



**WORLD BANK/IFAD PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION UNIT  
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA  
SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE TRANSFORMATION AND AGRIBUSINESS  
REVITALIZATION PROJECT (STAR-P)**

**1<sup>st</sup> Floor LIBSUCO Building Japan Freeway (Formerly Somalia Drive), Gardnersville –  
Monrovia, Liberia**

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**IDA 63600, PROJECT NO. 160945**

**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

**(CONSULTANCY SERVICE – FIRM SELECTION)**

**Assignment Title: Consultancy Service for a Firm to Evaluate the Performance and  
Conduct a System Update of the Liberia Agriculture Commercialization Fund (LACF)**

**REOI Reference No.: LR-PMU-MOA-398231-CS-CQS**

**Background**

The STAR-P was approved by the World Bank Board of Directors on January 15, 2019. The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to increase agricultural productivity and commercialization of smallholder farmers for selected value chains in selected counties. The USD 25 million financing agreement was signed on February 15, 2019, and the project became effective on June 28, 2019. The project is co-financed on a pari-passu basis with IFAD. The USD 23 million co-financing was approved by the IFAD Board in September 2019 and the Financing Agreement was signed on 21 November 2019.

The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to increase agricultural productivity and commercialization of smallholder farmers for rice, oil palm, and horticulture value chains in selected counties of Liberia.

**Objective of the Assignment**

The objective of the assignment is to conduct a comprehensive performance assessment and system update of the LACF and the Matching Grant scheme implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) through the World Bank/IFAD-sponsored STAR-P and RETRAP for enhanced service delivery.

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

- Core Business of the firm and Number of Years in Business
- Technical and Managerial Organization of the Firm

- Description of Similar Assignments (in the last 10 years) in agricultural financing, agriculture commercialization, understanding the situation or conditions of the smallholder farmers, cooperatives, FBOs, and SMEs., and project evaluation.
- Experience in Similar Conditions
- Availability of Appropriate Skills among Staff or within the firm that are competent agribusiness specialist/agriculture economists and investment analysis with experience in agricultural financing, agriculture commercialization and project monitoring, evaluation and reporting
- Legally Registered Firm in Home Country (Evidence of Business Registration)

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

- a. Executive Mansion ([www.emansion.gov.lr](http://www.emansion.gov.lr) )
- b. Ministry of Agriculture ([www.moa.gov.lr](http://www.moa.gov.lr)) or directly requested via email from [starp-bids@moa.gov.lr](mailto:starp-bids@moa.gov.lr) / [rglaydor@moa.gov.lr](mailto:rglaydor@moa.gov.lr)

The attention of interested individual Consultants 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, August 2018 and January 2020, 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 Qualification Selection (CQS) 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 31st January 2024 @ 4:30pm local time.

Galah Toto

National Program Coordinator

Project Implementation Unit (PIU), Ministry of Agriculture

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

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Signed by: Galah Toto

National Program Coordinator – STAR-P/RETRAP

**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (MOA)**

**SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE TRANSFORMATION AND AGRIBUSINESS  
REVITALIZATION PROJECT (STAR-P)**

**LIBERIA AGRICULTURE COMMERCIALIZATION FUND (LACF) AND MATCHING  
GRANT**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF A FIRM TO  
EVALUATE THE PERFORMANCE AND CONDUCT A SYSTEM UPDATE OF THE  
LIBERIA AGRICULTURE COMMERCIALIZATION FUND (LACF)**

### **1.1. Background**

The Liberia Agriculture Commercialization Fund (LACF) is a component of the Smallholder Agriculture Transformation and Agribusiness Revitalization Project (STAR-P) and the Rural Economic Transformation Project (RETRAP).

The STAR Project seeks to increase agricultural productivity and promote the commercialization of smallholder farmers through the productive linkage between the farmers and the private agribusiness firms in selected value chains. At its focus, the project will support the value chains of Rice, Oil Palm, and Horticulture.

The RETRAP original and additional funding 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.

### **1.2. Objective**

In line with the overall objectives of the projects, the objective of LACF is to increase agricultural productivity and commercialization of smallholder farmers for selected value chains in selected counties of Liberia.

The Projects seek to increase agricultural productivity and promote smallholder commercialization by facilitating private sector investment in selected value chains and fostering productive linkages between smallholder farmers and selected agribusiness firms to promote access to markets.

