

Terms of Reference

Consultancy Support for Baseline Assessment of GFRAS Last Mile Programme (LMP) (2019 to 2024)

1. Introduction to the Programme

The Last-Mile Programme (LMP) is a broad programme aiming at improving smallholders' access to innovation and pluralistic, demand driven extension services with a focus on engagement of women and youth (as partners and beneficiaries) and RAS delivery through promote public private partnerships. LMP is designed as an overarching programme which can harbour a range of projects funded by various donors tailored to improved delivery of advisory services. An example of such project could be the promotion of employment on youth in the agri-food sector.

The programme clearly focusses on strengthening the delivery capacity of service providers at the country level, since this “last mile” of service provision is the costliest. In this regard, the programme’s corner stone is the establishment and/or the organisational and institutional development of Country Fora (CF) consisting of national stakeholders in Rural Advisory Services (RAS). Experiences in some countries feed the assumption of a strong correlation between the development stage of RAS related CF and the quality of service provision to farmers, to be confirmed through this programme. Interaction and collaboration of CF members strengthen the delivery capacity of service providers as well as the knowledge about and spread of innovation at the country level. The GFRAS Regional Networks (RN), as key implementers of the programme, support agricultural sector stakeholders at country level in setting up and/or strengthening these platforms, stimulate exchange among platforms and manage sub grants assigned to the platforms for building up their activities. GFRAS at global level (Secretariat and Steering Committee) is responsible for project management including: coordination, financial and operational oversight, as well as the monitoring and reporting of the programme to donors.

Key achievements of the programme are outlined in the Grant Design Document as follows:

- The Overall Goal is: “Improved incomes, sustained market linkages and reduction of climate vulnerability for smallholder farmers (women, men and youth)”.
- The Development Objective is: “Enhanced capacity of public and private service providers of agricultural extension and rural advisory services deliver services to the last mile”.

The strategy for achieving the Development Objective and Overall Goal of LMP is to strengthen business-oriented country networks of advisory service providers (Country Fora) by facilitating the coordination and collaboration between the various RAS stakeholders at country level and enhancing public private partnerships. These CF can facilitate enhanced capacity of the service providers to reach the farmers with good quality services and also contribute to improving the enabling environment for the advisory services, favourable policies and investment in services. Moreover, there is need for strengthening the learning in the RAS network about innovations and about delivery of advisory services for improved agriculture.

LMP is GFRAS’ flagship programme for developing approaches to invest in better RAS provision by mobilising the comparative advantages at different levels of the GFRAS network

to maximise impact at country level (the results chain of the programme is given in Annex 1). Therefore, a baseline assessment at this stage will allow the programme to learn about the present status against its different indicators and also refine and adapt its tools to local contexts in a sector that is both conservative and volatile. Learning from the baseline will also enhance GFRAS ability to effectively design its interventions.

2. Purpose and Rationale of Baseline Assessment

The main objective of this study is to collect and analyze existing situation of the LMP indicators (indicators under development goal and objectives). The list of indicators is given in the Annex below.

LMP has identified indicators in its Manual for Monitoring and Evaluation, though baseline value for those proposed indicators are unknown. So, to create actual benchmarks, a baseline study is required to come up with baseline value for each of the indicators outlined in the M&E plan or manual. The baseline value will guide the LMP team to measure its' achievements and outputs over the period of implementation. This will also help devise appropriate monitoring tools for M&E of the programme's interventions - in addition.

3. Methodology

The hired consultant/firm will have to apply mostly qualitative approach methods to conduct the baseline assessment; which should satisfy LMP requirement. The consultant will heavily use secondary information and documents provided by the LMP team/ country for a (CF) and also from different relevant websites and sources. In addition, if necessary, the consultant will also collect primary data from key personnel from the CF members, and RAS providers and relevant stakeholders. Because of the present Covid 19 crisis, online or over-the-phone data collection is preferred in this assessment. The consultant should consider (secondary and/or primary) data from the following stakeholder categories in this assessment:

- CF member/ representative
- RAS providers
 - Public RAS providers and agencies
 - Private agribusiness firms that provide RAS
 - Civil society groups providing RAS and professional associations
 - Farmer organisations and commodity associations
 - Agricultural research and education institutions, other academia
 - RAS-related organisations: microfinance institutions and banks, mass-media organisations, others
 - Development partners (national programmes, international development agencies)
 - Policy makers and government representatives.
- Programme staff

The results framework that incorporates outcome and output indicators for the baseline assessment is given in Annex 2. In addition, it is recommended that the consultant will use maturity stages of organizations. We simplify it by using the Jefferson's (2001) 4 stage matrix for assessing maturity and achievements of the organizations connected to the country for a (CF). The maturity matrix is given in Annex 3.

