



INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT PROCUREMENT NOTICE

Date: **13 September 2013**

Country: Republic of Moldova

Description of the assignment: National Consultant to Develop the Feasibility Study on Sustainable Organic Fresh Fruit Growing and Exports

Project name: Regional Aid for Trade Project

Period of assignment/services: 40 working days during October-December, 2013

Application instructions: Proposals should be submitted **on-line** by pressing the “Apply on-line” link, no later than **23 September, 2013**.

Requests for **clarification only** must be sent by standard electronic communication to the following e-mail: dumitru.vasilescu@undp.org. UNDP will respond by standard electronic mail and will send written copies of the response, including an explanation of the query without identifying the source of inquiry, to all applicants.

1. BACKGROUND

In the past decade the Moldovan agriculture has undergone significant structural and technological changes. Generally, the income levels remain depressed, while the gap between efficient farms and the subsistence-oriented peasants' households has further widened. Recent reports suggest that the most detrimental impact of the agriculture on environment comes from the improper crops-rotation, drastic reduction in use of organic fertilizers, the improper use of chemical fertilizers, especially in the small farms, overgrazing, and significant cuts in the field-protecting forest strips¹.

While Moldovan agriculture continuously was faced with emigration of labour force during the last decade, National Report for UN Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 Rio+20 argues that organic agriculture is the best long-term option to provide sustainable job opportunities in rural communities. Furthermore, the low level application of chemical fertilizers in traditional agricultural entities in Moldova can be harnessed as a real opportunity to pursue organic forms of agricultural production. In terms of export opportunities, the global market demand for organic food is steadily growing. The key destination markets for Moldovan produce follow the same global trend: the EU organic market was estimated at 21.5 bln Euro², while in Russia the total consumer market is

¹Ministry of Environment of Moldova and others, “State of Environment in Republic of Moldova in 2007-2010”, National Report.

²<http://orgprints.org/22345/19/willer-2013-session-european-market.pdf>; Avantajele agriculturii ecologice și pașii spre certificare, <http://inagro.md/uploads/user/Avantajele%20agriculturii%20ecologice%20%C5%9Fi%20pa%C5%9Fi%20spre%20certificare.pdf>

estimated at \$148 million but with strong growth trends and potential³. As competitive pressures are poised to grow in the coming years in the aftermath of the DCFTA implementation, sustainable organic agricultural production might provide a proper niche for Moldovan agri-food exporters and producers.

Furthermore, a key characteristic of the sustainable organic agriculture is the replacement of chemical fertilizers with organic ones; from this perspective, the development of sustainable organic agriculture can be significantly supported by the increased use of the biogas installations in rural households and farms, as for instance remnants of converted biomass or biogas can be used as organic fertilizers. The connection of organic agriculture with energy production from biomass in the future could usher in a virtuous sustainable production cycle. For the time being, local producers should definitely focus primarily on possible closed cycles within agricultural field, mainly through combining fruit growing with labor intensive and HVA milk production, for instance.

CONTEXT

Overall, the vast majority of the Moldovan producers and, in some cases, also exporters of fresh fruits are small or medium sized enterprises, many of which are members of two active professional associations. For the last two years, UNDP Moldova, via the regional Aid for Trade Project, is implementing a series of specific activities to consolidate the capacities of such associations and their members. The target is enabling primarily fresh fruit producers to further consolidate their collaboration within the existing associations and cooperate for improving their competitiveness both at home and abroad. This is one of the key challenges faced by many producers, which otherwise would not be able to produce sufficiently large and qualitative lots of fresh produce. Besides cooperation for production or sales, producers need to diversify their produce and their target markets. Most probable, focusing more attention on niche markets, including the organic fresh fruit growing, is one way to stay competitive and profitable. Indeed, orientation towards organic production comports certain risks, including, but not limited to: a) expensive productive inputs for many small sized companies, b) high uncertainties related to identifying export opportunities and competitive advantages on potential markets, c) lack of supportive national regulatory framework to promote organic production, d) lack of trust of producers in needed partners along the value chain, particularly because organic fresh fruits require short lead time to market and storage requires sophisticated facilities.

Given the risks described, at present, on the local market there are very few companies, which decided to invest in organic fresh fruits production and invested into Global GAP. Their key constraints are lack of needed infrastructure in terms of sorting, pelleting and labelling technologies, lack of access to some technologies and finance, including at the very end stages of the value chain, lack of tools to promote exports and limited knowledge of foreign market opportunities. Trust between producers and the lax contract enforcement mechanisms are also important variables that sometimes result in unachieved profits and missed opportunities.

In this context, UNDP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, and being supported by the associations of fresh fruit producers, is seeking to conduct a feasibility study to spot those priority areas and commodities that could or should benefit from more support from State and donors community, so that to encourage substantial cooperation of producers around the idea of organic sustainable fresh fruit production and further consolidate the capacities of the existing associations to support such producers. The organic fresh fruits export promotion is one area in which all key relevant stakeholders shall join efforts to ensure that by the time new

3

http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Russian%20Organic%20Market%20Continues%20to%20Grow_Moscow%20ATO_Russian%20Federation_2-15-2013.pdf

investments for organic fresh fruits production are eventually made, needed regulatory and infrastructure frames are already in place. Other important areas and associated benefits and costs shall be identified and analyzed in a participatory and consultative manner.

2. SCOPE OF WORK, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ANALYTICAL WORK

The National Consultant will work in close collaboration with an International Consultant, who will lead the development of the Feasibility Study.

The specific objectives of the consultancy are, as per below.

