

Terms of Reference

Feasibility study for Agro-ecological Programme in Zimbabwe

The World Peace Service (Weltfriedensdienst e.V.; WFD) is **searching for a consultant / consultant company** to conduct a feasibility study for its agro-ecological programme in Zimbabwe.

I. Introduction and context

The WFD is a politically independent non-profit organisation without religious affiliation. We have been working in crisis and conflict regions since 1959. As a recognised partner in international development cooperation and implementing organisation of the Civil Peace Service, we support civil society organisations, especially on the grassroots level, and strengthen local ownership in development cooperation.

Together with our local partner organisations, we empower people in Africa, Latin America and Asia to improve their living conditions through their own efforts. We support them in managing conflicts peacefully, in managing resources in a democratic and sustainable manner, in promoting food security and in protecting human rights. Hand-in-hand with local civil society organisations, advisors strive for peace, justice and sustainable development.

In Chimanimani, WFD is working since 2002 with community based organisations on agro-ecological approaches, especially in terms of water use management and farming techniques as well as land and livestock management. After a period of funding separate projects with local partner organisations such as PORET, TSURO and PELUM Zimbabwe, WFD aims at combining the efforts of our partners to have larger and wider impact on the population and the environment in Chimanimani as well as political decision makers on district, province and national levels. A consolidated programme has therefore been proposed to the German Ministry for Technical Cooperation and Development (BMZ), incorporating the above mentioned organisations as partners. Technical advisors will be seconded to the project region to support and develop both, technical and coordination capacities.

II. Objectives and research questions

The objective of the present feasibility study is to provide WFD and its local programme partners with a solid **basis for enhancing the programme concept** by clarifying requirements, opportunities and risks, and offering guidance on optimising the concept, where necessary.

In particular, this involves an assessment of the feasibility of the programme and a systematic review of the extent to which the programme approach can plausibly achieve the planned impacts and improvements under the existing prevailing circumstances. The **joint learning** from the insights gained seeks to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of the programme.

Based on the programme context in the annex, the consultant will assess the following research questions:

1) Initial situation and problem analysis, on macro- meso- and micro-levels

- What current problems of the beneficiaries have been identified relevant to the proposed programme? Which of the causes of these problems will be prioritised and addressed in the project? Have any major needs of the target group not been taken into account?
- What existing local potential, structures (community-based groups, institutions, networks, umbrella organizations etc.) and social mechanisms can be built upon? What respective gaps have been identified?
- Are there any positive approaches or results from previous development measures? If yes, how can they be taken into consideration and be extended?
- What other circumstances, for example conflict dynamics, must be taken into account in the context of the proposed programme?

2) Local programme partner in the partner country

- Which organisation(s) have been selected as local project partner(s) and which others are relevant in the context? How can the selected partners engage and coordinate with those? How can local project partners' ownership be improved?
- How do existing partners currently work together (with special reference to coordination, synergy building and overlaps) and how can synergies and collaboration be strengthened in the proposed programme? Is there any potential for or existing competition or conflict between the partners? If yes, how can these be mitigated?
- Are the partners' resources and strengths as well as their respective challenges and capacity gaps, both at organisational and individual levels, well understood?
- Based on identified organisational and individual strengths and challenges: Which of the identified partners is most suitable for the implementation of the various components of the project?
- What relevant professional, methodological and political competencies, both at organisational and individual levels, must be further developed?
- What system of coordination should be established to enhance synergies (including the role of an advisor)?
- What expertise should an international advisor bring to complement and strengthen existing capacities of local programme partners?
- PORET and TSURO being membership organisations, what are potential conflicts and expectations (both on institutional level and beneficiaries)? How could those be met and minimized?

3) Beneficiaries and other stakeholders (on a micro-, meso- and macro-level)

- How were the direct beneficiaries selected, and by whom? What criteria were applied for selecting these beneficiaries? Are these sufficient? If not, what needs to be done to address this?
- What is the composition of each group/category of beneficiaries? How homogeneous or heterogeneous is the category with regard to factors such as gender, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, language, and capacity, and to what extent must the programme take this into account?
- What potential does each beneficiary category have for self-initiative? How well are the beneficiaries equipped for self-initiative? How can local problem-solving capabilities be further developed and improved?

4) OECD-Criteria¹

Relevance – To what extent is the planned programme doing the right thing?

- Will the proposed programme approach address key development challenges in the country and region? If so, which ones and in which way? How do those fit in the overall strategies by the BMZ?
- Are the focus, priorities and objectives (approach) of the planned programme clearly defined and aligned with the beneficiaries?
- To what extent do the intervention objectives and design adequately take into account the specific needs of the beneficiaries and any structural obstacles in the programme region, partner/institution, or policy programmes?
- Are the norms and standards of the approach compatible with those of the beneficiaries?
- Is the programme designed to consider and apply conflict-sensitive approaches (Do No Harm principle)?

