Terms of Reference

Development of e-learning course on Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)

1. Background

The Agriculture sector in India largely remained under-invested and un-organised on production side, until Government of India came up with the conceptual framework of Farmers Producers Organisations (FPO) to address challenges in the value chain while ensuring operational economies of scale. There is an immense opportunity to organise the production for better economies of scale, increasing productivity and quality assurance. The key lies in ensuring the institutions/ FPOs are facilitated and strengthened to undertake the desired role in the value chain.

Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) are enterprises which are promoted by the farmers, for the farmers and of the farmers. The aim and intent of FPOs was to organise forward and backward value chains around FPOs such that FPOs aggregate demand and produce for the market, while keeping farmers interest in mind. This process of collectivization of farmer producers, especially small and marginal farmers into FPOs, was to be one of the most effective alternatives to address the varied challenges that the agriculture sector is facing today, most importantly, improved access to investments, technology and inputs and markets**.**

However, the reality is very different on the ground, in the Indian context. Most of these FPOs do not survive beyond the "Project phase" to become sustainable enterprises and collapse after the initial couple of years after the project money has been cut off. Some of the successful cases identified of FPOs have essentially very less connect with farmers and work through the existing Mandi system. Some of the major reasons for such failure has been the lack of internal capacities to operate the FPO, inadequate exposure or skill sets to run a business enterprise, lack of financing for hiring quality human resource.

On the other hand, while farmers and the farming community are highly skilled at production related activities, they are not adept at handling the operations of a business enterprise that is essentially working as a marketing organisation. Such an organisation requires specific skillset, training and experience which is lacked in most professionals managing these FPOs. They need specific skills sets to market their produce, taking business decisions collectively, identify business opportunities, prepare business plans, network with experts, government officials, financial management, credit and collateral management etc.

2. Need for building capacities of FPO functionaries – eLearning course

There is, thus, a need to build up the capacities of the functionaries and professional staff associated with the promotion and operations of the FPOs and governance of a collective organisation as per statutory requirements. While there is sufficient resource material available in the public domain on the various functional aspects, operations and running of FPOs, there is a need to make it available in a homogenous manner, in a reasonable time frame, to these stakeholders across the country.

Most of the trainings are provided in-house by the Producer Organisation Promoting Institutions (POPIs)/ Resource Institutions. Typically, such trainings are conducted in residential format and lot of time, effort and money goes into achieving the objectives.

Therefore, a need is felt that an e-Learning module of the available resource material should be developed to help in "bridging the gap" for quality delivery of training and to build the capacity of the stakeholders.

3. FPO interventions under UPNRM

Under Umbrella Programme for Natural Resource Management, a collaborative venture among GIZ, NABARD and KfW, a number of activities have been taken up pertaining to FPOs. The programme has given emphasis, to provide development finance to various FPOs for taking up NRM based livelihood projects. Need based handholding support and capacity building have been extended to select FPOs financed under the programme. A study on assessing the capacities of FPOs was done covering 131 sample FPOs in Maharashtra. Another similar study has also been commissioned in Karnataka. Considering, the huge capacity gaps in FPO sector, GIZ in collaboration with NABARD has decided to develop E-Learning modules for FPOs.

Towards this, GIZ conducted a two-day Workshop in New Delhi, to deliberate upon various aspects that help in effective FPO functioning and identify the content which is needed for the development of the e-Learning module. The deliberations were facilitated through resource materials and other enabling tools.

It was reiterated by the participants/ experts, that while the workshop was timely, the discussions and deliberations should be an ongoing process of dialogue.

- These discussions resulted in creation of a "menu" which the e-Learning Module for FPOs envisages to offer.
- With the Menu being created, the specific contents for each of the thematic areas, sessions, along with facilitation notes will have to be developed.
- The insights shared by the experts were quite broad and therefore, nuances within each theme have to be co-created with support from content writers.
- It was emphasised that the e-Module should be a '*modular and work-in-evolution "product*"' and should allow for cross-learnings in an evolutionary manner. And, therefore, the initial offering (of the product) itself need not wait for all elements/ aspects to be developed.

- The contents should be lucid and should follow the 5Cs of Communications (Clarity, Consistency, Creativity, Contents and Connections); should not be "prescriptive" in nature; should facilitate for "learning" rather than deliver a "course curriculum".

4. Objectives of the assignment

In the above context, GIZ is seeking an expert technical agency / firm to formulate learning curricula relevant to the project's evolving capacity building needs using available learning platforms and technology.

i. Development of e-learning contents (Text) for FPOs
ii. Development of multi-media products (short videos, PPTs with audio, illustrations)

For e-learning module, development of appropriate e-learning IT platform for delivery of FPO (learning) contents (text and communication products) will also be required. However, this is not part of the assignment.

