

**Request for Qualifications**  
**Expert Advisor for:**  
***Coffee Farmer Training Programme Validation, Design & Scale-up Plan***

TechnoServe invites you to participate in this competitive solicitation for qualifications related to the position Coffee Farmer Training Advisor for support to a global coffee supplier, Mercon. The work will be conducted closely with the Mercon and CASA Technical Assistance Facility teams.

**Position Location:** The support will be provided in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

**Anticipated start date:** 15 November 2021.

**Estimated Duration & LOE:** The timing of the project is 15 November 2021 until 15 May 2022 as a full-time consultant for 6 months (~85 days LOE).

**Budget:** Maximum £25,200.

## **I. About TechnoServe**

TechnoServe is managing the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth, & Development Office (FCDO) 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, Mercon, is global green coffee supplier operating in several origins (eg. Vietnam, Brazil, Nicaragua). Regulatory changes created an opportunity for Mercon to bring its sustainable sourcing programme (“LIFT”) to Ethiopia, enabling Mercon to establish its operational presence and grow its market share in a sustainable Ethiopian coffee market while delivering impact for thousands of smallholder farmers (SHFs). Sustainability is a growing trend in the global coffee market, and key to Mercon’s strategy. Mercon implements its LIFT in key origins to ensure progress on environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Mercon engaged CASA to customise LIFT for Ethiopia to meet customer requirements and improve the livelihoods of SHFs, in a commercially viable way. The Inclusive Business Plan was finalised in April 2020.

To-date, Mercon has directly sourced green coffee beans in Ethiopia from one wet-mill that sources from ~800 farmers. To meet its growth target of 20K bags (~1200 tonnes) per annum of LIFT coffee by 2025, Mercon plans to enter commercial relationships with up to 14 private wet mills and directly support these businesses and ~9.3K SHFs to adopt key LIFT standards. At the farmer level, agronomy training, financial training and a stumping programme drive biggest impact.

Mercon’s ambitions to establish operations in Ethiopia by setting up partnerships with up to 14 wet-mills require the development of farmer training programme and its associated information and systems required at wet-mill level as well as the farmer training delivery model and budget that is based on local implementation capacity. In preparation for the 2022/2023 or 2023/2024 season, Mercon needs technical assistance from an expert to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) Identify information and processes that need to be in place at the wet-mill level through the use of the digital LIFT app, to enable greater visibility of farmer needs that will inform the farmer-level intervention,
- 2) Validate the opportunity to deploy training to farmers on a smaller scale than originally planned in the Inclusive Business Plan, and
- 3) Design a pilot and scale-up plan for a farmer training programme based on the findings of the validation assessment in line with Mercon and wet-mill financial, human resources and infrastructure available, and economies of scale required per training model.

To achieve these outputs, the company needs hands-on upfront technical inputs and advisory on a farmer training programme. This expert advisory support is the focus of this scope of work.

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

In validating the farmer training opportunity, and developing the farmer data framework and farmer training programme, it must build upon the inclusive business plan and the training methodology

already developed (agronomy training, financial training and a stumping programme) as a framework for it.

The TA provider will be providing advisory to the Mercon team on-the-ground in Ethiopia (country manager and sales director) with guidance/directional support from the Mercon Sustainability Director and the CASA TAF team.

#### Deliverable 2.1: Farmer data framework review and recommendation (Month 1)

- 2.1.1 Critical review of farmer data framework captured in the LIFT App for data-driven decision-making in customising the farmer training programme to meet farmer needs; including review of data points, of timing and sequencing of data capture by Mercon and wet-mill teams, and follow-through analytical process.
- 2.1.2 Present findings from 2.1.1 to Mercon for incorporation/adjustment in LIFT App configuration and deployment at wet-mill level.
- 2.1.3 The TA provider for this project will need to provide insights from 2.1 to a TA provider from a concurrent project providing support to Mercon on wet-mill advisory

#### Deliverable 2.2 Farmer training opportunity validation assessment (Months 1-3)

- 2.2.1 Critical review of coffee farmer training delivery models conducted in Ethiopia such as training-of-trainers approach, farm college and others; for each approach outlining i) timing of farmer training in relation to wet-mill partnership establishment, ii) scope of training activities (e.g. agronomy, financial training, stumping programmes), iii) training methodology/delivery model (considering e.g. Ratio of farmers/lead farmers to extension staff, or size of farmer groups, training implementer high-level roles & responsibilities), iv) locations, v) scale of training (number of farmers), vi) strengths and weaknesses, vii) any other key considerations to share with Mercon.
- 2.2.2 Develop a comprehensive list of training organisations/consultants in Ethiopia that could support Mercon in implementing a direct farmer training programme, including services offered, locations worked in, strengths and weaknesses, past performance, scale of training (number of farmers), indicative costs/unit costs per farmer.
- 2.2.3 Review existing training materials and manuals available in Ethiopia to select and package modules most appropriate for Mercon farmers into a training manual/guide, including gender-inclusive and climate resilient strategies and practices; present consolidated farmer training guide/manual to Mercon.
- 2.2.4 Present findings from 2.2 to Mercon, incorporate feedback and finalise recommendation of preferred training delivery model, training partner organisation/consultant shortlist, and farmer training guide/manual to support training design.

