# Terms of Reference and Scope of Services for

**Ex-post Evaluation of the current Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy 2014-2024 and Preparation for the new Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy 2025-2034**

# Background

# The Serbia Competitive Agriculture Project (SCAP), a US$50 million investment, was approved by the World Bank in December 2019 and ratified by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia in February 2020. The objective of the Project is to improve access to markets and information systems for agricultural producers in Serbia. This will be achieved through a) improving productivity of small and medium scale farmers by strengthening advisory and technical support; b) supporting market access of small and medium scale farmers (including finance and business planning capacity); c) improving government systems to strengthen the enabling environment for all agricultural producers (including capacity building for the Ministry, information systems, and data platform).

# The Project aims to provide financial and technical support to all productive investments in agriculture in Serbia through the national rural development program and will not finance direct payments (subsidies).1 This delimits the scope of Project interventions outside of all IPARD measures that the country has been accredited for or plans to be accredited for and puts it in the center of national rural development program.

# Project Beneficiaries: Small and medium scale agricultural production units (including producers, producer groups, agribusinesses/agro-processors that can provide direct link to smallholder farmers) that has or can have commercial focus and are not covered by accredited IPARD measures. Although large producers will not be directly targeted, the project will also benefit them with the enabling environment it will create through the improvements in information systems and the financial services provided. Small and medium size producers are defined by the economic size of holding expressed in euros of standard output. For the purposes of this project and the context of Serbia, small producers are those with an economic size of up to EUR 8,000; medium producers are those with an economic size between EUR 8,000 and 25,000.

# Project Description: The Project activities are structured into three Components. Component 1) will focus on improving the productive and entrepreneurial capacity of small and medium farmers by supporting business and financial planning for productive investments, as well as supporting market access and strengthening sector competitiveness. Component 2) will focus on improving the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (MAFWM) to provide core public goods for improving sector performance. This includes establishing and information system aligned with EU CAP requirements to enable evidence- based policy making and monitoring of results, enhance market information for stakeholders and build capacity for regulatory roles aligned with EU CAP. Component 3) will focus on project management.

# 1In 2018, the program received 8,000 applications from small and medium scale producers.

# By addressing sector needs at the level of producers (Component 1) and the MAFWM (Component 2), the Project will support a broader policy reform process in the agriculture sector through: i) improved targeting of policy instruments to different typologies of producers, ii) strengthened enabling environment for investment for small and medium agricultural producers, by improving the delivery of services to these productive segments (advisory, financial, information, etc.), iii) improving the monitoring of public resources and their utilization, as well as sector performance. It is expected that this will bring about a significant shift in the utilization of public resources in agriculture from subsidies (direct payments) to rural development investments. The Project is implemented over a period of 5 years starting from December 2019. The Project has been prepared under the World Bank’s new Environment and Social Framework (ESF).

As Serbia seeks to modernize its agriculture sector and to align with the EU acquis, the SCAP supports a broader agriculture policy reform process as well as improving the capacity of MAFWM to provide core public goods for improving sector performance. The SCAP is also aligned with the strategic goals of the Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy for 2014-2024 which is expiring in 2024 and needs to be revised to provide a continuity of the strategic development framework of the sector. It is also necessary to align the Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy with the EU acquis and Serbia’s broader strategic development context. To assess the level of achieving objectives of the Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy for 2014-2024 this assignment will include an Ex-post evaluation which will serve as input for the development of the new Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy for the period of 2025-2034.

# Objective of the assignment

# The main objective of this consultancy is to perform an Ex-post Evaluation of the current Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy for the period of 2014-2024 and prepare for the new Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy for the period 2024-2034.

# The Objective of the Ex-post Evaluation is to evaluate the achievements of the current Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy, its objectives, actions performed and progress towards the achievements of set indicators and progress towards the implementation of its objectives. Evaluation of the relevance of objectives and performance framework of the current strategy will be used as for preparation of the new Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy for the period 2025-2034.

