

Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD)

JOB/POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position title:	Value Chain and Business Development Expert (VCBD)
Level/Grade:	9
Project:	Transitioning to Agroecological Production (TAP)
Supervisor/Reports to:	Team Leader
Duty Station	Surkhet
Position description:	New V
	Published Date: 8 October 2026
	Anticipated Joining date: By end of November 2026

BACKGROUND

Transitioning to Agroecological Production (TAP) is a regional project funded by the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) for implementation in Nepal, Bhutan and Pakistan for the period of 3 years. In Nepal, the project will be implemented in Karnali, Sudurpaschim and Lumbini Provinces to support the IFAD funded Resilient High Value Agriculture Program (RHVAP), the Nepal Government's flagship programme under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Environment (MoAFE). The TAP project aims to support transition to commercially viable agroecological systems and strengthen the economic resilience of smallholder farmers through promotion and scaling of agroecological farming systems in the region. The project will seek to accelerate on farm agroecological transformation while strengthening the market, knowledge and institutional systems required to sustain and scale agroecological practices within ongoing investment projects in Nepal, Bhutan and Pakistan. While project implementation in each country will be led by the respective implementing partners, LI-BIRD will be responsible for overall coordination and project management. The project will promote collaboration, learning and knowledge exchange among the three countries while ensuring effective planning, implementation, monitoring, financial oversight, reporting and accountability at both national and regional levels.

JOB SUMMARY

Reporting to the Team Leader, the Value Chain and Business Development (VCBD) Expert will lead and support in-country project activities related to the marketing of agroecological products with Participatory

Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD)

Guarantee System (PGS) certification and value chains in close coordination with RHVAP, local government community groups and private sectors. Key responsibilities include developing localized certification and traceability systems; forging partnerships and strengthening capacity of farmers, producer organizations, market actors and other relevant stakeholders on establishing record keeping and certification systems, marketing and business development planning and execution; facilitating farmer-to-farmer learning and exposure visits; and supporting data management, documentation and reporting. The VCB Expert will provide technical guidance to the farmers and producer organizations and coordinate with local government, private sector actors and other stakeholders to strengthen market-led production, agri-business linkage, building synergies, leverage resources and scale promising innovations and agroecology-based value chain models.

Key Responsibilities and Tasks

1. Agroecological Value Chains and Market Systems Development (50% of available time)

- Lead value-chain and market assessments for selected high-value and priority agroecological commodities, identifying market opportunities, constraints, risks and value-chain upgrading opportunities;
- Support prioritization of value chains based on market demand, profitability, agroecological suitability, climate resilience, local comparative advantage, nutrition, and inclusion of women and youth;
- Map and strengthen linkages among farmers, producer organizations, cooperatives, aggregators, processors, traders, wholesalers, retailers and institutional/export markets;
- Develop and support implementation of value-chain upgrading and market development plans in collaboration with producer organizations, private-sector actors, local governments and R-HVAP;
- Identify opportunities for aggregation, grading, storage, processing, value addition, packaging, certification, branding and marketing of agroecological products;
- Promote market opportunities for priority R-HVAP and locally relevant high-value commodities, including vegetables, fruits, livestock and livestock products, spices, coffee, honey, NTFPs/MAPs, and indigenous and neglected crops;
- Facilitate and support international market experts to provide technical assistance to Semlar Wholesale market, Butwal in establishing, operationalizing, monitoring and promoting agroecological products; and
- Provide technical support, supervision, and mentoring to project staff on value chain and market system development.

2. Agroecological Certification and Quality Assurance (20% of available time)

- Facilitate development and operationalization of a localized Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) for agroecological certification and marketing of agroecologically produced commodities;
- Support relevant ministries and government agencies in developing agroecological product certification guidelines, particularly PGS, standards and mechanisms;

Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD)

- Build capacity of farmers, producer organizations, market actors, government staff and other stakeholders on PGS, certification, quality assurance and traceability through training, orientation and cross-learning;
- Support producer organizations and stakeholders to implement PGS, and agroecological certification and traceability systems, including documentation, compliance and quality assurance; and
- Support producer organizations and cooperatives to improve quality, packaging, branding and marketing of agroecological products and strengthen market credibility.

