

Subaward Request for Applications - Independent Evaluation

RFA Release Date:	03 December 2021
Deadline for Questions:	10 December 2021
Closing/Submission Deadline:	22 December 2021, 11:59pm GMT
RFA Code:	IB14MEL1
Subject:	Independent evaluation on the impact of CASA TAF's support to a cocoa sourcing company in Ghana
Eligible Organisations/Criteria:	Organisations with extensive experience in conducting evaluations for programmes supporting smallholder farmers, agricultural development, and food security

Dear Applicant,

This document constitutes a request for applications (RFA) from eligible bidders for an independent evaluation funded by the Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders & Agribusinesses (CASA) Technical Assistance Facility. It is accompanied by a template for a letter of intention to submit an application. Interested bidders should sign and return the letter of intention to submit an application to TechnoServe per contact details described in Section E (submission guidelines). Upon receipt of that letter, which also serves as a non-disclosure agreement, TechnoServe may provide additional information to the bidder.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of TechnoServe, nor does it constitute a commitment to pay for costs incurred in the development of an application.

Questions regarding the RFA requirements must be submitted in writing to Noel Verrinder nverrinder@contractor.tns.org by the deadline listed above. Include the RFA Code and Subject in the subject line for your questions.

TechnoServe, CASA TAF & FCDO aim to create an inclusive culture of best practice with the delivery partners with whom it engages, and which receive UK taxpayers' funds. All Supply Partners and Subrecipients should adhere to the overarching principles of the Supply Partner Code of Conduct to:

- Act responsibly and with integrity
- Be transparent and accountable
- Seek to improve value for money
- Demonstrate commitment to poverty reduction and FCDO priorities
- Demonstrate commitment to wider HMG priorities

A. Background

TechnoServe and CASA TAF

Established in 1968, TechnoServe works with enterprising people in the developing world to build competitive farms, businesses, and industries. We have worked in more than 40 countries across Africa, Latin America, and Asia, assisting thousands of businesses and improving the incomes of millions of people. We provide business solutions to poverty by linking people to information, capital and markets. With five decades of proven results, we believe in the power of private enterprise to transform lives. We are business specialists assisting farmers and other entrepreneurs in 29 countries, increasing their access to information, capital, and markets. The increased income our clients derive enhances resilience and prosperity for their families and communities. In 2020, TechnoServe assisted 298,000 farmers and businesses resulting in \$188 million of new revenues and wages for participating farmers, businesses, and employees.

In 2019, TechnoServe was competitively selected by the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) to lead part of a 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 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) to support agribusinesses that have received development finance institution (DFI) or impact investor financing to extend and deepen their smallholder impact. The facility will provide grants and technical assistance to agribusinesses that have received financing from a DFI (e.g., CDC, FMO, Norfund) or an impact/patient capital investor (e.g., Dob Equity, Barak Fund) for projects which will increase the volumes of purchases from smallholders and bring new smallholders into business supply chains. 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 that private investments in agriculture can play towards driving development impact for millions of smallholder producers across the globe. Over 5 years, our objective is to work with 35 agribusinesses to increase sales and productivity of over 100,000 smallholders, and increase jobs and rural income generation opportunities.

In Ghana, TechnoServe is working with a Licensed Buying Company (LBC) focused not only on collecting cocoa across the country's producing districts on a cost efficient basis, but also supporting the Government's broader initiative to deploy services that lead to financial inclusion and sustainability for Ghana's shareholder farmers. The enhanced LBC will prioritise farmer extension services to increase farmer revenues, and direct-to-farmer digital payments to facilitate the expansion of the country's farmer pension efforts.

Project

The parent company is a cocoa processor headquartered in Ghana, exporting semi-finished cocoa products, such as cocoa liquor, cocoa butter, cocoa powder and cocoa cake, and producing chocolate confectionery for the Ghana market. Having successfully entered and expanded in the downstream steps of the cocoa value chain, the company now sees an opportunity to establish a presence upstream in cocoa aggregation in Ghana.

Ghanaian smallholder farmers account for ~20% of global cocoa production, but face challenges from low yields, expensive inputs, poor access to credit, and limited access to public extension services. 92% farmers are below the living income threshold, with a typical farmer earning approximately \$1,700 per annum – significantly below the living income requirement of \$3,072. LBCs compete to attract smallholder suppliers by offering extension support; however, current offerings are limited in quality or scale both for local LBCs, which struggle to afford extension due to high cost of local finance, and internationally controlled LBCs, which generally focus extension on circumscribed sustainability programmes.

The company believes there is potential to redefine the LBC business model to create a scalable platform for extension, access to inputs, aggregation, and financial inclusion for smallholder farmers, while also providing certification premia to farmers adhering to specific social and environmental standards. The enhanced LBC will prioritise farmer extension services to increase farmer revenues, and direct-to-farmer digital payments to facilitate the expansion of the country's farmer pension efforts. Starting with a pilot in 2021-22, the company's new LBC will roll out progressively across Ghana. The new LBC will allow the company to aggregate fully traceable and certified cocoa, helping it to capture global market share in the face of increasing demands from consumers, customers, and regulators for sustainably sourced cocoa, and well as supporting the longer-term viability of cocoa cultivation in Ghana both through its own actions and by encouraging internationally controlled LBCs to compete in their proposition.

CASA TAF is supporting the company in this endeavour by assisting with the development of its hybrid sourcing and extension model, financial inclusion initiatives and farmer communication centre. CASA TAF is also assisting the company establish a monitoring and evaluation system to track its own success and farmer outcomes. It is expected that between 20,000 and 40,000 farmers will have benefited from this support by the end of CASA TAF's support.

B. Evaluation

Purpose of evaluation

CASA TAF is calling for proposals from specialised evaluation firms to conduct an evaluation aimed at assessing the impact of its support to the company on smallholder farmers and their lives. The purpose of the evaluation is to explore and establish if and how smallholder farmer incomes, resilience and food security have changed as a result of CASA TAF's support. While findings and insights of this evaluation will be used to assess our impact performance, they will also be used to establish what works and what could be replicated in other contexts.

Scope of evaluation

The overall purpose of this evaluation is to provide CASA TAF and its partners with a view of the smallholder farmer benefits resulting from the supported inclusive business model. Specifically, the evaluation will need to collect quantitative data on the key outcome and impact level indicators from a representative sample of smallholder farmers at baseline and a follow-up in 2024, to contribute to CASA TAF's overall logframe. These are:

- Mean total asset values of CASA target farmers
- Mean food insecurity experience & dietary diversity scores of CASA target households.¹
- Number of smallholder producers and small scale retailers benefiting from CASA TAF. Disaggregated by poorer (those earning less than \$1.90 per day) and gender of participating individuals.
- Additional net annual income per farmer (£) that can be credibly linked to improved access to growing markets enabled by CASA.
- Difference between men and women's score for two questions in the women's empowerment in agriculture index (WEAI) for beneficiaries of CASA interventions (focus on income and production domains)²

In addition to collecting quantitative data on the above indicators, the evaluation will also answer key questions that will unpack how change is realised and enable stakeholders to learn meaningfully, with a view to inform the rest of the programme and other inclusive business models. Ultimately, the findings and lessons learnt will be shared with a wider audience with the goal of enlightening the broader ecosystem of the benefits technical assistance can have in reducing poverty and improving food security, as well as what its limitations are.

Part of the role of the evaluator will be to assist CASA TAF in refining and prioritising the evaluation questions below. The final list of questions should be agreed upon by CASA TAF and the evaluator during the inception phase of the evaluation. These key evaluation questions will guide the evaluation scope, and the evaluator will respond to each of them in the final report.

Evaluation questions

1. Have the various components of the inclusive sourcing model been able to meet the production needs of the smallholder cocoa farmers?

¹ Using FAO's Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) and Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS)

² IFPRI WEAI: <https://weai.ifpri.info/versions/pro-weai/>

2. Considering both stated and revealed preferences, which components of the new LBC's offer are most valued by smallholder farmers? Have these led to changes in farmer loyalty to the company?
3. Has there been an increase in access to financial services and change in the smallholder farmers' agronomic behaviours, for example, increase the usage of appropriate inputs, equipment, and services?
4. To what extent are the smallholder farmers accessing other financial products and services (not related to farming activities) as a result of LBC's package? What are these products and services and how are these benefiting the smallholder farmers and their families?
5. To what extent did the hybrid extension model contribute to increased adoption of good agronomic practices and subsequent improved yields?
6. How has the inclusive sourcing model contributed to changes in smallholder farmers' farm-derived incomes, as well as their asset wealth?
7. How has the inclusive sourcing model contributed to changes in the food security situation of the smallholder farmers' households?
8. How has the inclusive sourcing model contributed to changes in women's empowerment in terms of decision-making over agricultural production and income ?
9. What risks may impede sustainability of the project outcomes and results?

