# Terms of Reference

Consultancy services for setting-up and running Knowledge Transfer Networks to promote good agricultural practices for the prevention and reduction of pollution in rural areas

1. ***Background information***

The Government of Romania has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) to support the implementation of the Rural Pollution Prevention and Reduction Project (RAPID Project).

RAPID Project is an initiative aimed at addressing environmental challenges in the rural areas of Romania. Focused on mitigating pollution and promoting sustainable practices, the project seeks to safeguard the country's rural landscapes, preserve natural resources, and enhance the overall well-being of local communities.

The Loan 9505-RO for the Project was ratified by Romania by the Law no. 332/2023 on November 7th 2023 and it became effective on December 13th, 2023. The Project closing date is June 30th, 2028.

The objectives of the project are to strengthen the institutional capacity of selected public entities, monitor pollution in agriculture, and transfer knowledge on agricultural pollution reduction to participating farmers. The project consists of three components:

1. **Modernization of Public Institutions:** Enhance the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests (MEWF) to monitor, evaluate, and report investments, including those related to environmental aspects of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP). This involves increasing the national capacity for monitoring, prevention, and reduction of pollution from agricultural sources in rural areas, including the National Administration "Romanian Waters" (NARW), the National Phytosanitary Authority (NFA), and the Directorate for Land Consolidation and Land Fund (DÎFFF) within the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD).
2. **Knowledge Exchange and Awareness:** Facilitate knowledge exchange, awareness, and information/innovation transfer to participating farmers. This includes establishing model farms to promote best agricultural practices for pollution prevention and reduction. The project also involves creating national knowledge transfer networks and conducting information and awareness campaigns for the public regarding project activities, including other environmentally-focused interventions funded under the NRRP.
3. **Project Management:** Ensure effective project management to oversee and coordinate the various components and activities outlined in the project.

The project aims to create a comprehensive framework for addressing agricultural pollution in Romania, involving institutional capacity building, knowledge dissemination, and active participation of farmers in adopting sustainable practices.

As presented above, Component 2 is centered around awareness raising among farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs about new technologies and innovations that reduce pollution and propose effective measures to tackle agricultural waste, with the aim to promote behavioral changes. The awareness campaign will be implemented at national level, targeting various rural and urban stakeholders, while trainings shall be delivered through farmer discussions groups. A grants scheme will support farmers to invest in farms environmental infrastructure, aiming at setting-up a network of demonstration farms, while other champion farmers will be identified by the Knowledge Transfer Networks (KTNs) that will be created through the RAPID Project. Furthermore, participating farmers will be encouraged to adopt good farming practices. Surveys on the level of adopted practices, knowledge, attitudes, and behavior will be expanded to allow for qualitative data collection and the consolidated results of the surveys will be shared with participating communities in a user-friendly format.

While Romania is still counting around 3 million farms, out of which around 800,000 farms are active farms registered for direct payments, the needs for knowledge transfer on farming environmentally friendly practices remains uncovered in the near future, notwithstanding the efforts of other Romanian public institutions and farmer organizations.

Setting-up Knowledge Transfer Networks (KTNs) for the prevention and reduction of pollution in rural areas will accelerate the transition of the Romanian agriculture towards a sustainable agriculture, in line with Farm-to-Fork targets and the various provisions of the EU and national legislation on environment protection. The networks will seek increasing use efficiency for farm inputs, thus avoiding waste of plant protection products (PPP), ammonia, nitrous oxide, antimicrobials, and also considering biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation – as deemed necessary.

The proposed interventions will be built on the successes and lessons learned from implementation of the KTNs funded through the INPCP – AF, during 2019 – 2023.

***Introduction to the concept of the Component 2 of the RAPID Project***

The Component 2 of the RAPID Project is dedicated to knowledge-sharing, awareness, and information/innovation transfer for participating farmers, aiming at adoption of good agricultural practices. This will be ensured through 3 interlinked interventions: grants for improving the farms environmental infrastructure, delivery of a comprehensive national awareness campaign and KTNs. The prevention and reduction refer to the following pollutants from agriculture: nitrates, ammonia, plant protection products and antimicrobials.

The estimated number of host farmers is 400, out of which at least 70 farmers are foreseen to be represented by the grants` beneficiaries, thus encouraging the promotion of innovative and advance technologies (precision agriculture, no or minimum tillage, etc.). The host farmers should be farmers of varying types and sizes that are typical of the region, possibly members of farmers` organizations.

