Request for Proposal (RFP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>NGO Partners for implementing projects of the Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness (CASA) programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issue Date:</td>
<td>March 20, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locations:</td>
<td>Province 2 and 5 of Nepal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Issuing Organization | Swisscontact Nepal  
Sanepa Marg, Kupondole – 10, Lalitpur, Nepal  
Phone: +977 1 552 8508 / 5548830 |
| Expected Partnership Period: | Two (2) years after signing the contract |
| Submission Date: | April 14, 2020 |
| Contact Person: | Post Bahadur Thapa (post.thapa@swisscontact.org) |

All inquiries 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

KINDLY SEND PROPOSALS DIRECTLY TO THE ISSUING ORGANIZATION ADDRESS SHOWN ABOVE.
Terms of Reference for implementing projects of the Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness (CASA) programme

1. SWISSCONTACT BACKGROUND

As an expert organisation, Swisscontact carries out high-quality project work. The cost-effectiveness and efficiency of its services is proven by well-documented, transparent monitoring and quantification procedures. Recurring internal and external checks provide proof of continued, sustainable development of expertise, skills and practical know-how.

Swisscontact was established in 1959 as an independent organisation by prominent individuals from the worlds of commerce and science in Switzerland. It is exclusively involved in international cooperation and since 1961 has carried out its own and mandated projects. Swisscontact is active in 34 countries with a workforce of over 1200 people. The organisation is based in Zurich.

In Nepal, Swisscontact is registered as an International NGO with a well-functioning country office that employs over 50 staff members. On-going initiatives of Swisscontact like the Youth Employment Project (YEP) are contributing to the integration of youth into the job market and youth groups in social and economic processes. This is achieved through improved and market-oriented skills development training and awareness programmes on youth policy dialogue and stakeholder sensitisation. Swisscontact has furthered its work in skills development in Nepal through the Nepal Vocational Qualifications System (NVQS) project, which supports the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) under the Ministry of Education to establish a National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) and a corresponding NVQ Authority. The Senior Expert Contact (SEC) in Nepal promotes entrepreneurship through expertise imparting technical skills during volunteer work.

Commercial Agriculture for Smallholder and Agribusiness (CASA) Programme, seeks to change how investors, donors and government view and invest in agribusiness that works with the smallholder supply chain. Nepal Agricultural Market Development Programme (NAMDP), also known as Sahaj, contributes to a long-term vision of thriving and inclusive agriculture markets that develop the comparative advantages for import substitution and export growth, and thus contribute to poverty reduction.

2. CASA PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness (CASA) Programme aims to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and their families in Uganda, Malawi and Nepal by stimulating investment in emerging agri-markets. CASA bridges evidence gaps to ensure that investors and policymakers have access to the right information and people to make inclusive agribusiness models succeed.

By showcasing successful models for businesses that source produce from smallholders and pulling together the evidence base supporting the commercial and development impact of their business models, CASA will attract more investment into the sector, boosting economic growth and raising demand for smallholder produce.

The CASA programme design is one of its kind as it not only focusses on the smallholders, as common with many development programmes but looks at enabling and commercialising the whole value chain. The programme will focus on different complementary value chains in three countries. In Uganda, it will seek to create a meaningful impact in the sesame and beans sectors, in Nepal in the dairy and vegetable sectors and in Malawi, in the poultry and aquaculture sectors. These sectors were selected after extensive research and obvious growth potential in various countries.

3. CASA NEPAL OVERVIEW

Swisscontact takes the role of country-level programme implementation in Nepal. In line with CASA’s overall objectives, CASA Nepal will support SME agribusinesses, smallholder groups and business groups to increase their productivity and access to markets in the dairy and vegetable value chains. Specific objective of CASA Nepal are:

- **Smallholder aggregation**: More inclusive market structures, enabling smallholders to engage and participate in value chains by supporting businesses, cooperatives and NGOs to link more, smallholder farmers to commercial markets.
• **SME investible deals**: Improved the pipeline of investable agribusinesses with significant smallholder supply chains by providing technical assistance to SMEs to help them prepare for and access investment.

