**Call for Expressions of Interest – Feasibility Study**

**Terms of Reference**

**Purpose:** Feasibility study to assess the project proposal for “***Empowering smallholder farmers and communities in north-western Syria through sustainable agriculture”*** for submission to the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

**Place of Assignment:** Afrin and Jandairis sub-districts, Syria / Gaziantep, Turkey

**Period of Assignment:** As soon as possible, preferably starting in 1st week of November 2024, for a total of 15-20 working days

1. **Background and Rationale**

Suffering from the crisis since 2011, Syria is experiencing an inexorable rise in humanitarian needs. Escalating violence in 2023, violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL), have led to further displacement and suffering. The socioeconomic situation has continued to deteriorate, further exacerbated by the February earthquakes in 2023, negatively impacting social cohesion, and amplifying vulnerabilities. In 2024, 16.7 million people are expected to require assistance, the largest number ever since the beginning of the crisis in 2011 (HNO, 2024 P 7). The displacement of populations has placed significant strain on already limited resources and services in the area, exacerbating existing socio-economic challenges.

The political and socio-economic conditions in Afrin and Jandairis sub-districts of Syria are deeply influenced by the ongoing conflict in the region. Moreover, the influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from other parts of Syria has intensified resource competition and further diminished livelihood opportunities for residents. Afrin and Jandairis, came under the control of Syrian opposition forces, contributing to a complex web of political dynamics.

This situation has profoundly disrupted the local economy, resulting in widespread damage to infrastructure, including crucial agricultural facilities and irrigation systems. The potential impacts of climate change and severe shortages in water and energy supplies – particularly fuel in 2024 – will significantly decline agriculture production and yields. The decrease of purchasing power among farmers has led to a reduction in land productivity, compounded by a decline in land fertility due to outdated planting and irrigation techniques. The reduction in emergency food aid and nutrition programs for vulnerable groups, combined with lack of funding for the agricultural sector, risk increasing food insecurity, malnutrition, and related diseases. (HNO, 2024 P 11).

Against this backdrop, the German organisation Orienthelfer e.V in partnership with the local implementing organisation Hand in Hand for Aid and Development (HIHFAD) intends to continue and strengthen the support of an agriculture sector in NW Syria. Funding will be applied for by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The target group for this project includes: 1135 Syrian small farmers, along with their families and surrounding communities, who will benefit from the rehabilitation of approximately 21 km of irrigation channels. This effort will provide reliable access to water and reduce irrigation costs, which are a major portion of agricultural expenses. The improvement in irrigation will support farming activities on 1550 hectares of fertile land. Among these, 500 small farmers are receiving additional support to adopt sustainable agricultural practices, including crop rotation techniques and the use of compost to improve soil fertility and overall productivity.

These interventions aim to enhance the long-term viability of farming in the region, reduce production costs, and contribute to more sustainable land use. By applying sustainable agricultural practices, the soil is used sustainably, and yields are increased. In addition, smallholder farmers can receive further training in climate-friendly agricultural practices by activating Farmer Field School (FFS) approach. This will enable them to mitigate the effects of climate change and strengthen the food security of local communities. The aim is to use the FFS to ensure sustainability through knowledge transfer beyond the duration of the project.

As part of the proposal development process, BMZ requires an external study on the feasibility of the proposed intervention design. The results will be one of the main sources for project planning and implementation, as they are to be considered in the project proposal. These terms of reference lay out the details of the assignment and the structure of the feasibility study report.

1. **Purpose**

The external Consultant undertaking the feasibility study is expected to assess the proposed intervention design and provide a qualified opinion on its feasibility as well as recommendations on maximizing the potential positive impact and mitigating risks. This outcome of the study is required to provide a solid decision basis for the further planning and development of the project.

1. **Scope of Work**

The Consultant will gather all relevant information. Based on these, he is expected to write the feasibility assessment report which should not exceed 30 pages. Supporting documents must be included. The process and activities must be documented in writing.

Specifically, the Consultant will assess the proposal documents in terms of:

* Technical feasibility, contextual appropriateness, proposed timeline and budgetary cost effectiveness of the proposed interventional support, skills development, capacity building and employment promotion measures
* Needs/problem analysis, planned impact matrix, appropriateness of planned measures for reaching intended goals, risks
* Target group (diversity aspects like ethnicity, religion, gender etc.), personal and technical capacities of local partner, stakeholder analysis
* The criteria for selecting the local entities being involved in or supportive to project implementation, and the proposed cooperation framework with them, notably with regards to programmatic and financial monitoring and evaluation.
* The sustainability of the proposed intervention design and anticipated results and impacts.

