

## Terms of Reference

<b>Job title:</b>	International Consultant to provide programmatic support in EU LEADER/CLLD approach implementation in the ATU Gagauzia and Taraclia district of the Republic of Moldova
<b>Duty station:</b>	Chisinau with travels, mainly to ATU Gagauzia and Taraclia district
<b>Reference to the project:</b>	Support to Agriculture and Rural Development Project (SARD)
<b>Contract type:</b>	Individual Contract (IC)
<b>Contract duration:</b>	April 2017 - December 2018 (up to 290 working days including 120 days in Moldova)
<b>Starting date:</b>	April 1, 2017

### I. BACKGROUND

The "Support to Agriculture and Rural Development" SARD Project is a three-year initiative funded by the European Union, and implemented by the UNDP. The **main objective** of the project is to foster confidence building in the Republic of Moldova by targeting regions and territorial administrative units with special status. People from ATU Gagauzia, Taraclia district and neighboring communities will benefit from improved development opportunities in their localities, grasping the benefits of the National Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy. The proposed intervention will aim to address key gaps identified in the main strategic document of the region's development in line with national priorities.

The project has the following components:

Component 1: Enhanced Dialogue and Community Empowerment;

Component 2: Local entrepreneurship and SMEs development;

Component 3: Small-Scale Infrastructure Refurbishment and Promotion of Inter-Municipal Cooperation.

It will contribute to enhancing the competitiveness of the agro-food sector in the target regions, promotion of local entrepreneurship, creation of jobs and raising income; as well as increasing capacities of local communities to identify development ideas, develop and fundraise resources as well as implement development projects. The project is connecting region's authorities and structures to the national ones, facilitating dialogue and inclusion in development of national strategies, as well as connecting neighboring villages through inter municipal cooperation and implementation of the LEADER/CLLD approach.

#### Specific background

The component 1 of the Programme focuses on the enhancement of the capacities of local communities to create, develop and manage basic public services, as well as to rehabilitate small-scale social infrastructure to address agriculture and rural development priorities.

Because of their local knowledge and mandate, local governments, civil society and other organisations are the best placed to identify needs and constraints of target/vulnerable groups and to provide them with access to services. The **Community Mobilisation for Empowerment approach**<sup>1</sup> will be used and updated in line with the EU LEADER and Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) approach.

The SARD Programme envisages training and support for the creation, functioning and management of the cross-sector or commodity-specific Local Action Groups (LAGs) in rural villages from targeted regions. LAGs will ensure representation and that proposed intervention are demand-led, have the full support of local stakeholders and represent their interests. The programme will help with all necessary human resource

<sup>1</sup><http://www.md.undp.org/content/moldova/en/home/library/poverty/community-mobilization-for-empowerment-of-vulnerable-women-and-m.html>

development, legal aspects, identification of co-financing and governance. Where appropriate, municipalities will be assisted in understanding their regulatory obligations relevant to rural development, including compliance with laws on spatial planning, environmental protection, market regulation and other laws as may be developed. It will provide all necessary training and support to ensure that all operational LAGs are networked in the country, regionally and internationally (with focus on EU countries' experience).

Last several years there was some progress in promoting and initiation of LEADER/CLLD approach in Moldova, namely:

- Several informational campaigns and study tours were organized by Donors and local NGOs,
- The first LAG was created in the North of Moldova, still in "dormant" stage,
- The National Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy (ARDS) has included in the list of actions, point 3.3.2 "Creation and operationalization of Local Action Groups of rural development, based on best practices and principles of EU LEADER Programme (pilot activity)".

The SARD Programme, starting from August 2016 initiated pilot EU LEADER approach activities through a series of sensitizing and mobilizing activities both during regional and national seminars and round tables, and 2 study tours to EU countries to learn from their LEADER experiences. As a result, first 8 LEADER initiatives were formed and a consulting company to assist those initiatives with coaching and development support was contracted, coaches and development experts were trained.

The SARD Programme seeks an experienced international consultant to continue pilot activities through the provision of LEADER/CLLD guidance, advice and supervision of the establishment of LAGs in targeted region as well as for institutionalization of LEADER/CLLD approach at the national level.

## **II. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF WORK**

In relevant to the synergic and comprehensive implementation of the three SARD Programme Components, the **major objective** of present assignment is to provide support to National, Regional and Local stakeholders to implement LEADER/CLLD measures aiming at enhancing the dialogue and community empowerment and at strengthening the territorial cooperation for rural/local economic development in Moldova, and in particular in the targeted territorial areas.

The scope of work will consist of gathering experiences, recommending the best EU LEADER/CLLD practices for the adjustment and pilot implementation in Moldova (with the specific focus on ATU Gagauzia and Taraclia district), providing a clear guidance for short term and long term interventions, and based on the piloting exercise, supporting in institutionalizing the LEADER approach in the country.