# The evaluation process will significantly facilitate the development of the new strategy as the outcome of the process will be an independent evaluation and assessment of the current objective, implementation framework and lessons learned. Thus, the Evaluation will be the first step of the assignment.

# The objective of the second step – preparation of the new Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy for the period 2025-2034 is to develop a new national agricultural and rural development framework that will set the objectives and goals for a ten-year period. The strategic framework will define the national priorities and strategic orientations to be financially supported from different resources and mechanisms. Thus, the document will provide a strategic basis for development of further action plans, programs and projects.

# The Strategy framework will be based on the key findings and recommendations from the Ex-post evaluation of the current strategy, socio-economic analysis and implemented participatory approach with key stakeholders to set the joint objectives.

# The Strategy needs to be in line with relevant strategic national and international legal framework and policies (i.e. EU, UN, etc.) that will be identified by the Contracting Authority.

# Scope of Services

# Phase I Ex-Post Evaluation of the current Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy 2014-2024 in line with the Law on Strategic documents

# Under this activity the Consultant/Firm will be responsible for:

# Reviewing and analyzing monitoring data that will be provided by the Contracting Authority.

# Proposing and designing methods and tools for collection of secondary data.

# Triangulating findings and information gathered from different sources to draft relevant and useful conclusions and recommendations.

# Elaborating the draft Ex-Post Evaluation Report which includes key findings and recommendations.

# Elaborating the Final Ex-Post Evaluation Report that will be in line with the comments and feedback provided by the Contracting Authority.

# Phase II Preparation of the framework for new Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy 2025-2034

# Under this activity the Consultant/Firm will be responsible for:

# Reviewing the relevant legal frameworks including EU and UN directives as well as national legal frameworks with which the new Strategy will need to be aligned.

# Preparing a methodological framework of the process of the development of a new Strategy based on a participatory approach, high level involvements of stakeholders and interested parties

# Carrying out a socio-economic analysis of the agricultural sector in the Republic of Serbia which includes the analysis of key macroeconomic factors that are relevant for the respective thematic fields addressed by the strategy.

# Reviewing the conclusions and findings of the Ex-Post Evaluation of the current strategy and incorporating relevant conclusions and recommendations during preparation of the new strategy.

# Performing SWOT analysis of the agricultural sector in the Republic of Serbia.

# Preparing a proposal for a vision and strategic orientations of the new strategy.

# Preparing a proposal for operational goals of the new strategy.

# Elaborating a Draft proposal.

# Elaborating the Final proposal that will be in line with the comments and feedback provided by the Contracting Authority.

# It should be noted that the public disclosure and debate, a mandatory step in any strategic document approval and adoption, in line with the Law on strategic documents, will be organized and implemented by the MAFWM. The Consultant/Firm will support the preparation by providing necessary information and relevant documentation, but the organization, management and implementation of the public disclosure and debate of the Strategy will be the sole responsibility of the MAFWM.

1. **Deliverables**

The Consultant/Firm shall prepare and deliver the following documents in the corresponding stages of the assignment.

**Task 1 - Ex-post Evaluation of the current Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy 2014-2024**

* Inception report
* Draft evaluation report
* Final evaluation report

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| **Deliverable** | **Expected timeline of delivery** |
| Inception report | 4 weeks from commencement  |
| Draft evaluation report | 32 weeks from commencement  |
| Final evaluation report | 40 weeks form commencement  |

**Task 2 - Preparation for the new Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy 2025-2034**

* Inception report
* Draft document
* Final document

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| **Deliverable** | **Expected timeline of delivery** |
| Inception report | 4 weeks from commencement |
| Draft document | 48 weeks from commencement |
| Final document | 60 weeks from commencement |

As this is a Lump Sum based contract, the payments to the Consultant/Firm will be based upon the delivery of the agreed deliverables.

