**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Consultancy Services for supporting the technical activities of the RAPID Project**

**Technical Helpdesk Expert (Individual Consultant)**

# **1. Background**

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" (ANAR), the National Phytosanitary Authority (ANF), and the Directorate for Land Consolidation and Land Fund (DÎFFF) within the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR).
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 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. However, Romania has limited experience in promoting environment protection through investments in farms modernization. At this moment, there is no database with types of machinery or equipment that would serve an environmental purpose at farm level. In order to apply for the grants scheme under Component 2 of the RAPID Project or simply to get inspiration for addressing environmental issues through better farm practices, there is a need for such a database to be built and further updated. It is intended that this database, which shall comprise technical specifications of machinery and equipment, as well an assessment of the potential impact on environment (specifically, on prevention and reduction of pollutants from agriculture, such as nitrates, ammonia, plant protection products and antibiotics used in animal breeding), to become part of a Helpdesk, thus facilitating access to information. The technical information will be further promoted through the Knowledge Transfer Networks and awareness campaigns that will be financed through the RAPID Project. Furthermore, the implementation of the grants` schemes will require various visits of the location/farms of the applicants / beneficiaries, ensuring the investments (including in new facilities) are technical in line with the Grants scheme requirements, will properly address the farms needs and will serve the purpose of transforming the beneficiary farms into role model farms, hosting farmer discussion groups and help promoting good farming practices. At the same time, through the RAPID Project, GD NRRP, ANAR and ANF are designated beneficiaries for investments in specialized equipment and machinery, which will require technical support for from the PMU.

The Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests (MEWF), through the Project Management Unit (PMU) responsible for the implementation of Rural Pollution Prevention and Reduction project seeks contracting specialized consultancy services of an Individual Consultant – Technical Helpdesk Expert - to contribute to and facilitate the development and implementation of PMU’s technical activities and also to specifically support the implementation of the Grants’ public beneficiaries related technical activities.

**Definitions of terms:**

The Project / RAPID – Rural Pollution Prevention and Reduction Project

MEWF – Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests

PMU – Project Management Unit – represents the unit established within the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests, that manages the implementation of the Rural Pollution Prevention and Reduction Project

GD NRRP – General Directorate for the National Recovery and Resilience Plan

ANAR - National Administration "Romanian Waters",

ANF - the National Phytosanitary Authority,

DÎFFF - Directorate for Land Consolidation and Land Fund

KTNs – Knowledge Transfer Networks

MADR - Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

The Contract – represents the contract to be signed with the awarded Individual Consultant

The Client – is the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests through the PMU RAPID

Grants scheme – the Grants scheme under the Component 2 of RAPID Project for investments in farms’ environmental infrastructure

The Technical Helpdesk Expert – is the Individual Consultant selected based on the present Terms of Reference, to support the PMU with the implementation of the activities for Technical Helpdesk under Component 2 of the RAPID Project.

# **2. Objective of the assignment**

The key objective of the consultancy services is to strengthen the technical capacity of the PMU for managing the investments in farms modernization and for improving the institutional capacity of the RAPID Project public beneficiaries.

The specific objectives are:

- To ensure an operational Helpdesk for farmers, potential applicants, applicants or beneficiaries of the Grants scheme to be financed through RAPID Project;

- To support the grants scheme implementation;

- To help promoting the investments through KTNs and awareness campaign.

# **3. Scope of the Services:**

The Technical Helpdesk Expert will closely coordinate his/her activity with the other members and consultants of the PMU.  The Technical Helpdesk Expert will have the following tasks and responsibilities:

1. Supports the PMU staff in establishing and operating a Technical Helpdesk to responding to various expected technical queries on eligible machinery, equipment and facilities that may bring significant environmental benefits in terms of prevention and reduction of nitrates, ammonia, plant protection products and antimicrobial, as well on preserving biodiversity and climate change adaptation and mitigation, by the following actions:
2. Preparation of indicative types of farm investments (farm facilities, machinery and equipment) that may have a significant impact on environment protection, and their respective technical documents, such as: concept notes, technical specifications (TS) and technological flow, to be promoted through the farm environmental investments Helpdesk. This will include the development and updating of a database, with technical specifications machines/machinery/equipment, market prices, potential suppliers. Special focus shall be given to precision agriculture, circular bio-economy, minimum and no-tillage practices, technologies to reduce waste / improve agricultural inputs efficiency;
3. Support development of Terms of References, evaluations of Expressions of Interest and Proposals and further with contracts management, for the services that shall be procured by the PMU to support grants beneficiaries with technical expertise for Feasibility Studies (FS), Technical Designs (TD) and for the supervision services of the construction works;
4. Technical support for evaluation of applications / request and assessment of clarification/ field visits at grants applicants and beneficiaries;
5. Verification/validation of correspondence FS - TD / TS of equipment - TD (procurement phase);
6. Verification of the integration of investments in the technological flow of the farms;
7. Technical support for PMU and for the grants` beneficiaries during the procurement of machinery and equipment;
8. Technical support for PMU for the assessment of the payment claims for grants beneficiaries, including verifications on-the-spot (at the beneficiary farm);
9. Validation of the minutes of acceptance of goods - including field visits for the public beneficiaries of the RAPID Project Component 1;
10. Continuous investigation of the manufacturers/dealers and users (farmers and public institutions) for the identification of the machinery/equipment on best technologies/updated technical information.
11. Support the PMU in establishing national knowledge transfer networks on eco-farm investments, including actions as follows:
12. Structuring and documenting support materials for trainings and testimonials and participation in territorial campaigns to promote role model investment types;
13. Participation in farmers' focus groups meetings to disseminate technical information at community level;
14. Participation in meetings and events for continuous updating of promoted technologies (with machine/machinery/ equipment suppliers, manufacturers, farmers and their organisations, other institutions responsible for implementing investment programmes for farmers and/or information and advice, promotion fairs, etc.);
15. Operation of a Technical Helpdesk on types of investments with environmental impact for the contracted farmers, as well for any farmer interested in investing in environmental infrastructure of the farm;
16. Participation in national/international workshops and conferences for dissemination of information / promotion of environmental farm infrastructure.
17. Support the PMU staff in implementation of the awareness campaign, including actions as follows:
18. Technical support in the development of communication vectors and target population for the promotion of technologies;
19. Development of technical promotional materials: guides, guidelines, posters, leaflets, sketches, etc.
20. Participation in various information dissemination actions: workshops, interviews, broadcasts, meetings with farmers / farmer organisations, etc;
21. Support for the preparation of the technical specifications and provide technical support during procurement procedures, including at the reception of goods, for the machinery, equipment and other goods (with field-visits, if necessary), as eligible for the public beneficiaries of the Component 1;
22. Collaborates with the other PMU staff in preparing reports requested by MEWF, Ministry of Public Finance, World Bank and internal or external auditors;
23. Collaborates with the other PMU staff in preparing the technical related reporting documents during World Bank’s support implementation missions;
24. Participates at various PMU meetings, including with the World Bank’s representatives and prepares minutes / drafts conclusions of the meetings.

The Consultant is expected to carry out the following **prior activities** in order to achieve the scope and objectives of the assignment:

1. Examine and get extensive knowledge of the project documents (Project Appraisal Document, Project Paper, Loan Agreement, Project Operational Manual, Project Procurement Plan, Project Action Plan, Grants manual and annexes among others);
2. Meet and work directly with the PMU team, especially the PMU Director, Deputy Director, Technical Coordinator, Knowledge Transfer Coordinator, Procurement Manager and Procurement Staff.

# **4. Consultant’s Profile:**

In order to be able to charge the Client for the activities performed under these terms of reference, the expert must either

1. be a person authorized under the Law **300/2004 regarding the authorization of individual persons and family associations to carry out independent activities or**
2. **act under a limited liability company or another form of organization that enables him/her to issue invoices for the services provided. In any of the cases, the Consultant should be aware that the services will be provided only by the selected Individual Consultant and no future substitution of the individual consultant who was initially selected, will be permitted.**

**The qualifications and experience required:**

* Academic engineering education;
* A background of at least 5 years in the field of engineering;
* At least 3 years of proven practical experience in the field of project management;
* Practical experience in monitoring and assessing internationally-funded projects;
* Relevant practical experience in the field of investments for the prevention and reduction of agricultural pollution;
* Proven practical experience in managing contracts involving collection and processing of agricultural waste;
* Sound knowledge of project management and of the provision of regulations in place regarding the technical-economical documentations development for public investments are a must;
* Knowledge of WB’s monitoring and assessment exigencies and procedures; experience in working with WB will be appreciated;
* Relevant experience in producing various reports to a large number of institutions;
* Advanced PC skills and sound knowledge of the MS Project and MS Office package: MS Word, Excel, Access, Outlook, Power Point;
* Good capacity to communicate with people from different backgrounds and positions, as well as with local and national authorities;
* Good command of spoken and written English is a must.
* Integrity, Proactive, Strong communication and reporting skills and ability to work in multidisciplinary teams.

# **5. Duration of the assignment**

The duration of the contract is until March 31st, 2028 (three months before the current closing date of the RAPID Project), or any other period mutually agreed by the parties, as may be necessary. The contract may be extended, in terms of both time duration and inputs in case the RAPID Project Closing date is extended.

The initial estimated total input under the present assignment is planned to be and it is estimated at **47 months of contract duration** (8 months FY 2024, 12 months FY 2025, 12 months FY 2026, 12 months FY 2027, 3 months FY 2028) x **6 hours/day** x **17 days/month** = **4,794 working hours.**

This initial estimated total input will be finally agreed during contract negotiations subject to Consultant’s availability and the agreed date of the commencement of services.

