JD for the position of Senior Research Consultant

Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation

Nature of Engagement: Consultant / Contractual – fixed duration
Duration: 4 months (starting January 28th, 2026; completion by May 26th, 2026)
Location: Delhi with travel to Madhya Pradesh
No of Position: 1
Last date for application: 27th January, 2026

About BRLF

Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation (www.brlf.in) is an autonomous body established in 2013 through a Union Cabinet decision by the Government of India. With a vision to transform the lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable populations across India, BRLF plays a crucial role in nurturing and facilitating civil society action in partnership with the government and people's institutions. Its mandate encompasses a range of objectives, including bridging the gap between program outlays and outcomes, improving implementation of government flagship programs, providing grant support to civil society Organisations (CSOs), and promoting partnerships for inclusive, sustainable development.

BRLF has a pan-India mandate and focuses on tribal geographies, particularly those in the Central Indian tribal belt and Northeast India. BRLF has supported and directly contributed to numerous projects on sustainable livelihoods, natural resource management, and governance in the states of Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Assam, Mizoram and Telangana.

About the Project

The Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation (BRLF), in partnership with the National Coalition for Natural Farming (NCNF) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), is implementing the Agroecology-based Regional Model Landscape Transformation (AgRMLT) initiative in Madhya Pradesh's Bundelkhand region. The project pilots are in Bijawar and Rajnagar blocks of Chhatarpur district, aiming to mainstream agroecology to address environmental degradation, livelihood distress, and nutritional insecurities.

The Bundelkhand region faces persistent agrarian distress, characterized by rainfed monocropping systems, soil degradation, groundwater depletion, and erratic rainfall, impacting over 70% of rural households in Chhatarpur. Nutritional vulnerabilities are severe, with 60% anemia among women and 87% among children under five (NITI Aayog & IFPRI). Despite efforts by CSOs (DMKS, SRIJAN, PRADAN, VSS, GSS), interventions remain fragmented, covering about 19,666 NF farmers across 22,152.7 acres, without a unified landscape approach.

The project seeks to enable block-level landscape transformation by integrating 14 agroecological principles to enhance soil-water resilience, biodiversity, and livelihoods, while empowering women farmers and improving nutrition security. The initiative will strengthen CSO-government convergence, build local capacity (CRPs, champion farmers), and leverage existing programs such as NMNF, VB-G-RAM-G (MGNREGA), NRLM, ICDS, and MDM for scalable impact.

Through the project, BRLF, NCNF and GIZ seeks to enable holistic change across ecological, economic, social, and nutritional domains through baseline assessments, institutional mapping, capacity building for FPOs/SHGs, and policy convergence, creating replicable models for mainstreaming agroecology in Madhya Pradesh.

About the Research Study

The Agroecology-based Regional Model Landscape Transformation (AgRMLT) initiative in Chhatarpur district addresses critical gaps in sustainable agriculture amid climate vulnerabilities and biodiversity loss. While CSOs have engaged over 19,000 natural farming practitioners across 22,000 acres, challenges persist in institutional coordination, resource baselines, and market linkages. This study will synthesize secondary data and conduct primary assessments to establish evidence on agroecological status, farming systems, and community institutions. Outcomes will inform phased action plans, enhance convergence with state schemes, and support scalable interventions for resilient landscapes. The key objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the status of agroecological conditions, including soil health, water resources, biodiversity, and crop diversity in Bijawar and Rajnagar blocks.
2. To map community institutions such as SHGs, FPOs, PRIs, and CSOs, evaluating their capacities for governance, seed systems, and market engagement.
3. To analyse farming systems, land use patterns, input practices, and nutritional indicators like dietary diversity and kitchen garden adoption.
4. To identify market systems, value chain opportunities, and vulnerabilities such as climate risks and resource depletion.
5. To recommend prioritized interventions, NF cluster selections, and convergence strategies with schemes like NMNF, NRLM, and ICDS for effective implementation.

Scope of Work

The study will cover two blocks in Chhatarpur district—**Bijawar** and **Rajnagar**- across the three designated Natural Farming (NF) landscape clusters.

Study Area	
Rajnagar Block (Cluster 1: Ken North)	Bijawar Block (Clusters 2 & 3: Ken South and Betwa Phase 2
30 villages	65 villages
9143 NF farmers	6256 NF farmers
10985 acres	7789 acres + additional coverage in cluster 3
Elevation: 131-256 m	Elevation: 256-379 m
Sampling and Coverage	
Households: 386, with attention to women-led, marginal, and tenant farmers.	
Institutions: 10 per block, including SHGs, FPOs, PRIs, and Biodiversity Management Committees.	
Villages: 12	
The study will use GIS-based agroecological mapping and track key MP benchmarks such as, • Soil Organic Carbon (SOC) ≥ 1.5% • Water saturation 65–75% • Crop Diversity Index ≥ 4	

