

**Terms of Reference**  
**Sustaining Peace and Improving Social Cohesion through the Promotion of Rural Employment Opportunities for Youth in Conflict-Prone areas.**

**Consultancy for a needs assessment for strengthening social cohesion & peacebuilding through cooperative development**

**1. Background**

The ILO, together with FAO and WFP, is implementing a project in Liberia funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund entitled “Strengthening the role of youth in reducing conflict through the promotion of rural employment in conflict-prone areas”. The project aims to sustain peace by addressing two interlinked root causes of conflict in Liberia, namely grievance over insufficient participation of young women and men in local dispute resolution and lack of employment and livelihoods opportunities for rural youth. Land disputes are a major driver of fragility in post-war Liberia including in the counties of Bong and Lofa where the project is active. To sustain a youth-inclusive peace and improve social cohesion, the project focuses on two interrelated outcomes:

*Outcome 1: Young women and men have increased access to local conflict resolution mechanisms, with a focus on land disputes, and become active agents of peace.*

In line with Government peacebuilding priorities, the project is supporting youth’s participation in peacebuilding at the community level, as well as promoting young women and men to have increased access to land conflict resolution mechanisms as a vehicle for youth-inclusive peacebuilding. The project is providing both technical and material support for youth to become champions and peace ambassadors.

*Outcome 2: Rural young women and men have access to sustainable agricultural livelihoods addressing key drivers of conflict.*

Supplementing improved access to land, the project promotes tangible peace dividends for young women and men, focusing on decent farm and non-farm jobs in rural areas through skills and entrepreneurial training and by improving the management and productive capacities of agricultural youth-based cooperatives and enterprises through value chain development.

**2. The cooperative advantage**

*Economic and social empowerment*

Cooperatives in Liberia, especially agricultural cooperatives were understood to be a driving tool of development among farmers.<sup>1</sup> Prior to the first civil war in 1987, the agricultural sector, contributed around 32.7 percent of GDP and provided employment for about 75 percent of the country labour

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<sup>1</sup> Harris G.: *Agricultural Cooperatives: Surviving in post-war Liberia (2018)*

force.<sup>2</sup> However, the good legacy of the country's agricultural cooperatives deteriorated in the aftermath of the two consecutive civil wars that resulted, among others, to the dissolution of several cooperatives and restrained cooperative development in the country.<sup>3</sup> Under the supervision of the Cooperative Development Agency, efforts have been made to revive cooperative enterprises mainly in view of their potential role for food security and their capacity to enable farms and community base groups to contribute to the national economy.

### **Box 1: Defining Cooperatives**

A cooperative is defined by the International Co-operative Alliance and the International Labour Organization as “an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.”

Source: The ILO Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193)

### *Conflict mitigation*

The relevance of cooperative enterprises in prevention, mitigation and post conflict reconstruction has also been highlighted in various countries. As self-help organizations, cooperative enterprises have a valuable role to play in terms of pooling know-how and resources, sharing risks and responsibilities and ensuring collective voice among those most likely to be severely affected by a crisis.<sup>4</sup> The very act of cooperation combined with this sense of solidarity helps to overcome the hopelessness and despair that often characterise crisis-affected populations. This partly explains the relevance of the cooperative model in crisis response and recovery strategies<sup>5</sup> and makes the role even more important in the Liberian context. A recent study demonstrated that cooperatives help by building self-sufficient and resilient communities, and encouraging dialogue and democratic participation, which can bridge the gap between conflict resolution and long-term development strategies. It shows how the sector empowers minority groups affected by conflict, provides decent work and sustainable development in fragile contexts, and supports mitigation of conflict through partnerships with other actors and the provision of humanitarian support.<sup>6</sup>

### **3. Scope of the assignment**

Under the supervision of the project manager, and in close collaboration with ILO's Country Office in Abuja as well as ILO's Cooperatives Unit (CCOP) and Development and Investment (DEVINVEST), the consultant is expected to conduct an assessment of cooperative enterprises and similar producers

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<sup>2</sup> NEPAD-FAO : Support to NEPAD-CAADP implementation (2006); available at <http://www.fao.org/tempref/docrep/fao/009/AH210e/AH210e00.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Harris (2018)

<sup>4</sup> ILO: *The Role of Cooperatives and other Self-Help Organizations in Crisis Resolution and Socio-Economic Recovery* (2001)

<sup>5</sup> ILO: *Cooperatives recovery and development in fragile and disaster-prone countries*

<sup>6</sup> CEDP: *Cooperatives and Peace: Strengthening Democracy, Participation and Trust*; available at [https://coopseurope.coop/sites/default/files/COOPS%26PEACE\\_research\\_2019\\_Cooperatives%20Europe-WEB\\_0.pdf](https://coopseurope.coop/sites/default/files/COOPS%26PEACE_research_2019_Cooperatives%20Europe-WEB_0.pdf)

organizations<sup>7</sup> as well as their needs/capacities, and of cooperative support organizations (i.e. business development service providers catering for cooperatives) operating in Bong and Lofa counties with a particular focus on the rice, vegetable and poultry value chains.

The main objective of the assessment is to understand the current situation of cooperatives and other member-based organizations in the targeted regions, particularly their capacities, strengths, weaknesses and needs. Furthermore, the study will assess the potential role of cooperative enterprises in social cohesion and peacebuilding in the selected regions (particular attention will be paid to women, youth and people with disabilities in the assessment).

