REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
(CONSULTING SERVICES – FIRMS SELECTION)

REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
RESILAND: Armenia Resilient Landscape Project
Grant No.: TF0C4647, TF0C4643

Assignment Title: Socio-economic Baseline Study
Reference No. (as per Procurement Plan): AM-EPIU-466890-CS-CQS

The Republic of Armenia has received financing from the World Bank (the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development ("IBRD"), acting as an Implementing Agency of the Global Environment Facility ("GEF") and as administrator of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Supporting Armenia Resilient Landscapes Project and International Development Association ("IDA"), acting as administrator of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Supporting Armenia Resilient Landscapes Project) toward the cost of the RESILAND: Armenia Resilient Landscape Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The consulting services ("the Services") include the study with aims to establish a baseline for evaluating current conditions in the Project's target settlements, allowing for a clear analysis of trends, challenges, and opportunities for future development. By identifying key socio-economic indicators, the study will offer valuable insights to inform the Project's strategic planning and monitoring. This study will also serve as a benchmark to measure the impact of the project interventions over time.

This consultancy has two overall objectives:
● Establish a Comprehensive Socio-Economic Baseline: Establish a socio-economic baseline for PDO Indicator (People benefiting from sustainable economic activities in targeted landscapes (number, sex disaggregated) , conduct a detailed a social and economic survey of the RESILAND project areas, to assess progress against the objectives and indicators outlined in the RESILAND Project Appraisal Document (PAD).
● Support Strategic Decision-Making: Assist the EPIU in refining the baseline indicators to be monitored in greater depth, ensuring that the data collected effectively informs ongoing updates and the development of the RESILAND project.

Geographic Coverage: The study will cover both urban and rural areas across Armenia, with a specific focus on the Lori, Ararat, Gegharkunik and Syunik regions. The primary settlements targeted for this study include:
• Lori Region: Spitak (43460 beneficiaries), Vanadzor (76500 beneficiaries), Stepanavan (20527 beneficiaries), Tashir (11731 beneficiaries), Halavar (111 beneficiaries), Shahumyan (2508 beneficiaries), Gugark (6567 beneficiaries), Vahagni (1103 beneficiaries), Vahagnadzor (323 beneficiaries), Yeghegnut (951 beneficiaries), Chkalov(144), Fioletovo (1512 beneficiaries), Margahovit (3449 beneficiaries), Lermontovo (1099 beneficiaries), Lernapat (1966 beneficiaries), Gargar (1349 beneficiaries), Push kino(249 beneficiaries), Medovka (396 beneficiaries), Kruglaya Shishka (117 beneficiaries), Saratovka (414 beneficiaries), Urasar (399 beneficiaries).

• Syunik Region: Kapan(44362 beneficiaries), Vanek(59 beneficiaries), Dzorastan (73 beneficiaries), Antarashat (114 beneficiaries), Arachadzor (156 beneficiaries), Verin Khotanan (205 beneficiaries), Yegheg (102 beneficiaries), Shrvenants (69 beneficiaries), and Okhtar (94 beneficiaries).
• Gegharkunik Region: Vardenis (13917 beneficiaries).
• Ararat Region: Poqr Vedi (3389 beneficiaries), Lusarat (2686 beneficiaries), Surenavan (2700 beneficiaries), Armash (2673 beneficiaries).
Target Population: The target population is the entire population of the communities included in the program (see population above).

The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment are attached to this request for expressions of interest in Annex A.

The Environmental Project Implementation Unit now invites eligible consulting firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services.

The Qualifications criteria of the Consulting firm are:

- Proven track record in designing, managing, and executing large-scale quantitative and qualitative socio-economic studies, particularly in local communities.
- Minimum of **5 years of experiences** in conducting socio-economic baseline surveys, impact assessments, and evaluations for large-scale projects.
- Experience working on programs/projects funded by international organizations such as the World Bank will be considered an asset.
- Experience in socio-economic condition in Armenia and/or CIS countries.
- Experience in applying Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) technology for data collection and survey implementation.
- Experience in conducting the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews, and other qualitative research methodologies.
- Experience in landscape restoration, forestry, wetland management, and green economy sectors will be considered an asset.