• **Investment climate**: More transparent and competitive agribusiness enabling environment by supporting governments and regulators to improve the enabling environment for farmers and agribusinesses.

### 4. BACKGROUND TO THE ASSIGNMENT

This Terms of Reference (ToR) refers to the assignment of an implementing partner (IP) who has a sound understanding and substantial experience in working in the areas of agriculture value chain and private sector development, and policy research and advocacy in Nepal. The IP will work closely with the relevant teams of CASA and the other IPs to implement interventions in the selected sectors.

### 5. WHO IS AN IMPLEMENTING PARTNER (IP)?

IPs are also referred to as “Sub-contractors” and “Co-facilitators”. In close collaboration with CASA Nepal, they implement interventions on behalf of CASA (essentially by establishing a partnership with market actors/intervention partners); they also work as an extended team of CASA for rolling out specific activities in the sectors, cross-sectors and on broader policy issues. Implementing partners are not market actors since CASA is also not a market actor. They are funded by CASA and play a facilitator’s role similar to that of CASA.

It is important to note that, IPs are completely different entities than the ‘intervention partners’. Intervention partners are market actors (private sector market actors or government agencies) who partner with CASA’s implementing partners and co-invest with CASA to test out innovation and scale up innovations in the market systems based on their business incentives (or mandates). The following table elaborates on the difference further.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementing Partner</th>
<th>Intervention Partners/ market actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementing Partner commits to following CASA project development strategy and approach and will report to CASA for matters related to the implementation of the project.</td>
<td>Relationship is based around joint investment from CASA and Intervention Partners to test new approaches, business models, and strategies. Partnership is formed based on the overlap between the development objective of CASA and business objective of the partner. No partnership is formed if no overlap of interests exists. Intervention partners invest in developing their businesses (private sector), meeting their own policy objectives (public sector), and/or improving societal or sector-level cohesion (civil society, association-bodies).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing Partner fully comply with the requirements of CASA’s management, financial, and results measurement systems.</td>
<td>Project usually provides only strategic and technical support services to Intervention Partners and share risks for testing out innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-contracting financial arrangement</td>
<td>Collaborative partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When implementing interventions, implementing partners form partnership with intervention partners (market actors) on behalf of CASA.</td>
<td>Forms partnership with CASA Implementing Partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6. OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The broad objective of the assignment is to design, implement and assess interventions in the dairy and vegetable sectors following the CASA approach. The IP will work closely with the relevant teams of CASA. It will build on the learning and experiences of the relevant CASA teams and contribute to the vision and strategies of CASA. Along with implementation, the IP will strictly follow the Monitoring and Results Measurement (MRM) system used in CASA.
Other specific objectives of the assignment are:

- Develop and implement, in collaboration with relevant private and public sector actors, appropriate interventions to address the key constraints and unlock opportunities.
- Incorporate pro-poor strategies in designing interventions so that the interventions benefit small and marginal farmers whose livelihoods depend directly or indirectly on the sectors that CASA is active in.
- Integrate CASA crosscuts, gender equity and social inclusion (GESI), food security and nutrition, and climate change and environment aspects in designing interventions so that women and disadvantage groups (DAG) can be more empowered by being economic agents at different stages of the selected value chains.
- Take leadership in the identification of key policy and regulatory issues, particularly in the sector that CASA is active, that impede the inclusive growth of the agriculture sector in Nepal.

7. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

7.1. Constraint Identification
The IP, in close collaboration with CASA and building on the existing analysis conducted by CASA, will further elaborate on the value chain and policy constraints in the selected sectors. With approval from CASA, the partner will implement selected interventions.

