



TERMS OF REFERENCE

SME Assessment Expert

Date 26 May 2025

Location: Beirut, Bekaa, Akkar, Lebanon

Project Title: ARADINA

Contact: careers@fairtradelebanon.org

Date of Posting, if applicable: 1 June 2025

Deadline for Submission: 1 July 2025

SCOPE OF WORK

Project Description

The ARADINA project is a multi-stakeholder project that supports Lebanon's transition toward more sustainable and resilient agricultural systems in a context of climate change, economic pressure, and social challenges. The 48 months project is funded by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and led by CIHEAM IAMM, in partnership with Fair Trade Lebanon (FTL) and Action Against Hunger (ACF). The project zones of intervention are Baalbeck Hermel area and the northern part of Akkar. These areas are agricultural production zones but face persistent challenges including water scarcity, soil degradation, declining farm incomes, limited access to markets, and high levels of social and economic vulnerability.

The project aims to promote agricultural systems that are environmentally sustainable, economically viable, socially inclusive, and traceable. This is achieved through the adoption of agroecological practices at farm level, the strengthening of agricultural value chains, and engagement with relevant policy actors. Through tailored technical assistance, behavior change approaches, and collective investments, ARADINA supports farmers in improving water and soil management, reducing reliance on chemical inputs, and strengthening productivity and climate resilience.

In parallel, the project supports cooperatives and Agri food enterprises to improve their performance and create decent employment opportunities, with particular attention to women, youth, and other vulnerable groups. It also works to improve market access through labeling and traceability systems, the promotion of short value chains, and stronger linkages between producers and markets. Data generated through research and field activities will be used to support policy dialogue, raise consumer awareness, and promote gender equity and environmental sustainability.

1- Summary

Fair Trade Lebanon is seeking an **SME Assessment Expert** to conduct structured technical, organizational, and economic assessments of **100 agroecological micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** identified under Activity 2.1.1 of the ARADINA project.

The assignment will support **evidence-based targeting and prioritization** of technical assistance and business development interventions, while contributing to ARADINA's broader objective of strengthening agroecological value chains and inclusive market access.

2- Objective

The objective of this assignment is to **assess the institutional, governance, operational, and economic capacities** of 100 SME in order to:

- establish clear enterprise profiles,
- identify capacity gaps, risks, and growth constraints,
- classify MSMEs according to their level of structuring and development potential,
- and inform **tailored support pathways** under ARADINA Component 2.

3- Scope of Work

The service provider will be responsible for the following tasks:

A. Analytical and Diagnostic Tasks

- Design, adapt, or refine a standardized MSME assessment tool (matrix, interview guides, scoring framework) in coordination with FTL.
- Conduct field visits and semi-structured interviews with MSME owners, managers, and key staff.
- Assess MSMEs across the following dimensions:
 - Organizational structure and management capacity
 - Technical and operational capacity
 - Business model and financial performance
 - Marketing, logistics, and market access constraints
 - Alignment with agroecological value-chain objectives

B. Classification and Analysis

- Categorize MSMEs according to their level of structuring, operational maturity, and growth potential.
- Identify cross-cutting constraints and priority needs affecting MSME sustainability and scalability.

C. Strategic Outputs

- Formulate clear, actionable recommendations for tailored technical and business development support.
- Contribute to the definition of differentiated accompaniment pathways aligned with ARADINA's market-oriented approach.

4- Deliverables (Supporting Documents):

- A **validated SME assessment tool**
- **100 individual SME diagnostic profiles**
- One **analytical synthesis report** including:
 - MSME typology,
 - key findings and cross-cutting issues,

- priority support recommendations for ARADINA implementation

Deliverables shall be submitted in **English and/or French**, as agreed with FTL.

5- Duration and Timeline

The total duration of the assignment shall **not exceed 90 working days**, to be implemented between **August 2025 and March 2026**, following signature of the contract.

6- Location of Implementation

The services will be delivered across **Beirut, Bekaa, and Akkar**.

Field visits to cooperative sites in the targeted regions will be required.

7- Qualifications of the Service Provider

The applicant (individual or company) must demonstrate:

- Proven experience in **evaluation or support of agricultural or agro-food SMEs**
- Strong understanding of **cooperative governance and associative structures in Lebanon**
- Experience with **organizational analysis and diagnostic tools**
- Strong analytical, communication, and facilitation skills
- Availability for field missions across regions

8- Required Documents for Submission

All applicants (Companies or Individuals) should submit the following:

- Technical Proposal (description of approach and methodology)
- Financial Offer (in local currency or EUR, including all applicable taxes)
- Company Profile or CV
- At least two references or examples of similar previous work
- Signed acceptance of payment terms and conditions

a. In case of Company application: The company should submit the following legal document:

- Commercial Circular
- Fiscal Certificate of Incorporation at the Ministry of Finance
- VAT Certificate of Registration if applicable
- ID of company's authorized representative(s)

b. In case of Individual application: The individual should submit the following legal documents

- CV
- ID
- Fiscal Number

9- Evaluation Criteria

The quotation's evaluation process will consider following with assigned weights:

- Financial 30%
- Technical 70%

10- Payment Terms

- Payments will be made through bank cheques
- Payment will be made **20 business days** from the last delivery and submission of final invoice.
- The cheque amount will be subject to applicable bank fees.

11- How to apply

Applicants are requested to send:

- Detailed quotation as per requirements
- Legal documents
- Acknowledgment letter of payment modality

via email to: careers@fairtradelebanon.org

Only selected candidates will be contacted.