

TERMS OF REFERENCE

FOR

CONSULTANCY FOR BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING PRODUCER ORGANISATIONS IN THE SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL REGION REF NO MW-MOAIWD-218913-CS-QCBS

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Government of Malawi, is implementing the Malawi Food Systems Resilience Program (MFSRP) also referred to as the Second Agriculture Commercialization (AGCOM 2) Program. MFSRP is financed by multiple donors including World Bank IDA grant financing estimated at US\$250 million, GAFSP estimated at US\$15 million, FS2030 Global Umbrella Trust Fund estimated at US\$16 million, the Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) estimated at US\$ 45 million, CRW estimated at US\$50 million and National IDA estimated at US\$14.6 million. The total funding for the program is US\$391.6 million. The Program effective date was on 1st November 2023, it was launched on 16th November 2023. MFSRP is expected to end on 30th August 2029. The key implementing agencies are the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) as lead, the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI) and the Ministry of Lands (MoL). The Program Development Objective (PDO) is to increase the resilience of food systems and the country's preparedness for food insecurity in project areas. MFSRP/AGCOM 2 consists of six main components namely: (i) (Re-)Building Resilient Agricultural Production Capacity; (ii) Sustainable Development of Natural Resources for Resilient Agricultural Landscapes; (iii) Getting to the Market; (iv) Promoting a Greater Focus on Food Security Resilience in National and Regional Policy making (v) Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC) and; (vi) Project Management and Coordination. MFSRP covers all districts in Malawi and targets all viable agriculture value chains.

MFSRP/AGCOM 2 would like to engage the services of firms to provide Technical Assistance (TA) in Building and Strengthening of Productive Alliances in cooperative governance and commercialization of agricultural products. The Productive Alliance is the partnership between Producer Organisations (POs) and Off Takers (OTs) through a formal contract farming agreement that ensures mutual business benefits between both parties. The project provides technical support to PAs throughout the process of preparation and implementation of their respective business plans. MFRSP also provides financial support to PAs through provision of matching grants. This TA will focus on Training of Trainers (ToT) of Technical Implementation Support (TIS) Brokers and Agribusiness Officers (ABOs). TIS Brokers are

frontline individual consultants contracted by MFSRP to handhold the PAs during implementation of their business plans. ABOs, on the other hand, are permanent government employees stationed at the district agriculture office. ABOs, apart from their numerous agribusiness roles at district level, they also backstop preparation and implementation of PA business plans. ABOs are the official district council desk officers for AGCOM 2 Project.

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The overall objective of this assignment is to build capacity of TIS Brokers and ABOs to effectively support Productive Alliances (PAs) for sustainable agricultural commercialization.

3.0 LOCATION AND COVERAGE

The assignment will be executed in PAs supported by MFSRP across 18 Agriculture Districts as follows; **Nsanje, Chikwawa, Mwanza, Neno, Thyolo, Blantyre, Phalombe, Zomba, Machinga, Mangochi, Balaka, Chiradzulu, Mulanje, Ntcheu, Dedza, Lilongwe, and Salima.** The districts are further subdivided into geographical zones that were created by the project for convenience of supervision. Each zone comprises of a set of districts (refer to table 1) and is managed by a zone supervisor from the project.

Covers zone 1 and 2 located in the southern region and part of the central region. It targets 63 participants of which 18 are ABOs and 45 are TIS Brokers. Details are provided in table 1 below

Table 1: Summary of location and coverage

Zone Code	Zone Name	No. of ABOs	Number of TIS-Brokers	Total	Names of Districts in each zone
Zone 1	Southern Region	13	18	31	Nsanje, Chikwawa, Mwanza, Neno, Thyolo, Blantyre, Phalombe, Zomba, Machinga, Mangochi, Balaka, Chiradzulu, Mulanje
Zone 2	Central Region 1	5	27	32	Ntcheu, Dedza, Lilongwe East, Lilongwe West, Salima.
	Total	18	45	63	

4.0 SCOPE OF SERVICES, TASKS AND EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

4.1 Scope of services

The scope of the services covers capacity building and strengthening of PAs through provision of Technical Assistance (TA) to Trainer of Trainers (ToTs) and backstopping ToTs when training the Pas in the following districts **Nsanje, Chikwawa, Mwanza, Neno, Thyolo, Blantyre, Phalombe, Zomba, Machinga, Mangochi, Balaka, Chiradzulu, Mulanje, Ntcheu, Dedza, Lilongwe, and Salima.** The relevance or usefulness of this assignment in MFSRP is that it is expected to improve the project approach to agricultural commercialization by empowering

ABOs and TIS Brokers with necessary skills in market-oriented extension and advisory services.

