

Request for Proposal (RfP)

Title:	Request for Proposal from research companies/ consulting firms to conduct an Outcome Assessment Survey
Issue Date:	Nov 10, 2022
Locations:	Selected districts in Province 2 and 5, Nepal
Issuing Organization	Swisscontact Nepal Oasis Complex, 4 th Floor, 211 Madan Marg, Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur, Nepal Phone: +977 1 55 8508 / 5548830
Expected Partnership Period:	Dec 5, 2022 – February 15, 2023
Quotation Submission Date:	Nov 25, 2022
Contact Person:	np.info@swisscontact.org

All proposals should be directed to:

Swisscontact Nepal
Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness (CASA)
Oasis Complex, 4th Floor,

211 Madan Marg, Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur, Nepal

Phone#: +977 1 552 8508 / 5548830

Email: np.info@swisscontact.org

KINDLY SEND PROPOSALS DIRECTLY TO THE ISSUING ORGANIZATION ADDRESS SHOWN ABOVE. NO TELEPHONE INQUIRIES WILL BE ENTERTAINED.

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Terms of Reference (ToR)

1. ABOUT SWISSCONTACT

Swisscontact is a leading partner organization for the implementation of international development projects. The organization promotes inclusive economic, social, and ecological development to make an effective contribution towards sustainable and widespread prosperity in developing and emerging economies. With this objective in mind, Swisscontact offers the chance to economically and socially disadvantaged people to improve their lives on their own initiative. The independent, non-profit, and private foundation was established in 1959 in Switzerland. The organization strengthens the competencies of people, improving their employability, increases the competitiveness of enterprises, growing their business, and fosters social and economic systems, promoting inclusive development.

In Nepal, Swisscontact is registered as an International Non-Governmental Organization that started its operations in 1991 with the initiation of the Training Institute for Technical Instruction programme. Currently, Swisscontact Nepal has five development programmes across all seven provinces, with a well-functioning country office that employs over 50 national and international staff members.

2. CASA PROJECT OVERVIEW

CASA is a six-year programme (2019-2024) funded by FCDO to increase economic opportunities for smallholder farmers by demonstrating the commercial viability of businesses with significant smallholder supply chains, and by attracting more investment into the sector. CASA is changing how investors, donors, and governments' view and invest in agribusinesses that work with smallholder supply chains. In doing so, CASA is increasing economic opportunities for smallholder farmers by: -

- a) Demonstrating the commercial viability of small and medium-sized (SME) agribusinesses with significant smallholder supply chains and attracting more investment into these businesses.
- b) Deepening the smallholder impact of existing investments made by Development Finance Institutions (DFIs, notably CDC), and impact investors.
- c) Enabling poor smallholder farmers to engage with and trade in commercial markets; and,
- d) Researching and communicating the case for successful engagement with smallholder-linked agribusiness.

Components A and C are implemented by a consortium led by NIRAS International, in partnership with Swisscontact, and Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI).

Component A focuses on catalytic interventions in the agriculture sectors of Malawi and Nepal to support agribusiness SMEs to prepare for and secure investment and to bring more, poorer smallholders into commercial markets. A key element of the anticipated intervention portfolio is to support target SMEs to become attractive investment propositions, whilst strengthening aggregation and access to commercial markets and linkages at producer group level.

Component C operates at a global level, where the programme is designed to work with larger agribusinesses to deepen their smallholder supply chains and engage more constructively with local communities. Component C is also designed to undertake evidence generation and learning activities. These bring together the experience from across FCDO's and other concessional finance providers' commercial agriculture programmes and research, in order to shape the debate on smallholder agriculture and influence the approaches of investors, donors and governments.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE OUTCOME ASSESSMENT

1. To assess the extent to which the technical assistance provided by CASA's partners to smallholder farmers in their supply chain have contributed to changes in production systems, produce handling and net attributable incomes.
2. Assess whether there are improved commercial relationships between smallholder farmers and Agri-SMEs as a result of increased produce sourcing and aggregation.
3. To determine the extent to which the promoted technologies and practices have resulted in increased production and produce aggregation and reduced post-harvest losses.
4. Assess the extent to which smallholder farmers receiving technical assistance through CASA's partners have adopted climate smart/regenerative agricultural practices or nature based solutions as a means to enhancing households' resilience and improving adaptive capacity to climate change.
5. Draw out successes and challenges encountered across the different interventions and provide an array of lessons learnt and recommendations to improve the implementation of new/on-going projects.

Research questions

The study should be able to provide answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent have the smallholders across the different sectors adopted the new practices and technologies promoted by CASA's partners? What are the key factors in adoption and non-adoption?
2. Has the adoption of new practices resulted to quantifiable product output/produce aggregation, product quality and reduction in post-harvest losses? What are the key explanatory factors?
3. To what extent has smallholder farmers' access and engagement with commercial markets increased/improved?
 - a. In relation to smallholder farmers selling produce through formal supply chains
 - b. In relation to the commercial relationship between smallholder farmers and CASA's SME's Key drivers, incentives, barriers, challenges
4. To what extent have smallholder farmers made major investments in their farm system, and how and how far does this stem from CASA support?
5. Are the practices and technologies promoted by CASA's partners sustainable? To what extent are smallholders willing and able to continue applying the practices and technologies without the support of the programme? What are the key factors influencing this?