Key Experts will not be evaluated at this stage.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" September 2023 ("Procurement Regulations"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

Consultants may associate with other firms to enhance their qualifications, but should indicate clearly whether the association is in the form of a joint venture and/or a sub-consultancy. In the case of a joint venture, all the partners in the joint venture shall be jointly and severally liable for the entire contract, if selected.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Consultant Qualification Selection method set out in the Procurement Regulations.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours (09:00-18:00).

Expressions of interests must be delivered via e-mail NO later than February 19, 2025, 18:00

Environmental Project Implementation Unit
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ANNEX A

RESILAND: ARMENIA RESILIENT LANDSCAPES PROJECT (P179988) TERMS OF REFERENCE
For
Consultancy Services
Socio-economic Baseline Study

1. Introduction and Background

The objectives of the RESILAND: Armenia Resilient Landscape Project are: (i) to increase the area under sustainable landscape management in Selected Locations and (ii) to promote sustainable economic activities to communities in Targeted Landscapes in Armenia. RESLAND Armenia follows an integrated landscapes approach to restore forests and wetlands and will rely on four key issues: (i) reduction of forest fragmentation and increase in density of tree cover by restoring the forest land degraded due to mining and by forest enrichment planting; (ii) improving management of neglected and abandoned wetlands, (iii) increasing community economic benefits, and (iv) strengthen the institutional foundation for the sustainable management of landscapes, creating green jobs, and increasing community benefits. Project activities are grouped into four interrelated components and their respective subcomponents. Under its main three components, the project will finance consulting services, non-consulting services, goods, equipment, training, workshops, as well as small works.
 The Project four Components include:
 Component 1: Institutional Capacity and Policy Development.
 Component 2: Landscape Restoration
 Component 3: Promoting Communities' Benefits.
 Component 4: Project Management, Monitoring & Evaluation, and Communication.
Evaluation Framework and Approach: To monitor progress and measure the impact of the project effectively, a comprehensive evaluation framework will be implemented, consisting of a mid-term evaluation and an endline evaluation, complementing the baseline study. Mid-term evaluation will be carried out during the third year of the Project using only qualitative methods and will focus on assessing the project's implementation progress and the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of activities guided by the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria. The endline evaluation will use the same methodologies and indicators as the baseline study to ensure consistency and comparability. This evaluation will measure: 1) Changes in socio-economic indicators identified in the baseline; 2) Progress toward achieving the Project Development Objective (PDO) and intermediate outcomes; 3) Gender-disaggregated results to assess the impact of the project on different demographic groups. Similar to the

baseline, the endline will include quantitative methods (household surveys) complemented by qualitative approaches (focus group discussions and qualitative interviews).

This Call for Proposals is aimed at hiring a consulting **firm exclusively for the baseline measurement** for the RESILAND Project.

2. Project Implementation Arrangements

The Environmental Project Implementation Unit (EPIU), a State agency under the Ministry of Environment, will provide overall management of the Project preparation and implementation activities aimed at achievement of the planned results.

3. Objectives of the Assignment

This study aims to establish a baseline for evaluating current conditions in the Project's target settlements, allowing for a clear analysis of trends, challenges, and opportunities for future development. By identifying key socio-economic indicators, the study will offer valuable insights to inform the Project's strategic planning and monitoring. This study will also serve as a benchmark to measure the impact of the project interventions over time.

This consultancy has two overall objectives:

- **Establish a Comprehensive Socio-Economic Baseline**: Establish a socio-economic baseline for PDO Indicator (People benefiting from sustainable economic activities in targeted landscapes (number, sex disaggregated) , conduct a detailed a social and economic survey of the RESILAND project areas, to assess progress against the objectives and indicators outlined in the RESILAND Project Appraisal Document (PAD).

