

## **Request for Qualifications** ***Expert Advisor: Agribusiness-led Farmer Training***

TechnoServe invites you to participate in this competitive solicitation for qualifications related to the position Extension Advisor for support to a farmer services platform. The work will be conducted closely with the CASA Technical Assistance Facility team who are based in Johannesburg and London.

**Position Location:** The support will be provided in Delhi and Eastern India (Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Jharkand).

**Anticipated start date:** 15 June 2021

**Estimated Duration:** The timing of the project is 15 June 2021 until 31 April 2022

**Budget:** Maximum £12,000

### **I. About TechnoServe**

TechnoServe is managing the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth, & Development Office (FDCO) funded five-year programme – Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusinesses (CASA) – focused on driving catalytic change in how investors view and invest in agribusinesses operating in supply chains with significant numbers of smallholder producers. CASA is focused on increasing economic opportunities for smallholder farmers (SHF) by:

- Enabling more smallholder farmers to engage with and trade into commercial markets;
- Demonstrating the commercial viability of agribusinesses with significant smallholder supply chains and attracting more investment into these businesses;
- Deepening the smallholder impact of investments made by development finance institutions and impact investors.

TechnoServe's role on CASA is to establish and operate a £8 million Technical Assistance Facility (TAF)<sup>1</sup> to support agribusinesses that have received development finance institution (DFI) or impact investor financing to extend and deepen their smallholder impact. CASA TAF's aim is to increase the development impact of individual deals and help build an evidence base of the potential development returns from agribusiness investments that can be used to raise expectations of investors from future deals. CASA TAF has the potential to re-define the role private investments in agriculture can play towards driving development impact for millions of smallholder producers across the globe. Over five years, our objective is to increase sales and productivity of over 100,000 smallholders, and increase jobs and rural income generation opportunities on farms and in invested agribusinesses.

### **II. Background**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.casaprogramme.com/technical-assistance/>

To meet our objectives, we are working with at least 35 agribusinesses to design and implement commercially viable, high-impact and sustainable inclusive business plans.

One of the businesses supported is an agri-tech company operating in Eastern India; offering farmer services via technology and its network of micro-entrepreneurs. The company has grown rapidly since starting operations in 2016 with a comprehensive service offering including input sales, agronomy advisory and output purchase which distinguishes it from competitors offering a narrower range of products. The company currently reaches approx. 300,000 farmers and offers advisory via the technology platform, its call-center, and in-person via its field officers. To deepen smallholder impact and ultimately grow input and output sales, the company is exploring opportunities to optimise provision of advisory services via a combination of technology and in-person advisory. DeHaat has faced challenges in delivering timely and appropriate crop advisory and scientific information (according to the crop calendar) to farmers during the Covid-19 pandemic due to 1) restrictions on farmer gathering/meetings for in-person extension advisory and knowledge sharing in the community, and 2) low smartphone penetration/uptake rates prevent uptake of crop and weather advisory. The company is looking for support to define an optimal configuration and a farmer advisory model that is practical, financially feasible and scalable over time.

Over the next year, the company plans to work with a solution/training provider to test out a training-of-trainers (TOT) model, develop and deliver customised advisory to farmers across multiple crops and multiple geographies in East India. On the basis of the pilot's delivery model and learnings, the company aims to refine its advisory scale up plan – confirming the optimal mix of technology-based and in-person advisory that should be provided, as well as how it should be provided to maximise farmer productivity and to drive farmer loyalty.

To achieve these outputs, the company needs hands-on upfront and ongoing extension advisory to provide technical inputs to pilot set-up and deployment over the next year. This advisory support is the focus of this scope of work.

### **III. Duties and Responsibilities**

- Assess scope of work and extension delivery approach of training provider for the first year pilot, provide strategic and technical feedback and recommendations on opportunities for improvement;
- Assist company management to refine extension/advisory delivery model(s) sharing advice around critical ingredients for extension advisory services based on best practices (drawing on past experience and know-how in Indian context) to develop common understanding for what works (recommending what drives impact at the farmer level and what drives commercial value), and identifying cost-effective tools that have been successfully applied in the past that drive best value for money;
- Assist company management on delivery mechanisms (for in-person and technology channels), extension curricula/content development (including related to GAP, appropriate input use, farm business management, mobile/smartphone application utilisation etc), and

incentive schemes (for training delivery personnel and for farmers) needed to deliver training at scale and in a sustainable manner;

- Provide input to KPI framework, to baseline and endline questionnaires prepared by pilot training provider and lead additional qualitative data collection e.g. farmer interviews and focus group discussions; collate quantitative and qualitative data from pilot focusing on company level value and farmer level impact to validate assumptions, inform pilot iterations and analysis of scale-up plan options; make recommendations;
- Support development and/or refinement of an extension/advisory delivery model, the curricula and associated adoption drivers; provide inputs to the Inclusive Business Plan (IBP) team on assumptions that would feed into the optimal configuration of a scalable delivery model (considering in-person and tech combination) based on financial feasibility, commercial and social impact;
- Identify possible training partners for scale-up (with appropriate fit/capabilities and fees for chosen delivery model); and develop shortlist & make recommendations.