- Provide substantial analytical input into the development of a draft paper on the current status of organic fresh fruits production and exports in Moldova and share the draft report with all relevant stakeholders;
- Conduct, together with the international expert, a detailed SWOT analysis and identify key opportunities and areas for further intervention from the private and public sectors; conduct impact assessment on the prospective effects of the organic fresh fruits production and exports on net job creation, net trade balance, income generation, overall sustainability of agricultural production, food security and other; share the intermediary draft with all relevant stakeholders;
- Develop a comprehensive and relevant set of policy, regulatory and specific sector recommendations to pave the way for sustainable organic fresh fruit growing and adherence to organic quality standards and Global G.A.P. certification; conduct an in-depth analysis of the existing and prospective synergies that might emerge between sustainable organic fresh fruit growing, including closed agricultural cycles mentioned above and, in long term run, bio-energy production;
- Contribute to the development of a specific set of policy recommendations for the promotion of support measures providing incentives for organic fresh fruits production and export, public or mixed financing of the organic start-ups, institutionalization of a national certification body based on international/regional best practices, among others ;
- Provide substantial input into the development of three (3) specific case studies which could serve as a basis for designing a pilot project to be further up-scaled;
- Provide analytical support to the international consultant for the finalization of the Feasibility Study.

For detailed information please refer to Annex 1 – Terms of Reference.

3. REQUIREMENTS FOR EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

I. Academic Qualifications:

- University degree in Economics, Agriculture or other relevant fields.

II. Experience:

- At least 5 years of proven analytical skills and previous experience in policy analysis, development of comprehensive analytical reports in economic and agricultural fields;
- Familiarity with the situation in the organic fresh fruits segment in Moldova and in the region and in-depth knowledge on principles of organic production, and overview of European organic market, its marketing channels, and main EU market stakeholders;
- Knowledge of the EU organic certification requirements and procedures, regulations, including institutional, legal and policy frameworks, in the area of organic fresh produce.

III. Competencies and Skills:

- Excellent analytical and writing skills,
- Strong communication and teamwork skills;
- Fluency in Romanian and English is mandatory. Knowledge of Russian is an asset.

4. DOCUMENTS TO BE INCLUDED WHEN SUBMITTING THE PROPOSALS

Interested individual consultants must submit the following documents/information to demonstrate their qualifications:

1. Cover letter, explaining why he/she is the most suitable for the work;
2. A brief methodology on how he/she will approach and conduct the work;
3. Financial proposal;
4. Personal CV including past experience in similar projects and at least 3 references, or duly filled Personal History Form (P11).

5. FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

The financial proposal shall specify a total lump sum amount, and payment terms around specific and measurable (qualitative and quantitative) deliverables (i.e. whether payments fall in installments or upon completion of the entire contract). Payments are based upon output, i.e. upon delivery of the services specified in the TOR. In order to assist the requesting unit in the comparison of financial proposals, the financial proposal will include a breakdown of this lump sum amount (including daily fee and number of anticipated working days).

Travel is not envisaged under this consultancy assignment. In case of unforeseeable travel, payment of travel costs, including tickets, lodging and terminal expenses should be agreed upon, between the respective business unit and Individual Consultant, prior to travel and will be reimbursed. In case of travel in the regions of Moldova (if necessary to be undertaken during the fulfillment of the assignment), the travel services will be ensured by the Project.

6. EVALUATION

Initially, individual consultants will be short-listed based on the following minimum qualification criteria:

- University degree in Economics, Agriculture or other relevant fields;
- 5 years of proven analytical skills and previous experience in policy analysis, development of comprehensive analytical reports in economic and agricultural fields.

The short-listed individual consultants will be further evaluated based on the following methodology:

Cumulative analysis

The award of the contract shall be made to the individual consultant whose offer has been evaluated and determined as:

- a) responsive/compliant/acceptable, and
- b) having received the highest score out of a pre-determined set of weighted technical and financial criteria specific to the solicitation.

* Technical Criteria weight – 60% (300 pts);

* Financial Criteria weight – 40% (200 pts).

Only candidates obtaining a minimum of 210 points would be considered for the Financial Evaluation.

Criteria	Scoring	Maximum Points Obtainable
<u>Technical</u>		
University degree in Economics, Agriculture or other relevant fields	(University degree – max 35 pts, Master's – max 40 pts, PhD's – max 45 pts)	45
5 years of proven analytical skills and previous experience in policy analysis, development of comprehensive analytical reports in economic and agricultural fields	(5 years – max 55 pts, >5 years – max 60 pts)	60
Familiarity with the situation in the organic fresh fruits segment in Moldova and in the region and in-depth knowledge on principles of organic production, and overview of European organic market, its marketing channels, and main EU market stakeholders	(max 50 pts)	50
Knowledge of the EU organic certification requirements and procedures, regulations, including institutional, legal and policy frameworks, in the area of organic fresh produce	(max 40 pts.)	40
Excellent analytical and writing skills	(max 40 pts.)	40
Strong communication and teamwork skills	(max 35 pts.)	35
Fluency in Romanian and English is mandatory. Knowledge of Russian is an asset	(English– max 15 pts., Romanian – additional max 10 pts, and Russian – additional max 5 pts)	30
Maximum Total Technical Scoring		300
Evaluation of submitted financial offers will be done based on the following formula: <u>$S = F_{min} / F * 200$</u> S – score received on financial evaluation; Fmin – the lowest financial offer out of all the submitted offers qualified over the technical evaluation round; F – financial offer under consideration.		200

Winning candidate

The winning candidate will be the candidate, who has accumulated the highest aggregated score (technical scoring + financial scoring).

ANNEXES:

ANNEX 1 – TERMS OF REFERENCES (TOR)

ANNEX 2 – INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS