Terms of Reference (ToR)
Agro-ecology Consultant

Assignment:	Terms of references for Agro-ecology Consultant
Location:	Lebanon – North Akkar and East Baalbeck
Duration:	12 to 15 months.
Starting date:	2 to 4 weeks after the selection of the Agro-ecology Consultant
Expected period of implementation:	12 to 15 months

1. Background of Assignment

In light of Lebanon's persistent economic and financial crisis, which has significantly impacted the majority of its population since 2019, the humanitarian situation in the country continues to deteriorate, leading to heightened levels of poverty and escalating needs. This crisis, ranked among the most severe globally, has resulted in soaring inflation, widespread unemployment, and an inability for many to afford basic necessities, thus exacerbating acute humanitarian challenges. The depreciation of the currency and inflationary pressures have led to increased prices for essential goods, further deepening the reliance of over half of Lebanon's 5.8 million inhabitants on humanitarian aid for sustenance and basic requirements. Additionally, more than 1.2 million individuals are facing significant barriers in accessing safe water and sanitation services.[1]

Given these challenges, implementing livelihood projects with farmers in Lebanon is paramount for adapting to climate change and reducing disaster risk in a climate-smart manner. The country faces various climate-related challenges, including rising temperatures and more frequent extreme events like heatwaves, cold waves, droughts, wildfires, and floods. These conditions directly impact the agricultural sector, which serves as a livelihood for many farmers, resulting in decreased productivity, shifts in production zones, and loss of pasture lands and water resources.[2] The objective is to introduce climate-smart livelihood projects to enhance farmers' resilience against climate change impacts. These projects integrate innovative and sustainable agricultural practices, equipping farmers with the necessary tools and knowledge to adapt to changing climate conditions while minimizing risks. Moreover, by promoting climate-resilient livelihoods, there's a contribution to community resilience, sustainable development, and the well-being of vulnerable populations in the face of an increasingly unpredictable climate.

In response to this multifaceted context, the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) is dedicated to enhancing community resilience, particularly targeting processors and farmers in two vulnerable Lebanese communities. Through the "Lebanon Country Program," the aim is to support micro-entrepreneurs and farmers in their recovery efforts amidst the crisis. This initiative currently concentrates on communities in NORTH Akkar - Qobayat, Owainat, Mashta Hassan, Alnahriya, Indkit, Shadra, Menjiz, Mashta Hamoud, Rmah, Aidamoun- and EAST Baalbek Nabi Chit, Khraybe, Khoder, Maaraboun, Ham, Sariin Tahta, Sariin Fawka, Jenta where targeted interventions aim to address the pressing needs and challenges faced by the local populations.

Objective of Assignment:

One of the objectives of this project is to enhance the capacities of **120 small-scale producers — 100 farmers and 20 beekeepers** — in North Akkar and East Baalbek, by supporting the implementation of agro-ecological and climate-smart agricultural practices and disaster risk reduction related to climate-smart production.

To achieve this, a 20-hour training program is planned for selected small-scale farmers, aiming to support their transition to agro-ecological and climate-smart agricultural practices. The training will focus on specific techniques related to post-harvest handling, organic agriculture, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), and Integrated Pest Management (IPM), all geared toward ensuring food safety, quality, and effective pest control.

The training will also cover topics such as soil health, promotion of biodiversity within farming systems, crop diversification, and the inclusion of climate-resilient species such as aromatic plants. These approaches aim to strengthen crop systems and enhance climate adaptability considering the locations (North Akkar and East Baalbek).

[1] Overview of the humanitarian response in Lebanon – OCHA
[2] 2016_USAID_Climate Risk Profile_Lebanon_2.pdf (climatelinks.org)

In addition, the training will include composting and sustainable irrigation techniques that reduce water needs, improve soil water retention and storage, and enhance irrigation efficiency.

A similar training program will be tailored to meet the specific needs of the 20 beekeepers, ensuring the integration of agro-ecological principles into beekeeping practices.

Based on the above, the Lebanese Red Cross is seeking a proposal/quotation from a qualified agro-ecological consultant to conduct a 20-hour training sessions for five (5) groups (20 participants in each group) of farmers and one (1) group of beekeepers consisting of 20 participants. Each followed by field technical follow up for the participants in their lands following the structure below:

- **A total of 20 hour sessions for each group:**
  The training will be provided to targeted farmers and beekeepers from North Akkar and East Baalbek and will aim to build their capacities in agro-ecological and climate-smart agricultural techniques to improve productivity and resilience to climate change and preparation for natural disasters or conflicts.
- **Technical assistance and follow-up on field:**
  Technical assistance and follow-up should be conducted after the training phase to provide the specialized assistance and coaching to the beneficiaries, offering guidance and resolving doubts about the applied practices. All visits should be completed after the training with LRC staff and volunteers who will accompany the expert during these visits.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation minimum after 6 months.**
  The locations of trainings will be determined at a later stage in North Akkar and East Baalbek.