The expected output of the present assignment is:

- Based on EU and pre-accession LEADER/CLLD best practices and the SARD LEADER piloting exercise, support to the institutionalization of the LEADER/CLLD approach in Moldova provided.
- Support to the implementation of the SARD LEADER/CLLD measures with focus on ATU Gagauzia and Taraclia district, in synergy with other SARD components and with emphasis on multipliability of the process in Moldova provided. 5-8 pilot LAGs supported.
- EU SARD LEADER/CLLD Public Awareness Campaign designed and implemented.
- SARD LEADER/CLLD Lessons learned and knowledge products prepared and distributed to all relevant stakeholders.

## **III. KEY ACTIVITIES**

In order to achieve the stated objective, the following activities are to be addressed:

### **1. Raise awareness and enhance the capacities on the EU rural development and LEADER/CLLD approach potential, and support its implementation in Moldova**

- Conduct regular meetings with all stakeholders: Ministry of Agriculture and in particular the Rural Development Department, Ministry of Regional Development and Construction, European Union Delegation in Moldova, ATU Gagauzia and Taraclia district administrations, donor organizations active in rural development support to contribute to further development of their LEADER/CLLD approach and visions;
- Raise awareness of national and local counterparts on LEADER approach, EU, pre-accession and SARD LEADER experiences, benefits and harness their interest in it.

- Review information available on LEADER/CLLD related activities to date: reports, informational events and presentations, governmental decisions, studies and assessments completed on relevant topic on LEADER approach in Moldova;
- Organize capacity building events on EU LEADER approach/CLLD for national, regional and local stakeholders (with focus on ATU Gagauzia and Taraclia district);
- Ensure synergies between main SARD Programme components

## 2. SUPPORT THE PILOT-TESTING OF THE PROPOSED LEADER MODEL.

- Support and monitor the pilot-testing in 5-8 pilot LEADER areas (from formalization of LAGs to projects' identification);
- Close supervision of consulting company and coaches, and development experts assigned for mobilization/facilitation work in selected LAGs of targeted area;
- Monthly supervision meetings with coaches and development experts as well as SARD project officers;
- Support the preparation of LAGs projects' proposals to be financed;
- Based on the lessons learned of the on-going pilot-testing exercise, re-shape the proposed LEADER/CLLD approach
- Validate the findings and the proposals on LEADER/CLLD approach pilot-testing and further operationalization during a roundtable at each stage of the implementation with participation of relevant stakeholders
- In cooperation with EU Delegation experts and based on the piloting exercise contribute to the development of the detailed roadmap for LEADER/CLLD approach institutionalization in Moldova.

## 3. DELIVERABLES AND INDICATIVE TIMEFRAME

The following deliverables, activities, and milestones are to be fulfilled by the consultant:

Deliverables	Tentative timeframe and/or level of effort
<p><b>1. Monitoring, technical assistance and guidance for the formalization of eight potential LEADER/CLLD initiatives in the project's target area provided.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- detailed SARD LEADER local implementation plan for the period of April, 2017 – December, 2018 prepared;</li> <li>- evaluation criteria and necessary legal documentation for the formalisation of SARD LAGs (draft mode of operation) prepared;</li> <li>- guidance and TA to the local facilitation process in SARD LEADER pilot areas to strengthen local rural development partnerships, monitoring of the implemented activities provided;</li> <li>- Monitoring, evaluation and analyses of the local implementation process and results conducted.</li> </ul> <p><b>Deliverable 1: Set of evaluation criteria and documentation to formalization of the SARD LEADER partnerships and LEADER LAGs. Concluded and shared lessons learned.</b></p>	<p>April 20-May 31, 2017 (35 working days)</p>
<p><b>2. Set up conditions and ensure the quality of the SARD LEADER/CLLD local planning procedure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- guidelines and TA to the local SARD LEADER planning procedure provided;</li> <li>- LAG strategic action plan and implementation plan format prepared;</li> <li>- Monitoring, evaluation and analyses of the local implementation process and</li> </ul>	<p>By July 31, 2017 (25 working days)</p>

results conducted.	
<b>Deliverable 2: A guideline and approved documentation to SARD LEADER Local Planning. Concluded and shared lessons learned.</b>	
<b>3. Designing and implementing LEADER/CLLD relevant exchange visits in EU and / pre-accession countries</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- design the study visits' concepts and rationale, develop and coordinate respective ToRs with SARD staff;</li> <li>- discuss with host organizations and key relevant persons to arrange the study visits in coordination with SARD;</li> <li>- contribute to visits Agendas;</li> <li>- provide logistical details: hotels, regional transport, translation and places for meals;</li> <li>- make sure that relevant learning materials for guidance and further learning are provided;</li> <li>- conduct follow-up discussions with the stakeholders and draft Study Tours' Final Reports.</li> </ul>	By August 31, 2017 (15 working days)
<b>Deliverable 3: Study Tour Reports</b>	
<b>4. Supporting LAGs' Strategy and Action Plan approval</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- evaluation criteria and guidelines for the evaluation of the prepared LAG plans, contribution to the evaluation process;</li> <li>- draft MoUs to be signed by UNDP and SARD LEADER LAGs prepared;</li> <li>- lessons learned analyzed and necessary adjustments of SARD LEADER local implementation plan proposed.</li> </ul>	By October 31, 2017 (25 working days)
<b>Deliverable 4: Set of evaluation criteria and documentation for approval of the SARD LEADER LAGs Action Plans. Report on lessons learned of the implementation process, recommendations to future implementation.</b>	
<b>5. technical assistance, CD training and guidance to set up SARD LEADER local management offices provided</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- relevant TORs prepared, contribution to selection provided;</li> <li>- training and TA to staff provided.</li> </ul>	By December 31, 2017 (25 working days)
<b>Deliverable 5: Functioning SARD LEADER LAG Management Offices set up.</b>	
<b>6. technical assistance and guidance for the identification, design, approval and implementation of the SARD LEADER/CLLD projects, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation provided</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the documentation to SARD LEADER local project identification, implementation and evaluation prepared</li> </ul> <p>donor coordination and information flow aiming at assisting the SARD LEADER LAGs in implementing the prepared development action plan supported.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- project selection at local and SARD level supported</li> <li>- local implementation team in financial management, monitoring and</li> </ul>	May 31, 2018 (60 working days)

