

ALBANIA

Climate Resilience and Agriculture Development Project

Contract Awarded

For the attention of Consultant's authorized representative

Name: ***J-V Koestinger & Partners FlexCo, & Gateway & Partners, & Iceberg Communication, & ProAdvice, & Koestinger Consulting Albania***

Email Address: joerg@koestinger.eu

DATE OF TRANSMISSION: This Notification is sent: ***on May 29, 2025***

Notification of Award

Client: ***Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)***

Contract title: ***Support the establishment and medium-term operation of the two clusters, branding of the selected products and placing the products in the market, etc. (F&V cluster) in Dibra Region***

Country: ***Albania***

Loan No. /Credit No. /Grant No.: ***94890-AL***

Reference no.: ***AL-MARD-416091-CS-QCBS***

This Notification of Award notifies you of our decision to award the above contract.

The successful Consultant and summary scope of contract

Name:	J-V Koestinger & Partners FlexCo, & Gateway & Partners, & Iceberg Communication, & ProAdvice, & Koestinger Consulting Albania
Address:	Taubstummengasse 6/3, 1040 Vienna Austria
Contract price:	ALL 32,683,726.13 excluding VAT 20%
Duration:	24 months
Method of Procurement/ Selection:	QCBS
Summary scope of contract:	The Scope of Work for this Assignment is divided in phases. Phase I: Establishing fruits and vegetables consortium.

Note: To enhance efficiency and effectiveness, multiple activities within this Phase will be conducted simultaneously.

Specific objective

The specific objective of this phase is to establish a sustainable consortium of fruit and vegetables producers to produce quality fruits and vegetables under a common brand and commercialize it in high-end outlets (e.g., Hotel, Restaurant and Catering sector) while promoting the specificity of the local territory. The consortium will support all stakeholders across the fruit and vegetables value chain in continuously improving the quality of the fruits and vegetables placed on the market. Additionally, it will provide training on the best practices to develop and maintain the highest quality standards possible and improve the marketability of fruits and vegetables.

Specific Scope of work

Under this phase, the Consultant will define the fruits and vegetables consortium objectives, participants and operational functioning.

Activity 1: Market study and value chain analysis

The Consultant will prepare a market study and a value chain analysis for the fruits and vegetables sector centered on Dibra region to identify key bottlenecks in the production, post-harvest, processing and commercialization activities to design several scenarios of development for the future consortium.

The value chain analysis will be key for:

- ✓ Developing a SWOT analysis of the fruits and vegetables sector in Dibra region
- ✓ Identify the specificities of the territory
- ✓ identify key technical, qualitative, marketing and branding improvement to better
- ✓ commercialize the fruits and vegetables in the region and meet high-end outlets standards
- ✓ Identify processing units' capacity, efficiency and need for upgrading or additional equipment for quality fruits and vegetables production and possible diversification of their products.
- ✓ Orientate consortium objectives, define consortium strategy, and identify potential facilities and equipment needs for fruit and vegetables production purposes
- ✓ Propose a specific technical assistance package for future participants to the consortium (including e.g. training programs, capacity building workshops, certification assistance, laboratory testing services, technical advisory services including on-site consultations)

The market study will be key to:

- ✓ Capture market trends in terms of fruits and vegetables taste and certifications
- ✓ Have an overview of key outlets for fruits and vegetables according to their quality
- ✓ Identify key potential buyers first in HoReCa sector in Albania and on international markets
- ✓ Identify key competitors on local market and the characteristics of their positioning

The Consultant will also produce a benchmarking of similar consortiums established locally or internationally to identify key success factors and best practices to be used for consortium development.

The Consultant will also assess the interest of local producers in participating in the consortium while exploring main potential outlets for premium fruits and vegetables from the region.

Activity 2: Development of a strategy and business plan

Based on the previous activities, the Consultant will introduce a conceptual scenario with draft project goals and strategy, concept, key activities, with first estimation of costs, functionalities, and management based.

The tasks to be delivered under this activity include, but are not limited to the following:

- ✓ Proposing and designing a concept under several scenarios in accordance with the market study and value chain analysis (for example scenario 1: consortium with key market outlet retail chains, scenario 2: consortium targeting HoReCa sector. Scenario 3: orientation towards fruits and vegetables certification);
- ✓ Identification of key challenges and equipment needs for quality fruits and vegetables production in Dibra region.
- ✓ Estimation of costs and profitability of each scenario;
- ✓ identifying potential management/governance model of the consortium. Several options of management models for the future consortiums will be studied. They will be based on the local context, considering the main stakeholders to be associated in the management and operations of future consortium to ensure its financial sustainability.
- ✓ Preparation of an operation plan

The different scenarios will be introduced during a workshop organized by the consultant (under the cost of this assignment) to public authorities and the fruits and vegetables sectors main actors.

Activity 3: Support to consortium members selection

The Consultant will support local authorities in selecting the future participants to the technical assistance program leading to the creation of fruits and vegetables consortium in Dibra.

- ✓ Organization and facilitation of a local workshop with local communities including: municipality, RAD, Agriculture Cooperation Association ACA, agro-processors, traders etc to introduce consortium objectives and process of participation to the technical assistance program.
- ✓ Develop a call for participation to the technical assistance program under the governance of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and local municipalities;
- ✓ Support local authorities in the design of selection criteria (e.g. technical, inclusive criteria) for the future members of the consortium.

Phase II: Capacity building activities for consortium members

Specific Objectives

Under this Phase, the Consultant will be responsible for supporting the establishment and development of the consortium through the monitoring and the deliverance of technical trainings. The Consultant will also provide support with officially registering and getting the license of the consortium through the MARD.