This assignment is limited to ToTs for frontline staff and initial technical backstopping of the frontline staff as they in turn deliver capacity building trainings to PAs to ensure quality control. The consultancy will only cover PAs approved by the MFRSP Independent Evaluation Committee.

The main issues to be addressed by this assignment are the following: Market oriented extension and advisory services; Cooperative management and governance among Producer Organisations; Resource mobilization, and financial management; asset utilization in Productive Alliances; and sustainable productive alliances between off-takers and Producer Organisations; and strengthening accountability in collective marketing.

The assignment covers the following key aspects.

4.1.1 Develop inception report and workplan

The consultant will be expected to prepare an inception report that specifies details on the understanding of the assignment, the approach and methodology, team allocation, the workplan and recommendations to the client. The client will provide the standard format for the inception report and workplan.

4.1.2 Develop training materials for ToTs and PAs

The consultant will be expected to prepare and submit for review and approval all the necessary training materials for both trainer of trainers and productive alliances. The materials will include, training manuals, guidelines, short videos and any other useful forms of materials. The materials shall cover key technical areas that include commercialization-oriented extension and advisory methodologies, cooperative management and governance, resource mobilization and financial literacy, asset utilization, productive alliances and accountability in collective marketing.

4.1.3 Conduct ToTs to TIS Brokers and ABOs

The consultant with technical and financial support from the client will set up a centre in each zone where the ToTs will be brought together for the trainings. The trainings will be undertaken in modules as follows.

Module 1: Market oriented extension and advisory services

Module 2: Cooperative management and Governance among Producer Organisations

Module 3: Resource mobilization, and financial literacy.

Module 4: Asset utilization in Productive Alliances.

Module 5: Establishing strong and sustainable productive alliances between off-takers and Producer Organisations.

Module 6: Strengthening accountability in collective marketing.

4.1.4 Provide technical assistance during follow up trainings by ToTs to POs and Off-takers

The consultant will develop a comprehensive action plan at the end of the ToT trainings on the execution of follow up trainings by the ToTs. The client expects the consultant to undertake visits to a representative sample of ToTs to provide on spot technical assistance on delivery of trainings as a way of managing quality assurance.

4.1.5 Provide technical assistance to ToTs on setting up and use of systems by POs and Off-takers

Soon after follow up trainings to POs and off-takers, the ToTs will be required to support the POs to set up systems and implement the knowledge gained during the trainings. The client expects the consultant to undertake visits to a representative sample of ToTs in order to provide on spot technical assistance on establishment and use of systems as a way of managing quality assurance.

4.1.6 Prepare completion report

The consultant will be required to prepare a completion report covering the progress made in all the key deliverables and provide recommendations to the client. A standard format for the completion report will be provide by the client.

4.2 Tasks

The consultant will be expected to undertake the following tasks in order to fulfil the key objective of the assignment. The tasks will be executed through ToTs and follow up trainings to POs and off takers.

4.2.1 Conduct trainings in Commercialization oriented extension and advisory services

The consultant will be expected to undertake ToTs in agricultural commercialization-oriented extension and advisory methodologies to targeted TIS brokers , Government frontline extension staff and lead farmers.

4.2.2 Establish Functional Cooperative management and governance.

The consultant will be expected to establish functional and effective cooperative management and governance structures for Producer organisations, including primary and Secondary cooperatives.

4.2.3 Enhance Resource mobilization and financial literacy skills

The consultant will be expected to train TIS Brokers and ADOs in sustainable and practical skills for resource mobilization and financial management. Undertake technical assistance to ToTs to ensure that Producer Organisations can match the AGCOM grant and are capable of raising running capital for their agribusiness subprojects while building financial management skills.

4.2.4 Establish a functional Producer Organisation asset utilization system

Develop a functional and sustainable system and undertake necessary ToTs in management and utilization of assets procured through the matching grant. The system should lay down standard operating procedures that ensure fair access to PO assets and accountability by the PO members and non-members. The system should develop asset specific written agreements that specify terms and conditions for utilization of assets among farmers in Producer Organisations.