### **1.3. Expected Results**

The projects will directly benefit 134,000 smallholder farmers, of which at least 30 percent will be women and 35 percent as youth. The LACF will be a major contributor to achieving these expected results. The projects will also specifically target the activities undertaken by women and youth through the following interventions: (i) ensuring that the criteria for selection of beneficiaries for the fund and Matching Grants include at least 30 percent of targeted women and youth producer organizations; (ii) ensuring that there is gender disaggregation in the key performance indicators so that women and youth targeting is adhered to by project implementers; and (iii) Inclusion of a Gender Officer in the Project.

## **2. LACF Strategic Approaches and Methodology**

The LACF component of the projects is a facility for eligible cooperatives, agribusinesses, aggregators/off-takers, and financial institutions to access value chain finance tailored to their needs. The facility provides a clear linkage between out-growers and smallholder farmers and the provision of productivity-enhancing services and access to the market—the projects finance Matching Grants for smallholder farmers, agribusinesses, BDSPs, and financial institutions.

LACF's core methodology will target funds according to the provisions of the four windows (STAR-P) and three windows (RETRAP) identified in the Project Appraisal Documents (PAD) of both projects. Potential beneficiaries will be supported to prepare a fundable business plan to attract funding. The projects will provide Matching Grants by soliciting subproject proposals based on business plans from potential beneficiaries and assessing them based on set criteria, including matching funds as required.

## **2.1. LACF Governance Structure**

The Fund operates under the Ministry of Agriculture's Project Implementation Unit. At the same time, the Fund is distinct in that it has its own identity, branding, and administrative processes. LACF is governed and managed by the following authorities/bodies:

### **2.1.1 Fund Advisory Committee (FAC)**

The FAC is responsible for advisory and policy direction aspects, including final approval of the projects shortlisted by the Fund Manager and recommended for funding by the Independent Investment Committee (IIC).

### **2.1.2 Independent Investment Committee (IIC)**

The IIC is a **MOA-created** committee of experts in relevant fields that reviews, evaluates, and provides recommendations to the FAC on Due Diligence Memo and/or Business Plans based on their experience and expertise.

### **2.1.3 Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)**

The MOA provides ongoing strategic management and technical advice to the Fund Manager through the **Project Implementation Unit (PIU)**.

### **2.1.4 Fund Manager (FM)**

The Fund Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of LACF.

## **3.0 The Assignment**

### **3.1 Objective of the Assignment**

The objective of the assignment is to conduct a comprehensive performance assessment and system update of the LACF and the Matching Grant scheme implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) through the World Bank/IFAD-sponsored STAR-P and RETRAP for enhanced service delivery.

### **3.2 Scope of the Assignment**

The scope of the assignment includes but is not limited to a) assessing the LACF and Matching Grant performance over the past two years and one year for STAR-P and RETRAP, respectively, and b) updating the systems for effectiveness and sustainability. The firm will assess all aspects of

the LACF and the Matching Grants to determine strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and impact areas. Additionally, the firm will isolate potential risks and suggest mitigation measures. Based on the findings, the firm will recommend improvement of the system.

### **3.3 Methodology**

The firm will provide information on the methodology used and develop the tools for assessing the performance and system update. The methodology and tools will be presented by the firm and validated by the PIU and the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) staff during the scoping meeting before the assignment begins.

### **3.4 Key Tasks and Deliverables**

The tasks listed herein are not exhaustive, and the firm shall, where it sees fit, recommend additional services to deliver a complete assignment. The firm shall refer to such additional services in its proposal.

- The firm will review the status of implementation of the performance of LACF and the matching grant program, as well as the progress towards achieving the objectives of the LACF
- The firm will undertake a desk review operational performance of the all relevant LACF systems (LACF, Deloitte, IIC, FAC, PIU, etc.), beneficiaries/grantees, , LACF structure and TORs for the various LACF committees/key actors and recommend measures for performance improvement.
- The firm may hold face-to-face and/or group meetings with the Minister, PIU, IIC, FAC, Deloitte members, and beneficiaries/grantees for information gathering, experience sharing, and general opinion on system improvement
- The firm is expected to review and update the operation of LACF and Matching Grant system to enhance transparency and eliminate possibilities of elite capture
- The firm will review the LACF application and grant award processes and revise the LACF manual reflective of the changes to enhance effectiveness
- The firm will propose measures/options for transforming LACF into viable and sustainable funding source for agriculture and agribusiness development in Liberia, learning from similar funds in the regional and elsewhere
- The firm will review and revise contract documents, making allowance for changes made in the system
- The firm will review and revise the Terms of Reference (TOR) for each LACF & Matching Grant stage. Such revision seeks to minimize processing time and improve system control
- The firm will recommend a beneficiary management plan for adoption by the PIU
- The firm will revise the Templates for tracking grantees and the criteria for beneficiary selection and processing
- Review the LACF and Matching Grant operation manuals to reflect the suggestions recommendations for improvements

### **3.5 Qualifications and Experience of the Firm**

All interested firms must provide information demonstrating they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the assignment. Firms should include in their Technical Proposal a profile of the firm and the team leader, the firm's understanding of the assignment, the methodology to carry out the consultancy, and a curriculum vitae of the key staff involved.

The prospective firm(s) must:

- Provide relevant details of demonstrable 10 years' experience in agricultural financing, agriculture commercialization, understanding the situation or conditions of the smallholder farmers, cooperatives, FBOs, and SMEs., and project evaluation. The firm(s)
- Demonstrate considerable knowledge and experience in project monitoring, impacts evaluation and reporting of similar interventions in Liberia and the sub-region.
- Demonstrate capabilities in providing technical assistance, especially relating to agribusiness development and entrepreneurship.
- Show detailed experience in developing or advising agribusiness projects in Liberia and the sub-region, and show a track record of comparable business development experience, including case studies and profiles of current similar assignments handled in the last five years
- Demonstrate the willingness to work with the project's M&E Specialist
- Demonstrate the internal capacities applicable to the assignment. Such capacities shall, among others, include a Project Manager (Team Leader), an Agribusiness Specialist, and an Investment/Finance Analyst with the following minimum qualifications:

#### **a) Team Leader**

##### ***Qualification:***

- A minimum of post-graduate degree (Master's Degree) in Economics, Project Management, Business, Finance, Agricultural Economics, statistics, or a related field from a recognized institution
- At least 10 years of experience working on project management, with at least 5 years of those related to agriculture and rural development.
- Experience working with the government and donor-funded projects in the SMEs /agribusiness sectors is an added advantage.
- Good understanding of SMEs/agribusiness-related issues.

##### ***Competencies***

- Strong interpersonal and collaboration skills within the team and with external stakeholders.
- Strong analytical and constructive thinking skills.
- Proven ability to be flexible in a team-oriented approach with diverse groups of people.
- Strong written and oral communication skills.
- Excellent planning, organizational, evaluation, multi-task, and time management skills.
- Proven computer skills (Microsoft Office Suite);
- Government relations and knowledge of Community-driven development issues are added advantages.

## **b) Agricultural Economist/Agribusiness Specialist:**

### ***Qualification:***

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

### ***Experience:***

- The specialist should have at least 10 years of practical experience in agribusiness, 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 programs or related activities.
- Good knowledge of policy developments in the global Agriculture and Agribusiness Industry.
- Understanding of the needs and challenges of agribusiness companies, agribusiness SMEs, and other agribusiness value-chain actors in Liberia or similar contexts, including experience establishing out-grower schemes that incorporate smallholder farmers
- Experience in developing or advising agribusiness projects in the sub-region
- Excellent skills in MS Excel and MS Word.
- Excellent project evaluation and reporting skills demonstrated in previous and similar assignments.
- 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 of experience in investment analysis
- A track record in Liberia and the sub-region, as well as experience with impact investments and experience in analyzing investments in the agricultural sector, will be an added advantage.
- Excellent skills in MS, Excel, and MS Word.
- Excellent skills in project evaluation demonstrated in previous similar assignment
- Proven track record in working effectively within multidisciplinary teams.

## **3.6 Duration of Consultancy**

The duration of this consultancy shall be for 3 months, beginning at contract signing.

## **3.7 Reporting Requirements**

The firm will report to the National Program Coordinator through the Operations Managers of STAR-P & RETRAP. The firm will also interphase with the Minister of Agriculture and her office staff, Deloitte, IIC, FAC, and Grantees.



### **3.8 Schedule of Assignment**

The Consulting Firm will develop activities in collaboration with the PIU, leading to the expected delivery of the assigned task.

S/N	Task/Activity	Time/schedule of Delivery	Percentage of Payment
1	Inception Report Presentation	Two weeks after contract signing	15%
2	Draft Reports (evaluation & system update) presentation	Six weeks after the Inception report presentation	25%
3	Validation of Draft Reports	One week after the presentation of the Draft Reports	20%
4	Submission of Final Reports	Three weeks after the Validation of the Draft Reports	40%

### **3.9 Facilities to be provided by the Client**

The consulting firm will be provided with the necessary documents that it may require, office space, and access to the relevant staff and key stakeholder