- **Support Strategic Decision-Making**: Assist the EPIU in refining the baseline indicators to be monitored in greater depth, ensuring that the data collected effectively informs ongoing updates and the development of the RESILAND project.

Geographic Coverage: The study will cover both urban and rural areas across Armenia, with a specific focus on the Lori, Ararat, Gegharkunik and Syunik regions. The primary settlements targeted for this study include:

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Target Population: The target population is the entire population of the communities included in the program (see population above).

4.   SCOPE OF WORK

a) **Develop the methodology and sampling strategy, incorporating (but is not limited to) the following elements:**

i.   **Operationalization of key indicators (specify how each indicator can be practically measured):**
- **PDO indicator:**
  - People benefiting from sustainable economic activities in targeted landscapes (sex disaggregated) (Number)
- **Intermediary indicators which should be measured:**
  - People benefitting from selected landscape management practices (sex disaggregated) (Number)
  - Beneficiaries with improved knowledge and skills on integrated landscape management (Number)
  - Beneficiaries with improved knowledge and skills on integrated landscape management (Number)
  - Percentage of beneficiaries reporting improvement in awareness on wetland management and restoration (Percentage)
  - Green jobs created as a result of project-supported interventions (sex disaggregated) (Number)
  - New businesses developed/established as a result of the project (Number)
  - Female-headed new businesses developed/established (Percentage)
- Gender indicators (Annex 2), the consultant should analyse the proposed and preliminary gender indicators and include relevant ones in the baseline study.

ii.   **Integration of Desk Study Information:** Identify and incorporate desk study materials into the assessment, including any existing studies or research from the Project design phase (any studies/research as part of design phase will be provided to the consultant).

iii.   **Methodology Description:** Provide a detailed outline of the qualitative and quantitative methodology for the study, including: sampling size; questionnaire(s) to be applied, data collection methods; quality control plan; data analysis and reporting plan. The proposed methodology should include qualitative methods that would complement the quantitative data, such as focus groups discussions, key informant interviews, etc.

iv. **Sampling approach and representativeness:** The survey should cover target communities in four regions. Representative sample should be calculated for each region with the sample calculation parameters of 95% significance level, ±5% margin of error. Household visits will serve as the primary method for data collection. The consultant is expected to propose the most suitable sampling method based on the context and population characteristics opting for random sampling methods.

b) **Collect the necessary data to establish socio-economic profiles of the settlements, as following the methodology agreed upon with EPIU**

- Conduct interview, focus group discussions and survey on socio-economic conditions of communities. The collected data will enable an analysis of communities' understanding and primary expectations regarding sustainable economic activities (including apiculture, agroforestry, and commercialization of traditional use of non-timber forest products (NTFPs)), along with community-based forest and wetland restoration and management. A special attention should be given to the gender indicators outlined in the projects' initial gender action plan (Annex 2).

- Qualitative interviews will primarily involve targeted settlements, local and provincial authorities, NGOs, and other stakeholders.
- Specific survey strategies must be applied within settlements that are home to ethnic minorities.
- Household profiles and demographic information,
- Main sources of livelihood and income generation activities,
- Natural resource-based livelihoods and income,
- Pressure on forest resources and household energy consumption
- Available green businesses, their profiles and development objectives,
- Main challenges and opportunities for integrated landscape management, sustainable economic activities (including beekeeping, agroforestry, and commercialization of traditional use of NTFPs), ecotourism
- Gender roles in landscape restoration and management and sustainable economic activities.
- **c)** **Compilation of the socio-economic baseline on the RESILAND project**

In addition to the requirements stated above, the report on the results and their analysis should encompass the following elements:

- Study objective and applied methodology,
- Identification of key issues and constraints in relation to data sampling,
- Recommendations for required actions for filling any data gaps,
-
- Clear recommendations and conclusions on:
    - Project interventions related to communities, based on the socio-economic profiles of settlements,
    - Project monitoring in relation to baseline indicators.

