

International Labour Organization

Terms of Reference

National consultant to investigate on informal suppliers and farmers upgrading greenhouses

1. BACKGROUND AND OVERALL OBJECTIVE

Lebanon has been suffering from a severe financial and economic crisis with long-lasting effects on its economy and its people. With the drastic devaluation of the currency, prices of imported items have risen sharply, and households are now increasingly struggling to cover food needs. The combined effects of the crises have resulted in unprecedented levels of unemployment and pushed both the Lebanese population and the approximately 1.5 million Syrian refugees further into poverty. The Lebanese agriculture sector remains one of few sectors where both Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese host communities can legally find employment as well as vulnerable Lebanese host communities but has been particularly hard-hit by the ongoing crises.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is therefore implementing a project aimed at 'Promoting Decent Jobs for Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees' funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida). The project focuses on the agriculture and agri-food sector as a key sector for the livelihoods of both Lebanese and Syrian vulnerable population groups and in particular women of both communities and aim to develop specific agricultural and agri-food value chains with potential for decent job creation that will benefit both groups.

The project makes use of the ILO's Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS)¹ to safeguard jobs and livelihoods of vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian communities threatened by the crises and encourage decent job creation for both groups in sectors with potential.

Within one component, the project focuses on enhancing productivity and working conditions in the horticulture sector by supporting farmers in adopting modern greenhouses and sustainable farming practices, improving productivity, crop quality, and working conditions for both Lebanese and Syrian workers.

2. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF WORK

Lebanon features a diverse landscape of agricultural production, encompassing both open-field and covered systems such as polythene greenhouses. The latter, particularly in demand for Lebanese vegetables, has witnessed rapid growth. While a few large-scale producers have embraced advanced technologies like sophisticated greenhouses, hydroponics, and automated irrigation, most rely on the economical single-tunnel, non-ventilated greenhouse design with manual drip irrigation.²

Research suggests that upgrading from tunnel design to the multi-span chapel design technologies available could increase productivity by up to 50 per cent. Nevertheless, the popularity of the tunnel design is linked to its affordability compared with the more modern and better-ventilated designs. Several branded multi-span technologies are available from three large wholesalers and some smaller distributors. However, the limited number of brands available on the Lebanese market offers few options in terms of mid-range upgrades and/or scope for staged/ incremental investment strategies.

¹ More information on AIMS on www.ilo.org/aims

² [wcms_744016.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#)

Anecdotal evidence suggests that smallholder farmers are engaging informal suppliers to uplift their existing greenhouses cost-effectively, surpassing traditional designs. Based on anecdotal evidence, informal suppliers may range from small-holder greenhouse suppliers to mechanics and welders that are hired to uplift existing greenhouses. The goal of this mapping initiative is to explore the methods employed by farmers for greenhouse uplift and identify these informal suppliers. We aim to validate the comparability of their products to the multi-span chapel design and assess the associated costs.

For that the national consultant will conduct a mapping and field research to collect data on the solutions being used by farmers, taking into account its effectiveness and capital required for implementation.

The overarching goal of the research is to provide valuable insights and information that will guide the selection of innovative models to further develop a business model for informal suppliers.

Key related activities:

- Identify farmers who have upgraded their existing greenhouses using informal suppliers and conduct Key Informant Interviews and/or Focus Group Discussions with these farmers and their informal suppliers.
- Document a list of 10-15 uplift initiatives undertaken by farmers, detailing the technologies used, the characteristics of the uplifted greenhouse (height, size, nets, doors etc) and the type of service provider responsible for this modification
- Collect visual documentation of uplifted greenhouses.
- Gather feedback from farmers regarding the performance of the uplifted structures.
- Obtain cost data associated with each uplifting initiative.

By understanding the potential of these informal suppliers to deliver comparable results at lower costs, there is an opportunity to collaborate with them to further develop this business concept.

3. DELIVERABLES

1. Workplan with detailed timeline for the assignment. This should include:
 - a. A plan for KIIs and FGDs with farmers and informal suppliers
 - b. Outline of the strategy that will be used to reach out farmers, workers and wholesalers (phone calls, visits, spot checks, etc.)
 - c. Workplan with detailed timeline for the assignment
2. Comprehensive report containing information gathered with visual documentation of uplifting greenhouses, a description of the characteristics (height, nets, doors, etc.), and comparable cost data associated to each uplifted initiative. The final report should also contain a mapping of the "informal" service providers. The raw data obtained through the KIIs and FGDs should also be included.

4. TIMELINE

The work is tentatively expected to start on **19 February 2024 and continue until 20 May 2024.**

- All the produced documents will have to be submitted in English. The consultant will also submit to the ILO the following materials:
 - 1) Electronic copies of all data sets
 - 2) All quantitative and qualitative data (completed questionnaires, recorded interviews, focus groups, etc.)



- 3) Any other documents that will be used or collected in the course of the consultancy

5. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

1. **First payment** covering 20% of the full payment, tentatively due by 20 February 2024 upon satisfactory delivery and project approval on the following deliverable:
 - Deliverable 1: Workplan with detailed timeline for the assignment. This should include:
 - A plan for KIIs and FGDs with farmers and informal suppliers
 - Outline of the strategy that will be used to reach out farmers, workers and wholesalers (phone calls, visits, spot checks, etc.)
 - Workplan with detailed timeline for the assignment
2. **Second and Final payment** covering 80% of the full payment, tentatively due by 30 April 2024 upon satisfactory delivery and project approval on the following deliverable:
 - Deliverable 2: Comprehensive report containing information gathered with visual documentation of uplifting greenhouses, a description of the characteristics (height, nets, doors, etc.), and comparable cost data associated to each uplifted initiative. The final report should also contain a mapping of the “informal” service providers. The raw data obtained through the KIIs and FGDs should also be included.

All payments are in fresh USD via international bank transfer. A USD account should be available in the name of the consultant for payment transfers.

6. FOCAL POINT (S) AT ILO

The national consultant will coordinate with Luana Ayala, the Project Technical Officer, and with the backstopping of Federico Barroeta, the Chief Technical Advisor in ILO Beirut Office and with relevant technical departments involved in the ILO Beirut Office and ILO Headquarters.

7. REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND APPLICATION

To apply for this assignment the consultant should possess the following qualifications:

- Demonstrated experience and knowledge in technologies related to the covered horticulture sector. Familiarity with both traditional and modern greenhouses.
- At least 3 years of experience in the agricultural sector development.
- Excellent research and data analysis skills, including proficiency in both qualitative and quantitative research methods.
- The consultant should have educational background (BA or advanced degree) in a relevant field such as Agriculture, Environmental Science, Agronomy, or a related discipline.

8. Application process and Deadline:

- Interested service providers are invited to submit a brief technical proposal and CV along with their expected daily rate in USD.
- Proposals should be sent to ayalal@ilo.org and chaya@ilo.org by a maximum of **7 February 2024, 2:00 pm Beirut time.**
- **Late applications will not be considered.**
- Any questions should be referred to ayalal@ilo.org.