Candidate selection and performance will be judged on capability to implement and successful achievement of the above activities.

#### IV. Deliverables

Activity	Deliverable	Anticipated due date
<b>Conduct upfront training needs analysis &amp; assessment of pilot plan</b> (incl. delivery model & team structure, curricula development & delivery approach, financial model and gap analysis/ recommendations); complete workplan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment report &amp; workshop with company and training provider</li> </ul>	15 July 2021
<b>Provide ongoing technical advisory support</b> and make recommendations based on observations and analysis of progress by presenting findings to Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality review and inputs provided to company management on extension model improvements</li> <li>• SteerCo slides and minutes provided</li> </ul>	Every two months, for first 10 months of pilot
<b>Develop shortlist of appropriate training providers</b> taking into account appropriate capabilities, training delivery approach, cost, terms etc aligned to the business and potential delivery model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2-3 tangible training provider opportunities originated, meetings facilitated</li> </ul>	1 October 2021
<b>Conduct Pilot impact analysis and recommendations for extension model and scale-up plan:</b> Support analysis of baseline and endline quantitative and qualitative data from pilot & collate with observations,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot analysis report and recommendations approved by company</li> </ul>	TBC (~March-April 2022)

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focusing on company level value and farmer level impact to inform extension model iterations and analysis/recommendations of scale-up plan options

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**Prepare extension delivery model, training manual (including curricula), adoption drivers/incentives, company training team structure & composition, incorporating commercial & farmer impact forecasts & scale up plan prepared by IBP team**

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- PPT deck capturing model & scale up plan submitted and approved by steering committee

1 April 2022

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## V. Expected Impact:

**Smallholder Farmer (SHF) impact:** The company aims to reach up to 15,000 farmers in the first year's pilot, delivered in the Training of Trainers (ToT) model facilitated by 50-60 trainers. Through the project, the roadmap to scale up will be developed incorporating farmer impact forecasts.

### **Business impact:**

Through the project, the roadmap to scale up will be developed incorporating company commercial value forecasts.

## VI. Skills Required

- Experienced agricultural training consultant with expertise in design, delivery and M&E of farmer extension programmes for large agribusinesses in India.
- Track record of successfully supporting companies in commercially oriented extension programme design and implementation.
- Expertise in setting up adoption incentives, KPI frameworks and monitoring and evaluation of training programmes required.
- At least five years of design and delivery of agricultural training.
- Expertise in multi-channel training models (e.g., in person and via technology, direct and training-of-trainer) preferred.
- Advanced degree in business management or other relevant field preferred.
- Experience working with private agribusiness companies around shared value initiatives required.
- Prior strategy consulting experience will be reviewed favourably.
- Strong stakeholder engagement and communication skills required.
- Demonstrated leadership skills, teamwork and relationship building.
- Proven expert analytical and quantitative skills.
- Excellent written and verbal communication and interpersonal skills.
- Strong computer skills, including MS Word, PowerPoint, and Excel.
- Ability to work independently, flexibly, and responsively.
- Ability to adapt to changing working conditions.

- Ability to prioritise and meet deadlines.

## **VII. Instructions**

Interested candidates should submit their CV, with cover letter; budget and a workplan which captures their indicative approach to implementing the required assignment. No travel is expected.

TechnoServe reserves the right to award the contract to the submission that is deemed to be in the best interest of TechnoServe and the Donor. The winning submissions will be notified in writing. Those who were not selected may or may not be notified, at the sole discretion of TechnoServe.

**Submission deadline:** 31 May 2021

Questions regarding this request may be addressed to Tasmin Mulder ([tmulder@tns.org](mailto:tmulder@tns.org)) and must be received no later than 27 May 2021.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

1. The Request for Qualifications is not and shall not be considered an offer by TechnoServe.
2. All responses must be received on or before the date and time indicated on the RFQ. All late responses will be rejected.
3. All unresponsive responses will be rejected.
4. All awards will be subject to TNS contractual terms and conditions and contingent on the availability of donor funding.
5. TNS reserves the right to accept or reject any submission or cancel the solicitation process at any time, and shall have no liability to the proposing party submitting for such rejection or cancellation of the request for qualifications.
6. TNS reserves the right to accept all or part of the submission when award is provided.
7. All information provided by TNS in this RFQ is offered in good faith. Individual items are subject to change at any time, and all bidders will be provided with notification of any changes. TNS is not responsible or liable for any use of the information submitted by bidders or for any claims asserted therefrom.
8. TNS reserves the right to require any bidder to enter into a non-disclosure agreement.
9. The bidders are solely obligated to pay for any costs, of any kind whatsoever, which may be incurred by bidder or any third parties, in connection with the Response. All responses and supporting documentation shall become the property of TNS, subject to claims of confidentiality in respect of the response and supporting documentation, which have been clearly marked confidential by the bidder.