



**Republic of Liberia**  
**Smallholder Agriculture Transformation and Agribusiness Revitalization Project**  
**(STAR-P) Ministry of Agriculture**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR RECRUITMENT OF A FIRM TO MANAGE THE**  
**LIBERIA AGRICULTURE COMMERCIALIZATION FUND (LACF) FOR THE**  
**SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE TRANSFORMATION AND AGRIBUSINESS**  
**REVITALIZATION PROJECT (STAR-P) FOR THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE**

<b>Country:</b>	Republic of Liberia
<b>Name of Project:</b>	Smallholder Agriculture Transformation and Agribusiness Revitalization Project (STAR-P)
<b>Project Number:</b>	P160945
<b>Assignment Title:</b>	Consulting Services for Fund Management Team for Liberia Agriculture Commercialization Fund (LACF)

### **1. Source of Funds**

The Government of Liberia received a US\$25 million dollars loan from the World Bank for the Smallholder Agriculture Transformation and Agribusiness Revitalization Project (STAR-P). The Government intends to use part of the project financing to establish the Liberia Agriculture Commercialization Fund (LACF) to support the project's development objective. Additional financing, US\$23 million, is expected to be contributed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

### **2. Project Background**

The project development objective (PDO) is to increase agricultural productivity and commercialization of smallholder farmers for selected value chains in selected counties of Liberia. The project, which is expected to last at least five years has three Components.

**Component 1: Institutional Capacity Building and Strengthening the Enabling Environment for Farmers, State, and non-State Actors.** This component aims to strengthen the capacity of Farmer-Based Organizations (FBOs), the institutional capacity of key public agencies and that of the private sector to deliver priority services necessary

to promote competitive commercial agriculture in Liberia. This component will also address selected regulatory and policy binding constraints in the agri- food sector by financing studies and analyses on a demand basis.

**Component 2: Enhancing Productivity and Competitiveness.** This component aims at improving smallholders' integration in the value chains targeted by the project. Under this component, the project will finance matching grants (MG) for smallholder farmers, agribusinesses; business development services providers and financial institutions through the establishment of the Liberia Agriculture Commercialization Fund, to contribute to the costs of investment subprojects. The LACF will be created as a special Designated Account under the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) and will be managed by an independent Fund Manager. The Government of Liberia and the relevant stakeholders will establish a Fund Advisory Committee to provide appropriate governance and oversight over the use of the LACF. The subprojects to be supported through the LACF will be based on business plans prepared by eligible beneficiaries, who will have undergone an independent screening and evaluation process to determine their technical, socioeconomic, financial, and environmental viability. Proposals that promote one or more of the following in the design – nutrition, gender equality, and climate-smart agri-practices (adaptation and/or mitigation), will be given additional weight in the selection scoring process.

Details of the design features and implementation arrangements will be provided in the LACF Operational Manual that will be a condition of disbursement for this component.

***Component 3. Project Management, M&E, citizens' engagement, and contingency emergency response.*** The objectives of this component are to facilitate (i) efficient coordination and monitoring and evaluation of project activities, (ii) stakeholder awareness and participation through timely communication of results and consistent citizen engagement, and (iii) a response to a possible emergency.

### **3. Brief Description of the Assignment**

The LACF has been created to address financing and technical assistance challenges faced by agribusinesses, farmer cooperatives, Financial Institutions that have plans to work with smallholder farmers in out-grower schemes. The Fund will promote agribusiness and smallholder farmer linkages along all value chains based on the following criteria (a) demonstration of impact on farmers' income, (b) competitiveness, (c) job creation, and (d) bankability. The LACF will combine both high developmental impacts with commercial viability in order to leverage investment in the agribusiness value chains in Liberia.

The Government would like to employ the services of a Fund Manager to manage the implementation of the LACF in an efficient, effective and transparent manner, in line with the development objectives of the STAR-P. Candidates are invited to apply as single firms or as a consortium of firms to perform the roles required to manage the LACF.

#### **4. Brief Description and Task to be performed by the Fund Management Team**

The Fund Manager (or Fund Management Team) is expected to:

- a) Review and finalize the draft LACF Manual already developed by the Project Implementation Unit
- b) Identify, structure, and disburse investment funds and technical assistance to eligible and qualified agribusinesses with relevant and viable projects which satisfy fund investment criteria for the Project;
- c) Work collaboratively with diverse groups operating with the selected value-chains including but not limited to, agribusiness community, farmer organizations, Farmers Cooperatives and the public sector to identify and fund investments along the selected agribusiness value chains;
- d) Provide technical assistance for investees as they design and grow out-grower schemes as well as other technical assistance relevant for the investees to better meet the needs of the out-growers;
- e) Raise additional capital for the LACF;
- f) Monitor and assess implementation of each investee's project to ensure efficient utilization of the funds disbursed, including services provided to smallholder farmers and the achievement of the expected targets (outputs and impacts);
- g) Evaluate environmental risk and impact on supported projects, and carry out annual environmental impact audits on selected agribusinesses, and ensure investees comply with relevant national and international environmental regulations as well as best practices established by the Government of the Republic of Liberia and the STAR-P's Environmental and Social Management Framework as well as the Pest Management Plan;
- h) Present a plan to ensure that, before disbursing investments fund, investees comply with relevant laws and regulations surrounding landholding, with legitimate leasing and/or ownerships rights and no actual or potential conflict with communities as well as clear demonstration of responsible investments. This due diligence can be performed internally by the Fund Management team or out-sourced to relevant institutions;
- i) Manage its budget and maintain the requisite staff and presence in Liberia.