4. Major Responsibility of the Consultant/ Firm

- Review of relevant programme documents made available to consultants.
- Development of data/ information collection and analysis tools including key informant interview and small group discussions.
- Development of a comprehensive plan of secondary data review, primary data collection, data analysis and report development.
- Secondary data review to get baseline data against programme indicators
- Primary data collection (using phone survey or online data collection) from key personnel from the CF members, and RAS providers and relevant stakeholders.
- Data analysis and triangulation
- Development and submission of draft report
- Based on the feedback from M&E/ LMP team, the firm should make further analysis, revise the report and submit the final report.

5. Major responsibilities of LMP

LMP will provide the consultant/firm with the necessary support to undertake and implement the assignment and execute the objectives of this assignment. Such responsibilities include the following:

- Provide initial briefing and contexts of the programme;
- Provide relevant documents and technical support;
- Disburse payment as per the agreed schedule in the contract.

6. Key Deliverables and Deadlines

The following deliverables are expected from the consultant/firm by the mentioned deadlines:

Phase	Component	Deliverables	Deadline
Phase 1	Kick off, Methodology and Research Tool finalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Methods and Tools for data collection and analysis· Work Plan & Schedule	August 7, 2020
Phase 2	Desk Research and Primary/ Secondary Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· N/A	August 21, 2020
Phase 3	Data Analysis and Report Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Draft baseline assessment report· Finalized baseline report	September 7, 2020

7. Tentative Work Schedule

The consultant/firm is expected to start work on or around the third week of July 2020. This assignment should be completed within six weeks from the starting date, which includes completion of all tasks in the assignment along with the submission of the deliverables as detailed in the key deliverables section. Based on unavoidable circumstances, the period for conducting the assignment might change. The consultant/firm is expected to be able to accommodate these changes without additional cost. A final detailed work schedule will be determined during the kick-off meeting.

Phases	August 2020				September 2020
	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1
Phase 1					
Phase 2					
Phase 3					

8. Proprietary Rights

Any document, information or data entrusted to or produced by LMP/GFRAS in connection with this assignment shall be strictly confidential and cannot be used by the contract employees/ firm for any other purpose without the written consent of LMP/GFRAS. LMP/GFRAS reserves the right to terminate this agreement at any time with the consultation of the contracted individual/firm.

9. Deliverables and Schedule of Payment

Cost proposals should cover all costs including consultants' fee for conducting the entire assignment until final deliverables submission. This should include remuneration, travel, accommodation, transport, per diems and any miscellaneous costs.

VAT & Tax deduction at source will be applied by the client as per government rules and regulations. The consultant will submit an invoice at the end of each phase.

- 40% of the budget will be released upon completion of **Phase 1**;
- 60% of the budget will be released upon completion of **Phase 3**

Note: Government VAT and tax regulation will be applied, and these costs must be included in the financial proposal. LMP will deduct VAT & TAX from the contract value during payment as per rules and regulations of GoB.

The following terms and conditions will apply:

- The payment will be made through account payee cheque/ wire transfer (account name, number, type, bank name, and branch name is required for wire transfer);
- VAT Registration Certificate, TIN and Trade License (if applicable) must be submitted before the agreement is signed.

10. Eligibility Criteria

Experience and expertise required for this consultancy assignment are mentioned below:

a. Mandatory requirements:

- At least MSc, degree in agriculture, social sciences, development studies or related discipline would be desirable.
- 8 years' experience preferably in research and policy analysis, especially related to baseline surveys and evaluation
- Proven track record of working collaboratively to achieve a shared goal;
- Relevant university degree;

- Fluency in English and Bangla, both spoken and written.

b. Preferred skills

- Excellent writing skills;
- Excellent intercultural and interpersonal communication skills, including coordination, facilitation and presentation.

11. Bid Submission

All proposals should include:

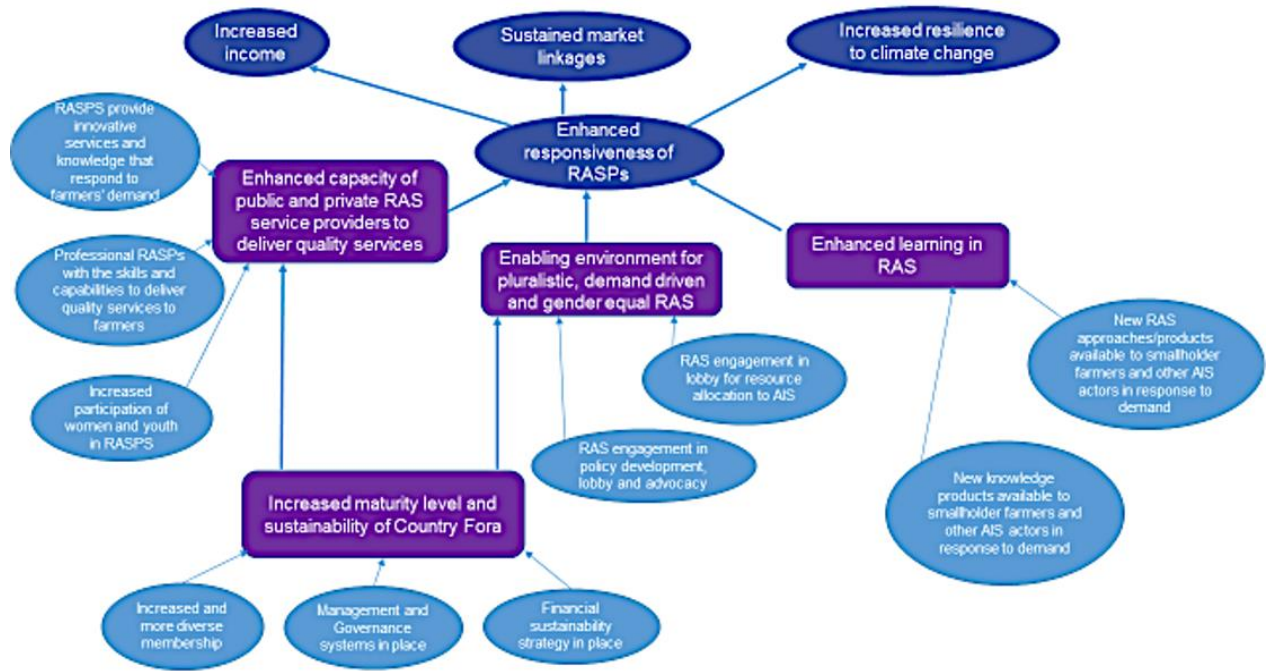
- Cover letter (maximum one page);
- Technical Proposal (maximum 4 pages) which should include:
 - Understanding of the assignment
 - A detailed work-plan
 - Relevant experience of the consultant/firm
- Financial Proposal (maximum one page): breakdown of cost estimates. This should include, but not be limited to accommodation and travel costs, food expenses, and other items needed for the consultancy.
- If applicable, please also include:
 - Company profile
 - VAT Registration Certificate
 - TIN Certificate
 - Joint Stock Company Registration Certificate
 - Trade License Certificate

Interested and qualified consultants/firms are asked to submit their Technical and Financial Proposals to Md. Afzal Hossain Bhuiyan; Focal person, LMP (afzalhb1062@gmail.com.) Please write “**Baseline Assessment of GFRAS Last Mile Programme (LMP)**” in the subject line. The proposals should be submitted by **July 29, 2020**. We are only able to consider electronic submissions. Only shortlisted consultants/firms will be contacted and invited for a technical discussion.

Deadline: July 29, 2020.

ANNEX

Annex 1: Figure - The Results Chain for LMP



Annex 2: Table - Results Framework for Baseline Assessment in LMP

Programme Elements	Indicators	Risks & assumptions
Development Objective: Enhanced responsiveness of RASPs (public and private) in targeted countries to the demand for advisory services of socially and economically differentiated categories of farmers	By mid 2024, 40% increase in the number of smallholder farmers accessing advise from CF-affiliated RAS providers during the last 12 months with XX% increase of the number of women and youth	Favourable policy conditions for engagement of public and private actors in RAS
	By mid 2024, 25% increase in the number of smallholder farmers (men, women and youth) utilising advise from CF-affiliated RAS providers during the last 12 months with xx% increase in the number of women and youth	Favourable environment for women and youth participation in agriculture and in service provision
Outcome 1 Business oriented CFs sustainably promote RAS service delivery at country level	80% of all participating CFs reach at least stage 4 of the CF maturity scale by mid 2024	RASP stakeholders from both public and private sector are interested in participating in the CFs and for strengthening these also through financial contribution Policies favourable to public private collaboration on service provision
	At least 50% of the mature CFs have assured funding for core functions (coordination, partnership brokering and policy engagement) by mid 2024	
Output 1.1 Increased membership, inclusiveness and diversity of RASPs in the CFs	By mid 2024 the number of RAS providers adhering to CFs increased by XX% and 50% of the newcomers belong to the private sector.	
Output 1.2 Management, strategy, legal recognition and governance systems in place	(imbedded in the maturity stage assessment)	
Output 1.3 Financial sustainability strategy in place	Imbedded in second indicator under Outcome 1	
Outcome 2: Enhanced capacity of public and private providers of agricultural extension and rural advisory services to deliver appropriate services to smallholder farmers (women, men and youth)	By mid 2014 XX% of the CF affiliated RAS providers that have targeted women and youth as their clients and have increased the number of topics relevant to women and youth	Systems and facilities in place for enhancing the capacity of service providers Both private and public service providers interested in enhancing their capacity and innovate on knowledge and services Willingness among RASPs to embrace gender and youth policies