7.2. Implementation Strategy
The IP will develop a detailed plan to execute the selected intervention (including a detailed timeline) with CASA sector teams during the implementation period. The detail plan will clearly state the following:

- Concept Plan
- Strategies and modality of execution
- Potential/ultimate beneficiaries
- Strategic partners (private and public) and stakeholders based on their strategic positions to contribute to the vision of the project and the project’s ability to influence.
- Activity details, action plan and tentative budget distribution for the activities
- Detailed timeline of implementing activities and outcomes (expected results).
- Proper exit plan explaining who and how relevant partners/stakeholders will continue the activities in future.

Though the IP will provide certain strategies and plans, the final execution strategy will be decided upon discussion among all the parties (IP, CASA and eventually other relevant parties, i.e., intervention partners/market actors) and is subject to approval from CASA.

7.3. Principles of implementation
In close collaboration with CASA, the IP will implement the interventions and activities based on following principles.

- The IP in close collaboration with CASA, will operate as a facilitator of market systems development, aware of its temporary presence in the market and respecting the market systems development principles.
- The IP must ground its work in a thorough understanding of the overall dynamics: the key issues in the selected sectors, why these are there, and what factors prevent the enactment and implementation of appropriate interventions.
- Based on a thorough understanding of the overall dynamics, and on a deep understanding of who has the right incentive to address the issues identified, the facilitator should identify entry points into the sector: private/public sector partners to work with or public institutions for policy implementation.
• The facilitator should only assist a private sector partner in those areas where the private sector partner lacks the knowhow of working independently. Assistance should always be about engaging the private sector partner, working together with the private sector partner, giving them exposure and, making them learn and achieve. Assistance should never take the form of working on behalf of the private sector partner, even not to speed up the process. The pace of progress is to be determined by the private sector partner.

• The facilitator should only assist the government sector partners in those areas where they lack efficiency in delivery or faces policy bottlenecks which hinders their service delivery. Assistance should be about engaging the government sector actors, give them exposure, make them learn and thereby achieve in terms of bringing about market-driven changes in their service delivery. Assistance should never take the form of working on their behalf, not even to speed up the process, but rather it should be in the form of facilitating the changes and the pace of progress.

8. MODE OF IMPLEMENTATION

The co-facilitator will implement the activities through its project team in close consultation with the relevant CASA teams.

8.1 Implementing partner team

TBC / Dependent on nature of individual interventions

8.2 Staffing, recruitment, and training

While developing the team, the partner must consider that each constraint and intervention area will require individual attention. To address multiple constraints in the sectors, the team may even have to work with several public and private actors at the same time. Thus, any recruit must have experience and capacity of delivering the task in hand, ensuring that no intervention is subject to any type of negligence.

Where necessary, CASA will determine the profile of candidates to be recruited. CASA has the right to reject candidates suggested by the IP.

8.3 Steering

The IP will work closely with the relevant teams of CASA. A steering committee will be formed comprising of selected members of the CASA team and the IP. The steering committee will meet the programme director from the IP when necessary to discuss on organisational issues and overall progress and suggest directions for improvements of the IP team.

8.4 Backstopping and reporting

The steering committee will function in the following manner and has the following decision-making authority:

The steering committee possess the authority to approve, change or amend, and reject any intervention or specific (research) activity and their respective budgets. Also, the steering committee meets to discuss overall progress, strategic direction and suggests changes where necessary. The IP needs to submit monthly report to CASA, which will include, but not necessarily be limited to:

• Monthly Activity Overview by means of a report followed by a meeting and meeting minutes.
• Activity plan and intervention strategies for following one month (for approval)
• Financial projection for upcoming activities, once in every two months or every quarter (for prior approval).
• Impact and monitoring reports and data (whenever required).

8.5 Performance targets

Performance targets of the IP are based on the following criteria:

• Follow CASA approach and adhere to the monitoring and result measurement system.
• Work closely with CASA core team and, particularly with the Market Manager or delegated personnel from CASA. Adopt the spirit of team approach to meet the strategic objectives of CASA following the guidelines provided by the CASA team.
• Ensure deliverables on time, meeting targets within the proposed budget, and propose recommendations for improvements.
• Ensure central, regional, field level coordination, where necessary, in the project activities.
• Active participation in knowledge sharing and contribution to the CASA knowledge hub.
• Commit to management commitments and adhere to CASA operational guidelines.
• Conduct both professionally and personally in such a manner so as to bring credit to the CASA.
• Commit a pool of agreed staff dedicated to the programme.
• Any other tasks as assigned by CASA.

