

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Title:	Request for Proposal from research companies/ consulting firms to conduct an Outcome Assessment Survey
Issue Date:	October 4, 2020
Locations:	Selected districts in Province 2 and 5, Nepal
Issuing Organization	Swisscontact Nepal Sanepa Marg, Kupondole – 10, Lalitpur, Nepal Phone#: +977 1 552 8508 / 5548830
Expected Partnership Period:	October 29, 2021 – December 31, 2021
Quotation Submission Date:	October 22, 2020
Contact Person:	np.info@swisscontact.org

All proposals should be directed to:

Swisscontact Nepal
Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness (CASA)
Sanepa Marg, Kupondole – 10, 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 organisation for the implementation of international development projects. The organisation 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 Organisation 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

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) **Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness (CASA) programme** seeks to change how investors, donors, and governments view and invest in agribusinesses that work with smallholder supply chains. CASA aims to demonstrate the benefits of increased sustainable investment in agribusinesses with smallholder supply chains and enable the gainful involvement of poorer smallholders in those supply chains. FCDO's approach to economic development and agriculture relies on an increasingly commercial approach to its agricultural programming by:

- Boosting agri-business investment, financing agricultural infrastructure and supporting smallholder farmer access to markets;
- Helping farmers and their families to have opportunities and jobs outside of their farms and supporting SMEs in rural areas.
- Supporting subsistence farmers without other economic opportunities to avoid hunger, malnutrition and extreme poverty; and,
- Encouraging commercial approaches that reduce the cost of nutritious diets.

In support of this approach, FCDO has launched the 5-year, flagship Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness (CASA) programme which seeks to change how investors, donors, and governments view and invest in agribusinesses that work with smallholder supply chains. In doing so, CASA will increase economic opportunities for smallholders 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.

CASA has 3 components, two of which (Components A and C) are managed by NIRAS-LTS in partnership with Swisscontact and CABI. CASA's component B is separately implemented by Technoserve and focuses on technical assistance and investment promotion for larger Agri-enterprises on the global development stage.

Component A aims at demonstrating high impact interventions in the 3 target countries (Malawi, Uganda and Nepal) leading to (a) mobilization of investments for partner agri-businesses (which can include commercially minded farmer associations and cooperatives) and/or expanded outreach to smallholders; and (b) improved access to markets for smallholders. The ultimate target group for CASA is the 'missing middle' of 'stepping-up' smallholders¹ – i.e. those that wish to engage in commercial agriculture but are largely not engaged to date (including 40% living on less than US\$2/day and 50% women). Component C is a learning and knowledge-sharing component that will leverage knowledge gains from Component A interventions and other research to inform donors and investors about the merits of investing in agribusiness SMEs with significant outreach to smallholders.

In the last one year, CASA has been working with agribusiness SMES and producer organisations in six sectors, namely; dairy & vegetables (Nepal); sesame & beans (Uganda) and poultry & aquaculture (Malawi) with the goal of crowding-in more smallholder farmers into formal supply chains through improved produce aggregation and at the same time, providing technical assistance to SMEs to attract investment from third party sources/commercial lenders.

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 is 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 to increment in produce aggregation and reduction in 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 to improve 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?
2. Are smallholder farmers selling produce through formal supply chains? If yes, what are the main underlying incentives/benefits?
3. Has the commercial relationship between smallholder farmers and CASA's SME's improved? If yes, what are the key drivers to the observed changes?
4. Has the adoption of new practices resulted to quantifiable product output/produce aggregation, product quality and reduction in post-harvest losses?

¹ 'Stepping-up smallholder farmers are defined as those that sell or wish to sell at least 50% of their cash crops.

5. What major investments have farmers made on their own that can be attributed to the CASA programme?
6. Are the practices and technologies promoted by CASA's partners sustainable? i.e are the smallholders willing to continue applying the practices and technologies without the support of the programme? If yes, what are the incentives to continue doing so?
7. 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 so as to draw more insights on the most significant changes recorded.
- 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. 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 word document.

5. DELIVERABLES

- i) Final Outcome Assessment report. The report format should include:
 - Executive Summary
 - Introduction/Background Information
 - Objectives of the Assessment
 - Methodology
 - Specific Findings (findings per intervention, human stories, case studies and field photos)
 - 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)

- ii) Cleaned dataset in SPSS format with all variables standardized in the respective SI units of measurement

6. PROPOSAL AND APPLICANT SPECIFICATION

- The research firm must have presence in the target countries (the study will be country specific, and this ToR is specifically for study in Nepal).
- The research firm should be registered in PAN/VAT and should provide us copy of legal and corporate documents including company registration certificate, PAN/VAT registration certificate, latest tax clearance certificate, company profile. Firms must also include a list of previous works, corresponding references, and samples of similar past works.
- Technical experts must have at least 5 years work experience in conducting large scale surveys in the agriculture sector.
- The team must comprise of a qualitative researcher and gender analyst with proven work experience.
- Experience in conducting Contribution Analysis (CA) is desirable.
- Experience in conducting a gendered analysis (Women in Agriculture Empowerment Index/WEAI is desirable).

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, 22nd October 2021** with subject line: CASA Outcome Assessment Proposal.

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 31st December 2021**.

Implementation timelines

Activity	Date
Advertisement/circulation of the ToR with research service providers	4 th October 2021
Bids closure	22 nd October 2021
Internal evaluation of the proposals	25 th – 27 th October 2021
Contract award	29 th October 2021
Submission of final deliverables (cleaned datasets & final outcome assessment report	31st December 2021

9. TERMS OF PAYMENT

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