Coherence – how suitable is the intervention?

- How consistent are the planned interventions with human rights principles (inclusion, participation), and any relevant standards/guidelines?
- To what extent do synergies and connections exist between the planned programme and other interventions by the same stakeholder (organisations) and other stakeholders?
- What are the most relevant policies on national and district level (max 3) for the intervention and how can the programme positively influence those?
- What similarities or overlaps exist between the beneficiaries and projects implemented by other stakeholders in the same region? To what extent does the intervention add value and avoid duplication?

Effectiveness – which programme approach is best for achieving the objectives?

- Are the cause-effect relationships (including assumptions) plausible? What negative effects might arise?
- Is the chosen methodological approach suitable and sufficient for achieving the programme objective? Are alternatives required? If yes, which ones?
- At what level (multi-level approach) should we anticipate implementing additional measures to increase effectiveness? What is recommended?
- How will changes be measured? What indicators (fields) are most suitable?

Efficiency – is the proposed programme's planned use of funds a cost-effective method to achieve its objectives?

- Which investments and staff structure will be necessary to achieve the set objectives in a cost-efficient manner?
- Which activities are considered the most efficient in terms of value-for-money?

Impact (significance) – what contribution does the planned programme make to achieving higher-level development impact?

- What particular contribution does the programme objective (outcome) make to the overall objective (impact)?
- To what extent does the planned programme build structures, set examples and have a broad impact? To which extent will the programme have an impact on social and cultural norms?

¹ Detailed information on the OECD criteria can be found at <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

Sustainability – to what extent will the positive impact remain once the programme has ended (without additional external funding)?

- How can the sustainability of the results and impact be ensured and strengthened (structurally, economically, socially and ecologically) with a special focus on ecological sustainability at landscape level?
- What long-term capacities will be established at beneficiary level to enable them to continue the implemented measures independently?
- What positive changes (role behaviour, mechanisms, networks, etc.) will be of long-term benefit to civil society players and the communities?
- How can built/strengthened capacities within the local partners (through trainings or the presence of international advisors) be sustained beyond the project period?
- What personal risks for those implementing the project, or institutional or contextual risks, may influence the sustainability of the project? How can these be minimised?

5) Concrete Recommendations

On the basis of the main findings the consultant will develop **concrete suggestions for each of the above-mentioned areas** which can then be incorporated into the programme concept. The overall guiding questions are:

- What components, if any, are missing from the programme concept to make the cause-effect relationships more coherent and to sustainably achieve the planned objectives? What planned components are not suitable or may have negative effect, and for what reasons?
- What findings and project-relevant data from the study are suitable for inclusion in the programme logic and what would be a suitable impact matrix look like? What activities are recommended and should be implemented and what would be the associated budget?
- What are the recommendations for possible impact monitoring and data collection indicators?
- Can the assumptions of cause-effect relationships be supported?
- What risks and assumptions must be considered in the project implementation?
- What would be adequate terms of reference (including expertise and main tasks) for an international advisor (EhFG)?

III. Methodology

The feasibility study process will include two major steps:

- Literature review
 - Documents to be provided by the client: evaluation reports for TSURO and PORET projects (2019-2023) and previous project documents if needed)
 - Relevant policies and programmes on national and district level (including but not limited to Chimanimani Climate Change and Watershed Management Strategy & Policy, Chimanimani Biosphere Management Plan, National Agricultural Policy, National Climate Change Strategy, National Agro-biodiversity Strategy)
 - Relevant studies on the subject of agro-ecology, HLLM, value chain, advocacy (such as Cyclone Idai Research)
- Field Assessment, including quantitative and qualitative data to provide:
 - Stakeholder Analysis on communal, district, provincial and national level (including analysis of possible implementing organisations) This includes but is not limited to e.g. organisational profile, technical as well as financial/administrative capacities, successfully implemented approaches and programmes, current und future funding partners and programmes, synergy potential with current partners, risk analysis....)

- Identification and needs analysis of main target groups
- Market assessment for relevant products on district and provincial level; focusing on the identification of major promising value chains, existing markets on different levels and barriers for farmers to access larger markets and potentials for agro-ecological products
- Base line data for relevant outcome indicators (such as income level, biodiversity indicators, etc)