9. Monitoring and Results Measurement
CASA follows the DCED standards\(^1\) for monitoring and result measurement (MRM). To capture the impact of the activities, the IP will develop their monitoring and evaluation system following the guideline and formats of CASA. The IP will be responsible for carrying out the monitoring and evaluation activities; CASA team will assist and suggest necessary steps in the due process.

The MRM activities will include (but will not be necessarily limited to) the following activities

• Concept Note
• Intervention plans/ MRM plans
• Cases and stories of the Interventions
• Monthly monitoring reports
• Interim impact assessments and reporting
• Final impact assessments and reporting
• Intervention Reports
• Supporting evidence documentation (e.g. meeting minutes, field visit reports, event/activity participation lists and reports, pictures, copies of MoUs, contracts etc)
• Relevant studies (formal/informal) conducted for an intervention.

10. ASSESSMENT AND FINANCIAL AUDITS
Annual and/or midterm evaluation of the IP will be carried out by CASA followed by a final evaluation at the end of the project with the following major elements:

• Overall performance of the contractor in implementing interventions in accordance with the activity plans that are approved by CASA
• Assessment of effectiveness of interventions in reaching smallholder farmers involved in the sector along with cross-cutting issues.
• Systemic development of the market, in a manner which promotes greater investments, involvement of private sector and improves the business enabling environment in the Agriculture sector

\(^1\) DCED standard is monitoring and evaluation technique specifically relevant to programme implemented within complex market system. The standard is guided by eight elements of successful monitoring system.
The IP contract may be revised depending on the outcome of the evaluation(s). Also, based on the outcome of the evaluation(s), CASA has the right to even nullify or discontinue the IP contract in extreme cases.

An independent financial auditor designated by CASA will audit the expenses incurred for the project periodically (2 times annually). This may also include task audits. CASA staff will carry out scheduled or ad-hoc checks on the IP’s records. However, the project can also decide to carry out financial audit as and when deemed fit beyond scheduled audits. The payments for the independent financial auditor will be borne by CASA and that cost is not part of the budgeted amount of the contract between CASA and the IP.

CASA reserves the right to conduct forensic audit(s) should it suspect that any inconsistencies or irregularities have occurred.

11. DELIVERABLES
The IP will provide specific deliverables to CASA, including –
- Monthly report containing activity overview of previous month, activity plan for next month, financial projection of upcoming activities, and impact and monitoring data/report.
- Half yearly review report describing interventions, impact, learning, etc. Interventions specific deliverables will be set upon regular meetings (at least twice in a month) between CASA team and the IP.
- Study reports after completion of relevant studies.
- Specific reports such as field updates, activity status, etc., as per request by the CASA project team.
- MRM and communication-related data and documents as and when required.
- Project completion report on completion of the assignment contract.

This is not an exhaustive list, and it can be amended as and when required.

12. TIMEFRAME AND BUDGET DISTRIBUTION
The project will be for 24 months from 01 May 2020 to 30 April 2022. The IP will continue the last 12 months’ assignment, only if the period of first 12 months is completed successfully and satisfactorily. This will be determined by annual and periodic evaluation(s) by CASA.

13. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
CASA requests for proposal from suitable Nepali NGOs, which are willing to take up IP assignment for implementing interventions in the dairy and vegetable sectors. Private consulting firms are not eligible for this RFP.