This planned estimated input is indicative being only an estimation and there will be no need for modifications of the contract through amendments, in order to adapt the working schedule, unless a substantial increase/decrease of monthly inputs will be agreed between the parties during contract implementation. It is estimated that the exact number of working hours per month to fluctuate, in accordance with the workload at the PMU level.

The Work plan will permanently be adapted to the project implementation needs and will be agreed upon between the Consultant and the Client. It will be detailed and carried over in the monthly time-sheets, which will provide a description of the activities carried out, of the deliverables provided and will specify the monthly total inputs effectively and actually performed.

Throughout the implementation of the Contract, the Client and the Consultant will periodically establish the Work plan and the schedule of the following activities, through written or oral communications, including the estimated inputs for the future activities, as needed. The parties will keep track of the total inputs actually provided since the beginning of the contract, the total inputs provided during the reporting month and the remaining inputs out of the total inputs foreseen in the contract – data which will be reflected in the Consultant’s monthly report.

 Payments will be calculated and made based on the total number of working-hours actually performed and delivered within each month.

Consultant’s monthly average input will be of about 102 working-hours (calculated as 6 working-hours/day x 17 days/calendar month). Even if the input is foreseen as a part time, the input per working day can normally range between 0-8 hours/day depending on the working schedule agreed between the Client and the Consultant. The monthly work-schedule may also include time periods with full-time input (8 hours/working-day) and time periods with higher or lower than the 6 hours/working day time-input, and also weekends and/or national holidays, if so agreed between the parties.

The consultant is expected to commence performance of the services within maximum one week after contract signing.

The contract will include a probationary period of 30 days, after which it may be terminated through a notification issued by the Client.

# **6. Reporting**

**Monthly Progress Reports**: Based on the work plan mutually agreed with PMU and services actually provided, the Technical Helpdesk Expert will deliver a progress report of an entire month which he/she has worked. The monthly progress report will contain at least, but will not be limited to, a list of activities planned and delivered during the reporting period, their progress toward the targets, results of the activities and a corresponding time-sheet. The time-sheet records daily inputs of the Technical Helpdesk Expert and it needs to be cleared by the Client’s Representative(s). In case of sensitive activities, the Reports should give general recommendations for potential solutions and approaches for improving or speeding up the processes.

The monthly progress reports will be elaborated in one hard copy as well as in electronic format, in Romanian language. English translations will be provided only if so requested by the Client.

The progress reports will be delivered within five working days as from the last day of each month. All reports will be submitted for the approval of the Client’s Representative(s) and will constitute the basis for the monthly payment made to the Consultant under the contract.

# **7. Institutional arrangements, Data, Local Services, Personnel and Facilities to be provided by the Client**

The Technical Helpdesk Expert:

* Will work under the direct supervision of the PMU (overall management), guided technically by the Technical coordinator;
* Will cooperate closely with the Technical Department and Knowledge Transfer Network Department, as well as with all the other departments of the PMU;
* Will provide support to the Technical Department and Knowledge Transfer Network Department at PMU’s and also at Project Beneficiaries’ level;
* Will report to the PMU Director and to the Technical coordinator;
* Will cooperate with the World Bank’s Task Team Leader, as well as with WB’s specialists and with specialists from other projects financed by the World Bank.

The Consultant will not at any time communicate to any person or entity any confidential information acquired in the course of the assignment.

All documentation prepared by the Consultant in the course of the assignment will remain the absolute property of the PMU. The Consultant will, not later than upon termination or expiration of the contract for the current assignment, deliver all such documentation to the PMU.

**The observance of the Fiscal Code provisions applicable in any of the legal forms under which the Individual Consultant will provide the services (either (a) limited liability company or another form of organization that enables him/her to issue invoices or (b) person authorized under the Law 300/2004) is the sole responsibility of the Consultant.**

The Client will not pay or reimburse the Consultant for any other costs outside of the fees agreed for in the contract and the travel related expenses and, if approved by the Client in advance, other reimbursable type expenses incurred by the Consultant for the delivery of the services.

In case of travel outside Bucharest for meetings / workshops / conferences, any related costs incurred by the Consultant as for travel, accommodation, per-diem and as such, will be paid against supporting documents (for travel and accommodation) and at the level and in line with the thresholds approved for public administration for per-diem.

The Client will provide access to all relevant information, documents and stakeholders’ contact points to facilitate the implementation of the activities under this assignment, and if needed, equipment and working capital to carry out the tasks included in these Terms of Reference, including access to the PMU’s network resources for working remotely.

The Consultant will work at her/his own office. For the occasional situations in which the Consultant will carry out activities at the Client's premises – as needed / requested by the Client, the Client will ensure a furnished and equipped office space at PMU’s premises, including access to the Internet and to PMU’s network resources.