JD for the position of Research Consultant
Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation

Nature of Engagement: Consultant / Contractual – fixed duration
Duration: 3 months
Location: Delhi with travel to Madhya Pradesh
No of Positions: 1
Last date for application: 18th February, 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, 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.

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.

Job Purpose

This position offers a meaningful opportunity for early-career researchers committed to agroecology, rural development, natural resource management, and field-based evidence generation. The Research Consultant will support and monitor rigorous data collection (quantitative and qualitative), PRA-based participatory diagnostics, institutional profiling, GIS-enabled ecological documentation, soil sample laboratory testing, and stakeholder engagement across the Bijawar and Rajnagar blocks. The study will cover the Bijawar and Rajnagar blocks in Chhatarpur district across three Natural Farming landscape clusters, encompassing 12 villages in total. It will sample 386 households and 10 institutions per block, focusing on women-led, marginal, and tenant farmers. Stratification will be based on CSO presence, elevation zones, farmer interest, and agroecological suitability.

The role demands strong field orientation, community facilitation abilities, and ethical research practice. The data and insights gathered will contribute to BRLF–NCNF–GIZ collaborative knowledge products, block-level agroecological planning, and the final baseline/scoping study reports.

Scope of Work

1. Field Data Collection

- Anchor the data collection process and supervise the field enumerators in household surveys using Kobo Toolbox (400 households).
- Facilitate FGDs, KIIs, and PRA tools in each selected NF cluster.
- Supported GPS tagging of farms, NRM structures, and sample transects, along with coordination of soil sample collection and laboratory testing
- Coordinate soil tests through collaboration with local laboratories

2. Indicator-based Data Collection and analysis

The Research Consultant will anchor and supervise data collection on the following indicators to support testing selected parameters, calculating indices, and analysing the results.

A. Chemical Parameters of Soil

- SOC% (composite soil sampling)
- pH levels
- NPK (Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium)

B. Water Saturation & Retention

- Groundwater level observations
- Functionality of water structures (ponds, trenches, check dams)
- Area under bunding/contouring/mulching
- Duration of water availability

C. Crop Diversity Index

- Crop species per season
- Intercrop/mixed-crop areas
- Indigenous/traditional crop area
- Shannon Diversity Index

D. Nutrition Score

- Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS)
- Kitchen garden presence and diversity
- Household food consumption patterns
- Proxy nutrition/health indicators from secondary sources

E. Biodiversity Index

- Crop, tree, and wild plant diversity
- Pollinator presence
- Bird/small fauna observations
- Community seed bank diversity

F. Soil Moisture & Fertility Health

- Soil moisture observations (visual + instrument)
- Use of mulching/cover crops
- Crop residue management
- Bio-fertilizer/microbial input use

G. Agro-Input Efficiency & Carbon Sequestration

- Reduction in chemical fertilizers/pesticides
- SOC-linked carbon sequestration potential
- Area under low-input farming
- Adoption of NF/bio-inputs

H. Market & Livelihood Linkages

- Produce volumes & value through FPOs/haats/mandis
- Market channels used
- Organic/NF branding

- Annual changes in farm income sources

3. GIS & Spatial Mapping

- Assist in cluster boundary validation.
- Support land-use mapping and GPS-based spatial documentation.
- Maintain spatial datasets for integration in ArcGIS/QGIS.

4. Institutional Mapping

- Map SHGs, FPOs, PRIs, Biodiversity Management Committees.
- Document seed systems, NRM assets, and market nodes (haats/mandis/aggregators).

5. Ethical & Quality Protocols

- Ensure informed consent, data privacy, gender sensitivity, and cultural respect.
- Conduct **10% back-checks** for data verification.
- Follow BRLF protocols on reporting, data governance, and field safety.

6. Coordination & Engagement

- Maintain continuous coordination with BRLF, NCNF, GIZ, and CSO partners.
- Participate in weekly review calls and fortnightly synchronization meetings.
- Support Gram Sabha validation and block-level stakeholder dialogues.

Qualifications and Experience

- Doctorate (PhD.) in Agriculture, Rural Development, Environment, Geography, Economics, NRM, or related disciplines.
- Minimum 3 years of field experience, preferably in Tribal parts of India.
- Strong skills in PRA tools, FGDs, KIIs, community facilitation, and CAPI-based surveys and data analysis.
- Basic GIS/GPS skills preferred.
- Ability to travel extensively across natural farming clusters in MP.
- Proficiency in Hindi and English is essential.
- Preference will be given to candidates having skills related to agroecology.
- Two scholarly publications addressing Natural Resource Management and climate change, with a focus on climate-responsive livelihoods is desirable.
- Strong interpersonal skills, data discipline, and ethical research orientation.

Deliverables (Team-Level)

- Clean and complete datasets (quantitative, qualitative, and spatial) and related analysis reports.
- Monitoring reports - Coordinated and supported field enumerators during primary data collection.
- Field insights, maps, and qualitative summaries as required.
- Weekly progress logs, field notes, and documentation.
- Strongly support the Senior Research Consultant and BRLF HO (Research) in evidence validation and preparation of draft/final baseline reports, and conduct the workshop.

Compensation

Remuneration will be consolidated and commensurate with experience and organisational norms.

<u>Application Process</u>

Eligible candidates interested in this position may apply through <u>LINK</u> For any queries regarding the position, write to **anukriti@brlf.in** with the subject line: **"Application for Research Consultant– AgRMLT (Madhya Pradesh)"**. Interested candidates must apply by 18th February, 2026

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. Recruitment will be on a rolling basis.

BRLF is an equal opportunity organisation, without discrimination based on religion, caste, social class, ability, gender, or any other status.