Programme Elements	Indicators	Risks & assumptions
Output 2.1 RAS providers have the skills and capabilities to deliver quality services to smallholder farmers	By mid 2024 xx% of CF affiliated RAS providers have trained their staff on core competencies as stipulated in the NELK (at least 4 out of 7)	
Output 2.2 Increased participation of women and youth in delivery of RAS	Mid 2024 X% of RAS providers affiliated to CF with field staff consisting of 40% women and 40% people below “youth cut-off rate (35 year for men, 40 year for women).	
Output 2.3 RASPs develop innovative services and knowledge that respond to farmers demand	By mid 2024 X% of CF affiliated RAS providers operate systems/work culture to collect farmers’ requests for and feedback on services provided	
Outcome 3. Enabling environment for pluralistic and demand driven and gender equal RAS	By mid 2024 X% of RAS-related policies and regulations adopted that promotes pluralistic, demand driven and or gender sensitive RAS	Opportunities and platforms existing in the target countries for policy dialogues Positive investment climate for agricultural innovation
Output 3.1 CF Engagement in policy development, lobby and advocacy	By mid 2024 the number of positions in RAS-related policy dialogue discussed within the CF each year is XX% higher as in 2019	
Output 3.2 CF engagement in lobby for resource prioritisation for AIS	In period 2020-2024) CF is XX times officially represented in annual national budget prioritisation exercise	
Outcome 4: Enhanced learning in RAS	By mid 2024 xx% of the CF affiliated members consider the “CF” knowledge network as one of the three key sources for accessing and sharing/ exchanging/ trading in knowledge services;	Favourable environment for digital sharing of knowledge, innovation and service approaches across networks Intellectual rights and competition aspects in the sharing have been clarified
Output 4.1: CF affiliated RAS actors are better linked to AIS	By mid 2024, XX% of the CF increased the number of AIS partners they are in contact with by YY%	
Output 4.2: New knowledge products available to CF-affiliated AIS actors	Over the period 2020- 2024 there is an average annual increase of XX% in the number of documented new knowledge products made available on the CF network (compared to the release in 2019)	

Annex 3: Table - Maturity matrix Country Fora

Criteria		1	2	3	4	Score
Constitution	The CF has an instrument (statute) that regulates its operation and the rights and duties of its participants	Not yet	Under development	Approved	In function (members know and use)	
Registration ^[1]	The CF has a legal status, requirements in many countries for its operation	Registered interest with Regional network	Legal registration under development	Legal registration approved by stakeholders	Approved by legal authorities	
Governance		Focal point appointed	Board elected	Board meeting 1 – 2 times a year	Board meeting 3 times a year or more	
Representation in Board	The CF needs to represent interest and position of women and youth in RAS	No women or youth in Board	Up to 20% women and youth in Board	Up to 40% women and youth in Board	60% or more women and youth in Board	
Membership diversity ¹	The CF membership represents the diversity of the RAS stakeholders in country	Up to 2 sectors represented	Up to 3 sectors represented	Up to 4 sectors represented	More than 4 sectors represented	
Strategic plan	The strategic plan of the CF sets out the direction of its operation	Not yet	Under development	Approved	In function and guiding the work plans	
Secretariat and management team	The Secretariat assures expertise, continuity and accountability in running the daily work of the CF	No secretariat and no employed staff	Secretariat hosted with stakeholder who provides focal point (secondment)	Secretariat hosted by stakeholder, one staff paid by the CF	Independent secretariat with more than one paid staff	

Criteria		1	2	3	4	Score
Financial management system		Not yet	Using host system	Own account within host system	Independent financial management system	
Activity level	The CF has a regular set of activities to achieve its goals	Sensitisation meeting	1 to 2 activities over last year/last 12 months	3 to 4 activities including PPPs over last year/last 12 months	5 or more activities including projects with PPPs undertaken over last year/ last 12 months	
Visibility	The CF actively disseminates its activities and opinions	No activities undertaken	The CF has designed a communication strategy	The CF has social media accounts with updated content	The CF has updated social media accounts and appeared 3 times in national press over the last year	
Recognition, lobby and advocacy	The CF is recognised by the government and RAS stakeholders; it undertakes lobbying and advocacy activities with decision makers to highlight the importance of RAS	Not yet	Initiatives for dialogues started	Active on lobby and advocacy for policy and investment	Recognised by Government and development partners as a platform for negotiations	
Financial sustainability	The CF transits to an entity that can procure the financing required for its operation	No sources of income	Income through external fund support	Income through member contribution ² and external funding support	Self-financing through service delivery and member contribution, with external funding support below 20%	
	Total score					

Score

12 – 19

20 – 29

30 - 39

40 – 48

Maturity scale

1 Start-up/nascent

2 Developing/emerging

3 Consolidating

4 Mature/viable