

Agricultural Competitiveness and Enterprise Development (ACED) Project

Contract Number: AID-117-C-11-00001

Request for proposals

Design of a Horticulture Development Program for the Republic of Moldova

Type of Contract: Fixed Price Purchase Order
RFP Issue Date: May 03, 2012
Proposal Due Date: May 28, 2012
Proposals received after 5:00 PM on this date may not be considered.
Electronic copies may be sent to MoldovaAg@dai.com

Background: The need for a Horticulture Development Program

ACED (Agricultural Competitiveness and Enterprise Development) is a five year project, co-funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), to increase the success of the Moldovan agriculture sector in the production and marketing of high value crops both in the domestic market and internationally. ACED focuses on a limited number of high value agriculture (HVA) value chains that will take advantage of new programs, supported by MCC, to increase irrigation capacity in the country and provide positive returns to farmers and the rural economy. The project will provide a combination of technical and managerial training, technical assistance and marketing services to strengthen existing value chains and encourage the development of new ones.

Accelerated development of the horticultural sector is critical for the growth of Moldova's agricultural sector and its economy overall. Government action—at all levels, and through quasi-governmental institutions—affects the growth and competitiveness of the horticulture sector. Such policies range from those that are clearly sector-oriented, such as seed testing and registration, to broader issues, like infrastructure development or exchange rate policy. Existing policies may actually constrain the potential of Moldova's horticultural sector. Identifying these issues, establishing clear policy objectives to overcome constraints, and identifying the actions needed to achieve these objectives therefore represents a policy priority for the Government of the Republic of Moldova (GORM). The Government has therefore initiated the process of articulating a Horticulture Development Program (HDP) that responds to this need.

The GORM has asked ACED to provide support in the process of designing the HDP. ACED is therefore seeking the services of a Moldovan firm to provide that support under the guidance of a Horticulture Policy Working Group, under the supervision of ACED and ultimately USAID, in close coordination with other activities under the Project. The ultimate objective of this exercise is the adoption of an official Horticulture Development Program by the Government.

Work on the design of the HDP is expected to start in May 2012, with a target for adoption by the Government by November 2012.



HDP design specifications

The design of the Horticulture Development Program will follow the framework laid out by the Government Decree No. 33 of 11. January 2007. This Decree distinguishes four types or levels of government policy documents:

- Concept papers;
- Strategies;
- Programs; and
- Plans.

The HDP is designed to meet the criteria for the “Program” option. It is to provide the rationale for specific actions on the part of the Government aimed at promoting the growth and economic performance of Moldova’s horticultural sector.

In line with the specifications of the Decree, the HDP will at a minimum include the following elements:

- (1) **Identify key issues:** Examine the nature of the problems in the sector, in particular with respect to policies controlled by the Government or quasi-governmental institutions.
- (2) **Establish specific objectives of the Program:** Based on the analysis of the problems, determine a comprehensive list of specific objectives for government policy to promote the growth of Moldova’s horticulture sector, possibly grouped into categories like “institutional development,” “legislative action required,” or “organizational/administrative changes.”
- (3) **Determine the actions to be undertaken:** For each of the specific objectives, assess the actions needed to achieve them, such as changing institutional arrangements, adopting new legislation, promulgating new regulations, launching new programs, etc.
- (4) **Set deadlines for these actions:** For all actions required, establish a deadline for their implementation to ensure a smooth performance of the overall Program.
- (5) **Assign institutional responsibilities:** For all actions required to achieve the objectives, identify which lead institutions are to be charged with their implementation.
- (6) **Provide broad estimates of the resources required:** For each action, estimate the financial and other resources required for implementation.
- (7) **Outline the expected results:** What will be the results that show that the specific objectives have actually been achieved?

- (8) **Propose program performance indicators:** What are the best metrics to show whether the Program has generated the hoped-for results and has achieved the specific objectives?
- (9) **Delineate procedures for reporting and evaluation.**

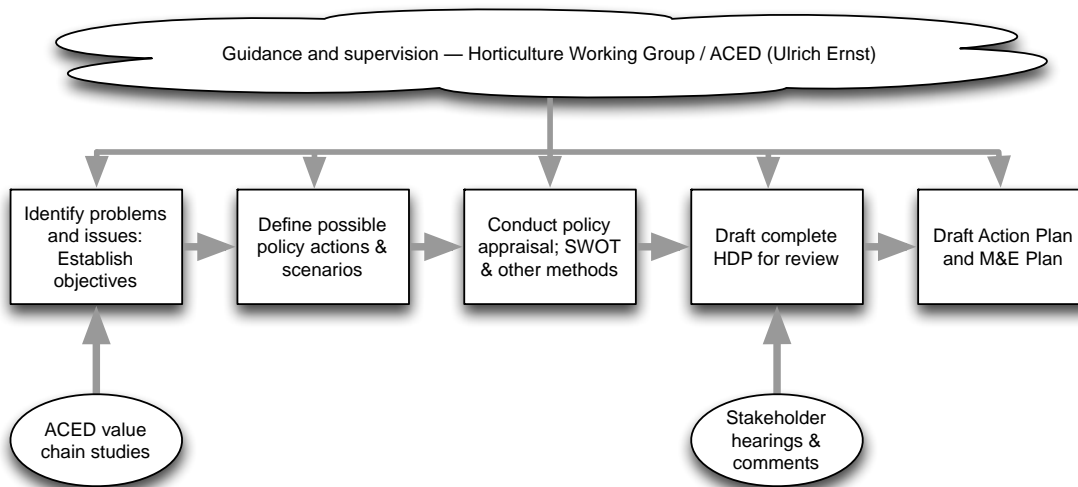
The design of the Program will be guided by a Horticultural Policy Working Group (WG) that will bring together representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, other Ministries, affiliated quasi-governmental institutions, such as the Scientific Institute of Horticulture and Food Technology, and private sector associations focusing on horticulture production and marketing. The role of the Working Group will be to provide direction for the identification of issues, and to review and comment on major design steps and initial drafts of the HDP. The design team will work under the supervision of the ACED Project; Ulrich Ernst will serve as the key ACED adviser to the design process.