5. Scope of the assignment

Main tasks of the technical agency/ firm are as below:

A. Development of architecture/framework of e-learning module

Develop broad architecture/framework of e-learning course in consultation with subject matter, communication and IT experts. The agency will share the broad framework with GIZ for inputs and feedback.

The agency will collate literature, publications, case studies etc on FPOs from various sources for development of content.

B. Develop content (text)

Based on the broad framework of e-learning module, the agency will develop text content for six individual modules. Each individual module will have target audience, topics/session, content, learning objective, learning outcome, teaching and assessment methodology etc.

Please refer annexure 1 and annexure 2 for the proposed thematic areas and sample template for the modules.

C. Workshop to validate the content

The agency will facilitate a close group consultation workshop with 8-10 experts to validate the broad framework and the text content. The expert group will also consist of IT professional who will provide inputs about the requirements of IT platform for uploading training content.

The workshop facilitation will include development of workshop agenda; identification and sending invite to experts; workshop moderation; support to GIZ in logistics etc.

The cost of workshop in terms of logistics, travel of experts etc will be borne by GIZ separately.

Based on the inputs from experts, the agency will revise the text content and develop detailed framework for multi-media product development

D. Development of multi-media product

The agency will develop suitable multi-media products apart from text content as per the framework and design of e-learning module. The multi-media product should include 12 short videos (up to 10 minutes), 24 PPTs - multimedia, 24 sketches/illustrations etc. This is just an indicative list of multi-media products; the agency may include any other formats of multi-media products to full-fill requirements of course structure.

E. Next course of action for development of IT platform

The development and testing of IT platform to host the e-learning module is out of scope for this assignment. However, the agency will provide a road map for engaging IT agency for creating IT platform to host/upload text and multi-media products of the e-learning module.

6. Major activities, deliverables and timeline

Activities		Deliverables	No. of mandays
Activity 1	Review and collation of existing material from difference sources (internet, FPOs, Resource Institutions, promoting institutions etc). Note- This activity will continue till continue till completion of content development.	Architecture/framework of FPO e-learning module	15
	Development of architecture/framework of FPO e-learning module		
	Meeting with GIZ team to share draft architecture/framework of FPO e-learning module for inputs		
Activity 2	**Content Development**		50
	Development of 6 modules	**Module 1**-Governance Framework ~ Understanding FPO functions, Management of FPO & Role of stakeholders	
		Module 2-FPO Statutory provisions/ Compliances under various legal forms	

		Module 3-Understanding the potential of the FPO, terms of trade and market linkages	
		Module 4-Resource Planning ~ Training & Educating FPO stakeholders	
		Module 5-Access to Finance ~ Sources, emerging Models	
		Module 6-Business plan of an FPO – how to develop and implement	
Activity 3	**Workshop to validate text content-Coordination and Facilitation of the workshop**		10
Activity 4	**Development of multi-media products**	12 short films/ videos of upto 10 min duration	130
		24 PPTx	
		24 sketches/ illustrations	
Activity 5	**Roadmap for IT platform**	Terms of reference for creation of IT platform	10

The modules should be based on evidences (case studies, practical experiences etc) and not merely cover generic information on FPOs. It could be designed through an evolutionary and continuing narrative format.

Duration of the contract

215 man-days over three months (Dec 2018 to Feb 2019)

Place of assignment

New Delhi with travel (tentative 4 trips to Gujarat, Maharashtra, AP, Karnataka, Odisha) to meet FPO/expert agencies to collect information for training module development.

for meeting experts and stakeholders

Required qualification/ experience of the agency

The agency should is required to submit technical and financial proposal comprising a profile that contains CVs and summary of relevant professional experience of both-agency as well as individual experts.

a. Agency qualification

The consultant agency's team must be comprised of qualified experts, with a sufficient experience in working with farmers groups and having in-depth understanding of FPO functioning.

- The agency should have at least 5 years of proven experience in development and preparation of content for training purposes.
- The agency should have 5 years of experience in development of FPO related training material.
- The agency has capability and experience to convert the contents (text, multi-media products etc) to develop an e-Learning online course.
- The agency has necessary expertise and infrastructure for creating multi-media products.
- The agency has strong network with FPOs, resource, promoting institutions etc for collecting relevant case studies, reports etc on FPOs for module development.
- The agency should have a strong project management ability and excellent communication skills.

References and examples of past work are required and should be included in the proposal.

b. Agency should have following administrative and financial requirement in concluding the assignment

- Average annual turnover for the last three financial years should be at least 1,000,00 Euro.
- Number of employees as at 31st December 2017 should be at least 20.
- The technical assessment is only based on reference projects with a minimum commission value of 25,000 Euro.

c. Profile of experts

The agency requires to have a multi-disciplinary team for executing the assignment. The team should have following experts in the team.