2. Scope of Work

1. Requirements for the selection of the Agro-Ecological Expert:

This assignment aims to recruit a highly skilled agro-ecological expert who will conduct:

- 20-hour training sessions for a total of six groups: five groups of 20 small-scale farmers and one group of 20 beekeepers, distributed between North Akkar and East Baalbek.
- Technical assistance and follow-up field visits for each beneficiary in his/her land in North Akkar and East Baalbek to provide assistance and ensure sustainability.

Please, note that in addition to the targeted beneficiaries, LRC staff and volunteers will be present during the workshop days to build their capacities, and support the participants.

In addition, the field visits will be conducted in coordination with the project team who will accompany the expert during these visits.

2. Training Sessions on Agro-ecological and Climate-smart Practices:

The training sessions should outline the following:

2.1. Conduct comprehensive training sessions for the selected small-scale producers on agro-ecological practices, including post-harvest techniques, organic agriculture, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), and Integrated Pest Management (IPM), while also addressing soil care, the promotion of biodiversity in agricultural systems, crop diversification, and composting methods.

2.2. Educate the participants on the importance of applying climate-smart agricultural practices in their lands, such as the inclusion of species adapted to climate change—like aromatic plants that contribute to crop

diversification and resilience—as well as sustainable agronomic irrigation practices that help reduce water needs, improve retention and storage in the soil, and enhance the overall efficiency of water use.

2.3. Conduct comprehensive training sessions for the selected small-scale beekeepers on agro-ecological and climate-smart beekeeping practices, including sustainable hive management techniques, organic approaches to pest and disease control, and the promotion of biodiversity through the integration of bee-friendly flora.

2.4. The training will also emphasize the importance of planting species adapted to climate change that support year-round nectar and pollen availability, as well as water conservation practices around apiaries to maintain hive health under changing climatic conditions.

3. ***Duties and responsibilities of the Agricultural Expert Trainer:***

3.1. Initial Assessment: Conduct an initial assessment to all producers to identify their needs, capacities, and constraints in adopting ecological practices. This assessment has to be able to clearly showcase the participants's basline knowledge and agroecological practices.

3.2. Develop training program package that is aligned with the ToR and the topics listed in the Scope of work, including the design and development of the training curriculum, materials, and needs assessment tool for the participants;

3.3. Provide all supporting materials for the training program (hand-outs for participants, power point presentations, checklists, and reference materials);

3.4. Detailed agenda for the 20-hour training for farmers -in agreement with the project team; N.B. the same training will be provided five different groups of farmers distributed between North Akkar and East Baalbek;

3.5. Detailed agenda for the 20-hour training for beekeepers in agreement with the project team

3.6. The training should be interactive and hands-on with opportunities for participants to actively practice and receive feedback on their skills.

3.7. Support participants by providing technical input and guidance for the development of their business plans in coordination with the business management trainer.

3.8. Support participants through technical assistance and follow-up visits with CRL staff and volunteers, ensuring farmers and beekeepers apply the skills learned and receive guidance as needed.

3.9. Finalize the Initial Assessment aiming to assess the 120 participants' progress and the impact of the agroecological training on their agricultural projects.

3.10. Conduct pre- and post-training evaluations to measure knowledge gained and skills developed;

3.11. Final Report: Conduct a final report summarizing the training workshops. This may include and not limited to: key takeaways, findings, challenges, lessons learnt, recommendations, photos.

4. Deliverables

The 20-hour training for each group that will be conducted for the small-scale farmers and beekeepers will be implemented in close coordination and collaboration with the Project Team.

General Deliverables:

4.1 Needs Assessment: A comprehensive needs assessment tool to assess the specific needs and requirements of the business owners/entrepreneurs and farmers allowing the expert and the project team to gain a clear understanding of their current business situations, challenges, and aspirations.
4.2 Detailed training outlines and materials for all four module: This includes but not limited to; Training Agenda, Training Materials, Attendance Sheets, Pre/Post Test, Training Attendees Survey.
4.3 Training Schedule for all four Training Modules.
4.4 Delivery of training sessions for all four modules.
4.5 Training Curriculum (Curriculum has to include the below mentioned topics in Section 5). Handouts have to be adapted to the participants' educational and literacy levels. Also consider using visuals, demos, and simple language).
4.6 Training Activity Report: Provide a training activity report summarizing the delivery of all training sessions. This report will include any training findings, lessons learnt, Pre/Post Test results, Attendance Sheet and Feedback forms.
4.7 Technical Follow Up Schedule: Develop a post-training follow-up plan for technical assistance visits.
4.8 Technical follow Up Report: this report comes after completing the training sessions and completing the Technical follow up field visits. Its template should be agreed on with the LRC team. This report aims to summarize the specialized assistance and support to the beneficiaries offering guidance and resolving doubts about the applied practices
4.9 Visual Gallery: Compile a visual documentation gallery with photos and/or videos of the training sessions and field visits.
4.10 Success stories: Expert has to document case studies or success stories from participants applying the training and sharing it on a regular basis.
4.11 Monitoring Visits for Farmers: the expert conducts the monitoring and evaluation visits to evaluate the project's impacts following the previous interventions. This is done through specific monitoring and evaluation developed tools and site visits. This is done at the latest six months of the project.
4.12 Monitoring Visits for Beekeepers: the expert conducts the monitoring and evaluation visits to evaluate the project's impacts following the previous interventions. This is done through specific monitoring and evaluation developed tools and site visits. This is done at the latest six months of the project.
4.13 Final Report: Submit a report detailing the training findings, achievements, including photos and assessment results, in addition to recommendations with suggestions for further capacity building and improvements.