4.2.5 Strengthen Productive Alliances

Producer Organisations, by default are expected to have an agreement with at least one off-taker before they sign a grant agreement with AGCOM. The consultant will be expected to develop functional mechanisms for the improvement in the existing productive alliances and facilitate development of additional alliances for POs where the current alliances are weak. Collective marketing is key to commercialization of Producer organisations. The consultant will be expected to devise a workable system for accountability of aggregated produce, collective sale of produce , revenue collection and fair distribution of revenue/surplus among Farmer Producer Organisation members.

4.3 Expected Deliverables

This assignment is expected to deliver several key outputs with the objective of enhancing sustainable commercialization among farmer producer organisations. The following are the key deliverables of the assignment and the corresponding timelines.

Deliverable 1: Inception Report

Deliverable 2: Training materials

Deliverable 3: ToT Training report for TIS Brokers and Government Extension workers for modules 1,2 and 3

Deliverable 4: ToT Training report for TIS Brokers and Government Extension workers for modules 4,5 and 6

Deliverable 5: Report on technical assistance during follow up trainings by ToTs to POs and Off-takers

Deliverable 6: Report on technical assistance to ToTs on setting up and use of systems by POs and Off-takers

Deliverable 7: Implementation Completion Report.

5.0 FIRM ATTRIBUTES, TEAM COMPOSITION AND QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR KEY EXPERTS

This section presents the firm attributes, team composition and the qualification requirements of the key experts (KE) expected to carry out the assignment.

5.1 Firm qualifications

The firm should possess the following attributes to demonstrate its capability in **cooperative development and farmer organization strengthening**:

5.1.1 Proven Expertise in Capacity Building

- Minimum **five years of documented experience** in designing and implementing ToT **capacity-building initiatives** for farmer cooperatives, ensuring long-term sustainability and growth.
- Ability to **develop structured training programs**, governance frameworks, and strategic business models for cooperative enterprises.

5.1.2 Experience Working with Farmer Organizations

- Demonstrated **five years of engagement** with farmer organizations across **rural and semi-urban communities**, with measurable impact on agricultural productivity and business growth.
- Strong capacity to **integrate digital tools** and innovative methodologies to enhance farmer access to markets, financial services, and advisory support.

5.1.3 Track Record in Cooperative Strengthening

- Experience in **establishing, restructuring, and scaling** primary and secondary cooperatives, focusing on governance, financial management, and market competitiveness.
- Ability to **navigate legal frameworks** and policy environments supporting cooperative structures.

5.1.4 Multi-Sectoral Collaboration

- Proven ability to **engage with government agencies, private sector actors, and financial institutions** to foster linkages that benefit farmer organizations.
- Familiarity with **inclusive business models**, ensuring **gender and social equity** in cooperative development strategies.

5.1.5 Results-Driven Approach

- Clear **monitoring & evaluation framework** to track cooperative performance and measure effectiveness of interventions.
- Demonstrated success in **securing funding** and mobilizing resources to expand farmer-led agribusiness initiatives.

5.2 Core team composition and qualifications

NOTE: Caveat on Key Staff - The proposed names by a consulting firm of key staff for this assignment shall be for this assignment ONLY (which will be conducted in Nsanje, Chikwawa, Mwanza, Neno, Thyolo, Blantyre, Phalombe, Zomba, Machinga, Mangochi, Balaka, Chiradzulu, Mulanje, Ntcheu, Dedza, Lilongwe, and Salima districts). As such they shall NOT be proposed for same assignment in other districts.

5.2.1 KE-1 Team Leader

- Master's degree in **Agribusiness, Agricultural Economics, Development Economics, Business Administration**, or a related field from an accredited institution.
- **10+ years of progressive experience** in managing large-scale agribusiness initiatives, farmer producer cooperative development, and capacity-building programs, with at least **5 years at a senior leadership level** overseeing multi-sectoral projects.
- Demonstrated ability to develop **high-impact strategies**, ensure **policy alignment**, and drive **sustainable commercialization models** for smallholder farmers.
- Proven expertise in **stakeholder engagement**, including government agencies, private sector actors, and financial institutions to facilitate agricultural value chain development.

5.2.2 KE-2 Market-Oriented Extension Expert

- Master's Degree in **Agricultural Extension and Development, Agribusiness, Rural Development, or Applied Agricultural Sciences** from an accredited institution.