Specific tasks to be covered by this study include:

- Review existing relevant literature on cooperatives in Liberia, and provide a brief overview of the state of cooperatives in the country, highlighting specific challenges;
- Review relevant available conflict analysis conducted in the country (in particular for the targeted regions if any);
- Map all relevant stakeholders, in particular cooperatives and similar self-help organizations operating in the targeted value chains in the target areas<sup>8</sup> and determine if project beneficiaries are already operating through cooperatives or similar producer organizations;
- Identify relevant cooperative support organizations (i.e. cooperative business development service providers, training institutes, NGOs etc.);
- Prepare standard interview questionnaires for relevant organizations and other necessary tools (e.g. for remote consultations with producers);
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of cooperatives in terms of leadership, membership, infrastructure, participation in the markets, and their economic viability;
- Provide an assessment of the challenges and opportunities for cooperatives;
- Assess the potential role of cooperative enterprises in promoting social cohesion, conflict prevention and peacebuilding;
- Identify and discuss concrete opportunities for cooperative development for producers (with a special focus on women/youth producers and people with disabilities) and for youth employment;
- Identify and analyse skills gaps and specific training needs for cooperatives, other producers' organizations, and cooperative support organizations. This will include a review of ILO tools such as Think.Coop, Start.Coop, and MyCoop<sup>9</sup> to assess their relevance;
- Produce a needs assessment report based on the above objectives which includes but not limited to desk review, stakeholders mappings, analysis of challenges and opportunities for cooperative development, and recommendations for improving the performance of cooperatives including with regard to social cohesion and peacebuilding as well as to guide future ILO's interventions in related value chains.

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<sup>7</sup> This refers to self-help organizations not registered as cooperative enterprises but operating along the same principles and values (including self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity)

<sup>8</sup> The mapping will provide basic information such as the main crops and produce of each organization, type of organization, membership (disaggregated by sex), production capacity etc.

<sup>9</sup> List of ILO's resources for capacity building of cooperative enterprises available at

[https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/areas-of-work/WCMS\\_628372/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/areas-of-work/WCMS_628372/lang--en/index.htm)

#### 4. Methodology

The methodology to be followed by the consultant will include the following components:

- a. A desk review of relevant documents related to the selected value chains and cooperative development in the target regions in particular and in Liberia in general;
- b. Semi-structured interviews and remote consultations with relevant stakeholders such as cooperative enterprises and organizations (incl. financial and producers' cooperatives), government representatives (e.g. Cooperative Development Agency), cooperative support organizations, social partners, and NGOs, among others<sup>10</sup>. The main objective of the interviews will be to gather in-depth information, including perceptions, views and factual information on the current situation and potential for cooperative development and the integration of women, people with disability and youth in existing cooperatives (as members or employees). The consultant should take specific measures to ensure the inclusion of women, people with disability and youth as interviewees, and an interview/consultation plan as well as the draft interview guide should be included in the inception report.

#### 5. Outputs

The final output expected from the consultant is a needs assessment report of a maximum of 40 pages in English.

Specific deliverables expected from the consultant include the following:

Deliverable	Explanation	Time required
Inception report / work plan	This document should include detailed work plan with information on the stakeholders to be interviewed; Specific research questions; interview guide / questionnaire; Initial bibliography for the literature review;	5 days
Draft report	The draft report should include: Literature review; Assessment of cooperatives/similar producers groups and their strengths, weaknesses and needs; Assessment of availability of cooperatives/producers groups among project beneficiaries; Assessment of cooperative potential in the area of social cohesion and conflict mitigation Recommendations on the way forward; Complete list of interviews; Bibliography	20 days
Final report	The report should address comments submitted by the ILO based on the draft report	5 days
Presentation	Present findings of the study to key stakeholders in a webinar and integrate feedback/comments received.	2 days

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<sup>10</sup> Including: Liberian National Federation of Cooperative and Societies and the West Africa Farmers Cooperatives

## **6. Timeline and consultancy fees**

The external collaborator will work for a total of 32 non-consecutive working days over a two-month period. Interested external collaborators should provide the daily rate required (negotiable and in line with available budget).

Payments will be made as follows:

- First tranche (20 per cent) upon submission of the inception report to the satisfaction of ILO-Abuja; and
- Second tranche (80 per cent) upon submission of the final report to the satisfaction of ILO-Abuja and presentation of findings.

## **7. Procedure for submission of expression of interest**

Interested external collaborators should submit the below documents by email to the ILO Country Office in Abuja ([abujareg@ilo.org](mailto:abujareg@ilo.org)) not later than 31 July 2020 at 6 PM Nigerian time.

- An application letter/technical proposal including remuneration requirements (daily rate);
- An updated Curriculum Vitae.

Applications not including the above information will not be considered. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

## **8. Responsibilities, supervision and coordination**

The external collaborator will report to the ILO-Abuja Office, COOP and DEVINVEST. The ILO project team will provide the external collaborator with contact information of project partners and other relevant stakeholder in Liberia.

All deliverables should be submitted to Mr. Salif Massalay ([massalay@ilo.org](mailto:massalay@ilo.org)), Mr. Guy Tchami ([tchami@ilo.org](mailto:tchami@ilo.org)) and Mr. Dino Corell ([corell@ilo.org](mailto:corell@ilo.org)).

## **9. Qualifications**

Required qualifications include:

- University degree in social sciences or other relevant subjects
- Knowledge and experience in working in Liberia
- Specific knowledge on participatory research methods
- Experience in cooperative development and agricultural development
- Good facilitation, presentation and analytical skills, as well as ability to elaborate high quality research documents
- Language skills: fluency in English
- Familiarity with ICT tools that can be used for regular data collection

## **10. Confidentiality**

The consultant is required to respect strict confidentiality vis-à-vis third parties, for any information relating to the assignment or collected on its occasion (no reproduction/dissemination of reports or documents is allowed). Failure to comply with this clause will result in immediate termination of the assignment. This strict confidentiality remains the rule, without limitation, after the end of the assignment.