Team member	Role	Eligibility
Team leader	Overall coordination and overseeing the assignment. Coordination with GIZ.	▪ Post Graduate degree in agriculture/ allied agriculture sectors/ development/Economics/Finance ▪ Professional experience of 10 years in development sector with 5 years related to FPO/Agriculture sector/Capacity Building. ▪ At least 5 years of experience on development of training material for agriculture, rural development etc. ▪ Fluent in English with excellent oral and written communication skills
FPO subject matter expert	Development of training content	• Post Graduate/Graduate degree in agriculture, rural development, management, social science or related sector

Team member	Role	Eligibility
		• Experience of at least 10 years in development of training courses/ writing content for training curricula in agriculture/rural development or relevant sectors • At least 10 years of experience of FPO sector. • Fluent in English with excellent expression and writing skills.
Multi-media expert	Development of short videos/animation and other multi-media products on FPO modules.	• Post Graduate/Graduate degree with relevant experience in creation and development of media products, especially with proven work in the rural domain. • Experience of atleast 10 years in development of media tools and products used for training curricula in relevant sectors • Fluent in English with excellent expression and visualisation skills
Illustrator	The person should have experience in making illustrations for development communication products.	• Post Graduate/Graduate degree in communication design/graphics/Media • At least 5 years of experience in making illustrations/sketches for training material.
IT expert	IT expert who can guide the content team on developing the materials which would be compatible to host later in the e-module platform / creating IT platform for training content.	• Post Graduate/Graduate degree in IT/Computer • At least 2-3 years of experience in developing E-learning module

Annexure 1: Suggested modules with broad topics:

Module	Topics
Governance Framework ~ Understanding FPO functions, Management of FPO & Role of stakeholders	1. To Understand the importance and advantages of Collective Action 2. To understand what is an FPO and its relevance 3. To know the role of a farmer in an FPO's journey
FPO Statutory provisions/ Compliances under various legal forms	1. Understanding of statutory provisions under various legal formats 2. To learn and act on various compliances that govern the legal entity 3. Licences and certifications needed for business operations
Understanding the potential of the FPO, terms of trade and market linkages	1. To understand how to assess the business potential of the FPO 2. To comprehend the various terms of trade in conduct of business
Resource Planning ~ Training & Educating FPO stakeholders	1. How to plan for various resources which are needed for running an FPO business? 2. What are the various types of resources which need planning such as HR

Access to Finance ~ Sources, emerging Models	1. What aspects of the business need financing? 2. What are the various sources for raising finance? 3. What are the emerging models for funding which FPOs can access?
Business plan of an FPO – how to develop and implement	1. What is a business plan for an FPO? What are the various significant elements that form part of a Business Plan? 2. How to develop a business plan? 3. What are the risks and challenges in business operations? How to overcome these?

Annexure 2: Sample template of contents for a module on how FPO's Function (for ease of understanding)

Module 1: Governance framework- FPO Formation and its Functioning

Topic:

1. To Understand the importance and advantages of Collective Action
2. To understand what is an FPO and its relevance
3. To know the role of a farmer in an FPO's journey

Topics/ Objectives	**User Level**	**Session Contents: *Must know***	**Session Contents: *Good to know***
To understand the importance and advantages of collective action	Primer level	Existing challenges of small & marginal farmers; advantages of working in groups	local scenario over the years; few local success stories of group farming
	Medium level	Existing challenges of small & marginal farmers; advantages of working in groups; trends in collective farming	Agriculture scenario – global/ India/Local; aware of few success stories of collective action on crops similar to theirs
	Advanced level	Agriculture scenario – global/ India/Local; understanding of how farmer collectives have made a difference to small and marginal farmers; Associated with similar groups in the past	Specific cases of collective action leading to successful collective action and evolving small-level businesses; knowledge of commodity markets
To understand what is an FPO and its relevance	Primer level	definition and explanation; features of FPOs in terms of who owns, awareness on existence of	list of types of FPOs - major differences, different government authorities that are responsible for its

		different forms of FPOs	registration in various forms
	Medium level	definition and explanation; features, who owns; aware of various types of FPOs registered by different authorities.	Advantages/ trends of registering it under specific legal formats; aware of FPOs that have registered in the local geography and reasonable level of awareness about their performance
	Advanced level	Aware of various legal forms of FPOs; Advantages/ trends of registering FPOs under specific legal formats; Aware of various roles of FPO functionaries; Understand the importance and need for registering their groups into FPO at appropriate stage.	Able to decide which legal institutional form is suitable for their groups to be registered as.
Role of farmer in FPO journey	Primer level	basic steps with roles at each point through a visual diagram	detailed roles at each level; difference between Farmer Interest Group (FIG) and FPO
	Medium level	detailed roles at each level ; difference between FIG and FPO	Solutions to overcome the challenges faced at various levels of role play
	Advanced level	detailed roles at each level and the challenges also.	