- **Minimum 7 years** of experience in implementing **market-driven extension strategies**, including participatory approaches that enhance farmers' access to demand-driven advisory services.
- Strong expertise in **agricultural technology adoption**, digital extension tools, and linking smallholder farmers to high-value markets.
- Experience designing and executing **farmer field schools, business incubation programs**, and tailored extension packages for diversified agricultural enterprises.

5.2.3 KE-3 Cooperative Development Expert

- Master's degree in **Cooperative Development, Rural Sociology, Agricultural Economics, Business Development**, or a related field from an accredited institution.
- **At least 7 years of hands-on experience** in **establishing and strengthening primary and secondary cooperatives**, with a focus on governance structures, financial sustainability, and market linkages.
- Proven capacity to **develop legal frameworks** supporting cooperative operations, ensuring **policy compliance** and longevity of farmer producer organizations.
- Skilled in facilitating **cooperative financing mechanisms**, risk management, and institutional capacity-building for member-driven growth.

5.2.4 KE-4 Resource Mobilization and Asset Management Expert

- Master's Degree in **Agribusiness, Agricultural Economics, Investment Management, Resource Planning**, or a closely related field from an accredited institution.
- **Minimum 7 years** of demonstrated experience in **strategic resource mobilization**, focusing on securing agricultural financing, grant structuring, and sustainable investment models.
- Expertise in **developing financial models**, including cost-benefit analysis, investment risk assessments, and optimizing productive assets for farmer groups and agribusiness cooperatives.

- Strong ability to engage with **impact investors, government subsidies**, and financing institutions to secure long-term agricultural development funds.

5.2.5 KE-5 Productive Alliances Expert

- Master’s Degree in **Trade and Marketing, Agricultural Business, Agribusiness Enterprise Development**, or a related qualification from an accredited institution.
- **At least 7 years of proven experience in business-to-business linkages**, facilitating farmer organizations’ engagement with processors, retailers, and exporters in regional and international markets.
- Deep knowledge of **commodity value chains**, price risk management strategies, and export regulatory frameworks to enhance smallholder farmers' market competitiveness.
- Experience in **negotiating supply contracts**, improving agribusiness performance metrics, and implementing **innovative branding and product positioning strategies**.

5.3 Estimated time input for Key Experts

The following is the estimated time input for the firm’s key personnel required to carry out the services:

Table 3: Key Experts time input

No.	Key Personnel	Time Input in Man days						
		Inception	ToT materials	ToTs	Follow-up TA	PO Systems set-up	Final Report	Total
1.	Team Leader	7	6	20	10	10	7	60
2.	Market Oriented Extension Expert	2	3	5	6	6	2	24
3.	Cooperative Development Expert	2	3	5	6	6	2	24
4.	Resource Mobilization and	2	3	5	6	6	2	24

	asset management Expert							
5.	Productive Alliance Expert	2	3	5	6	6	2	24

6.0 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND TIME SCHEDULE OF DELIVERABLES

The table below presents the reporting obligations of the consultant. It specifies the key deliverables and the reporting timelines

Table 4: Schedule of deliverables and reports

Deliverable No.	Deliverable Description	Timelines (weeks)								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Inception Report	█								
2	Submission of Training materials		█							
3	ToT Training report for TIS Brokers and Government Extension workers for modules 1,2 and 3			█	█					
4	ToT Training report for TIS Brokers and Government Extension workers for modules 4,5 and 6					█	█			
5	Report on technical assistance during follow up trainings by ToTs to POs and Off-takers							█		
6	Report on technical assistance to ToTs on setting up and use of systems by POs and Off-takers								█	
7	Final Report									█

6.0 CLIENT INPUT AND COUNTERPART PERSONNEL

6.1 Services, facilities and property to be made available to the consultant by the client.

The client shall be provided with the lists of TIS Brokers and the government extension workers to be targeted by the assignment. The list of POs targeted for this assignment. The client will also provide all the relevant documents needed by the consultant. The client will manage organisation and logistics for participants including cost of venues, transportation and daily subsistence allowances using government of Malawi rates and standards.

6.2 Professional and support counterpart personnel to be assigned by the Client to the Consultant's team

The client will assign the Institutional Development Specialist (IDS) under the PIU to act as the main contact officer for all administrative and technical requirements of this assignment.