IV. Proposed timeframe and deliverables

Deliverables	Date	Comments
Submission of financial and technical proposals	21.08.2023, 23:59 CEST	Please send your proposal to following email address: ramones@wfd.de , citing as subject "ZWE – feasibility study" For consideration, your proposal must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CV of participating researchers - Proof of previous experience for similar consultancies (work samples etc.) - Technical proposal with description of the consultant's understanding of the context and his/her approach in terms of methodology for both, literature review and field assessment - Financial proposal and proposed timeline
Contraction of consultant	30.08.2023	
Inception report with detailed methodology and tools	04.09.2023	The inception report should include following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Description of the consultant's understanding of the context and main problem analysis - Methodology for literature review (detailed list of relevant policies, studies, documents to be included) - Methodology for field assessment (quantitative and qualitative tools) - Updated timeline
Preliminary report and presentation of findings	04.10.2023	In a presentation to stakeholders such as WFD and identified organisations, the consultant will present: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Context on micro- meso- and macro level - Stakeholder Mapping - Main findings on each OECD criteria - Main recommendations
Submission of final report (including relevant data bases for future use)	13.10.2023	The structure of the final report must contain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Context and problem analysis - Objectives of the study - Methodology - Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder Mapping • Market assessment and opportunities • Baseline data for possible impact indicators • OECD criteria - Recommendations (impact matrix, activities and possible budget)

V. Consultant profile

Applicants may be individual consultants, a group of individual consultants or consulting companies with relevant expertise. Applicants must have at a minimum the following qualifications:

- Proven experience in conducting both evaluations and feasibility studies to similar environments.
- Proven experience or training in projects and programmes in the field of livelihood, Climate Adaptation and Resilience, Agroecology, community development.
- Proven experience in developing impact matrix (including indicators) and proposal. Knowledge of BMZ requirements, formats and impact matrix is a valuable asset.
- University degree in social science, rural development, agroecology or environmental agriculture.
- Expertise in relevant monitoring indicators on biodiversity (ground cover & species) and water tables
- Experience in using mixed methods and participatory approaches as well as youth, child and gender sensitive approaches.
- Fluency in English (written and spoken)
- No conflict of interest with WFD or partner organisations (PORET, TSURO, PELUM)

VI. Annex: Project concept

Bringing back biodiversity and water tables – scaling up agro-ecological approaches to ensure food and nutrition security and preserve the environment.

In Zimbabwe, the agricultural sector is dominated by 1.5 million small farmers. They produce about 70% of Zimbabwe's staple foods and practice rain-fed agriculture on an average land area of 2 hectares. The majority of small farmers reside in regions characterized by high temperatures, low annual rainfall, and soil degradation: Climate change, soil degradation, loss of biodiversity, and outbreaks of pests and diseases mean that small farmers are increasingly impoverished by declining harvests and even less able to offset the impacts of climate change. This is also the case for the programme region, Chimanimani. To a large extent, industrial agriculture, the massive use of synthetic fertilizers, hybrid seeds, and pesticides and herbicides have contributed to these deteriorating circumstances. Declining soil quality must be countered with increased use of artificial fertilizers, leading to further soil degradation that reduces yields achieved over time and increases risks for farmers as production costs rise. Agro-ecological approaches have been identified as a sustainable solution to enhance resilience, improve livelihoods of farmers and protect the environment from further harm.

The above mentioned problems are thus two-folds: on an environmental scale as well as on a population's income and livelihood scale. The programme proposes activities on household, community and national level to contribute to a sustainable development in Chimanimani which are in line with SDG 1, 2, 12, 13, 15.

Agro-ecological approaches on household and landscape level

The programme proposes a landscape and model village concept. Agro-ecological practices, such as holistic land and livestock management (HLLM) and permaculture will be intensified and scaled up in areas with low biodiversity and receding water tables. Trainings

A model village approach (for example such as eco-village) will implement permaculture designs and water harvesting systems on household level and surrounding areas (such as watershed areas). These activities will have an impact on both, household income on individual homestead area and the general water table recharge.

HLLM activities will focus on high adherence of cattle owners in well specified areas with low biodiversity. Investments on water sources, fencing and veterinary services will create the necessary cattle rearing infrastructure. Communities will be encouraged to combine agricultural activities and cattle farming through for example crop field impaction.

Continuous training courses on relevant agro-ecological approaches, especially permaculture and HLLM, but also related methods such as seed management, production of bio-fertilizer, etc) will enhance skills and resilience capacities of the target group.

Regular technical support from experts beyond the implementing partners (such as ACHM) will ensure technical advice on challenges and increase capacities of implementing partners.

Beyond the increase of individual skills, the above mentioned activities will also enhance communities' responsibility and ownership of commonly owned land and resources as they will jointly plan the implementation of eco-village, water-harvesting systems, grazing plans etc.

Market Access

Depending on the results of the market analysis, territorial markets and linkages to provincial markets for identified products with promising value chains will be established or improved.

Joint learning and building of synergies

Through the consolidated programme approach, implementing partners will enhance coordination, joint learning and building of synergies. Exchange visits between organisations, communities and individual farmers will increase exchange, learning and social cohesion in the project region.

Creation of evidence and policy influence

Shared learning documentation of approaches and evidence creation through Participatory Action research will increase visibility of the project at national and continental level, mainly through the PELUM Zimbabwe Network. The created evidences will also be used to influence identified policies on district and national level towards a sustainable agricultural system.