The following is the schedule of payments:

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| **Deliverable** | **Schedule of payments** |
| Draft evaluation report | 15% |
| Final evaluation report | 20% |
| Draft Strategy  | 30% |
| Final Strategy  | 35% |

1. **Reporting**

The Consultant/Firm will work under the authority of the MAFWM/Directorate for Agrarian Payments and will report to the Project Coordinator on a regular basis on the progress of the Project implementation. Reports should be submitted on time with all necessary information and provide predictive analysis for specific issues. The reports and deliverables will be submitted in both Serbian and English, language, sent via email along with 2 hard copies for approval to the MAFWM. All reports shall be approved by the MAFWM (Project management Team – Project Coordinator)

1. **Qualifications**

The Consultant/Firm must have experience in the following areas in the past 10 years:

* Experience in performing evaluations of strategies and operational programs.
* Experience in providing professional and advisory support for the development of strategic documents in agricultural or rural development sector.
* Experience in providing consultancy support to institutions in charge for agricultural or rural development sector.
* Experiences in conducting socio-economic assessments.
* Prior experience in working in the Republic of Serbia.

The Consultant/Firm must ensure the engagement of qualified experts, as well as the necessary equipment for the execution of works required to achieve the project’s objectives.

The engagement of following Key personnel is requested:

Team Leader

* University degree in natural sciences, biotechnical, social sciences or another related field;
* Minimum 15 years of general working experience
* Minimum 10 years in planning and development of sectoral development plans- strategies, action plans or guidelines;
* Minimum 10 years experience in performing evaluations or assessments of strategic documents or development programs;
* Minimum 10 years in managing team of experts on international donor funded projects in related fields;
* Fluency in English and Serbian.

Key expert 2 – Strategic planning and Evaluation expert

* University degree in natural sciences, biotechnical, social sciences or another related field;
* Minimum 10 years of general working experience in at least one of the following fields: agriculture, rural development, ecology, spatial planning, forestry, environment, nature protection or similar;
* Min 5 years of experience in performing evaluations or assessments of development strategies guidelines, action plans or operational programs;
* Min 5 years of experience in preparation of strategies, guidelines, action plans or operational programs;
* Fluency in English and Serbian.

Key expert 3 – Socioeconomic analysis expert

* University degree in economy or social sciences;
* Minimum 10 years of general working experience;
* Minimum 5 years of experience in conducting socioeconomic analysis as part of the process for development of strategies, guidelines, action plans, studies or operational programs;
* Prior experience in affordability analysis, developing SWOT analysis and financial evaluations of strategic measures;
* Fluency in English and Serbian.

Key expert 4 – Agriculture and Rural Development expert

* University degree in natural sciences - agronomy, forestry, or another related field;
* Minimum 10 years of general working experience in agriculture and rural development sector;
* Experience of 5 years in developing strategies, guidelines, action plans or operational programs related to rural development and agriculture;
* Fluency in English and Serbian.

Non key expert pool

* Minimum 5 years of experience in supporting sustainable sector development for agriculture, food industry, rural sector, or related fields;
* Prior experience working with national institutions in support to the development of strategies or operational programmes;
* Fluency in English and Serbian.

In addition to Key and Non key experts, the Consultant/Firm should present in their offer qualified project managers and administrative personnel in charge for contract management and backstopping.

1. **Logistic and timing**
	1. **Location**

The Consultant/Firm is expected to work from their own principal office, while all meetings and events must be carried out in the Republic of Serbia. On-line meetings can also be held, but only upon prior agreement with the Contracting Authority.

**7.2 Start date & period of implementation of tasks**

The tentative start date is October 1, 2023, and the period of implementation of the contract will be from the contract signature by both parties until finalization of the project implementation in December 31st, 2024.

1. **Selection**

The Consultant/Company will be selected in accordance with CQS method set out in the World Bank’s Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers (Fourth Edition November 2020).

**Expressions of interest will be evaluated based on the following criteria:**

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| Specific experience of the Company  | 40 points |
|  | points |
| Qualifications of key staff  | 60 points |