#### **5. Number of Key Staff Required: Four (4)**

The **Fund Management Team** should demonstrate the internal capacities applicable to the Fund Manager's role. Such capacities shall, among others, include a Project Manager (Team Leader), a Financial Management Specialist, an Investment/Finance Analyst, and an Agribusiness Specialist.

#### **6. Qualification and Experience of the Fund Management Team**

Interested Firms should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. Firms should include in their Technical Proposal a profile of the team leader or his/her company and/or institution, the team's understanding of the assignment, the methodology to carry out the consultancy, and a curriculum vitae of the key staff that will be involved in the assignment.

The prospective firm(s) must provide relevant details of demonstrable experience in managing similar Fund arrangements with considerable knowledge of smallholder farmers and agribusiness linkages (out-grower scheme) in post-conflict contexts in Africa. The firm(s) must demonstrate capabilities in structuring deals as well as ability to provide technical assistance, especially relating to the needs of agribusinesses and smallholder farmers. They must also show detailed experience in developing or advising agribusiness projects in sub-Saharan Africa or similar (including experience with smallholder out-grower schemes); and show a track record of sub-Saharan African or comparable investment experience, including any experience working with debt, quasi-equity, or self-liquidating instruments (including case studies, and profile/brochure of funds under management), as well as experience with impact investments.

Qualification and experience for key staff include:

**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 management of grants funded by International Funding Agencies and facilitating the transfer of knowledge to increase productivity and value addition
- Good understanding of rural economics and market demand opportunities
- Experience working with domestic and foreign private sector actors and investors along agriculture value chains;
- Knowledge of grant financial management;
- 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, Business Administration, Marketing or related field from a recognized institution.

*Experience:*

- The person should have at least 10 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) Financial Management and Resource Mobilization Specialist**

*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:*

- The Financial Manager Specialist will have not less than 10 years' experience in financial and project management.
- Detailed experience managing investment funds, including structuring new funds, strong internal governance, and a track record of fiduciary responsibility and accountability, and ability to attract additional funds.
- Experience in matching grants

- Experience in disbursement procedures and financial management of World Bank credits/grants or other donor funded projects will be an added advantage.
- Must have a proven track record for the design and implementation of a robust resource/fund mobilization strategy
- 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.

#### **d) 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 or comparable investment experience, including any experience working with debt, quasi-equity, or self-liquidating instruments (including case studies, and profile/brochure of funds under management), 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.

#### **7. Duration of Assignment**

The duration of the assignment is five (5) years subject to annual renewals, based on satisfactory performance.

#### **8. Performance management**

The contract will include Key Performance Indicators that will allow the STAR-P Project Coordinator to monitor the performance of the recruited consulting firm against the Terms of Reference of the assignment.

#### **9. Submission of Reports and Obligations**

##### **Reports to be submitted:**

- Upon signing of the contract, the firm will be required to present an inception report to STAR-P's PIU, outlining the approach/methodology for delivering the services under this assignment. The inception report will include a revised methodology and confirm the availability of the key staff in the proposal submitted. This submission should also

include a detailed work plan outlining all critical activities to be undertaken under this assignment for the full length of the contract period, with clear dates of delivery and specific deliverables at the conclusion of each activity

- Quarterly progress reports (both financial and technical);
- Participation and presentation at PIU hosted quarterly review meetings
- Participation and presentation at bi-annual Implementation Support Missions
- Annual reports (both financial and technical). The technical report should include the performance of the Fund, covering the following:
  - details on the number of Concept Notes, full proposals, annual reports, PCRs, evaluations etc. appraised and staff time spent on these
  - details on response times to applicants
  - a detailed overall assessment of the impact of the Fund over the year
  - recommendations of any remedial actions required for individual projects
  - recommendations on any changes in process or Fund criteria
- A Final Report on the assignment at the expiration of the contract. This is to cover a detailed statement on the overall operation and performance of the Fund, including detailed recommendations on the management of the Fund beyond the closure of STAR-P.

#### **Obligations:**

- The use of the LACF will be governed by a Fund Advisory committee (FAC), which will serve as some form of board for advisory and policy direction purposes only. It will receive periodic reports (preferably quarterly) from the Fund Manager, for the attention of the Government of Liberia, the World Bank and IFAD.
- The FAC will also give its review of the Fund Manager's performance to the Government and the development partners (WBG and IFAD).
- The FAC will be directly responsible for hiring and terminating the services of the Fund Manager for non-performance or other reasons contrary to the objectives of the Fund.
- The Fund Manager will have independent responsibility to manage the LACF, working closely with the Project Implementation Unit (PIU).
- The PIU will also work closely with the independent fund manager for the LACF to ensure that funds are disbursed in accordance with the guidelines.
- The Fund Manager will have the overall responsibility for gathering data and delivering the expected outputs of this assignment and adhering to reporting deadlines.

#### **10. Duty Stations:**

The primary duty stations for the assignment will be Monrovia, with extensive travels to the project counties.

#### **11. Services and Facilities to be provided by the Client are:**

The following facilities and services will be made available to the consultants:

- Relevant documentation on STAR-P (PAD, ESMF, PMP, LASIP, PIM, etc.);

## **12. Language of the Assignment**

All reports and deliverables under this assignment are expected to be in English and submitted as publication ready..