What lessons can the programme draw from on-going interventions to improve implementation of new or on-going projects?

4. SCOPE OF WORK AND METHODOLOGY

The research will adopt a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. The qualitative approaches will include but not limited to: Focus Group Discussions, Key Informant Interviews, Stories of Change including human stories and Field observations.

Specific Tasks

The research service provider is expected to;

- i. Review programme documents (report, value chain studies, progress reports, project concept notes) in order to have a better understanding of the different interventions implemented
- ii. Review and agree on the survey data collection tools with CASA MRM Manager
- iii. Script the questionnaires in Open Data Kit (ODK) system to improve data capture and quality assurance.
- iv. Draw a representative sample of the targeted producers from a database that will be provided by CASA. Tentative sample size should range between 200-250 per sector.
- v. Recruit and train field enumerators
- vi. Pilot the questionnaire to test its efficacy before roll out.
- vii. Manage data collection in the field with the right data quality assurance protocols put in place
- viii. Collect qualitative data through Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews with different stakeholders (all lead firms to be interviewed) and beneficiaries
- ix. Document human success stories per intervention. Where appropriate, the consultant will be required to provide case studies in the main report.
- x. Clean the dataset and standardize all the measurement units into respective SI units.
- xi. Present cleaned dataset (In SPSS/ Excel formats) to CASA as part of the final deliverables.
- xii. Systematically analyse qualitative data and use it to triangulate quantitative findings and provide additional analysis providing explanatory insights
- xiii. Provide a formatted survey report to CASA' management for review (the data to be presented in form of graphs/tables). The report to be presented in MS Word document.

5. DELIVERABLES

- Final Outcome Assessment report. The report format should include:
 - Executive Summary
 - Introduction/Background Information
 - Objectives of the Assessment
 - Methodology
 - Findings
 - Conclusions and Recommendations (including possible lessons to be drawn by the programme per intervention).
 - List of Annexes (List of key informants/stakeholders interviewed, field photos etc.)
- Cleaned dataset in SPSS format with all variables standardized in the respective SI units of measurement

A report template will be provided to ensure help consistency.

6. PROPOSAL AND APPLICANT SPECIFICATION

- The research firm must have presence in the target countries (the study will be country specific).
- Technical experts must have at least 7 years of work experience in conducting large scale surveys and evaluation studies in the agriculture sector with a bias of Market systems development (MSD) projects.
- The team must include an experienced qualitative researcher.

- Experience in conducting a gendered analysis (including use of the Women in Agriculture Empowerment Index/WEAI) is desirable.
- Experience in collecting and analyzing the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) analysis.

7. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The potential and interested organization are requested to submit documents showing their keen interest to undertake the proposed assignment. The proposal should include:

- Cover letter expressing the interest,
- Technical Proposal (75% of the weightage)
- Financial Proposal (25% of the weightage)

Technical Evaluation Criteria

SN	Heading	Points
1	Overall Response The understanding of the assignment by the proposer and the alignment of the proposal submitted with the ToR	15
1.1	Completeness of response	
1.2	Overall concord between ToR requirements and proposal	
2	Organization, key personnel, and relevant skills and past work experience	35
2.1	Range of depth of the organizational experience with similar assignment.	
2.2	Sample of previous work (experience in training and mobilizing field teams for large scale data collection and experience in preparing outcome assessment reports)	
2.3	Relevant experience and qualifications of the proposed team for the assignment	
3	Proposed Methodology and Approach Work plan showing detail deliverables, implementation plan in line with the project	25
3.1	Proposed work plan and approach of delivery of the tasks as per the ToR	
	Total Score	75

Financial evaluation Criteria

The financial proposal will be evaluated following the completion of the technical evaluation. The bidder with the lowest evaluated cost will be awarded 25 points. Financial proposal from the other bidder will receive pro-rated points on the relationship of the bidder's prices to that of the lowest evaluated cost.

Both the proposals must be in two separate pdf files. The financial proposal will be opened only after the technical proposal is rated. Technical proposals with scores less than 50% will not be further evaluated.

8. Application Guidelines

Detailed technical and financial proposals to be submitted to np.info@swisscontact.org not later than **5 PM, 25th November 2022** with subject line: CASA Outcome Assessment Proposal 2022.

The proposal should include Understanding of the Terms of Reference, Methodology to be used, tentative work plan and budget. All applicants to enclose list of similar assignments undertaken with sample reports and references. Final deliverables to be **completed not later than 15th February 2023.**

Implementation timelines

Activity	Date
Advertisement/circulation of the ToR with research service providers	10 th November 2022
Bids closure	25 th November 2022
Internal evaluation of the proposals	26 th – 4 th December 2022
Contract award	5 th Dec 2022.
Submission of final deliverables (cleaned datasets & final outcome assessment report	15th February 2023

9. TERMS OF PAYMENT

As per Swisscontact norms and mutually agreed during the signing of the contract.