

## **ARIAS SOCIETY**

**Assam Rural Infrastructure and Agricultural Services Society**

*(An Autonomous Body under Govt. of Assam)*

**Project Coordination Unit (PCU), Proposed World Bank aided Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project (APART)**

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### **Draft TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)**

#### **For Hiring an agency to set up and manage a Market Intelligence Cell (MIC) in Assam State Agricultural Marketing Board (ASAMB) under APART**

### **Background**

1. The Government of Assam (GoA) through Government of India (GoI) has applied for a loan from the World Bank (WB) for implementation of Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project (APART). Assam Rural Infrastructure and Agricultural Services (ARIAS) Society is the main coordinating agency for the project. The project will be implemented by eight line departments of GoA including their directorates/ agencies/ Commissionerates. ARIAS Society & ASAMB now intend to utilize a part of credit to hire a consultancy agency to set and manage a Market Intelligence Cell (MIC) at ASAMB **initially for a period of two years** which may be extended for further period depending upon the performance of the agency and project requirements.
2. **Project Development Objective (PDO):** The Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project aims to “increase value-added and improve resilience of selected agriculture value chains, focusing on smallholder farmers and agro-entrepreneurs in targeted districts of Assam”.
3. There are four components of the project: **The first component is Enabling Agri enterprise Development**, with sub components being (i) enhancing state capacity to attract private investments, (ii) setting up of an Enterprise Development and Promotion Facility (EDPF) (iii) Agribusiness Fund Support (iv) establishing stewardship councils. **The second component is Facilitate Agro Cluster Development** with sub-components being- (i) support establishment of cluster level Industry Associations (IAs), (ii) supply chain infrastructure support to establish a modern supply chain. **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 & product aggregation (iii) Facilitating access to and responsible use of financial services. **The fourth component is project Management, Monitoring and Learning.**
4. APART would support, value addition in the production and post-harvest segments of selected agricultural value-chains; facilitate agribusiness investments through inclusive business models that provide opportunities to small farmers as well as stimulate the establishment of new small and medium agribusiness enterprises; and support resilience of agricultural production systems in order to better manage increasing production and commercial risks associated with climate change and marketing of agro produce, in the targeted districts. The project would adopt a cluster strategy within the targeted districts to generate economies of scale; promote vertical and horizontal links between local agricultural enterprises; enable diffusion of innovations; leverage network externalities; and channel public support for services and infrastructure. By adopting a cluster approach, the project would enable all the value chain participants to develop competitive and innovative products that meet market demands rapidly and successfully.
5. Sub-component on Market Intelligence will support setting up of a Market Intelligence Cell (MIC) within Assam State Agricultural Marketing Board (ASAMB). The main objectives are to increase information transparency, profitability and market access to the farming community in the project districts. The MIC, will closely work with the Enterprise Development and Promotion Facility (EDPF) and stewardship councils under component A, and is expected to provide producers, enterprises and trade intermediaries with relevant information, technical knowledge, and market intelligence; and support diversification and intensification of the production, aimed at responding to market demand and climate variability. The overall aim is to create a conducive environment for direct and sustainable commercial relations between producers/FPOs, and buyers of produce from the targeted value chains.

### **Specific Objectives of the Assignment:**

6. The purpose of establishing Agricultural Market Intelligence Cell (MIC) in ASAMB is to help the farmers in this State to get remunerative prices for their produce and optimum realizations by other value chain players by way

of taking informed business decisions in a scientific way backed by market intelligence as well as providing crop advisory, package of practices. The specific objectives are as follows:

- Providing price forecasts well in advance of sowing of major agricultural commodities so that the farmer can take a better sowing decision during different seasons;
- Providing price forecasts during harvesting so as to enable the farmer to take decisions on selling, storage, form of sales etc;
- Providing related market intelligence such as product qualities, high price markets for the commodities concerned;
- Dissemination of the above market advisories to the farmers and others through mass media like News papers, Agricultural Magazines in regional language and English, Television, Radio, SMS and Voice mail through mobile phones;
- Training the farmers in the use of above market intelligence; and
- Training the officials of Agriculture Department (Agriculture, Horticulture, ASAMB, Assam Agricultural University) on Market Intelligence and using them as agents of dissemination of the same.

### Scope of the Assignment:

7. The broad scope of the assignment will include:
  - a. **Improving the understanding of the supply and the demand of the products of the targeted value chains:** This would include, surveys and diagnostics for the identification, characterization, and mapping of producers and potential buyers; communication and dissemination campaign to inform all actors in the value chains and other potential stakeholders about the scope and rules of the project through local workshops and mass-media outlets. Its aim is to ensure that producers and producers' organizations, potential buyers and providers of goods and services become aware of the opportunities presented by the project. Successful initiatives that can be replicated, will be disseminated widely to share knowledge on promising business opportunities; and creation of an online-based information system on markets, prices, and services, technology, affiliated FPOs, etc., that will be open to all value chain actors;
  - b. **Connecting the demand and the supply:** This would include, market studies to identify concrete business and market opportunities for FPOs and buyers at the state, national, and regional level. To enhance producers' prospects of establishing viable and durable commercial relations with buyers, the project will support the identification of buyers that have a demonstrated demand for products generated from the targeted value chains; and facilitating the dialogue with stewardship councils to inform the policy reform agenda for the targeted value chains.

### Activities to be performed by the Consultant:

<b>Activity -1</b>	<b>Setting up, managing the office of MIC and deploying the necessary manpower</b>
<b>Description</b>	The consultant will set up the MIC Office at Guwahati in the premises of Assam State Agricultural Marketing Board (ASAMB). The staff to be deployed at MIC office and their roles and responsibilities are provided in annex-1
<b>Output / Deliverables</b>	Setting up along with manpower the office of MIC Timeline for setting up office and resource mobilization: 6 months
<b>Activity -2</b>	<b>Diagnostic study</b>
<b>Description</b>	The diagnostic study would include surveys and investigations for the identification, characterization, and mapping of producers and potential buyers of APART commodities. The aim of the study would be to understand the market intelligence requirements of farmers and other agri value chain players in the targeted districts.
<b>Output / Deliverables</b>	Diagnostic study report. Timeline: 12 Months (from date of agreement signing)
<b>Activity -3</b>	<b>Communication and Dissemination campaign</b>

<b>Description</b>	The objective of Communication and dissemination campaign will be to inform all actors in the value chains and other potential stakeholders about the scope and rules of the project through local workshops and mass-media outlets. Its aim is to ensure that producers and producers' organizations, potential buyers and providers of goods and services become aware of the opportunities presented by the project. One workshop will be conducted each year in each targeted district with minimum 100 participants in each workshop. Mass media release in local TV will one per quarter and that in Assamese newspaper will be one per two months.						
<b>Output / Deliverables</b>		Initial contract	In case the contract is extended			Total	
	Years→	Y-2	Y-3	Y-4	Y-5		Y-6
	Workshop	16	16	16	16	--	64
	Mass media releases						
	TV	4	4	4	4	4	20
N. paper	6	6	6	6	6	30	
<b>Activity -4</b>	<b>Creation of web portal for MIC</b>						
<b>Description</b>	A separate dynamic web portal will be created for MIC which will be linked to ASAMB website and ARIAS Society website. The web portal will (i) display daily prices of commodities, (ii) price forecasts, (iii) crop advisory as per season, weather forecast information. Commodity profiles, diagnostic study, study on business and market opportunities will also be made available on the web portal. These will be in a downloadable format. Also, it will have information on commodity buyers, service providers, exporters, importers etc as the case may be. The web portal will be multi lingual (English, Assamese, Hindi) and will be interactive where users can post their queries related to market intelligence as well as provide general feedback for improvement. The MIC will ensure that these enquiries are responded to in a timely manner. It will also have provision of counting the number of users visiting the web portal, time spent on the portal and time spent in each section of the portal.						
<b>Output / Deliverables</b>	Fully operational web portal with all the above features by 18 months from agreement signing.						
<b>Activity -5</b>	<b>Study on Business and Market Opportunities for FPOs</b>						
<b>Description</b>	This will be an in-depth study covering all the FPOs formed in the project and would be initiated at the beginning of third project year when all the FPOs have been organized but not necessarily registered. The study would explore alternative and innovative marketing channels and opportunities for each of the FPOs. Apart from this the study would also cover business development opportunities for the FPOs. The study would be of nine months duration and should be completed by the end of year 3.						
<b>Output / Deliverables</b>	Study report on Business and Market Opportunities for FPOs Timeline: Start in beginning of y-3 and complete by end of y-3.						
<b>Activity- 6</b>	<b>Study on Market Led Production of APART Commodities</b>						
<b>Description</b>	This will be six months long study to be initiated in the beginning of year-2 of project and will be completed within six months. The study would cover for each commodity market quality, standards, expectations of the buyers (aggregators, traders, wholesalers, retailers, consumers). Accordingly, the study will also make recommendations for primary producers for market production and other value chain players for market led handling/processing (primary and secondary). The results will feed into the market led extension program of Agricultural Technology Management Agencies (ATMAs). Tentatively 16 commodities will be covered including livestock and fish.						
<b>Output/ Deliverables</b>	Study Report on Market Led Production of APART Commodities Timeline: 18 months from date of agreement signing (will start in the beginning of 2 <sup>nd</sup> year)						
<b>Activity –7</b>	<b>Buyers' Survey</b>						
<b>Description</b>	The consultant will conduct a detailed survey of bulk buyers buying APART commodities. Their requirements w.r.t. quantity, quality, seasonality and other specifications would be documented and disseminated to FPO farmers through CSCs. This database of bulk buyers will be constantly updated and also displayed on the web portal of MIC, ASAMB and ARIAS Society website. Customized extracts of this database will also be used in advisories issued by Market Intelligence Cell through various channels including SMS.						

<b>Output / Deliverables</b>	Updated Buyers database along with necessary specifications To be completed within 24 months of agreement signing.							
<b>Activity-8</b>	<b>Price forecast for APART Commodities</b>							
<b>Description</b>	Price forecasts will be made for seven major non perishable commodities of APART. The consultant will collect historical data of selected commodities- Area, Production and Yield data on International, national and state level local and national market data on arrivals and prices, petroleum prices, Export- Import, Rainfall data, Daily Prices, Futures prices, WPI, MSP, etc. This data will be continuously updated. The consultant will apply different forecasting models (based on regression and time series methods) and prepare forecasts for selected commodities. This will be an ongoing activity and for each commodity, starting from year-2. For each commodity, two forecasts will be made-one before sowing and another at the time of harvest.							
	Year	Initial contract	In case the contract is extended					Total
<b>Output / Deliverables</b>		Y-2	Y-3	Y-4	Y-5	Y-6	Y-7	
	No. of forecasts	14	14	14	14	14	14	96
<b>Activity –9</b>	<b>Dissemination of forecasted prices</b>							
<b>Description</b>	The consultant will disseminate the forecasted prices through various channels and media in a timely manner. Various channels which could be used are phone (SMS/voice messages), newspapers in vernacular language, displays in wholesale markets through ticker boards (wherever they are available), TV, radio etc. Other innovative dissemination channels will also be explored by the consultant.							
<b>Output / Deliverables</b>	Timely dissemination of forecasted prices to farmers as per crop sowing harvesting seasons.							
<b>Activity –10</b>	<b>Development of Commodity Profiles</b>							
<b>Description</b>	Commodity profiles of 16 project commodities will be prepared by the Consultant. These commodity profiles will include information on input supplies, production, post harvest management and processing, markets, buyers, major players, consumer expectations, business opportunities etc. These should be completed by 24 months from project signing. These commodity profiles will be continuously updated and uploaded on the MIC portal, websites of ASAMB and ARIAS Society. Copies will also be supplied to EDPF offices and other relevant stakeholders.							
<b>Output / Deliverables</b>	Commodity profiles of 16 commodities 24 months from date of agreement signing							

### Reports and Payments (against activities/milestones accomplished):

Sl.	Mile Stone	Timeline from the date signing of agreement	% of Payment of the contract price (Cumulative)
1.	Inception Report	Within 1 month	10%
2.	1 <sup>st</sup> Half Yearly Report & First Six Months activities completed	6 months	20%
3.	1st Annual Report & 1st year activities completed	12 months	20%
4.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Half yearly Report & 18 Months activities completed	18 months	20%
5.	2nd Annual Report, Final Report & 2 years activities completed	24 months	30%

### Services to be provided by the Client

- The client (ASAMB) shall provide an office facility for MIC operations within the premises of ASAMB. All other furnishings, utilities etc will have to arranged by the consultant. Accordingly, consultants should consider this point while submitting their proposals.
- The client will share relevant available background information, including the results of any preliminary work already conducted.

Necessary cooperation of Regulated Market Committees of the project districts will be ensured by the client.

### Key Professionals whose CV and qualifications will be evaluated

8. The CVs of following Key Professionals will be evaluated:

Sl	Designation	Qualification & Experience	Indicative Role
1	Team Leader cum Chief Economist	Master's degree in Agricultural Economics/Post Graduate in Agriculture, or Graduate in Agriculture with MBA in Marketing or Agribusiness as specialization and having at least 5 years of experience in the fields related to agriculture marketing, market analysis, data analysis and forecasting with excellent knowledge of written and spoken English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To head the Agriculture Market Intelligence Cell (MIC), coordinate its activities and lead the staff of the cell</li> <li>To be accountable and responsible to fulfil the objectives of MIC</li> <li>To collect relevant data, analyse it and provide the data and data products to different stakeholders as per their requirements</li> <li>To prepare long term forecasts of supply, demand and prices of important agricultural and livestock commodities of Assam State and continuously update them</li> <li>To prepare data/information products (like Alerts, Outlook Reports, Announcements, SMS, MMS, Voice messages, emails, Bulletins, etc.) for dissemination to various stakeholders, including price forecasts before sowing and during harvesting of the farm commodities</li> <li>To liaise with different departments of Central and State Governments, research organizations, Universities, international agencies, policy makers, market functionaries, service providers and other stakeholders for obtaining and disseminating timely and reliable data (both qualitative and quantitative) on agricultural marketing, trade, consumption, policies and prices and their projections for the future.</li> <li>To take decisions concerning prices and contents of data products in such a way that the charges (if any) are fair to the stakeholders and MIC becomes sustainable and financially independent in the long run.</li> <li>To ensure that the data and data products released by MIC are timely, accurate and beneficial to the stakeholders; to arrange periodic surveys and reviews for assessing the benefits of the services to stakeholders</li> <li>To hold seminars and workshops for discussing the methodology and models used by MIC and data products required by stakeholders</li> <li>To suggest policy measures to project and State government with regards to agriculture marketing, as and when required</li> </ul>
2	Economic Analyst	The Economic Analyst should be Graduate (preferably Post Graduate) in Economics with Statistics as one of the subjects, should be conversant with statistical software and time series and Econometric Analysis. He/she should have at least 3 years experience in this domain and knowledge of both English and Assamese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To collect &amp; compile required data from primary &amp; secondary sources and assess its reliability and accuracy</li> <li>To analyse the data by using statistical and econometric analytical methods</li> <li>To interpret the findings by discussing with traders, domain experts &amp; policy makers</li> <li>To prepare Commodity Reports, short-term and long-term forecasts for commodity prices and prepare data products for the release to different stakeholders using different media</li> <li>Providing need based training to farmers &amp; other stakeholders</li> <li>To assess the accuracy &amp; benefits of data products released by MIC from time to time &amp; make improvements in data, analytical methods and reporting</li> <li>To work under the overall guidance and instructions of the Team Leader</li> </ul>

Sl	Designation	Qualification & Experience	Indicative Role
3	Market Analyst	Master's degree in Economics /MBA. At least 10 years' relevant experience in agri commodity research & analytics (pertaining to demand, supply, arrivals etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formulating work plan for required market studies on a periodic basis in consultation with project authorities</li> <li>Designing or assisting in the development of moderator guides to ensure that necessary data is captured</li> <li>Source market analytics</li> <li>Analysis of demand-supply trends</li> <li>Agricultural markets data analysis using statistical/business analysis tools, software etc</li> <li>Providing inputs for developing alternate agri marketing channels in the state</li> <li>Documentation of best practices and success stories in Agricultural Marketing</li> </ul>
4	Research Associate	The Research Associate should be Graduate (preferably in Agriculture) with Post Graduate course in Computer Application or Data Management, should have knowledge of data maintained by the market committees, knowledge of internet and computer software including MS office and data storage and retrieval. He/she should have at least 3 years experience in the domain and knowledge of both English & Assamese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To maintain and update the sources of primary and secondary data required by MIC</li> <li>To maintain and update the lists of stakeholders, including their contact addresses, for dissemination of data and data products</li> <li>To collect quantitative and qualitative data from primary sources (Market Committees, Commodity Exchanges, Traders, Exporters and Trade/Business Associations etc.)</li> <li>To collect quantitative and qualitative data from secondary sources (newspapers, magazines, reports, internet etc.) on a regular basis</li> <li>To collate and maintain all the data collected by MIC and make it available to other staff members as needed</li> <li>To conduct surveys for assessing the accuracy and benefits of data products by visiting different stakeholders</li> <li>To work under the overall guidance and instructions of the Team Leader</li> </ul>
5	IT Officer	The IT officer should be Graduate in IT (BCA/BCS), Post Graduates (MCA/MCS) will be preferred. IT Officer should be conversant with programming and preparing data products for various media. He/she should have at least 3 years experience in the domain and knowledge of both English & Assamese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand the methods of data collection and reporting by the Market Committees and make improvements by introducing software and hardware solutions to ensure timeliness, reliability and accuracy</li> <li>To introduce hardware and software solutions for efficiently obtaining data from secondary sources</li> <li>To develop and maintain the website of MIC</li> <li>To store the data collected and data products prepared by MIC in a scientific way and ensure it is secure and easy to retrieve whenever required</li> <li>To develop application software for disseminating data and data products of MIC by different media including Radio, TV, mobile phones, websites, service providers, etc., by creating bulletins, alerts, announcements, voice and text messages, emails, reports etc.</li> <li>To arrange for displaying content on electronic boards located in Market Committees and other places</li> <li>To work under the overall guidance and instructions of the Team Leader</li> </ul>

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