The continuing discussions with the WG and representatives of the ACED Project as well as USAID will be complemented by public presentations and hearings designed to encourage widespread participation and ownership of the HDP when finally approved by the GORM.

Design process

The basic design process for the Horticulture Development Program can be sketched as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: HDP design process



In the case of Moldova’s horticulture sector, ACED has already conducted a number of studies of the respective value chains and end markets. This information will serve as the foundation for

identifying the problems and assessing the actions required on the part of the Government and quasi-governmental institutions to promote growth in the sector. As a result, data collection for the design of the Program is not expected to require a significant effort. However, feedback from the Working Group and other stakeholders may well provide additional insights into the issues definition stage.

Identifying specific issues affecting the growth potential and competitiveness of the country's agriculture sector sets the stage for the remainder of the Program design. This process therefore needs to go beyond broad definitions of major problems to define *policy constraints* in detail, establishing the basis for setting objectives and choosing specific actions to reach them. Ideally, there should be a one-to-one correspondence between issues and objectives. These objectives in turn define the policy actions designed to solve these problems and address the issues.

One or more policy actions are required to achieve any of the objectives. At times, there may be several possible, yet mutually exclusive, policy actions. The design process therefore needs to include some form of *policy appraisal*. Government Decree No. 33 suggests an approach that examines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) to assess the impacts of the potential policy scenarios. The design team may complement the SWOT analysis by other strategic appraisal tools. That analysis will enable the HDP design to select and refine the actions to be taken to achieve the specific HDP objectives. In conducting this analysis, the design team will need to consult extensively with the institutions involved in carrying out the various actions under the respective policy scenarios. The policy appraisal step will also form the basis for assessing which resources are required for the implementation of these actions.

Once the initial draft of the Horticulture Development Program has been completed, the design team is expected to engage in publicizing it widely, and consulting with representatives of institutions and firms affected by the Program. The main focus of the vetting process will of course be the Working Group charged with the oversight of the process, but at least two public hearings should also be scheduled. In addition, the draft should be made accessible to all interested parties on the Internet for comments and suggestions.

The Action Plan for the implementation of the HDP should be in tabular form (with linkages to support documents as needed), covering at a minimum the following items:

- Objectives;
- Policy actions required, including conditions precedent (such as earlier actions in a particular sequence);
- Deadline for completion of action(s);
- Institution(s) responsible;
- Major performance indicators (linked to the Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan);
- Resources required.

The final draft of the HDP for approval by the Government will also include a detailed plan for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the Program. This Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PPMEP) will focus on tracking the effects of the implementation of proposed policy actions.

Objective

ACED will engage a local contractor to carry out the design of the Horticulture Development Program under the guidance of the Horticulture Policy Working Group and the ACED Project, with Ulrich Ernst serving as the lead adviser to the design team.

The selected contractor for the design of the HDP will:

- Review existing studies and canvass members of the Working Group and other stakeholders to identify specific policy issues and constraints affecting the growth potential and competitiveness of Moldova's horticulture sector.
- Translate these issues into a series of specific policy objectives.
- Define and assess policy actions required to reach these objectives, using SWOT or similar techniques to develop and appraise the appropriate policy scenarios.
- Define the time frame, institutions responsible and resources required for the implementation of these policy actions.
- Conduct an open vetting process of the initial draft of the HDP, primarily with members of the Working Group, but also in at least two public hearings, and through opportunities for commenting on the Internet.
- Prepare a Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, including the appropriate performance indicators, and responsibilities for tracking the impact of the proposed policy actions.
- Develop a detailed Action Plan for the final draft of the HDP.

Tasks

Task 1: Within 10 working days of contract award, the contractor will present a detailed work plan based on the material in this RFP and the proposal. The Horticulture Policy Working Group will be responsible for reviewing and approving this work plan.

Task 2: The contractor will review existing studies of value chains in Moldova's horticultural sector. Most of these studies are available from ACED. The focus of the review is the identification of specific issues hampering the growth potential and competitiveness of the country's horticulture sector. The review will also identify any gaps in the existing information.