The awareness campaign is meant to ensure information at all society levels in regards to the need of acting against pollution in rural areas, and will particularly seek to promote the good practices identified through the KTNs, by the use of testimonials and success stories and through awareness ambassadors.

The KTNs shall operate as an advisory services hub, contributing to peer-to-peer learning and practical demonstrations within the farming communities, through informal training sessions. The KTNs Advisory Hub will ensure the preparation and delivery of training materials aligned with scientific evidence and the best available techniques and practices, including climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience solutions, encouraging modernization and innovation. Training materials will be aligned with the national legislation / existing codes of good practices / action program e.g. *action plan regarding the reduction of risks associated with the use of plant protection products* and *the action program for the protection of waters against nitrate pollution from agricultural sources*.

The training format would be designed in the form of farmer discussion groups (including specific female farmers discussion groups), workshops and conferences, supporting the idea of a local farming community, in which the members are helping each other. Technical designs of the modernized farms facilities and technical descriptions of the acquired machinery and equipment, prepared with the support of the PMU, will also be made available and presented in the farmer discussion groups, together with the monitoring data on economic and environmental impact collected from the modernized farms. Overall, the farmer discussion group topics would focus on tackling various pollutants from agriculture and promoting farm environmental-friendly investments and practices; reducing nitrates, plant protection products use and risk, ammonia, nitrous oxide, methane emissions, and antimicrobials; encouraging organic farming and agri-environment schemes. The farmer discussion groups will also include topics such as reducing emissions from agriculture, building resilience to climate change (especially extreme heat and hydrological events), and developing more resilience practices.

Farmer organizations are encouraged to engage in the implementation of the KTNs, thus ensuring sustainability of actions by incorporating the farmer discussion groups under their own advisory system.

The KTNs shall ensure alignment and complementarity with the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) foreseen in the NSP for 2023–2027 by MARD through an institutional agreement.

1. ***General objective***

Adoption of good agricultural practices for the prevention and reduction of pollution from rural areas.

***Specific objectives***

It is intended that the general objective will be achieved via the following specific objectives:

* To set-up Farmer Discussion Groups (FDGs) at local community level with focus on knowledge transfer and adoption of good agricultural practices;
* To promote regional, national and international exchange of experience and awareness raising through workshops and conferences;
* To encourage KTNs sustainability.

1. ***Scope of the KTNs, approach and methodology***

KTNs shall be built around the farmers’ needs for information and knowledge, having as key players the facilitators, host-farmers and local officials` representatives. The KTNs logistics (especially, the training materials and their delivery) shall rely on the KTNs Hub.

The KTNs shall be organized at the level of development regions, as follows:

KTN 1 – NE Region (Counties: [Bacau](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Bac%C4%83u), [Botosani](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Boto%C8%99ani), [Iasi](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Ia%C8%99i), [Suceava](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Suceava), [Vaslui](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Vaslui)), SE Region (Counties: [Braila](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Br%C4%83ila), [Buzau](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Buz%C4%83u), [Constanta](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Constan%C8%9Ba), [Galati](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Gala%C8%9Bi), [Tulcea](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Tulcea), [Vrancea](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Vrancea));

KTN 2 – South Muntenia Region (Counties: Arges, Calarasi, Dambovita, Giurgiu, Ialomita, Prahova, Teleorman), Bucharest Ilfov Region (Bucharest Municipality, Ilfov County), SW Oltenia Region (Dolj, Olt, Mehedinti, Gorj, [Valcea](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_V%C3%A2lcea));

KTN 3 – West Region (Counties: [Arad](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Arad), Caras-Severin, Hunedoara, [Timiș](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Timi%C8%99)), NW Region (Counties: [Bihor](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Bihor), [Bistrita-Năsăud](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Bistri%C8%9Ba-N%C4%83s%C4%83ud), [Cluj](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Cluj), Maramures, [Satu Mare](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Satu_Mare), [Salaj](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_S%C4%83laj)), Center Region (Counties: [Alba](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Alba), [Brasov](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Bra%C8%99ov), [Covasna](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Covasna), [Harghita](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Harghita), Mures, [Sibiu](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Sibiu)).

The KTNs will differentiate from the traditional, top-down ‘linear model’ of trainings. Knowledge no longer flows only one-way from researchers and trainers, as the power of example of other farmers proves to be more effective, generating exchange of knowledge through direct discussions among farmers. This approach is meeting the farmers organization increased capacity and interest in expanding their networks by offering farmers support in avoiding agricultural inputs waste, thus pollution.