The Consultant is expected to use a variety of methods to collect and analyse data. Participatory methods should be used to collect qualitative and quantitative data. He is expected to apply, at a minimum, the following methods for his work:

* Review of the design documents, including technical annexes, and of relevant internal and external information sources such as the HRP strategic plan 2023-2024.
* Discussions with key Orienthelfer e.V. staff involved in the design.
* Discussions with representatives from the proposed partner organization the local NGO Hand in Hand for Aid and Development (HIHFAD).
* Discussions with the key agriculture field actors including (chamber of agriculture, farmer associations, agronomists, technical experts).
* Discussion with the key coordination mechanism actors including other LNGOs and INGOs with similar activities among agriculture cluster partners in Gaziantep hub.
* Outreach to the target group in the intervention area to assess the baseline situation with surveys, interviews, discussions, or other appropriate means
* The Consultant(s) shall indicate the methodology he intends to use in his application. At the end a final report in written form is required.

1. **Specific Criteria for Feasibility Study:**

The study should present the context of the planned project at all relevant levels (micro-, meso-, macro-).

Critical examination of the project should be provided, with respect to the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact (significance) and sustainability. For each criterion, chapter VI provides guiding questions which should be addressed and answered by the study.

Applying these criteria, findings are to be presented and interpretated. Based on that, recommendations for adjustments to the specific project concept, including impact matrix and project measures, should be formulated as concretely as possible in the final feasibility study report.

**Responsibilities of Consultant**

* Design the feasibility study
* Draw feasibility study budget
* Write and present inception report
* Collect and analyse data
* Produce draft report
* Facilitate research findings presentation and discussion
* Produce final feasibility study report
* All products related to the feasibility study shall be submitted to Orienthelfer e.V. at the end of the assignment and upon approval of the final report by Orienthelfer e.V.

**Responsibilities of Orienthelfer e.V.**

* Contract the Consultant
* Provide project specific documents
* Review and approve inception report
* Facilitate access to study areas
* Participate in research findings presentation and discussion
* Review draft feasibility report and approve final report
* Pay the Consultant based on the agreed terms and conditions specified in the expression of interest

**Responsibilities of HIHFAD**

* Review of the questions that will be asked in the questionnaire or discussion sessions
* Review and approve feasibility study activities
* Provide and/or coordinate logistical support to the Consultant
* Facilitate the Consultant’s access to key stakeholders and specific information, or expertise needed to perform the assessment
* Ensure that all stakeholders are kept informed
* Participate in research findings presentation and discussion

1. **Process, including tentative timetable**

The consultancy is scheduled for approximately 15-20 working days, with start as early as possible, preferably in early November 2024.

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| **Timeframe** | **Purpose/Activity** |
| 3 days | * Briefing of the Consultant through the Orienthelfer e.V. team to gain an overview of the assignment and roles and responsibilities among the team members. Consent on (time) plan for feasibility study and methodology with identified candidate, to be approved by Orienthelfer e.V. and HiHFAD. * Desk review by Consultant of relevant documents provided by both Orienthelfer e.V. and HIHFAD team. * Finalization of review methods developed and proposed by Consultant, to be approved by Orienthelfer e.V. and HiHFAD. * A review of questions that will be asked in questionnaires/surveys or discussion sessions by the Consultant(s). |
| 3 days | * Site visits and meeting with field key informants in Afrin-NW Syria. * Interaction with the target group, assessment of current situation and needs. |
| 2 days | * Meetings with HIHFAD project design team staff in Gaziantep facilitated by HIHFAD team, for understanding the design of the project. |
| 3 days | * Meetings with partners and key informants in Gaziantep facilitated by HIHFAD team. |
| 1 day | * Debriefing of Orienthelfer e.V. and HIHFAD teams by Consultant on preliminary findings and recommendations |
| 2 days | * Report writing * Validation workshop with presentation of the results * Draft report shared with Orienthelfer e.V. for review |
| 1 day | * Clarification of open questions and incorporation of reviewers’ comments * Finalization of report based on feedback from Orienthelfer e.V. and HiHFAD * Submission of final report |

1. **Deliverables**

The Consultant is expected to take the guidance note on procedures for feasibility studies by Engagement Global/bengo as framework for the assignment.

