultancy.

All submission of written reports must be in both Serbian and English. Results are to be provided in both languages as well. Submissions should be sent electronically via email and in two printed copies for the approval of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (MAFWM). All deliverables shall be submitted to and approved by the Project coordinator. Approval of these deliverables will allow payment for each of the Deliverables.

# Other requirements

The Consultant is obliged to perform consulting services in accordance with the applicable Serbian legislation and wide-known technical norms and rules of the profession and in accordance with the requirements defined in this ToR.

Intellectual property rights policy will be applied in accordance to the proper sections of the Contract.

# Engagement

The intended start date is April/May 2024 and the period of contract implementation will be up to 3 months.

Estimated time effort for the assignment is up to 60 working days, whereas for the distribution of working days per deliverables, the estimated amount of working days is: Deliverable 1 - 15 working days, Deliverable 2 - 30 working days, Deliverable 3 – 15 working days.

# Experience and Qualifications Requirements

The consultant is required to meet the following conditions:

* University degree in political sciences, public administration, international relations, or related fields. Master degree is a plus.
* At least 15 years of relevant experience in public sector development projects, particularly in institutional development, strategic and operational planning, and project management.
* Substantial experience in organizational reforms, capacity building, and the development of coordination mechanisms.
* Skilled in conducting workload analyses, feasibility studies, and in the development of policy documents and operational plans. Profficient in monitoring, evaluation, and data management.
* Familiarity with the institutional and legal frameworks in the EU and Western Balkans preferred; experience with EU integration and accession processes is advantageous.
* Fluency in Serbian and English is required;
* Certification in project management methodologies such as PRINCE2 is a plus; proficiency in computer applications is expected.

# Confidentiality Statement

All data and information received from MAFWM/DAP/PMT/WB for the purpose of this assignment are to be treated confidentially and are only to be used in connection with the execution of these Terms of Reference.

All intellectual property rights arising from the execution of these Terms of Reference are assigned to MAFWM/DAP. The contents of written materials obtained and used in this assignment may not be disclosed to any third parties without the expressed advance written authorization of MAFWM/DAP.

# Selection

Selection procedure will be conducted in accordance with 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 2017, August 2018, as given in articles 7.36 and 7.37 “Open Competitive Selection of Individual Consultants”.

The candidates will be evaluated applying the following evaluation:

* The Consultant's specific experience related to the task         ( 60 Points)
* Relevance of the Consultant for the task     ( 40 Points)

 (total: 100 points)

1. In 2018, the program received 8,000 applications from small and medium scale producers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)