3. Strengthening Producer Organization and Private-Sector Engagement (15% of available time)

- Support producer organizations, cooperatives and agroecological enterprises to develop business models, investment plans and market strategies aligned with R-HVAP priorities, local government plans and other relevant programmes;
- Strengthen the capacity of producer organizations and enterprises in business development, aggregation, value addition, market engagement and financial management;
- Build capacity of farmers, producer organizations, market actors, extension workers and other stakeholders on PGS, certification, quality assurance and traceability through training, orientation and cross-learning;
- Establish and strengthen partnerships with market actors, buyers, financial institutions and service providers to mobilize markets, finance, technical services and investments for agroecological enterprises;
- Facilitate public–private–producer partnerships and co-investment opportunities to strengthen value-chain infrastructure, enterprise development and sustainable market systems;
- Facilitate business-to-business linkages, buyer–seller meetings, market exposure, trade fairs and other market linkage events; and
- Provide technical support, supervision and mentoring to producer organizations and enterprises, identifying challenges and facilitating timely solutions.

4. Coordination, Partnerships and Learning (10% of available time)

- Maintain effective coordination with R-HVAP, relevant federal and provincial government agencies, local governments and other flagship programmes to ensure alignment, complementarity and synergies.
- Work with local governments and R-HVAP project team in integrating agroecological value chains, enterprise development and market-oriented interventions into relevant plans and programmes.
- Participate in relevant government and R-HVAP coordination, planning and review platforms and facilitate joint planning, implementation, monitoring and learning;
- Identify opportunities for resource leveraging, joint initiatives and strategic partnerships with government programmes and other stakeholders to strengthen sustainability and scale ; and

Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD)

- Document and share good practices, successful business models, partnership approaches and lessons learned to support replication, institutionalization and scaling.

5. Compliance Management and Accountability (5% of available time)

- Ensure LI-BIRD's key policies such as Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Environment and Social Safeguarding are implemented and monitored;
- Actively promote LI-BIRD's workplace policies, staff wellness, fairness and equity and take corrective measures/actions where appropriate;
- Ensure that assigned activities and expenditures comply with organizational policies, donor requirements, and project procedures;
- Maintain appropriate documentation and records for assigned activities and ensure timely reporting;
- Monitor the use of resources for assigned activities and take appropriate action to maintain financial accountability and value for money; and
- Support audits, reviews, and other accountability processes as required.

Additional Position Description/Requirements

The VCDB Expert is responsible for problem-solving at various levels. The position requires strong analytical, problem-solving, decision-making, coordination, collaboration, and communication skills, along with the ability to work effectively with stakeholders. The candidate must have a strong personal commitment to social equity, equal rights and opportunities, and demonstrate adherence to LI-BIRD's values, policies, and safeguarding principles.

Education and Experience: Master's degree in agribusiness management or agriculture economics or an equivalent related field, with at least 5 years of work experience on agriculture value chain and market systems development engaging smallholder producers and private sectors. Candidates with valid motorbike/scooter license and grounded experience in safe food and agroecological value chains and market developments, basic understanding about organic certification including Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) and private sector promotion are encouraged to apply.

Competencies and Personal Specification:

- Strong conceptual, interpersonal, communication, negotiation, facilitation and representation skills;
- Demonstrated experience in agriculture value chains and market development, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the project;
- Demonstrated ability to coach and mentor staff and manage staff;
- Experienced in the effective management of project finance;
- Experienced in maintaining a congenial working relationship with all the associated stakeholders of the project;
- Outstanding ability to cope with stress, make decisions and appropriate communication;
- Strong interest to work on issues related to agroecology-based value chain;
- Fluency in both (written and oral) English and Nepali, and
- Proficient in M.S. Office (Excel, PowerPoint and Word) and Knowledge of basic statistical concepts (SPSS, R-Studio, Arc GIS).