

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PROJECT TITLE: **SUSTAINABLE SILK ROAD DEVELOPMENT**

PROJECT CONTRACT NO.:



Terms of References – Expert in Food Safety, Development of the HACCP System for Production Processes at LLP “Agroprosperity”

1. Contracting body

Hilfswerk International (HWI)

Grünbergstrasse 15/2/5,

1120 Vienna,

Austria

Type of organisation: NGO

2. Basic data

Donor reference:
NA

Project title:
Sustainable and Inclusive Silk Road Development

Countries of implementation:
Kazakhstan

Source(s) of funding:
ADA “Austrian Development Agency”

Project duration:
01.09.2023 – 28.02.2026

3. Background

Hilfswerk International (HWI) is based in Vienna and is one of Austria's leading organisations for development cooperation in developing countries. Within the scope of HWI we provide worldwide assistance to people in need. Since 2008, HWI in Central Asia has been a driving force for quality and food safety of agriproducts. Directly in Kazakhstan, HWI is active since 2018. Our main pillars, i. e., areas in which HWI has been providing capacity building are food safety and traceability of agricultural products, commercial quality of agri-products, product and export promotion, incl. by applying strong marketing tools such as Geographic Indications and Terroir Products.

HWI's long-term strategy in Kazakhstan and Central Asia is to support sound business development & regional cooperation to accelerate sustainable and inclusive growth and economic development.

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Outside of the primarily commercial farm sector, crop production on household plots has remained of importance throughout Central Asia. To this day, rural households contribute a significant share of total agricultural output, even though they cultivate a small percentage of total arable land. Their production is labour-intensive, in contrast to extensive agricultural production systems. They are dependent on market intermediaries and the added value of selling their products often remains with the market mediators. Traditional and cultural norms make it more difficult for women to gain access to decent and paid employment opportunities, markets, and institutions. Male migration mainly in the rural areas has additional negative effect on rural families' vulnerability.

The current project will address the following key challenges:

- Food security is closely related to poverty and access to basic needs. Arable land is particularly scarce in the Central Asian region, but more than 60% of the people in Central Asia find employment in agriculture. Still, food security is an issue in Central Asia, most critical in Tajikistan, where more than 25% of children are malnourished. How is that possible? Food security depends (among other factors) on the (in)effective use of land. Close cooperation with smallholder producers and coaching them in effective use of their agricultural land and agrotechnical methods will improve food security in the target regions.
- Food safety is an issue, in which the Central Asian countries, with the support of many international programs, has made progress mainly related to ensuring it on the processing level, but it is still quite a challenge at the production level. Good agricultural practice, efficient use of natural resources, and support to guarantee reliable and internationally recognized laboratory tests can help overcome this challenge. Food safety standards are not the first condition for exports, but they are also a guarantee for the health of the local population. Closely connected to food safety is the weak value chain traceability and insufficient cold chains. Food products which are stored inappropriately can harm consumers' health and cause recalls of production, which was aimed for export and selling.
- Weak capacity of agricultural value chains is the result of inefficient production methods, unpaid work for many women, weak market connections, and strong dependence of small producers on intermediaries.
- Weak capacities in marketing and product promotion hinder producers in the beneficial realization of their products. Indirect access to the market, unattractive but also unproper packaging of the products, scarce expertise, and inability to develop and implement successful marketing strategies are the main obstacles here. Marketing quality is poor, commercial quality standards are not sufficiently considered, and these are the quality criteria of the international buyers, but also of large local supermarket chains.

Against this background and based on 20 years of expertise and a solid network, Hilfswerk International (HWI) is developing a local social enterprise. It will buy raw material (fruits) from smallholder producers at a fair price, process, refine and promote the product, thus ensuring sustainable sources of income, improved job opportunities and enhance recognizability of local products on local, regional, and international markets.

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Project Objective: Smallholder farmers in Makhtaaral and Zhetissay districts of Turkestan region (South Kazakhstan) have improved income and access to markets and demanded services.

