**Terms of reference**

**Field research on the implementation of the**

**LEADER approach in Georgia**

1. **Background Information:**

Action Against Hunger, in partnership with “WINNET Armenia” Network of Women Resource Centers and the National LEADER Network in the Republic of Moldova, is implementing the project *“Promoting Links between the Rural Economy and Development actions - LEADER approach in EaP region”* that is financed by the EaP Civil Society Forum*.* The main goal of the project is to promote the implementation of the LEADER approach in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, through the establishment of an Open Work Platform for the collaboration of interested partners in LEADER implementation. A cornerstone of the project is the development of a guide for the implementation of the LEADER approach in EaP countries, which will be based upon the results of country-level field studies and research.

The LEADER approach[[1]](#footnote-1) is a bottom-up, community-led approach to rural development, that promotes the inclusion of a broad range of community stakeholders in planning and decision-making processes. A key element of the approach is a territorial inter-sectoral partnership, known as Local Action Groups (LAGs), which include representatives of the public, private and civil sectors that operate and manage local development processes based on local development strategies for their locality. The LEADER approach was introduced into Georgia in 2015 under the European Neighborhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD). Initially, ENPARD assisted the implementation of the approach in three municipalities, but in subsequent ENPARD programmes the LEADER approach has been expanded to cover a further nine municipalities in Georgia, and five districts in the breakaway region of Abkhazia.

1. **Research aim and objectives**

The proposed field research aims to study the implementation process of the LEADER approach in Georgia and develop recommendations for improving this process in the future. In particular, the study will examine the following core pillars:

* Motivation of participants to actively engage in the strategic development of their locality;
* Composition and cooperation of sectors/interest groups within the LAGs;
* LAG structure and management and leadership processes/models;
* Sustainability of the LAGs.

Overall, the study aims to identify lessons learned and best practices as well as the main obstacles faced during the first phases of adoption of the LEADER approach in Georgia.

1. **Duties and responsibilities**

The consultant shall conduct the study based upon a methodology developed by Action Against Hunger that utilizes a combination of desk research and qualitative research.

The scope of work for the consultancy includes the following:

* To conduct a critical desk review of materials related to the LEADER approach in Georgia, including project documents, final reports, studies, evaluation reports and other relevant materials;
* To develop data collection instruments (key informant interviews/focus group discussion guides) based on the research aim and objectives;
* To conduct key informant interviews and four (4) focus group discussions with the LAG Executive Board members in Georgia. (Action Against Hunger will be responsible for providing the support related to the selection and recruitment of the focus group discussion participants and Action Against Hunger will conduct two (2) focus group discussions in Abkhazia);
* To elaborate a draft research report providing a descriptive overview, an analysis of the implementation of the LEADER approach and lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations based upon the information derived from the desk review, key informant interviews and (six) 6 focus group discussion;
* To develop two (2) case studies preferable covering the different aspects of the LEADER approach;
* To finalize the report based on solicited feedback from AAH team.
1. **Key deliverables and schedule**

The consultant should perform the research over a seven (7) week period and achieve the following schedule of deliverables:

**Deliverable 1:** Inception report (due at the end of Week 1) which will address the following components:

* Finalized research design and methodology;
* Consultancy work plan.

**Deliverable 2:** Extensive overview of background information (desk research) & **Deliverable 3:** Data collection instruments (due at the end of Week 2)

**Deliverable 4:** Electronic version of all collected raw data from key informant interviews and focus group discussion, transcripts of the interviews, and other process-related products (due at the end of Week 4)

**Deliverable 5:** A draft of the research report with the following key chapters (due at the end of Week 5):

* Executive Summary (context and purpose of the study, main conclusions, recommendations, and lessons learnt, etc.);
* Research design and methodology;
* Main findings (extensive overview of background information, objectives and key questions addressed, analysis through gender lens, etc.);
* Good practices and lessons learnt (2 case studies)
* Recommendations

**Deliverable 6:** The final research report following review from Action Against Hunger (due at the end of Week 7).

The consultant will work closely with the Action Against Hunger Monitoring and Evaluation Manager and Project Country Coordinator who will provide support and feedback on the research process.

1. **Qualifications and expertise of required consultants**

The consultants or consulting agency should have:

1. Post-graduate degree in Social and Political Sciences, Statistics, Management or related field;
2. Minimum of 5 years relevant professional experience in research and studies;
3. Strong background and experience in data collection and analysis;
4. Excellent communication, analysis, writing and report presentation skills in English (Essential);
5. Familiarity with the LEADER approach (Desirable);
6. Knowledge of AAH and its work (Desirable).
7. **Application procedure and requirements**

Applicants are requested to submit the following:

1. CV/resume;
2. Expression of interest letter containing the fee for the complete service in Euros (gross);
3. Example of previously completed research report (in English).

The applications should be sent to the Action Against Hunger e-mail address procurement@sc.acfspain.org with the subject line **“AAH Field Research - LEADER”** no later than the **26th June 2020.** The submitted application should fully comply with the requirements outlined in the ToR.

If there are any questions concerning the terms and conditions of this call, please contact Dea Tsartsidze via the following e-mail: dtsartsidze@sc.acfspain.org

1. **Ownership of data**

All data collected during the study will be handed over to, and will become the property of, Action Against Hunger, who will retain the right to use it for internal and external purposes.

1. ‘LEADER' derives from the French "Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économique Rurale" which means, ‘Links between the rural economy and development actions' [↑](#footnote-ref-1)