

Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development (CARD) Foundation

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

for conducting study on “Identification of bottleneck problems in food safety and standardization systems of Armenia and proposal of recommendations for sector improvement” within the frames of

“SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS” PROJECT WITHIN THE RECONOMY PROGRAMME

The Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development (CARD) Foundation is announcing a call for tenders for conducting a study on “Identification of bottleneck problems in food safety and standardization systems of Armenia and proposal of recommendations for sector improvement” within Sustainable Food Systems Project, RECONOMY PROGRAMME funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) in partnership with HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation.

Deadline for applications: October 15, 2022

Project description

INTRODUCTION

“Sustainable Food Systems” TOR Food Safety Study is a pilot project within RECONOMY programme – a regional inclusive and green economic development programme of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), implemented by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation in partnership with CARD foundation and others in the Eastern Partnership and the Western Balkan countries. The project aims to facilitate cooperation between sectors related to food production and introduce innovative solutions for fragmented agricultural production which would lead to better productivity and profitability, strengthening the intersectoral linkages and utilizing the potential of secondary cities.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

The «Sustainable Food Systems» project focuses on two broad workstreams:

- **Workstream 1:** to support private sector development through promoting new and improved business and financial services and public-private coordination, stimulating enterprise investment, growth, invest and ultimately the creation of more employment and income-earning opportunities.
- **Workstream 2:** to support advocacy (policy/regulatory/ legislative/administrative improvements) so that target groups and private enterprises increase their participation and voice, and hence access better economic opportunities

The market systems development (MSD) approach guides the implementation of the «Sustainable Food Systems» project. Central to the application of the MSD approach will be working through a variety of market actors (both public and private) and supporting behavioral changes which will lead to long-term improvements in their performance, ultimately benefitting the target groups.

Purpose of Food Safety Study

Marketing of commodity or value-added food products requires compliance with WTO, Codex Alimentarius, and other accepted standards. Development of safe and secure food supplies for domestic consumption or export trade rely on uniform food policies and procedures that are fairly and consistently enforced by government agencies and producers. The compliance with international and domestic food safety, food security and import/export regulations and requirements are crucial and essential for an effective food safety system. Globally, food safety and regulatory issues are becoming increasingly complex and require science-based knowledge and understanding in order to comply. A stable and modern food safety and regulatory system must be in place to provide the necessary confidence for export customers to conduct business with Armenian food processors. In addition, improvements in the well-being of the general populace of the country are dependent upon strategies that will provide basic and sustainable food safety programs for implementation by Armenian food processors, regulatory governmental agencies and exporters.

Most of the food producers in Armenia are small-size business owners. They fully depend upon subsistence agriculture. These people often sell their produces for earning livelihood and supporting their families. As a big number of farmers in Armenia lives in villages, they have no proper idea regarding the usage of basic techniques and equipment for food safety, cleaning and sanitation.

Sanitation and hygiene are crucial for enabling small-scale producers to access markets via short food supply chains. Routine operations such as improper handling and keeping of the products, sorting, disinfection of the utensils, washing and cleaning of the facilities, contact with vehicles and equipment, interactions with service providers and outside visitors, are all possible contact points for the transfer of diseases and pests. Proper sanitation will improve quality control and food safety. Often the low level of education and lack of communication result in a general lack of awareness regarding food safety. Consequently, these factors hinder the development of food production and food service entrepreneurship in the country.

It is necessary to ensure that consumers, other food chain stakeholders and trading partners have confidence in the decision-making processes underpinning food safety law, its scientific basis, and the structures and independence of the institutions ensuring food safety and protecting their interests.

Research Company, team of experts or an individual expert will conduct market research to find main shortcomings of quality control, food safety in Armenia. Having conducted the research, identifying the

gaps and looking for alternatives to ensure the quality control and food safety, other companies will utilize the recommendations to ensure good quality and safe products which in its turn will attract more customers.

Scope of Work

Task 1. Analyze and assess food safety, quality control sectors through desk review, physical visits, key informant interviews and focus groups.

Task 2. Detailed review of the existing legislation; and in case of necessity updates/improvements provision of such recommendations to be incorporated.

Task 3. Explore the public, international and private entities and partners engaged in Armenia in food safety and quality control area and provide brief overview of strong and weak aspects of those, from both operational and to be provided services quality level stances.

Task 4. Develop quality assurance action plan based on the research/analysis results.

Reporting Requirements and Duration

The deliverables should be submitted in English. All reports should be submitted in hard and electronic copies. The submitted reports will be reviewed during 7 days by the Client. List of deliverables is presented below:

Report	Date of submission
Inception report- including approved work plan of proposed assignments, with its timelines and level of effort.	1 weeks after the commencement of the contract.
<p>Deliverable 1</p> <p>Task 1. Analyze and assess food safety, quality control sectors through desk review, physical visits, key informant interviews and focus groups.</p> <p>Task 2. Detailed review of the existing legislation; and in case of necessity updates/improvements provision of such recommendations to be incorporated.</p> <p>Task 3. Explore the public, international and private entities and partners engaged in Armenia in food safety and quality</p>	4 weeks after the commencement of the contract.

control area and provide brief overview of strong and weak aspects of those, from both operational and to be provided services quality level stances.	
Deliverable 2 Develop quality assurance action plan based on the research/analysis results.	6 weeks after the commencement of the contract.
Final Report - compiling all previous reports in their final/approved and summarized way, with key findings, conclusions and recommendations sections.	8 weeks after the commencement of the contract.

Required qualifications for the selection of the Consultant

The Consultant should have:

- 5 and more years of experience in food safety and legislative research and analysis
- Experience in working with international regulations (USDA/FDA)
- Experience in sectoral studies (not animal origin products) and policy development,

Evaluation criteria

One-stage procedure is utilized in evaluating the proposals, with evaluation of the technical and financial proposals. Proposal documents need to be sent to ani.grigoryan@card.am. The technical minimum requirements are described in the following demonstrations:

- Demonstrated understanding of Directions and Scope of the work of the Food Safety Study.
- Methodology and implementation of the plan. Details and quality (adequacy) of methodology proposed for Food Safety Study. Detailed implementation plan indicating time frames of requested Paper.
- Detailed description of the proposed team, position with the consultant organization with CVs (not more than three page for each CV) of the proposed Team Leader and other key team members. Individual experts, or team of experts are also eligible to apply without having an organization.
- Portfolio of the individual expert, team of experts or research organization, experience in similar development projects in last 5 years, client list, and management control system. Exposure in working International Donor and/or other development agencies.

The financial component must be expressed in USD. The technical proposal is evaluated on the basis of its responsiveness to the Term of Reference.

The contract will be awarded to the successful candidate, organization or group of experts following completion of all evaluation stages including final interview. The successful candidate, organization or group of experts will have to sign a contract with the CARD to undertake the assignment.