Results & Measures: A newly established social enterprise in Makhtaaral and Zhetissay districts of Turkestan region will process, refine, and promote locally sourced agricultural products based on stable contracts with and fair payment to smallholder farmers. Additionally, it will develop and provide services (agronomy, post-harvest management, food safety and commercial quality) and inputs (seed, plant protection products and fertilizers) to the farmers. Trainings for women, who are mostly engaged in harvesting and sorting, as well as coaching for processing facility staff in production technology will be designed and conducted as well. The design and implementation of a marketing strategy, the introduction of internal quality control systems and necessary external certifications will ensure the promotion of the refined products to local and international markets. The local social processing enterprise LLC "Agroprosperity" plans to gradually implement the HACCP system, for which it is necessary to first develop a system and documentation. The project team will subsequently carry out personnel training based on the developed system and documentation.

4. Purpose of the contracted tasks

The project aims to engage an expert who will be responsible for the development and implementation of the HACCP system and requirements at the local social enterprise LLC "Agroprosperity," located in Zhetesai District, Turkestan Region, Republic of Kazakhstan. The company's product range includes the production of dried fruits, greens, and herbs, dried using sun-drying and freeze-drying facilities.

5. Scope of work

Task Description

The expert will be responsible for the development of the HACCP system to produce dried fruits and dried greens (herbs) manufactured by LLC "Agroprosperity," in strict compliance with the national legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan and international food safety requirements.

1. The tasks include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Conduct an analysis of the company's current production processes and conditions for compliance with HACCP principles, including both sun-drying and freeze-drying processes.
- Identify hazards, perform risk assessments, and determine Critical Control Points (CCPs) for all technological stages related to both drying technologies.
- Develop a comprehensive HACCP plan with monitoring procedures, corrective actions, verification measures, and a traceability system for all product types and processing stages.

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- Prepare a complete documentation package (product safety policy, instructions, process flow charts, record forms, and checklists) taking into account the specifics of sun-drying and freeze-drying.
- Provide recommendations for improving production processes, sanitation and hygiene practices, and maintaining the sustainability of the HACCP system.

2. Site Visits

Conduct at least one visit to the production facilities of LLC “Agroprosperity” to observe and document all key production technologies and operational steps, including sun-drying and freeze-drying processes. Identify specific technological operations, Critical Control Points (CCPs), and elements of the production cycle that need to be formalized in the HACCP plan and supporting documentation.

6. Timetable & Deliverables

Task	Timeline
1. Preparation and Planning	October 2025
2. On-site Visit & Data Collection	October 2025
3. Risk Analysis & HACCP Structure	October – November 2025
4. Documentation Development	November 2025
5. Adjustments	November 2025
6. Recommendations	November 2025
7. Final Report & HACCP Package	November 2025

All tasks are to be carried out and in compliance with the HWI Project Coordinator and the HWI Regional Manager.

Above timeline is based on regular circumstances and can be subject to changes in case of external influence (e.g., complaints from potential bidders, delayed decision from Tender Commission).

7. Expected Qualifications

- In-depth knowledge and experience in food safety and the implementation of HACCP systems in small and medium-sized processing enterprises (at least 7 years), including work with sun-drying and freeze-drying processes.
- Proven experience in developing HACCP plans, standards, and technical documentation for small and medium-sized food processing enterprises (at least 7 years).
- At least 10 years of experience working in Central Asia, with an understanding of regional legislation, infrastructure, and production practices.
- Good command of Russian (spoken and written); knowledge of Kazakh or English would be an advantage.
- A professional and well-structured approach, result-oriented, with the ability to critically assess production processes and the enterprise's operational context.
- Ability to present material clearly and concisely, highlight key findings and recommendations, and develop training materials for staff.
- Excellent communication skills for interacting with management, technologists, and production personnel, as well as for conducting interviews and training sessions.

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8. Contracting body's approach to be considered

HWI is an NPO founded with the aim of providing worldwide assistance to people in need, regardless of their heritage, gender, or religion. HWI's work is oriented toward Austrian and international objectives of development cooperation. Therefore HWI expects all Contractors to respects its values as stated on the HWI website: <http://www.hilfswerk.at/HWI/english/about-us/mission-statement/hilfswerk-austria-international-mission-statement>

Regarding the contracted tasks HWI expects the outcome to consider

- the demand and needs of the target group(s) of the project,
- approaches and principles of the target country and
- sustainability aspects.

Interested experts should submit offers to aslanov@hilfswerk.tj;
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