

Draft Indicative Terms of Reference (ToR) Prop for Farmer Producer Companies (FPC) Coordination Centre at Assam Agricultural University (AAU), Jorhat under APART

(A) BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

1. The Government of Assam (GoA) through Government of India (GoI) has received a loan from the World Bank for the Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project (APART). The Assam Rural Infrastructure and Agricultural Services (ARIAS) Society is the apex coordinating and monitoring agency at state level for the Project. ARIAS Society in association with Assam Agricultural University (one of the implementing agencies of the Project) now intends to hire **six Proposal Appraisal Experts for Farmer Producer Companies (FPC) Coordination Centre** planned to be set up at the Assam Agricultural University (AAU), Jorhat, on contractual basis. **The incumbent will be positioned at AAU Jorhat.**
2. The development objective of APART is “*add value and improve resilience in selected agricultural value chains, focusing on smallholder farmers and agro-entrepreneurs in targeted districts of Assam*”.
3. There are four components of APART. **The first component is Enabling Agri Enterprise Development**, with sub components being (i) enhancing state capacity to attract private investments, (ii) Setting up an Agribusiness Enterprise Development and Promotion Facility (EDPF) (iii) Agribusiness Investment Fund (AIF) support (iv) establishing stewardship council. **The second component is Facilitating Agro Cluster Development** with subcomponents being (i) support establishment of cluster level Industry Associations (IAs), (ii) supply chain support. **The third component is Fostering Market Led Production and Resilience Enhancement** with sub components being (i) promoting climate resilient technologies and their adoption (ii) facilitating market linkages through market intelligence and product aggregation (iii) facilitating access to and responsible use of financial services. **The fourth component is project Management, Monitoring and Learning.**
4. **The Project will achieve the PDO by:** (i) promoting investments in agri-enterprises, reducing the business and transaction costs, facilitating access to finance for agribusiness entrepreneurs, and, where appropriate, push for process, regulatory and/or policy change; (ii) supporting the development of a modern agri supply chain; improved information communication technologies (ICT) based farm information and intelligence services, and alternative marketing channels; and (iii) improving producers’ access to knowledge, technologies and infrastructure so that they are better able to respond to market opportunities and climate variability.
5. The sub-component C-2 on product aggregation and market intelligence, *among others* will support the establishment of Common Service Centers (CSCs). The CSCs are conceived as small scale aggregation places owned, managed and operated by FPCs. The project will finance ‘productive’ demand-driven investments, on a grant basis (FPC Grants), to FPCs, for establishing CSCs. Project funding will be provided based on the business plans prepared by them. The grants provided under these activities will be supported by the Project at 80 percent of costs with 20 percent contribution by beneficiaries. Establishment of about 125 CSCs and corresponding FPCs is being supported by the project, primarily focusing on prioritized value chains. These CSCs will

better enable FPCs to undertake various activities such as bulk purchase of inputs for sale to individual members, marketing of produce, grading and quality control, and enhancing access to distant and higher value markets and bypassing existing market inequities. The benefits to the members of FPCs are expected to be higher prices through the combination of larger critical mass of saleable produce, thereby providing economies of scale, savings in transaction costs, and strengthened negotiation positions, coupled with the added value achieved through primary grading and packing etc.

6. The local support to FPCs for technical assistance and monitoring will be from the District Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) under the Assam Agricultural University (AAU). It has been planned to establish a common secretariat in the name of **FPC Coordination Centre at AAU, Jorhat** for coordinating the work related to FPCs supported by APART. During the remaining Project period of around three years the FPC Coordination Centre will be supported by the Project, after which it will be run by AAU through its own resources or with the support of other schemes. To carry out efficient evaluation and appraisal of business plans/proposals for Common Service Centres (CSCs) and possibly other support finally leading to better market linkages of the FPCs and provide them a business acumen, it has been planned to engage the services of **six** individual Consultants i.e. **Project Appraisal Experts (PAEs), FPC Coordination Centre**.

(B) OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT AND SCOPE

7. The scope of position for **PAE, FPC Coordination Centre** mainly involves evaluation and appraisal of the business plans/ proposals submitted by FPCs for setting up of Common Service Centres (CSCs) and any other facilities with the funding support of APART.
8. *The key job responsibilities of PAE- FPC Coordination Centre include*
 - a. The **PAE, FPC Coordination Centre** will support the Team Leader and also work closely with the FPCs supported by the Project across Project Districts. He/ she will also coordinate with the Nodal Officer, Alt Nodal Officer and Head of Operational Project Implementation Unit (OPIU), AAU, and other staff members of the Centre as per directions of the Team Leader. **He will also report the progress on a regular basis to Vice Chancellor (VC), AAU or as desired by the VC.**
 - b. To support the FPCs under the Program in preparation of business plans which are economically viable. Collecting various data from FPCs in this regard and maintaining a database of FPCs supported by the Project which will be regularly updated including in the APART FPC Portal which is currently under development.
 - c. To maintain, close coordination with the District KVKs who would be technically supporting and monitoring the work of FPCs supported by APART. He/ she will also work closely with the concerned experts/ specialists at the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) of ARIAS Society.
 - d. To keep a track of the progress made by around 125 FPCs supported by the Project particularly in respect of preparation of proposals/ business plans for Project support. Facilitating funding support from the Project on the basis of approved business plan and their timely implementation. Sorting out any issues in the implementation of business plans and ensuring proper documentation by FPCs and submission to the Project authorities timely.
 - e. Liaison with banks and other financial institutions for credit support to FPCs and ensuring smooth & expeditious flow of bank credit to beneficiary FPCs. Encouraging FPCs for timely repayment. Also, closely working with select banks for availing loans & other services at attractive terms compared to other banks. Working towards signing of agreements with banks for customized services to APART FPCs.
 - f. The FPCs will also be provided with a Custom Hiring Centre (CHC) from where agri machinery can be rented out to members and non member farmers by the FPCs. The **PAE** will help the FPCs in preparing business plans for the CHCs and ensure that the machine renting is done in a

manner so that CHC becomes profitable revenue generating entity which can be run by the FPCs on a sustainable basis.