Task 3: Based on the work in the preceding task, the contractor may gather any additional data collection and analysis and issue identification, as appropriate.



Task 4: The contractor will prepare a paper outlining the specific *issues* identified and stating the associated *objectives* for the HDP. This paper will be presented for discussion with members of the WG. The purpose of this step is to build consensus around the issues identified and adopt a set of specific objectives for the Program.

Task 5: For set of issues identified and reviewed by the WG, the contractor will develop a list of potential policy actions and scenarios designed to achieve the HDP objectives. The results of this step will be summarized in a Working Memorandum shared with members of the WG for comments and suggestions.

Task 6: For each of these potential actions and policy scenarios, the contractor will carry out a strategic appraisal, using SWOT or other strategic assessment tools. The purpose of this step is to narrow the list of actions and ensure that they are realistic and feasible. This step may also identify further actions needed to create the conditions precedent for each policy scenario.

Task 7: The contractor will assess the institutional context for the implementation of the policy actions, and examine the resource requirements. This step is likely to involve additional contacts with the targeted institutions to ensure feasibility.

Task 8: The contractor will draft initial HDP document outlining the issues, actions recommended, institutions responsible and resources required. This draft will be shared with the WG and other interested stakeholders. It will also be posted on the Internet for comments (see Task 10).

Task 9: The contractor will organize a workshop for the members of the Horticulture Policy Working group to review the draft HDP in detail.

Task 10: The contractor will set up a web-accessible comment system, with links to backup documents. Basically, the draft HDP document, including links to analytical documents and strategic appraisals, should be accessible to anyone with access to the Internet, with a provision for submitting comments and suggestions.

Task 11: Once the Working Group has reviewed the draft HDP document, the contractor will organize at least two half-day workshops in the regions to present the HDP draft to sector stakeholders. The emphasis should be on farmers and other stakeholders who may not have access to the Internet to contribute to the design of the HDP.

Task 12: The contractor will develop a detailed Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PPMEP) for the implementation of the HDP. The document will include performance indicators, as well as procedures for collecting and analyzing information for the assessment of the performance of the HDP over time. It should also assign M&E institutional responsibilities.

Task 13: The contractor will prepare a detailed Action Plan, with the minimum requirements as stated above.

Deliverables

Reports

A draft report of the issues and specific objectives, in English;

Working memorandum regarding the strategic appraisals of potential policy actions and scenarios, in English;

A draft of the substantive portions of the HDP (minus M&E plan and Action Plan), in Romanian;

Action Plan (as specified above) in Romanian;

Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, in Romanian;

Workshops and others

Periodic meetings with the Horticulture Policy Working Group, at least every month

One workshop with members of the WG to discuss the draft HDP

Two workshops in the regions for draft HDP

Internet platform for presentation of comments and suggestions, through either the ACED or the MAFI web sites, possibly in coordination with the e-Governance center

Final workshop for the rollout of the entire package

Proposal instructions

Parameters

ACED intends to issue a Fixed Price (lump sum) subcontract for the design of the HDP. The period of performance is approximately June 01 until November 15, 2012. Interested bidders are requested to submit a brief proposal in English. The maximum length of the technical proposal will be 5,000 words; separate tables and exhibits do not count toward the word total.

Proposal content

The proposal must contain the following elements:

The technical approach for conducting the analysis and developing the overall Horticulture Development Program and the associated Action Plan, including a draft work plan;

Detailed resumes of the individuals proposed to carry out this assignment;

A brief qualification statement explaining bidder's experience with the development of sectoral or business strategy documents;

Level of effort (LOE) in person-days in order to perform the assignment;

A detailed budget (net of VAT) in Moldovan Lei including all costs of personnel proposed to carry out the assignment.

Bidders' conference

All potential bidders for this contract are invited to participate in a Bidders' Conference, in the ACED conference room at 4:00 PM on Thursday March 10th. All questions relevant to this RFP and the tendering process will be discussed at this time. The information provided at this conference will not be distributed in any other way and no additional questions will be answered by ACED after the conference is concluded.

Delivery instructions

All proposals must be written in English and delivered to the ACED office either electronically or in hard copy before 5:00 PM on May 28.

Sealed hard copy proposals should be addressed to ACED Project, Kentford Building, 202 Stefan cel Mare Blvd., Chisinau and the subject line should include the title of the RFP. Electronic proposals should be sent to MoldovaAg@dai.com. No proposals will be opened until the delivery deadline has passed.

Selection criteria

Final selection will be made on the basis of the best overall value for money considering the following criteria:

Technical approach	40%
Professional qualification the person(s) proposed to carry out the work	20%
Bidder's relevant experience	20%
Total proposed cost	20%

Disclaimer

The issuance of this RFP does not obligate DAI to award a contract for this work. The selection of the successful bidder is at the discretion of ACED, and any award is subject to USAID approval. ACED reserves the right to conduct negotiations with bidders and to issue more than one contract, at its sole discretion. An award under this procurement only covers the design of the HDP. Any further activity once the HDP is approved and promulgated by the Government of the Republic of Moldova is subject to other arrangements.