The Consulting Firm is expected to carry out various meetings/workshops related to the progress of the work with the Ministry of Environment (MoE) EPIU staff to keep the team informed about methodological challenges. All activities in relation to fulfillment of these ToRs should be discussed in detail with and agreed upon with the EPIU relevant staff.

5. TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING FOR ENUMERATORS AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCHERS

- The consulting firm must ensure that field staff are well-prepared for the challenges of conducting surveys in local communities, including those populated with ethnic minorities. During the field preparation phase, the firm should provide training to enumerators and qualitative researchers on ethical data collection, cultural sensitivity, and privacy. At least two training sessions should be held with the enumerators to cover quality interviewing techniques and the use of CAPI technology.
- Enumerators involved in data collection should demonstrate their ability to conduct quality interviews by pilot testing the survey questionnaire, with each enrolled enumerator completing at least two pilot interviews.

6. QUALITY CONTROL AND FIELDWORK REPORTING

- During fieldwork the Consultant will submit technical reports every 15 days (twice a month). Fieldwork reporting will include information on fieldwork progress, quality check, issues and difficulties raised during fieldwork, statistics on interviews generated through CAPI (e.g. length of interviews, response rate, etc.) and other related information.
- During this survey, the response rate should be closely monitored and controlled. During the field preparation phase the Consultant firm needs to submit a plan to manage and control response rate as part of quality control mechanisms.

- The Consultant needs to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and consistency of the data collected through applying multi-layer quality control mechanisms involving at least the following:
  - Regular logical and arithmetic verification of the collected data. Technical and logical analysis of completed questionnaires shall be carried out daily.
  - Back-phone calls to randomly selected 25% of interviewees to check the quality of filled-in questionnaires.
  - 10% of the interviews for each interviewer shall be conducted in the presence of local field coordinators.

7. Ethical Principles

- The Consulting Firm needs to ensure ethical aspects of the study to ensure the integrity and respect for all participants involved. Prior to data collection, the Consulting firm needs to ensure informed consent from each participant. Confidentiality shall be strictly maintained throughout the study. All collected data shall be anonymized, with personal identifiers removed to protect participants' identities. The anonymized data needs to be stored securely, accessible only to authorized personnel, to further ensure privacy and data protection.
- The Consulting firm needs to develop ethical guidelines that emphasize respect for cultural sensitivities, privacy, and participants' autonomy that researchers and enumerators need to adhere to.
- The Consulting firm needs to put in place measures to ensure that all individuals, including those living in remote areas, people with disabilities, vulnerable groups and people with language barriers have equal opportunities to participate in the study while safeguarding their well-being throughout their involvement.
- Specialists and enumerators involved in the study will sign a code of conduct that outlines their responsibilities and commitments, particularly regarding the protection of respondent confidentiality.

8. DELIVERABLES
INCEPTION REPORT
The Consultant shall produce a clear and concise Inception Report after 3 weeks of commencement of the assignment. The report should set out the methodology of the assessment, including but not limited to sampling strategy, proposed data collection instruments, quality control plan, activity timeline.
DRAFT REPORT
The Consultant shall produce a comprehensive, clear, and concise report that shall include:
- The activities, tasks, and outputs described herein after concluding the assignment.
- Presentation and analysis of results
- Annexes as relevant (including questionnaires and other information that makes a replication feasible).

In addition, the material from survey should be presented in a database form in Excel and SPSS format, to enable full access to the raw material. Open-ended answers from the survey as well as focus group discussion raw data will not be stored to ensure alignment with EU GDPR rules on the storing of personal data.

Final Report

Final Report will be submitted after taking into account the final comments received on draft final report.