The experience gained through the INPCP KTNs confirms that the most effective method for delivering trainings is to establish local / community level Farmer Discussions Groups (FDGs), with an average of 20 participants. FDGs should be hosted by a “champion” farmer, able to demonstrate good practices, based on its own farming experience and modern technologies, while the discussions shall be encouraged by a facilitator. The FDGs would normally include 1 – 5 representatives from local administration, from relevant institutions, such as local offices of payments and intervention agency for agriculture (APIA), phytosanitary authority, agency for husbandry, agency for financing rural investments (AFIR), and from the local municipalities, able to provide official information, as needed.

It is preferable to involve farmer's organizations in identifying host-farmers and facilitators, as well in coordinating host-farmer networks for each KTN, given their significance in the KTNs design and high potential in ensuring KTNs sustainability.

It is expected that the Farmer Discussion Groups will facilitate:

* Short, medium-and long-term peer-to-peer learning by increasing contact between farmers at community level;
* Effective learning through practical demonstration;
* Connectivity of the local farming communities with new practices and technological progress / community led-initiatives for adopting good farming practices through conversion to smart agriculture;
* Access to information and advisory services delivered by large/national farmer organizations;
* Ensuring sustainability of the local farmers by increasing their internal cohesion and their awareness regarding their role in environment conservation at local level.

The KTNs will be supported by around 70 host farmers that will be selected through competitive bases, benefitting of public support for the modernization of their farms` environmental infrastructure. In return, the grants beneficiaries will act as host farmers, having, among other obligations, the duty for hosting presentations at farm-level meetings with interested farmers / representatives of local / central public authorities on:

* 1. The need for environmental investments imposed by national legislation;
  2. The opportunity to adopt good practices that lead to the efficient use of resources at farm-level, respectively to the reduction of pollution through the waste of inputs (for example, fertilizers, pesticides, etc.), especially in Natura 2000 areas and areas with high pollution (hotspots);
  3. The expected environmental impact, based on environmental indicators that are part of the financing request;
  4. Feasibility studies and technical solutions identified for carrying out construction works, part of the farm's environmental infrastructure;
  5. The costs of making the investments, including the preparation of business plans or Project Proposals that are the basis of their economic analysis, as well as the issuance of building permits;
  6. Challenges and constraints encountered in the process of designing and making environmental investments in the farm;
  7. Supporting practical demonstrations for interested farmers within the knowledge transfer networks, as well as at the request of other interested public or private entities, with an emphasis on the practical operation of the machines and equipment purchased;
  8. The best available techniques in the sector in which the farm activates, techniques that demonstrate economic and technical feasibility and are most suitable for preventing or minimizing emissions and environmental impacts.

Furthermore, the grants beneficiaries shall support the information dissemination / best practices promotion, on:

* 1. Agri-environment commitments and organic farming as sustainable agricultural practices capable of providing quality, healthy and safe agricultural products;
  2. Farm environmental infrastructure operation and maintenance costs, including the efficiency of the use of inputs relevant to the investment (chemical and/or organic fertilizers / plant protection products / antimicrobials / diesel fuel, etc.).

Technical designs of the modernized farms facilities and technical descriptions of the acquired machinery and equipment, prepared with the support of the PMU, shall be made available and presented in the farmers discussion groups, together with the monitoring data on economic and environmental impact collected from the modernized farms. KTNs, with the support of the host farmers (grants beneficiaries) shall disseminate the practical experience on investing in farms` environmental infrastructure, considering all the technical, financial and social aspects.

All host-farmers, except those compensated through grant schemes for the modernization of their farms` environmental infrastructure, will be compensated for each hosted meeting. The Consultant shall be reimbursed for the compensations and, during Phase 1 of the Contract, shall prepare a detailed compensation mechanism for the host farmers. When developing the compensation mechanism, the Consultant will consider the farm types and the needs of the host-farmers. The budget for compensating host-farmers represents up to 7% of the FDGs budget. All the expenditures related with host-farmers compensation mechanism are reimbursable.

All host-farmers, except those compensated through grant schemes for the modernization of their farms` environmental infrastructure, will implement at least the following activities:

* "Hosts" the FDG sessions together with the facilitator;
* Presents his / her success story to the other farmers. On the farm, he / she already implements good agriculture practices related with nitrates, ammonia, the use of plant protection products and antimicrobials. Having knowledge on the fields of biodiversity and climate change will be an important element when identifying the host-farmer;
* Provides practical demonstration based on FDG type;
* Ensures access and basic facility for the regular hosting at his / her farm for the FDG;
* Is a member of farmer organization or willingness to adder to a farmer organization;
* Provides feedback during the process of preparation of training materials;
* Participates at all the FDG meetings (2 or 3 depending on the FDG member’s needs);
* Ensures sustainability after the Contract ends.