reporting on SARD LEADER local projects supported.	
<b>Deliverable 6: Report and analyses on rural development projects supported in frame of SARD LEADER.</b>	
<b>7. Raising EU rural development and LEADER/CLLD IMPLEMENTATION POTENTIAL IN MOLDOVA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SARD Programme's scale up and visibility by active contribution to the implementation of the SARD LEADER communication plan supported;</li> <li>- national stakeholders in implementation of the EU rural development and LEADER approach in Moldova supported;</li> <li>- awareness raising and best practices of the SARD LEADER process and results supported;</li> <li>- SARD LEADER LAGs' horizontal, vertical and international networking supported;</li> <li>- synergies between the SARD components and LEADER approach ensured.</li> </ul>	By October 31, 2018 (60 working days)
<b>Deliverable 7: Concept of the LEADER designed and implemented.</b>	
<b>8. knowledge products and final report prepared</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- case studies for major implementation steps prepared;</li> <li>- handbook for practitioners on EU rural development and implementation of the LEADER/CLLD approach in Moldova prepared;</li> <li>- Substantive inputs on LEADER/CLLD approach for new programmatic interventions provided</li> <li>- final report on SARD LEADER interventions and results prepared.</li> </ul>	By December 31, 2018 (45 working days)
<b>Deliverable 8: At least 5 SARD LEADER case studies prepared. SARD LEADER handbook for practitioners. 2 draft concept notes of programmatic interventions. SARD LEADER final report.</b>	

**Note:**

The indicated tentative timeframe has been estimated as being sufficient/feasible for the envisaged volume of work to be completed successfully and is proposed as a guideline for the duration of the assignment. It cannot and shall not be used as unique criteria for completion of work/assignment. The provision of the envisaged deliverables approved by the SARD shall be the only criteria for Consultant's work being completed and eligible for payment/s. All deliverables shall be developed and submitted in English in electronic format.

#### **4. Institutional Arrangement**

All above deliverables shall be endorsed by the SARD Manager and officers in charge.

#### **5. Duration of the Work**

The whole activity (preparation, implementation and reporting) shall be carried out by December 2018 in the limits of the above-mentioned general timeframe. The assignment envisages 10 missions to Moldova (up to 120 days in total) and the costs shall be included in the financial offer as well.

#### **6. Requirements for experience and qualifications**

##### I. Academic Qualifications:

- University Degree in Public or Business administration, planning, economics, or other relevant field. Master Degree will be considered as an advantage;

## II. Working experience:

- At least 10 years of progressive professional experience in the area of Agriculture and rural development, municipal management and/or public administration, preferably in newer EU/pre-accession/MS candidate country;
- Experience of working with the LEADER/CLLD approach on local, regional and national levels is a must, former LEADER/CLLD implementation experience in Moldova is a strong advantage;
- Experience of launching, institutionalizing and active management of LAGs is a strong advantage;
- At least 10 years of experience of working with UNDP/EU funded local development projects;
- At least 10 years of experience of working in agriculture and rural development in multi-ethnic areas is an advantage;
- Proven experience in guidelines, legal documents, training, strategic programming and project proposal drafting.

## III. Competencies:

- A solid experience in community mobilization, rural capacity development and LEADER implementation;
- Experience of work in multifaceted environment, that requires to combine and formulate common goals and crystalize win-win ideas and approaches;
- Excellent public speaking and presentation skills;
- Ability to meet deadlines and prioritize multiple tasks.
- Excellent writing, editing, and oral communication skills in English, knowledge of Romanian and/or Russian is an asset.

Proven commitment to the core values of the United Nations, in particular, respecting differences of culture, gender, religion, ethnicity, nationality, language, age, HIV status, disability, and sexual orientation, or other status.

UNDP Moldova is committed to workforce diversity. Women, persons with disabilities, Roma and other ethnic or religious minorities, persons living with HIV, as well as refugees and other non-citizens legally entitled to work in the Republic of Moldova, are particularly encouraged to apply.