#### Deliverable 2.3: Farmer training programme design & scale-up plan (Month 4-5)

- 2.3.1 Taking the outputs from 2.1 and 2.2 above; design of most appropriate training delivery model with recommended training partner organisations/consultants, the

mix of in-person and technology driven knowledge dissemination; given Mercon & wet-mill financial and human resources and infrastructure available and given Mercon scale-up plan and economies of scale required per model.

- 2.3.2 Design extension staff/training team, job descriptions/profiles, a training & monitoring calendar and performance targets aligned with the production & harvest cycle.
- 2.3.3 Work with Mercon to develop a detailed farmer training budget for farmers aligned with the wet-mill partnership scale-up plan.
- 2.3.4 Present consolidated programme design & scale-up plan to Mercon, incorporate final feedback and finalise documentation.

For the project, Mercon team on-the-ground will be implementing the LIFT training programme developed by the TA provider/consultant; therefore, close engagement with Mercon and team throughout the project, in combination with a robust handover, will be critical.

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

#### IV. Deliverables

Activity	Deliverable	Level of Effort	Anticipated due date
<b>Farmer data framework review &amp; recommendation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation and presentation of farmer data framework to Mercon</li> </ul>	~5 days	30 November 2021
<b>Farmer training opportunity validation assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report incorporating critical review of coffee farmer training delivery models in Ethiopia with recommendations</li> <li>• Analytical report of coffee farmer training organisations/consultants in Ethiopia with recommended shortlist</li> <li>• Training manual/guide incorporating training modules recommended and agreed upon</li> <li>• Presentation of findings to Mercon, incorporating feedback into final deliverables</li> </ul>	~30 days	15 February 2022
<b>Farmer training programme design &amp; scale-up plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report incorporating consolidated farmer training programme design per activity 2.3.1</li> <li>• Report detailing implementation operations per activity 2.3.2</li> <li>• Finalised farmer training programme budget for years ~1-5</li> <li>• Presentation of consolidated farmer training programme design &amp; scale-up plan to Mercon, incorporate feedback and finalise documentation.</li> </ul>	~50 days	15 May 2022

## V. Expected Impact:

**Smallholder Farmer (SHF) impact:** The refined digital registration of purchases and farmer profiling at the wet-mill (enabled by the TA provider's recommendations to the use of the LIFT App) will introduce the farmers to a traceable supply chain, enable collection of gender disaggregated data, as well as to enable Mercon to refine farmer training programmes and support activities through data collected at the wet-mill.

Short-term farmer reach: ~1,500 farmers reached through wet-mills in Limu Leben and in Sidamo.

Given that the balance of the project is a validation and design of the farmer-level intervention (without implementation) there is no farmer impact anticipated within the boundaries of the project, however, the impact will be forecasted and time-lined based on the outputs of the validation, design and scale-up plan. CASA TAF will adjust the logframe outcome forecasts (including number of farmers benefiting, and additional net income per farmer) based on the outputs of this project.

The longer-term potential reach and farmer returns as indicated in the IBP includes ~9.3K farmers, and an estimated ~\$4M in cumulative incremental net income, or \$40 per SHF annually on average (over 10 years to 2030). The project will assist us to indicate what reach is feasible within the CASA lifecycle.

### **Business impact:**

The project will support Mercon to stabilise and deepen partnerships with 2 wet-mills already engaged, as well as to accelerate partnerships with the 12 additional wet-mills, thereby supporting its growth ambition to source ~20K bags (~1200 tonnes) per annum of LIFT coffee by 2025.

## VI. Skills Required

- Experienced coffee farmer training consultant with expertise in design, delivery and M&E of farmer extension programmes for large agribusinesses in Ethiopia.
- Experience working with private agribusiness companies around shared value initiatives required.
- Track record of successfully supporting companies in commercially oriented extension programme design and implementation.
- Expertise in setting up budgets, adoption incentives, KPI frameworks and monitoring and evaluation of various coffee farmer training delivery models required.
- At least five years of design and delivery of agricultural training; including coffee agronomy training, financial training and stumping programmes.
- Advanced degree in agricultural economics or other relevant field preferred.
- Prior management 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 Oromifa, Amharic and English written and spoken language 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 approach to implementing the required assignment and deliverables outlined in this document. 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 October 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 29 October 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.