All host-farmers will sign a letter of commitment.

The training materials will be constantly adapted around the practical demonstrations and the monitoring data and information collected from the role model farms and participating farmers.

The key player in organizing a FDG is the facilitator, a person with proved experience in agriculture, ideally a member of a farmer organization. For an efficient FDG preparation, implementation and reporting, the Consultant may consider the need of allocating 2 persons for a FDG meeting (1 facilitator and the team-leader, 2 facilitators or a facilitator and an assistant for each FDG meeting). The team-leaders will be responsible for the monitoring of the effectiveness of FDGs and should play an active role, participating in around 50% of the organized FDGs. In this case, the team-leader will perform also the tasks of the second expert.

It is expected that, each FDG will meet at least 2 times, while, depending on the group needs / environmental hot-spots / farmers or locally community expressed interest / social aspects, around 50% of the FDGs shall meet a 3rd time.

In addition, the host-farmers compensated through grant schemes for the modernization of their farm’s environmental infrastructure representing constructions, may organize an initial FDG meeting for ensuring public consultation of the investment under the grants scheme, presenting the financed intervention in the community and collecting the feedback from the participants.

The target farmers participating in FDGs are the farmers using fertilizers, plant protection products and/or antimicrobials, interested in making more efficient the use of farm inputs, respectively preventing and reducing pollution, by reducing losses. The target farmers should be able to embrace new practices and techniques, including via new technologies and to further disseminate the information received to other farmers from the community. The farmers participating in the FDGs will receive an official ‘certificate of attendance’ endorsed by the RAPID Project.

Hot-spot areas for the use of fertilizers / PPP / antimicrobials (e.g., areas with intensive agriculture) shall be targeted.

The KTNs should take into consideration the interests of women and national minorities and include specific communication channels and materials, ensuring there is equitable access to the opportunities to participate in and benefit from the networks, technologies, innovations and demonstration farms. The Consultant must encourage the participation of women farmers and farmers part of vulnerable groups (minorities, persons with disabilities, young farmers, etc.). Women shall be encouraged to undertake key roles in the KTNs architecture, such as national coordinator, team-leader, facilitator or host farmer. Furthermore, where possible, will be set-up dedicated FDGs for women in agriculture, while the Consultant must seek organizing the FDGs during the appropriate days and hours for women. Thus, in communes with a sufficient number of women farmers demonstrating interest, dedicated women farmer discussion groups that address the specific challenges and needs of women farmers will be piloted and the women farmers interests and needs to adopt pollution reducing measures will be evaluated.

For all FDGs, during implementation, the Consultant should continuously analyze the level of women participation and engagement, in pursue of a high participation in the KTNs of women farmers and farmers identified as part of vulnerable groups (ethnic minorities – particularly Roma, isolated rural community of small farmers, farmers with disabilities).

The implementation of the KTNs shall rely on an Advisory Hub, which will be responsible for preparing training materials aligned with scientific evidence and the best available techniques and practices, encouraging modernization and innovation at farm level. These materials must be “farmer-friendly” and carefully tailored to the specific characteristics of the Farmer Discussion Groups setup, considering the various agricultural, including relevant photos. During the drafting process, the materials will be consulted with representatives from farmer’s organizations. In addition, all training materials will be promptly adapted to any modifications of the relevant legislation which might refer to the topics appropriate for FDGs.

Training materials developed in accordance with the characteristics of the Farmer Discussion Groups setup depending on the various agricultural sectors, will include a common section for all FDGs type (around 8 pages) and an annex related with grievance mechanism that will be developed during the Phase 1 of KTNs implementation under the coordination of the PMU representatives.

The format of the training materials will be A4, polychromic, double sided prints, offset paper 90 g / square meter, thermocouple gluing, printing covers with 4 colors, with a minimum of 24 pages.

Also, the Advisory Hub shall ensure a direct phone line and an email address, for the farmers, officials and other interest parties to ask information / raise questions on the KTNs activities, particularly on technical aspects included in the training materials. The Advisory Hub shall be responsible for addressing the received questions (with the support of the facilitators/team-leaders/representatives of the farmer organizations, as needed). In case the call / email is non-technical, the Advisory Hub shall promptly (in maximum 2 business days) inform the PMU, for considering the application of the grievance mechanism established at the level of the PMU.