The following deliverables are expected:

1. Documentation
   * Detailed work plan, evaluation matrix (Inception report).
   * Evidence of the document review (Desk review tracker).
   * Outline of the proposed, discussed and agreed upon methodology (Inception report).
   * Data collected (e.g. electronic copies of material, data analysed and other documents related to the feasibility study, documentation of meetings with partners).
   * Debrief after the site visits and meetings with partners.
2. Reporting
   * A summary Power Point Presentation highlighting main findings and recommendations
   * Presentation and discussion of findings and recommendations in a validation meeting/workshop
   * Supporting documents
   * Feasibility study report (draft and final versions) structured as follows (max. 30 pages):

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**Table of contents (lists of maps/ figures, acronyms)**

**Executive summary (background, key findings and recommendations)**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 Summary of the proposed intervention

1.2 Background and rationale of the feasibility study (incl. main questions)

1.3 Description of the assessment process (timeline, composition of the team/ qualifications of the evaluator, external factors and their impact on the assessment process)

**2. Methodology**

2.1 Methodology (methods/ instruments, security considerations, partners and stakeholders met)

2.2 Methodological limitations

**3. Analysis of the project context**

1. Were external factors, potential challenges and the anticipated potential of the proposed intervention adequately assessed and taken into consideration?
2. Is the intervention based on a gap analysis of existing interventions by other actors? Are duplications avoided?
3. Have risks been adequately analysed and can the proposed mitigation measures be reasonably expected to address them?

**4. Assessment of the capacity and potential of the proposed partners**

* 1. Which local organizations were considered as implementing partners?
  2. Have the following aspects been assessed for the selection of local partners: Qualification of staff, organizational capacity (technical, financial, managerial, administrative)?
  3. Have capacity gaps and potential been assessed appropriately? Has a capacity building plan been developed in cooperation with the local partner? Is it addressing the identified needs, cost effective, and can it reasonably be assumed to have the desired impact?

**5. Target groups and stakeholders**

* 1. Who constitutes the target group and which criteria guide the selection of beneficiaries?
  2. What needs are expressed by the target groups and how can they be addressed?
  3. Which capacities for self-help do target groups exhibit and how can these be strengthened?
  4. Who are the most important governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in the sector and project area?
  5. What are stakeholders’ interests and how were those considered in project design?

**6. Anticipated developmental impact**

6.1 Relevance & Appropriateness

Will the planned project approach address a key development problem or a significant develop- mental bottleneck in the NW Syria?

Are the focus, priorities and objectives (approach) of the planned project clearly defined and aligned with the beneficiaries?

To what extent do the intervention objectives and design adequately consider the specific needs of the beneficiaries and any structural obstacles in the project region, partner/institution, or policy programs?

Are the norms and standards of the approach compatible with those of the beneficiaries?

Is the project designed to be conflict-sensitive (Do No Harm Principle)?

Are the proposed interventions contextually appropriate given possible alternatives?

6.2 Effectiveness

How do you assess the quality of the planning process for this project?

How do you assess the quality of the intervention logic, including the indicators?

How do you assess the quality of the proposed monitoring system? Have potential negative effects been considered and are they planned to be monitored?

How do you assess the quality of the proposed implementation structure, and of the proposed management system?

How do you assess motivation, ownership and legitimacy of the agencies implementing the project?

Are the cause-effect relationships (including assumptions) plausible? What negative effects might arise?

Is the chosen methodological approach suitable and sufficient for achieving the project objective? Are alternatives required?

At what level (multi-level approach) do you anticipate implementing additional measures to in-crease effectiveness?

How will changes be measured? What indicators (fields) are most suitable?

6.3 Efficiency

Are the proposed activities cost-effective compared to alternatives?

To what extent can the planned measures be implemented with the envisaged funds and personnel in the proposed time period?

To what extent can the envisaged spending be allocated cost-effectively, and are the investments, operating expenses and personnel in proportion to the intended goals?

6.4 Coherence – how suitable is the intervention?

How consistent are the planned activities with human rights principles (inclusion, participation), and any conventions or relevant standards/guidelines?

To what extent do synergies and connections exist between the planned project and other interventions by the same stakeholder (organisation) and other stakeholders?

What similarities or overlaps exist between the beneficiaries and projects implemented by other stakeholders in the same context? To what extent does the intervention add value and avoid duplication?

6.5 Developmental impacts to which the project seeks to contribute

Can the project reasonably be assumed to contribute to the stated developmental impacts?

How are you assessing the intervention to contribute to promoting local capacity for sustainable service delivery, and to resilience among the local population?

What is the reach of the intervention in terms of benefits to the local population/ long-term changes?

What might be potential negative effects/ unintended development consequences?

What particular contribution does the project objective (outcome) make to the overall objective (impact)?