The report should be prepared and submitted to the EPIU in both Armenian and English language.
9. Deliverables and Timeline for the Assignment

The study is expected to be completed within about 4,6 months from the date of contract signing. The timeline for key deliverables is as follows:

Deliverables	Timeline
Delivery of a methodology report (inception report) (including proposed instruments for data collection, sample size, focus areas and agreed methodology for completing the tasks, incl. proposed questionnaires to be used for the baseline)	Three weeks after contract signing
Delivery of Draft report with preliminary findings	Three months after contract signing
Final report that includes an executive summary, methodology, findings, and recommendations and incorporates comments and feedback received on the draft report	Within 2 weeks after feedback and comments on the Draft Report
PowerPoint presentation summarizing key findings and recommendations	Within 2 weeks after feedback and comments on the Draft Report

After submission of the reports/deliverables by Consultant, it will be reviewed by the Client, after which, if necessary, the Consultant should present the revised report to the Client with inclusion of acceptable comments and recommendations (within 10 days after acceptance of the Client's comments). If no comments are provided by the Client within three (3) weeks of receipt of the report, the report is deemed approved.

10. QUALIFICATIONS

The selected firm should present a team with the following qualifications:
- Proven track record in designing, managing, and executing large-scale quantitative surveys, preferably in conducting socio-economic studies in local communities. Work experience in Armenia is mandatory.
- Expertise and technical capacity in using CAPI technology for survey data collection.
- Expertise in conducting FGDs and qualitative interviews
- Capacity to train and oversee a team of field staff, including enumerators and qualitative researchers.
- Team leader with appropriate understanding of the Armenian society, the challenges rural population face, statistical and survey experience, together with knowledge of database design and task management; Team leader should have a Master in social sciences / economics / statistics /public policy, or a related field (or equivalent) and have performed baselines, including social surveys for large scale and complex projects, preferably with the WB. At least 5+ years of experiences in conducting, coordinating, compiling and analysing baselines with an emphasis on socio-economic baselines. Knowledge of forestry/wetlands is a merit, but not a requirement. Additional training or certifications in areas like project management, data analysis, or specific socio-economic fields can be beneficial.
- Qualified gender Consultant(s) with a broad gender competence and experience of rural Armenia, with results and baseline experience; at least 3 + years of experience in gender mainstreaming. If consultant do not have equivalent to a master degree (preferably in social sciences) the consultant should have 5+ years of experience. Knowledge of gender equality challenges in forestry/wetlands is a merit, but not a requirement.
- Database/statistician consultant with focus on assembling the primary data for further analysis by team leader and gender specialist;
- Fieldwork coordinator with experience in gender sensitive household survey and interview techniques and ability to manage complex, multi-stage surveys within tight timelines.

11. **Responsibilities of the Client and the Consulting Firm**

The Consulting Firm is expected to be fully self-sufficient in all respects for undertaking the assignment including accommodation, office space, equipment and supplies, communication, and transport.

The Contractor shall ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped, in particular, it shall ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting provision to enable experts to concentrate on their primary responsibilities.

The Client or the EPIU team will assist with facilitation of logistical arrangements, coordination with stakeholders, access to relevant data and documentation, and any necessary approvals required for the Consultant to carry out the services effectively.

12. Payment Schedule

Task	Payment
Upon delivery of Inception Report	20%
Upon delivery of Draft Report	40%
Upon delivery of Final Report and PPT	40%

ANNEX 1
Results Framework
COUNTRY: Armenia
RESILAND: Armenia Resilient Landscapes Project

Project Development Objectives(s)
The Project Development Objective (PDO) are (i) to increase the area under sustainable landscape management in selected locations and (ii) to promote sustainable economic activities to communities in targeted landscapes in Armenia.