The farmer discussion group topics would focus on adopting good environmental practices which, in this context, will be defined as the agriculture practices that lead to resource efficiency at farm level, namely at the reduction of pollution by avoiding the waste of agricultural inputs, including via encouraging the implementation of organic farming and agri-environment schemes. Specific focus will be on prevention and/or reduction of pollution with nitrates, PPP, ammonia, nitrous oxide and of antimicrobials use. The FDGs will also address topics such as biodiversity conservation and air emissions reduction and building resilience to climate change (especially extreme heat and hydrological events). Through KTNs, the farmers will be encouraged to adopt good farming practices.

The FDGs will be assessed during meetings after the training in terms of relevance, engagement, and usefulness, and in terms of knowledge and skills acquired through quizzes, tests, and / or practical demonstrations. These will help the Consultant to adjust the materials and methodologies during the implementation of the Contract in order to improve the effectiveness of the FDGs. Mini-questionnaires will be filled in after each FDG in order to assess the effective engagement processes and service satisfaction for participant farmers.

The FDGs shall be organized for around half-working day and shall include a) lunch (drinks included) for 50% of the organized FDGs b) training supporting materials c) personalized dossier d) printed documents, such as agenda, questionnaires, GDPR procedure e) letter of commitment f) personalized pen g) personalized Notebook.

Adoption of good practices as a result of participation at the FGDs will be independently assessed by third-party reviewers.

Farmer organizations will be encouraged to be engaged in the implementation of the KTNs, thus ensuring sustainability of actions by incorporating the farmer discussion groups under their own advisory system. Workshops and conferences are important events for ensuring awareness of the KTNs activities and purpose, for discussing challenges and lessons learnt, and consolidating the implementation approach, involving various relevant public and private stakeholders.

Workshops agenda shall be for half-working day and shall include a) coffee, drinks and open buffet for registration b) networking lunch c) compensation for the transportation costs and one overnight accommodation costs for at least 20% of the participants d) workshop materials (e.g., a personalized dossier with printed agenda and documents, 1 personalized pen, 1 notebook). Transportation and accommodation should be prioritized for participants travelling more than 200 km.

Conferences agenda shall be for one day and shall include a) coffee, drinks and open buffet for registration and 2 breaks b) networking lunch c) compensation for the transportation costs and one overnight accommodation costs for at least 20% of the participants d) conference materials (e.g., personalized conference bag, a personalized dossier with printed agenda and documents, 1 personalized pen, 1 notebook, 1 gift – the exact type of gifts shall be approved by PMU in advance). Transportation and accommodation will be prioritized for participants travelling more than 200 km.

Workshops and conferences shall take place on locations with high standards related with accessibility, registration, meeting room, coffee breaks, lunch, etc. Project screen and video-projector are mandatory.

For the workshops and conferences, at least the following promotional materials shall be produced:

* 1 pop-up banner – at least 400 x 230 cm, print and metal stand, color printing, personalized design;
* 5 A3 posters – glossy paper, color printing, personalized design;
* 1 outdoor banner – print color, horizontal banner, at least 3000 x 1000 mm, personalized design.

For workshops and conferences, the Consultant will ensure that at events will be promoted / advertised by placing the outdoor banner and one A3 poster at the entrance of the location, the rest promotion materials at the event meeting and lunch rooms.

All participants shall receive transparent badges. Eco-friendly badges are preferred instead of traditional plastic badges.

Personalized conference bag – dimensions at least 40 x 6 x 29 cm.

It is expected that all the materials produced for workshops and conferences will be eco-friendly.

**Phase 1 – Preparation and kick-off**

In the first 2 weeks after contract signing, the Consultant and the Client shall organize a kick-off meeting for the Contract implementation.

The implementation shall include a mandatory Phase 1 along first 3 months after contract. During this phase, the Consultant, through the Advisory Hub, shall prepare and deliver the followings:

* Indicative types of FDGs, considering the pollutants from agriculture in connection with the relevant agricultural sectors (e.g., crops fertilization, application of PPP in orchards, use of antimicrobials on sheep and goats, etc.);
* The indicative territorial distribution of the FGDs, in respect of the agriculture specificities, thus covering all the counties, based on local agriculture particularities;
* Training materials for the 1st FDGs meetings (ready-to-print, in electronic format) and a draft of the training materials for the 2nd FDG meeting;
* Job description templates for the Project Manager, team-leaders (including the duties for the validation of the FDGs meetings), Financial Manager, facilitators, logistical expert for organizing the trainings / workshop / conference, innovation and research expert in agriculture, expert on agriculture;
* A Code of Conduct, aligned with World Bank principles. The Code of Conduct will be signed by all experts;
* CVs and supporting documents for at least half of the foreseen facilitators and for the staff allocated for the Advisory Hub;
* Methodology for identification and selection of target farmers for the FDGs in collaboration with farmers ‘organizations;
* Methodology for the identification, selection and validation of the host-farmers and the involvement of farmers ‘organizations in the process;
* A list of potential host farmers at national level (for at least half of the counties). The list may include farmers members of existing farmers ‘organizations;
* Methodology for obtaining the PMU agreement for scheduling a FDGs;
* Internal procedures for delivering meeting materials in due time to the facilitators;
* Methodology for setting-up and running the training logistics;
* The assessment questionnaires for the FDGs participants;
* Consultant check-list for validating a FDG meeting;
* Compensation mechanism for the host farmers (and reimbursement for the Consultant);
* A guide for facilitators on their responsibilities and best practices on organizing and conducting the meetings and their proper documentation and reporting;
* Procedure for GDPR, including farmers agreement for their data to be shared with other institutions and processed for the elaboration of publications, studies and reports;
* Advisory Hub logistics and procedures to ensure a direct phone line and an email address, for the farmers, officials and other interest parties to ask information / raise questions on the KTNs activities, particularly on technical aspects included in the training materials;
* Methodology for organizing and reporting workshops and conferences;
* The methodology for information dissemination through farmers` organizations;
* An annual indicative planning for delivering trainings, workshops and conference;
* Monitoring procedure for attaining Contract performance indicators;
* Delivery of a workshop (for the Consultant staff and with the participation of the PMU representatives) with a thematic oriented towards fine-tuning the implementation procedures / work flow as above requested and for the formal kick-off for FDGs meetings. The meeting logistics and agenda shall be approved by the PMU.

Based on the above deliveries, as accepted by the Reception Committee, the PMU will be able to notify the Consultant for initiating the implementation of the ***Phase 2***:

* *Delivering trainings;*
* *Workshops, conferences and other events, such as field-visits to demonstration farms and participation at exhibitions / fairs for knowledge sharing / promotion of best practices.*

In case the Consultant is not receiving acceptance for the Phase 1, the Contract shall be terminated.

**Phase 2 – Implementation**

Phase 2 will include, at least, the following activities:

1. **Setting-up and running an Advisory Hub**. Shall provide:

* A) All needed administrative and logistical support for organizing the planned trainings, workshops, conferences and other KTNs events, and for facilitating the access of the target audience to the best practices promoted through a) the PMU awareness campaign and b) aggregated information ready-to-use for the dissemination mechanism set in place by the farmer organizations, including information on the activities implemented by the KTNs for the elaboration of a monthly newsletter, to be published by the awareness campaign team;
* B) Technical information through emails and by phone / re-direct to PMU the non-technical calls / emails for the grievance mechanism to be activated.

In addition, the Advisory Hub will be responsible with reports preparation for the PMU, including but not limiting at a) questionnaires development and analysis b) recommendations for further improvements of the trainings c) financial reporting and payments and d) monitoring of indicators.

1. Furthermore, **the Advisory Hub** shall continuously update the training materials (while ensuring availability and accessibility of information for the target audience).

The facilitators and team-leaders shall work closely with the Advisory Hub for properly organizing the FDGs, workshops, conferences and other events meetings.

1. **The Advisory Hub team** - shall be composed by Project manager, Financial manager, Team-leaders, Innovation and research expert on agriculture, Expert on agri-environment and Logistical expert.

The Logistical expert will play a significant role in all the activities developed for the Advisory Hub and described above.

1. **Organizing FDGs.** It is the primary obligation of the facilitators. FDGs shall be organized with the support of farmers organizations and any other Consortium members / their network. It is anticipated that each Farmer Discussion Group will meet at least twice during the contract duration, and the duration between the meetings should normally not exceed 1 year. The FDGs will focus on practical on-farm demonstrations at different times of the year. Nevertheless, some farmers’ groups may have more meetings, as may be deemed necessary.
2. **Organizing workshops and conferences.** The Consultant shall organize, at the request of the Client, workshops for 500 participants and conferences for 300 participants. Ideally, yearly shall be organized one workshop and one conference. The number of participants may vary from one event to another, thus the Consultant shall report and request for payment the number of participants for the given reporting period.