To what extent does the planned project build structures, set examples and have a broad impact? On what levels will norms or structures be changed?

6.6 Sustainability

How can the sustainability of the results and impact be ensured and strengthened (structurally, economically, socially and ecologically)?

What long-term capacities will be established in the beneficiaries 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?

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?

**7. Cross-cutting issues**

To what extent were cross-cutting issues, in particular gender, disability, environment and peacebuilding, considered in the project design?

Can the proposed activities to address these issues be reasonably assumed to have the desired consequences?

**8. Conclusions and recommendations**

Annexes:

ToR

Composition and independence of the team undertaking the feasibility study

Evaluation matrix

Timetable and process of the feasibility study

List of persons interviewed/ participating and MoMs.

References

Methods/ instruments (e.g. questionnaires)

Other

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The report language shall be English and two copies (Draft/Final) will be submitted to Orienthelfer e.V. latest two weeks following the field visit.

1. **Expertise Required**

The Consultant should demonstrate:

* Excellent analytical and report writing skills and experience in elaborating feasibility studies for development projects.
* Experience in working with the early recovery and development including agriculture sector, preferably in the wider field of Agriculture.
* Experience in applying and analysing OECD DAC criteria.
* Knowledge in the field of livelihood would be an added value.
* NW Syria context experience is essential. The person should be familiar with the local culture, policies and laws in the respective field of expertise.
* Ability to work with minimal supervision, under time pressure, to organize himself/ herself efficiently in the country context, and to communicate and cooperate effectively with partners with different operating styles.
* Knowledge of English in spoken and written language is a must. Proficiency in spoken Arabic is a strong advantage. Local candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

1. **Logistics and travel arrangements**

* The review process will involve site visits and meetings with partners in Gaziantep-Turkey, NW Syria-Afrin.
* A Consultant based outside of Turkey is expected to have clarified in advance the visa requirements for travel to the project area.
* The Consultant will be responsible for insurance coverage and all necessary equipment (e.g. computer) as well as communication costs.
* The Consultant will be responsible for all local travel arrangements.
* The Consultant will be responsible for organizing interviews with stakeholders with support of the local partner HIHFAD.
* Orienthelfer e.V. will make available all necessary background documents and project design materials upon contract signature with the Consultant.

1. **Expressions of Interest**

Interested candidates should submit an expression of interest including the following:

1. Technical offer including description of methodology and work plan (Maximum 3 pages).

2. Financial offer including all costs for travel, accommodation, per diem etc.

3. Information on previous experience, including CV and two examples of comparable pieces of work (or recent consultancy if no comparable work is available) and 2 references

4. Information on availability for the assignment

5. Necessary documents pertaining to licenses. Statutory documents e.g. tax clearance or VAT certificate are mandatory. It is expected that applicants for this job show all costs related to conducting the feasibility study including taxes according to the rules and regulations of the local tax authorities.

Offers shall be presented to Orienthelfer e.V., via e-mail to **tender@orienthelfer.de** until **November 1st latest.**

**Submission of Proposal**

Interested Consultants are expected to submit a detailed expression of interest (technical and financial proposal) with the following components:

**Technical Proposal:**

* Understanding of the ToRs
* Proposedmethodology and work schedule (indicating description of activities in chronological sequence and dates for each activity)
* A profile of the Consultant(s) including full name, physical addresses, telephone number(s)
* Copy of CV(s) of Consultant(s) who will undertake the feasibility study

**Financial Proposal (Excel sheet):**

* Detailed breakdown of the daily rates of each feasibility study team member and expected number of working days per team member.
* (Orienthelfer e.V. reserves the right to negotiate the final fees in line with the budget available for this feasibility study and based on the experience of the chosen candidates.)
* Details of reimbursables (travel cost, accommodation and subsistence allowance during travel, communication)
* The enclosed financial offer should give a detailed breakdown of costs and include payment terms and conditions
* The budget should be presented in Euro
* The costs for organizing the workshop and meetings with stakeholders will be covered by Orienthelfer e.V.

**Selection Criteria**

The technical and financial proposals are the basis for selection of candidates.

* Budget proposal
* Technical proposal:
  + Experience in related tasks
  + Qualifications of team
  + Technical proposal and methodology

**Schedule and Mode of Payment**

* Signing Contract: First advance of 30%
* Approval of inception report: Second advance of 30%
* Final payment after submission and approval of the final report, data set and Power Point following receipt of invoices from Consultant(s): 40%
* Taxes will be followed as per government rules.

Bank transfers are in Euro.