Specific Technical Deliverables:

4.14 Baseline and Endline Assessment on adapted agro-ecological practices.
4.15 Design two booklets summarizing the agro-ecological and climate-smart Good Agricultural Practices (GAP): one tailored for farmers and one for beekeepers, adapted to the context.
4.16 Design Booklet summarizing composting best practices (to be applied by both farmers and beekeepers).

Topics to be covered:

Topics to be delivered to farmers:

- Agro-Ecological Principles & Organic Agriculture
- Soil Health
- Composting and Water-Efficient Irrigation Techniques/Water management
- GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) and IPM (Integrated Pest Management)
- Post-Harvest Handling and Food Safety
- Crop Diversification, Climate-Resilient Species (Biodiversity promotion, and diversification through climate-adapted crops e.g.,
- aromatic plants).
- Final Discussion, Group Reflection, Evaluation

Topics to be delivered to Beekeepers:

- Sustainable beekeeping under climate stress
- Bee health management and natural treatments
- Integration of aromatic plants to support pollinators
- Biodiversity, hive positioning, and field adaptation

5. Agricultural Expert Profile

Academic Qualifications, Education and Relevant Experience:

- University degree: Specialist with a Master's Degree in Agriculture, Agro-ecology, Agronomy, or Agricultural Engineering with a specialization in plant production or plant protection. (Mandatory)
- Minimum of three (3) years of experience delivering training on agro-ecological and climate-smart agricultural practices, including Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for small-scale farmers and sustainable beekeeping techniques for beekeepers. (Mandatory)
- Proven track record of implementing at least three (3) similar projects with a focus on capacity building for farmers and/or beekeepers.
- Previous experience in dealing with civil society organizations (CSOs), NGOs or national societies is an asset;

- Fluency in written and spoken Arabic. Working proficiency in English is required for reporting and documentation.
- Excellent computer skills, particularly in MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), and ability to use digital tools for training and reporting.
- Ability to effectively support and communicate with participants of varying literacy levels to ensure inclusive and participatory learning.
- Strong reporting, coordination, and analytical skills.

3. Application Procedures

The application should include:

- Motivation letter summarizing relevant training experience, his/her expertise, and success stories.
- Detailed CV/ resume with clear starting and ending dates, including 3 references (including sample of previous work).
- Detailed technical proposal, including training methodology (with tools and resources), the suggested training topics and Agenda. Financial/ budget proposal.

Please, note that only completed proposals will be evaluated.
Please, note that the selected expert should be flexible in scheduling the workshop days based on the project team suggestions and plan.

4. Technical Evaluation Criteria:

Technical Criteria weight-70% & Financial Criteria weight- 30%
(Only bidders scoring at least 55 out of 70 points in the technical evaluation will proceed to the financial evaluation.)

Criteria:	**100 Points**
Criteria A: Expert Qualifications as stated in the ToR (50 Points)	
Relevant Education • University degree: Master's Degree in Agriculture, Agro-ecology, Agronomy, or Agricultural Engineering with a specialization in plant production or plant protection. (5 points) • Excellent computer skills with Strong reporting, coordination, and analytical skills. (5 points).	Max 10 points
Relevant Previous experience • Minimum of three (3) years of experience delivering training on agro-ecological and climate-smart agricultural practices, including Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for small-scale farmers and sustainable beekeeping techniques for beekeepers (5 points). • Previous experience in dealing with civil society organizations (CSOs), NGOs or national societies is an asset (5 points) • +3 years' work experience in a training or capacity building role in similar projects (5 points) • Samples of previous projects and works similar to the above mentioned Scope of Work (3 points). • Proven track record of implementing at least three (3) similar projects with a focus on capacity building for farmers and/or beekeepers (2points).	Max 20 points
Submitted methodology • Detailed Methodology for the Assignment (5 points) • Detailed Assignment Scope of Work (5 points) • Detailed Timeframe (5 points) • Detailed curriculum and training topics (2 points) • Detailed one–to–one coaching methodology (including tools and resources) (2 points) • Previous successful experience with LRC is a plus based on the feedback from LRC (1 Point)	Max 20 points
Interview: • Clarity in expressing ideas (5 points) • Accuracy in responses (5 points) • Ability to interact and engage with the interviewers (5 points) • Capacity to develop solution – oriented strategies (5points)	Max 20 Points

Payment Schedule:

- **We are kindly requesting that The payment schedule will de divided to minimum of four payments related to the successfull completion of deliverables.**