Reasonable resources may be allocated, as reimbursables, for various activities that may include field-visits to demonstration farms and participation at national or international workshops / conferences /exhibitions / fairs for knowledge sharing / promotion of best practices or for any other activity aiming at information dissemination / exchange of experience. Prior approval by the PMU is required about 2 weeks before the event. It is anticipated that, the Consultant team and experts will participate at 3 events per year, with an average of 5 participants per event. Reimbursable expenses will cover: participation fees, accommodation (averaging 3 nights per person), plane tickets and other costs related with the events, as approved by the PMU. The budget for the above activities should not exceed 3% of Phase 2 total budget.

1. ***Contract performance indicators***

It is expected that the Consultant will ensure the attaining of the following indicators:

1. At least 400 demonstration /role model farms (including the grants beneficiaries) ready to host FDGs;
2. Training materials for at least 10 types of FDGs. At least 80% of the training materials will include content on climate smart agriculture, climate mitigation, adaptation and practices for emissions reductions from agriculture;
3. At least 400 Farmer Discussion Groups organized;
4. At least 8,000 farmers participating in the Farmer Discussion Groups;
5. At least 1030 FDG meetings, with an average of 20 participants, totalizing 20600 participants at FDG meetings;
6. At least 500 local authorities` representatives will participate in Farmer Discussion Groups;
7. At least 35% of the farmers participating in the Farmer Discussion Groups, are women working in agriculture;
8. At least 80% of beneficiaries will report effective engagement;
9. At least 80% of participating women beneficiaries will report effective engagement;
10. At least 6 regional or national workshops and/or conferences will be organized.

Furthermore, the Consultant has the obligation to do all diligences for attaining the following indicators (for which the Consultant will provide intermediate data and information to third party reviewers):

* At least 80% of the farmers (men and women) participating in trainings are expressing satisfaction with the newly adopted practices, on the basis of environmental protection;
* At least 50% of the farmers adopted good environmental practices;
* At least 35% of female farmers adopted good environmental practices;
* For at least 30,000 hectares are introduced new and/or improved sustainable landscape management practices.

At any time during the Contract implementation and through reports, the Consultant will propose, as needed, additional measures for attaining all the above indicators.

The track of all indicators will be ensured throughout implementation by the Consultant by quarterly and annual reports, and by ad-hoc reports, as may be requested by the Client.

In case the PMU analysis indicates a risk in unattaining any of the above indicators, PMU may request supplementary efforts / actions towards achieving the set targets.

1. ***Required capacity and experience of the Consultant key experts***

The Consultant team will include at least the following key experts:

* 1 Project Manager;
* 1 Financial Manager;
* 3 Team-leaders (1 per each KTN);
* 1 Innovation and research expert in agriculture;
* 1 Expert on agri-environment;
* 1 Logistical Expert.

All the proposed key experts should have a relevant university degree in agricultural sciences, environmental sciences, engineering, finance/economics or any other relevant sciences. Previous experience in Romania or neighboring countries, with World Bank, EU or other internationally funded projects will be considered an advantage.

**Project Manager** – with at least 10 years of experience in managing contracts / projects of at least (cumulative) 2,000,000 Euro budgets in agriculture / rural development.

**Financial Manager** -with at least 7 years of experience in managing contracts / projects of at least (cumulative) 2,000,000 Euro budgets.

**Team-leaders** –with at least 7 years of experience in management on farmer organization / advisory system for agriculture / training projects in the field of sustainable agriculture / environmental protection.

**Innovation and research expert on agriculture** – with at least 7 years of experience in the field of research in sustainable agriculture / good agricultural practices / bioeconomy.

**Expert on agri-environment** –with at least 5 years of experience in the field of agriculture and environment (policy / programs / plans / strategies / projects preparation and/or implementation).

**Logistical expert (part of the Advisory Hub)** -for organizing the trainings / workshops / conferences.

Non – key experts:

* Facilitators for organizing the FDGs. The number of facilitators contracted for a KTN will vary based on the specific characteristics of the region and /or FDGs. Ideally, the facilitators should be part of a farmer organization and, mandatory, shall have experience in agriculture.

All non-key experts may start their assignments only after receiving PMU approval in writing, based on their CVs and supporting documents.

All experts will prepare monthly timesheets, which will be annexed to the reports.

All experts will sign the Code of Conduct aligned with the World Bank principles.

1. ***Duration of services and schedule of reports and deliverables***
   1. ***Duration of services***

The duration of the Contract is estimated up to end of February 2028, with possibility of extension.

The Consultant will commence their duties starting with a contract kick-off meeting. The duration of Phase 1 will be three (3) months from the kick-off meeting. The commencement of Phase 2 is contingent upon the successful completion of Phase 1. Phase 2 of the assignment will last up to end of February 2028, or any other date as agreed through a contract amendment.