- g. Need based support to FPCs on market linkages ensuring that the business model is remunerative for the FPCs. For this the **PAE** will work closely with the Anchor Institution being set up under the Project to support the FPCs on business development, market linkages, agro logistics and supply chain management etc.
- h. Evaluation, appraisal and in-depth financial analysis of the business plans submitted by the FPCs to the Project for setting up of Common Service Centres (CSCs) and any other facilities with the funding support of the Project, as applicable.
- i. Testing and establishing the economic and financial viability and feasibility of business plans/proposals submitted by FPCs for Project support including that for Common Service Centres (CSCs).
- j. Documentation of success stories, innovative agribusiness models emerging out of the FPC initiative under APART and disseminating at various forums like APART Newsletters, social media, print & other electronic media.
- k. Representing the Project at various forums like meetings, seminar, symposia & other events, as needed.
- l. Any other task assigned by the Reporting Officer.
- m. Travel Requirements: PAE will take up field visits/tours to the project locations, FPCs, District Offices etc with the approval of Reporting Officer. Occasional out of state visits may also be required as directed.

(C) QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE, AGE ETC

- 9. **Educational Qualification:** Master degree/ Post Graduate Diploma (min two years duration) in Finance/Business Administration/ International Business/ Economics/ Agribusiness or a closely related field.
- 10. **Working Experience:** At least **seven (7)** years of experience in Project appraisal, evaluation, business plan preparation, financial analysis etc and managing or working with FPCs or other farmer collectives.
- 11. **Computer Skills:** Must have proficiency in the use of Internet based applications, Graphics, MS Word, MS Excel and MS Power Point and other related applications. *Very strong command on financial analysis particularly of business plans, proposals etc and other business statistics tools/softwares is essential.*
- 12. **Language:** Fluency in English and Hindi.
- 13. **Age:** Age of the candidate should not be more than **50** years as on **1st Jan, 2021**.
- 14. **Desirable:**
 - a. Ability to work effectively in teams as well as independently;
 - b. Good communication and presentation skills; the candidate must show initiative, synthesis, organization and personal dynamism, should be able to independently prepare reports, plans based on appraisal, analysis, evaluation etc;
 - c. Experience of working in multi stakeholder environment and multi-tasking;
 - d. Fluency in Assamese, Bengali, Bodo and other local languages;

(D) DURATION OF THE CONTRACT, NOTICE PERIOD ETC

- 15. The tenure of the **PAE** is intended for entire duration of the project and co-terminus with the project i.e. September 2024. However, continuity of the **PAE** beyond **eleven (11) months** from the date of signing the agreement and joining the position, will depend upon his/her performance. The assignment is purely contractual in nature and shall not, under any

circumstance, be extended beyond the APART's closing date, without thereby incurring any liability to the GoA/AAU/PCU/ARIAS Society/World Bank/GoI, etc. The contract with PAE may be terminated by either side at any point of time during the contractual period by serving a 30 days' notice without assigning any reason and without thereby incurring any liability to the Govt. of Assam/ AAU/PCU/ ARIAS Society. The ARIAS Society/ AAU or the Government of Assam shall not undertake any responsibility for subsequent deployment of the Consultant.

16. The PAE shall not assign or sub-contract, *in whole or in part*, his/her obligations except with the Reporting Officer's prior written consent. The PAE will have to serve the project on full time basis. He/she will provide services from Assam Agricultural University (AAU), Jorhat.

(E) REMUNERATION, PAYMENT TERMS & LEAVE

17. Depending on the qualifications, experience, competency, and also the remuneration/pay package of the last assignment, the consolidated fixed remuneration of the PAE will be determined and mutually agreed, which could be in the range of **Rs. 11.40 lakh to Rs. 19.20 lakh per year**. This annual rate shall be inclusive of all taxes, health/service related insurance, all allowances, cost of accommodation and food, conveyance to attend the office etc. *In case of exceptionally talented candidates and having longer relevant experience i.e. more than 11 years, the remuneration can go up to 25.80 lakhs per annum. However, the final decision in this regard will be taken by the SPD, ARIAS Society.*
18. Travelling, Boarding & Lodging expenses for approved official tours outside HQ will be reimbursed as per prevailing Project rules.
19. The remuneration will be given in equal monthly installments and the performance-linked-incentive will be given quarterly based on the performance and achievement against the mutually agreed deliverables by the PAE. Taxes as applicable shall be dealt with as per applicable laws.
20. The provisions of leave would be as per prevailing Project rules.

(F) REPORTING AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW

21. *The PAE will report to the Vice Chancellor, AAU through the Team Leader.* The performance of the PAE will be reviewed accordingly on quarterly basis.

(G) FACILITIES TO BE PROVIDED

22. Access to all the required documents, correspondence, and any other information associated with the project, as deemed necessary and shared office space at AAU Jorhat, along with necessary facilities like computer, printer, scanner, internet connectivity etc.

Notes:

- 1. This is a draft ToR and SPD reserves the right to modify the ToR, including increasing or reducing the number of positions any time before the recruitment process is completed.**
- 2. ARIAS Society is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages women candidates to apply.**