Scope of work

The Consultant will be engaged to develop the capacity of the consortium members for two/three years in order to improve production techniques, fruits and vegetables quality, processing techniques, food hygiene and safety, marketing, commercialization and branding of the fruits and vegetables consortium. The Consultant will provide international and local experts to support the activity of the consortium until it reaches its operational capacity. The collaboration between all the different experts will be key to achieve the ambition to build a branded quality fruits and vegetables for Dibra region.

Activity 4: Improve production and post-harvest techniques.

The Consultant will strengthen the capacity of consortium members in fruits and vegetables cultivation and post-harvest technics to improve final quality of fruits and vegetables produced and support sustainable management practices (water use, pesticides). The Consultant will provide one expert (agronomist) responsible for organizing on-field trainings and monitoring of the production for two/three years. The expert will be responsible for producing the training program and materials based on phase I preliminary assessment.

The expert will prepare and deliver a clear training package based on the value chain analysis and the identified gaps at the production and post-harvest stages. He/she will be responsible for providing on- demand advices to consortium members (online and in-person) for two/three years and will monitor monthly the evolution of the production and participate to harvesting while providing post-harvest recommendations.

He/she will need to produce a record of the trainings at the end of the year to keep track of the type of assistance needed by producers and maintain a memory of the sector's development.

Activity 5: Develop FRUITS AND VEGETABLES quality.

The Consultant will support consortium members in developing unique quality fruits and vegetables connected to the specificities of Dibra territory and fruits and vegetables production. The Consultant will provide a quality expert who will develop a training package, theoretical and practical, about quality improvement in fruits and vegetables processing.

He/she will in particular focus on:

Theory:

- ✓ Organoleptic evaluation of different fruits and vegetables in the Dibra region
- ✓ Chemical and physical characteristics of fruits and vegetables
- ✓ fruits and vegetables growing and the effects on the quality of their subproducts.
- ✓ Influence of technology on the quality of fruits and vegetables subproducts.
- ✓ The classification, the community, and international legislation of fruits and vegetables
- ✓ fruits and vegetables and their benefits in the diet: healthy and physiological aspects
- ✓ Production and consumption in the world

Practical

- ✓ Tasting technique and organoleptic evaluation sheet
- ✓ Recognition of negative and positive attributes
- ✓ HACCP Standards for handling fruits and vegetables and their subproducts as well as good hygiene and manufacturing practices).
- ✓ Different packaging techniques for fruits and vegetables and their subproducts
- ✓ Standards of labelling the fruits and vegetables their subproducts
- ✓ Quality of fruits and vegetables and their subproducts and how to produce high-quality products (PDO and PGI certifications processes)

Based on the preliminary assessment achieved in phase 1 and in collaboration with the agronomist and the consortium members, the expert will oversee the development of a characteristic fruits and vegetables and their subproducts from Dibra region. The fruits and vegetables and their subproducts will meet the best international practices in terms of technics and final quality tasting while being characteristics of local fruits and vegetables and their subproducts production and the territory. The expert will provide and work in close collaboration with a marketing and branding expert to reflect in the future brand the specificity of Dibra fruits and vegetables and their subproducts.

The expert will be responsible for producing the training program based on phase I preliminary assessment and the training material. He/she will guide consortium members in the obtention of quality certifications.

He/she will need to produce a record of the trainings at the end of the year to keep track of the type of assistance needed by producers and maintain a memory of the sector's development

Activity 6: Marketing, promotion, and branding development

The marketing and branding expert will deliver specific trainings to consortium members to improve access to market of local fruits and vegetables and their subproducts on high-end markets (HoRe Ca, export) through a marketing and communication strategy, the development of a specific branding linked to the fruits and vegetables and their subproducts characteristics and territory and several Business to Business promotional events. The experts will be responsible for producing the training program based on phase i preliminary assessment and the training material.

The expert will support consortium members, in coordination with fruits and vegetables and their sub-products quality experts and based on market study, by delivering specific technical trainings in particular on: marketing strategy development strategic promotion approaches implementation, narrative development for product promotion, integration of products with HoReCa sector.

The expert will be in charge, in consultation with consortiums members, of the development of a specific brand with its logo, packaging and full promotional package.

The expert will also be responsible for the organization of several (minimum two) Business to Business meetings to promote consortium's fruits and vegetables and their sub-products in collaboration with local authorities. Target audience will be local HoReCa and potentially international buyers.

He/she will need to produce a record of the trainings at the end of the year to keep track of the type of assistance needed by producers and maintain a memory of the sector's development.

Activity 7: Organize a study tour.

The Consultant will be in charge of organizing a study tour in one of the main fruits and vegetables and their subproducts producer's countries ex. In Turkey, Moldova, Italy, Greece or neighbour's countries which also have similar typologies and are already advanced and efficient in these types of clusters. The tour will be dedicated to the consortium management staff or representatives (10 persons). The study tour will represent an opportunity to share best practices in fruits and vegetables and their subproducts and inspire the consortium in its approach to market and their promotion.

The study tour will visit fruits and vegetables and their subproducts production areas, processing units and leading consortiums in quality fruits and vegetables and their subproducts production. Several exchanges with the local producers and local authorities will be set up to understand the process of development of the consortium, the processes applied to increase quality, the marketing strategy according to current fruits and vegetables and their subproducts demand and as well as branding strategy developed. Criteria: (members of the consortium, food industry representative, producers and exporters) The consultant is covering training expenses.