* 1. ***Reports and deliverables***

**Reports and Deliverables for Phase 1**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Phase 1 Report*** | The Phase 1 Report will be due the end of Phase I (three months as from the kick-off meeting) and will include a description of the activities carried-out during this phase and all the documents for the activities listed within the sub-chapter “Phase 1 – Preparation and kick-off”. The report will include a minute of the workshop organized at the end of the Phase 1, that will include, at least the main conclusions of the meeting. The workshop will be documented by at least the following documents: attendance list signed by participants and relevant photos from the event. |

**Reports for Phase 2 – Implementation and dissemination**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Progress Reports*** | Progress Reports will cover every 3 months starting from the commencement of Phase 2, to be submitted by the end of the following month. Each report will include detailed information about the activities carried-out during the reporting period, related to / including at least the following:   * Advisory Hub and setting-up FDGs; * the updated list of host farmers; * activities on encouraging women and vulnerable groups participation; * the contract indicators against the set targets; * additional information on the progress, including monitoring data on the number of trained farmers (per gender, type of FDG, county etc.); * a centralized table with all the trained farmers evaluation results and the analysis of those results, including future training needs identified by the Consultant; * reports on effective engagement of the trained farmers (per gender); * supporting documents (as agreed during Phase 1, but at least attendance lists signed by participants and relevant photos of the meetings) for the trained persons and participants to workshops/conferences and for the host farmers compensated during the reporting period, including the financial documents regarding host farmers’ compensations eligible for reimbursement; * supporting documents for other activities, such as field-visits to demonstration farms and participation at national or international workshops / conferences /exhibitions / fairs for knowledge sharing / promotion of best practices or for any other activity aiming at information dissemination / exchange of experience; * conclusions from the workshops and conferences organized during the reporting period; * additional observations, feedback, comments, as needed; * problems encountered and their resolutions, if any; * recommendations for the next reporting period, as needed (including on updating the training materials, indicative targets of the FDGs, etc.).   All the workshops and conferences will be documented through minutes of meetings (as well, attendance lists and relevant photos of the meetings).  All Progress Reports must be as clear and concise as possible. |
| ***Phase 2 Interim Report*** | The Phase 2 **Interim Reports** will be submitted in 2 months after the mid-period of the Phase 2, and will include:   * a summary of the Advisory Hub’s activity during the reporting period; * a synthesis of all FDGs organized during the reporting period, including:   i) a summary of all activities carried out;  ii) FDGs indicators against the set targets;  iii) all problems encountered and how they were resolved.   * a synthesis of all workshops and conferences organized during the reporting period; * the progress on meeting the contract indicators (to be presented against the set targets and implementation timeline); * a list of all host farmers and the progress for their compensation; * a summary of all lessons learnt to-date regarding practical implementation of the KTNs and recommendations for the remaining period of Phase 2; * detailed recommendations for the remaining implementation period and options for ensuring sustainability of the KTNs after RAPID funding has ceased. |
| ***Final Report*** | The **Final Report** will be submitted together with the last progress report and will include, at least:   * a summary of all the Advisory Hub’s activities; * a synthesis of all organized FDGs, including:   i) a summary of all activities carried out;  ii) FDGs indicators against the set targets;  iii) all problems encountered and how they were resolved.   * a synthesis of all workshops and conferences; * the contract indicators (to be presented against the set targets); * a list of all host farmers and the status for their compensation; * a summary of all lessons learnt regarding practical implementation of the KTNs; * detailed recommendations and options for ensuring sustainability of the KTNs after RAPID funding has ceased. |

1. ***Facilities provided by the Client***

The Client will provide access to all existing data and information that is: a) relevant to the scope of work, and b) reasonably required by the Consultant to perform the tasks under this assignment.

1. ***Institutional arrangements***

The appointed Consultant will work in close cooperation with the specialists of the RAPID Project, including the individual consultants on social and environmental areas.

All reports prepared by the Consultant will be submitted to the Authorized Representative of the RAPID Project Management Unit (PMU) for prior analysis and for the approval by the commission nominated by the Client for this purpose. All reports will be submitted in one printed copy and in electronic format (Memory Stick – USB/email), both in English and Romanian.

If necessary, the Consultant will respond to comments from the Client by modifying, amending or supplementing the reports and resubmitting them to the Client within the deadlines requested by the Client.

The Consultant may submit the invoices only after the PMU’s notification for the reports` approval.

Approval of the reports will constitute the basis for payments to the Consultant under the terms of their contract.