Project Development Objective Indicators

Indicator Name	PBC	Baseline	End Target
Increased area under sustainable landscape management in selected locations			
Land area under sustainable landscape management practices (CRI, Hectare(Ha))		0.00	25,800.00
Sustainable economic activities to communities in targeted landscapes promoted			
People benefiting from sustainable economic activities in targeted landscapes (sex disaggregated) (Number)		0.00	5,000.00

Intermediate Results Indicators by Components

Landscape Restoration			
Wetland area restored (Hectare(Ha))		0.00	1,200.00
Forest area restored and/or reforested (Hectare(Ha))		0.00	12,500.00
Feasibility package for repurposing of the abandoned Kavart mining site in Kapan developed (Yes/No)		No	Yes
People benefitting from selected landscape management practices (sex disaggregated) (Number)		0.00	22,500.00
Net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (CRI, Metric tons/year)		0.00	178,000.00
Institutional Capacity and Policy Development			

Regulatory and operational guidelines for community-based forest and wetland management developed and submitted for approved (Yes/No)		No	Yes
Guidelines for development and management of ecotourism updated (Yes/No)		No	Yes
Beneficiaries with improved knowledge and skills on integrated landscape management (Number)		0.00	3,000.00
Percentage of female beneficiaries with improved knowledge in skills on integrated landscape management (Percentage)		0.00	50.00
Percentage of beneficiaries reporting improvement in awareness on wetland management and restoration (Percentage)		0.00	30.00
Promoting Communities' Benefits			
Green jobs created as a result of project-supported interventions (sex disaggregated) (Number)		0.00	800.00
New businesses developed/established as a result of the project (Number)		0.00	20.00
Female-headed new businesses developed/established (Percentage)		0.00	40.00
Project Management			
Grievances registered related to delivery of project activities and addressed (Percentage)		0.00	100.00

ANNEX 2

RESILAND: ARMENIA RESILIENT LANDSCAPES PROJECT				
Gender Indicators				
Indicator Name	PBC	Baseline	End Target	
Institutional Capacity and Policy Development				
A comprehensive gender-sensitive review of all relevant policies, frameworks, and documents identifying gaps in gender considerations (Yes/No)			Yes. Gender review of the current forestry and wetlands policies and legislation with recommendations	
Policy briefs and infographics are developed to illustrate how gender-sensitive/responsive approaches can enhance the effectiveness and equity of forestry and wetland management (Yes/No)			Yes	
Capacity-building training sessions for policymakers and technical staff on the importance of gender-sensitive approaches in forestry and wetland management		EPIU consists mainly of women (app 80%)	Target 80% women, 20% men	
Awareness campaigns for local environmental and women's organizations, as well as other stakeholders on gender-sensitive approaches in integrated landscape management (Number)				
Beneficiary organizations with information on gender-sensitive approaches in integrated landscape management (Number)				
Landscape Restoration				
Beneficiaries with knowledge on wetland management and restoration			At least 50% women participation	
Beneficiaries with knowledge on forest management and decision-making			At least 50% women participation	
Engagement of women from ethnic minority groups, such as Yezidi and Molokan communities in landscape management and decision-making (Number)				

Promoting Communities' Benefits				
Beneficiaries with knowledge on the sustainability and profitability of the processing of forest food products for selling			80% women participation	
Measures for business planning and proposal development exclusively for women or women's groups (Number)			8 female-headed new businesses developed/established	
Employment rates of women in green jobs, disaggregated by location, and organization type			240	
Campaigns informing women about the availability of green jobs (Number)			4	
Collaboration with training providers, universities, and vocational schools to offer courses in green technologies, environmental management, and sustainable agriculture, with a focus on increasing women's participation (Yes/No)			Yes	
Collaboration with green sector employers for creating a more inclusive and supportive work environment for women (Yes/No)			Yes	
Project Management				
Awareness-raising of gender-sensitivity within EPIU staff			At least 4 sessions	
Gender-sensitive monitoring implemented (Yes/No)			Yes	

Customized World Bank gender indicator: "Saved to start, operate, or expand a farm or business (% age 15+)"
https://genderdata.worldbank.org/indicators/