Key Tasks

Component	Description
Research design: Geographical & Agroecological Coverage	• Mapping of Bijawar and Rajnagar blocks using DEM, land-use, soil texture, watershed boundaries, and CSO overlap, with specific delineation of the three landscape clusters: **Cluster 1** (Ken North, Rajnagar block, 30 villages), **Cluster 2** (Ken South, Bijawar block, 29 villages), and Cluster 3 (Betwa Phase 2, Bijawar block, 36 villages). • Stratification within the predefined clusters based on elevation zones, farmer interest, and ecological suitability. • Coverage includes 300–400 households and 10–15 institutions per block (SHGs, FPOs, PRIs, BMCs), with village-level sampling proportional to cluster size. • Prioritization linked to MP agroecological zones (Bundelkhand, Malwa Plateau) and NF scaling ambitions (1.55 Mha target)
Research Design: Approach & Methodology	Mixed-methods, participatory approach aligned with the AgRMLT Phase 1 Action Plan and ethical standards (informed consent, data sovereignty, gender inclusion).
Secondary Data Review & Synthesis	● Review of AgRMLT Concept Note, Scoping Study, CSO datasets, intervention timelines. ● Thematic synthesis: Agroecological Profile, NRM & Land Use, Agriculture & Livelihood Systems, and Institutional Landscape ● Knowledge gaps & priorities for primary research ● Triangulation with NMNF, KVK, ISRO BHUVAN, Soil Health Cards, e-NAM ● Identification of data and knowledge gaps o Biodiversity, Farming Systems and Land use o NRM functionality (Soil, Water, Forests, Commons) o Nutrition and food systems o Vulnerability and climate risk o Markets and local economy o Community Institutions and Governance
Institutional & Systems Assessment	• Mapping of SHGs, PRIs, FPOs, BMCs using digital tools, with focus on CSO presence in the listed villages (e.g., Srijan, Pradan, Dawat, NMNF, DMKS, VSS, GSS). • Review of nutrition systems, market linkages, supply chains, and risk/vulnerability assessments. • Use of community records and Gram Sabha documentation for validation (non-field-data focus).
Quantitative & Qualitative Analysis	• **Qualitative**: Thematic coding using NVivo; institutional case studies; gender-disaggregated insights. • **Triangulation**: Cross-checking with KVK/CSO documentation; secondary soil/biota data; community-level validation loops.
Integration & Recommendations	• Development of 3–5 costed NF Hub Profiles per block (CSBs, BRCs, aggregation nodes). • Convergence matrix linking VB-G-RAM-G (MGNREGA),(NRM works), ICDS/MDM (nutrition procurement), MP Mandi Board (market traceability), and KVKs (technical extension).

	• Scalability roadmap for agroecological transformation including blended finance opportunities and risk-mitigation pathways.
Operational Arrangements	• Bi-weekly coordination meetings with BRLF, NCNF, GIZ, CSOs (DMKS, SRIJAN).

Expected Deliverables

Sl. No.	Deliverable	Timeline	Description / Expected Outputs	Indicative Length / Format	Timeline
1	Secondary Research Report	Week 2	Detailed methodology, sampling design, data collection tools, and identification of preliminary data gaps.	12–15 pages	February 2025
2	Monitoring report of Raw Data Repository	ongoing (week 5-12)	Weekly Monitoring and final Compilation of digitized datasets, GIS shapefiles, and field notes.	Excel file / KOBO format	Feb-Mar 2026
3	Data Analysis workshop	Week 7	Finalisation of analysis framework, data analysis plan and preparation of code books	Excel file	Mar 2026
4	Draft 1 - Research Report	Week 11	Preliminary findings supported by visuals (maps, charts), and gap analysis.	30-40 pages +annexes	Mar-Apr 2026
5	Draft 2 - Research report	Week 14	Final findings supported by (maps, charts), and gap analysis.	40–50 pages + annexes	April 2026
6	Final Research Report	Week 15	Revised report incorporating feedback, with an executive summary and policy brief.	Final report + 5-page policy brief	April 2026
7	Validation Workshop	Week 16	Stakeholder presentation and feedback session; includes workshop PPT and meeting minutes.	PPT + Minutes document	Apr-May 2026

*All deliverables shall be in English. The Research Report should follow APA 7th edition citation and referencing

Consultancy Fees

The overall consultancy fee for the Senior Research Consultant for the assignment shall be INR 2,50,000/- all inclusive of taxes.

Milestone	Deliverable / Activity	Payment (%)
1	Completion of Deliverable 1	25%
2	Completion of Deliverable 3	25%
3	Completion of Deliverables 2 and 4	25%
4	Completion of Deliverables 5,6 and 7	25%

Qualifications and Experience

Essential

- Advanced degree (Master's/PhD) in Agriculture, Environmental Science, Rural Development, or related field.
- Minimum 12 years' experience in agroecology, baseline surveys, or landscape assessments in India (preference for Bundelkhand/Madhya Pradesh).
- Proven expertise in mixed-methods research (quantitative: GIS, stats; qualitative: PRA), with familiarity in NF/NMNF indicators.
- Strong knowledge of MP agriculture schemes (e.g., NMNF, VB-G-RAM-G {MGNREGA}) and gender/nutrition integration.
- Proven skills in quantitative and qualitative data analysis using analysis software, particularly, R and NVivo.
- Must have experience in designing and conducting data collection for large research projects using qualitative and quantitative tools.
- Must be proficient in data visualisation methods and tools, MS Excel, and Kobo/ similar data collection platforms.
- Work independently and be organised to ensure that tasks are completed on time.
- Results orientation with attention to detail.

Desirable

- Publication record on sustainable farming or climate resilience.

Reporting and Coordination

The consultant will report to BRLF's Head, Research and MEL. Weekly updates via email/virtual calls; monthly reviews. BRLF may convene a stakeholder meeting on draft findings. The consultant must incorporate suggestions. Final approval of all deliverables shall be done by BRLF for release of consultant fees

Application process and timeline

Application Process: Eligible candidates interested in this position are requested to apply through Link . Interested candidates must apply by January 27th, 2026. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. Recruitment for the position will be on a rolling basis.

BRLF reserves the right to close this recruitment as the position is filled from applications received.

BRLF is an equal opportunity organization without discrimination by virtue of religious belief, social class, caste, special ability, or gender.