13.1 Structure of the proposal
13.1.1 Technical proposal
Please see overleaf the structure of technical proposal and instructions (page limit, font, margin, layout etc)
Structure of Technical Proposal

- Cover Page
- Table of contents
- List of tables
- List of figures
- List of Annexes
- Abbreviations

A1. Agriculture sector in Nepal

A1.1. Basic information
   A1.1.1. Status of commercialisation of agriculture in Nepal
   A1.1.2. Growth opportunities and constraints for smallholder farmers and SME agribusinesses

A1.2. Brief analysis of policy and regulatory issues related to inclusive commercialisation of agriculture

A1.3. Brief analysis of the vegetable and dairy sectors

A1.4 Brief analysis of investment climate in the vegetable and dairy sectors

A2. Analysis

A2.1. Analysis of key constraints of the two sectors
A2.2. Key constraints to agriculture policy reform
A2.2. Investment opportunities in vegetable and dairy sectors
A2.3. Key areas for interventions

A3. Strategy

A3.1. Strategy for implementation of interventions
A3.2. Prioritization and sequencing of interventions

Annexes

B1. CVs of Implementation Staff with Consent Letters (Programme Director, Programme Officer X2)
B2. CVs of Admin and Finance Officer
B3. CVs of experts as short-term consultants (with consent letters)
C1. Summary of relevant intervention experience of the organisation
13.1.2 Financial proposal
See annex 2 and populate the highlighted cells following the template and instructions.

13.2 Scoring criteria

13.2.1 Technical Proposal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Full marks</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Understanding of the agriculture sector in Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Analysis of sector and regulatory issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Strategy for high impact interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Expertise and experience of the core team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Finance/ accounting experience (A&amp;F officer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Expertise and experience of short-term experts will be assessed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Experience will be critically assessed to see whether it is related to value chain work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13.2.2 Financial Proposal

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Full marks</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sections to be considered in budget (annex 2):</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Total budget in sections A, B, C, and G (from annex 2) will be summed up for 21 months. Lowest sum will get 17. Higher sums will get less proportionately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency with technical proposal</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Is the budget in line with the technical proposal? Are there enough resources allocated for being able to implement the proposed interventions and spend the intervention fund?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13.3 Selection process and negotiation

CASA will follow a “two envelopes” method. Technical and financial proposals must be submitted in hard copies in two separate and sealed envelopes. (Those two separate and sealed envelopes can be put inside an outer envelope). No soft copy of the technical and financial proposal can be submitted, unless and until CASA asks for those at a later stage.

CASA will open and evaluate the technical proposals first. Financial proposals will be opened and evaluated only when the corresponding technical proposals get at least 50% of the total technical score (37.5 out of 75).

After completing the evaluation of both proposals as per the conditions mentioned above, CASA will contact and further discuss with the topper(s).

Before awarding and signing the contract with the selected organisation, CASA will undertake an assessment of the organisation’s financial and management capacity and the relevant practices, through one or more meetings and visits.

If necessary, CASA may ask an organisation to make changes in their proposed team. CASA may also want to conduct additional meetings with the organisations and their proposed teams, before making the final decision. CASA can cancel an award if the proposed team is drastically changed by the organisation during the negotiation period and/or right after singing the contract.

CASA can cancel the whole tender in case all proposals are found unsatisfactory.
13.4 Deadline for submitting the proposal

1. Please visit the link below for detailed RFP and RFP guidelines

2. Application pack which includes the templates for the technical proposal, financial proposal, as well as RFP guidelines must be requested by email from post.thapa@swisscontact.org. The application pack can be requested any time after March 20, 2020. Please ensure your e-mails’ subject line read:
   “Application pack request for CASA RFP”

3. Technical and financial proposals must be submitted in hard copies in two separate and sealed envelopes (put inside an outer envelope) on or before 14 April 2020 (At or before 5 PM, Nepal time, if submitted on 14 April 2020) to the following address:

   CASA Programme, Swisscontact, Sanepa Marg, Kupondole-10, Lalitpur, Nepal
   (Phone: 5528508 / 5548830: only for getting direction of the CASA/ Swisscontact office location. Phone calls for any other reason will not be entertained)

   No soft copy of the technical and financial proposal can be submitted unless and until CASA asks for those at a later stage.