Method

The evaluator will develop and propose a suitable and sound evaluation design. A mixed method, highly participatory and iterative approach is expected for this evaluation. Given the complexities of technical assistance and working with private sector partners, we do not necessarily expect a quasi-experimental or experimental approach to be proposed. Evaluators are encouraged to explore all methods of establishing what changes can be credibly linked to CASA TAF's support.

The evaluation will be based on at least two discrete data collection points, one at baseline and a follow-up at the end of CASA TAF's current programme period in March 2024. With the technical assistance projects beginning in Q4 of 2021, we believe that the timing is appropriate for rich baseline data collection from cocoa farmers.

The contracted evaluator will be responsible for the design, implementation, analysis and drafting of a report. Evidence gathered will be from both primary (interviews, surveys, focus groups, beneficiary stories etc.) and secondary (project documents, records, etc.) data sources. It is also anticipated that the evaluation will include a desk review of project reports and outputs.

The consulting assignment will include the following tasks:

- **Develop Inception Report/Evaluation Work Plan:** The evaluator will produce a detailed work plan, which should include the proposed method to conduct the evaluation, sampling approach, agreed upon data collection and analysis plan, staffing, budget and period. The evaluation design will be developed with CASA TAF's staff and the company.
- **Survey Development/Adaptation:** Along with CASA TAF's team, the evaluator will identify key outcome indicators and other variables that will be measured as part of the evaluation. This will include defining data sources and methods of collection and preferred measurement tools.
- **Develop Research Protocol:** The evaluator will identify all requirements for ethical clearance of the evaluation activities. In addition, the evaluator will lead development of the research protocol, which will include:

- Overview of method, data collection and analysis plan
- Overview of methods taken for protection of human subjects, including informed consent and respondent confidentiality
- Assessment of respondent risks and benefits
- **Develop a sampling plan:** The evaluator will define the sample sizes required to estimate project impacts, as well as the sampling strategy.
- **Data collection:** The evaluator will be responsible for overseeing all activities related to preparation and conducting data collection. CASA TAF and the company will assist the contractor with the logistics involved. The evaluator will oversee all activities including:
 - Field data collection
 - Creation of survey training materials
 - Data collectors' recruitment and training
 - Pilot testing with field teams
 - Collection and compilation of any required secondary data
 - Ensuring quality of collected data
- **Data Quality Assurance:** The evaluator is responsible to conduct all appropriate data quality assurance procedures, including instrument review, enumerator instruction, coaching and performance monitoring, back-checks, spot-checks and accompaniments and preparation of daily data quality assurance reports
- **Data Uploading:** The evaluator is responsible to supervise data uploading to the specified server, verification, and cleaning in accordance with established data quality assurance procedures,
- **Data Analysis:** The evaluator is responsible for the analysis of the collected data.
- **Manage data documentation and storage:** The evaluator is responsible for ensuring proper and comprehensive documentation of evaluation activities, as well as making sure all data and corresponding documentation is properly stored. Proper and comprehensive documentation should be provided for the method, sampling procedures, and questionnaires. *Raw data and analysis files must be shared with CASA TAF.*
- **Presentation of outcomes of final evaluation:** The contractors is responsible to produce comprehensive written baseline and final evaluation reports in consultation and collaboration with CASA TAF's staff. Virtual or in-person presentation of each of the reports will also be required.

Deliverables

- Inception report detailing:
 - Method of the evaluation- to be approved by TAF team before implementation including:
 - Sampling method
 - Data collection plan
 - Analysis framework

- Detailed work plan for evaluation

- A baseline report synthesising findings from the baseline data including a completed table of baseline information on key indicators, emerging findings and recommendations.
- A presentation of the findings of the baseline to CASA TAF and the company
- An final evaluation report after the endline data collection, that includes a completed table illustrating changes in key indicators, key qualitative insights, answers to the evaluation questions, and recommendations for the company and CASA TAF
- A presentation of the findings of the evaluation to CASA TAF and the company
- The raw data collected from both waves of the survey and associated analysis scripts to allow for reproduction of results

Audience

The audience for the evaluation reports and presentations will be CASA TAF, its primary funder, FCDO, the company and its investors, as well as the broader eco-system of impact investors and practitioners.

Budget

A total of up to £100 000 available for the cost of this evaluation. These funds are provided by CASA TAF.

Location

The evaluation will be based in Ghana with multiple site and field visits to cocoa growing regions (e.g. Eastern and Central).

Timing

The project duration is estimated at 27 months starting January 2022 and ending in March 2024.

C. The application and award process

Contracting mechanism

Open tender

Value for money

Potential service providers will be evaluated in terms of value for money with a benchmarking of bidder costs in relation to outputs before contracts are awarded.

The selected evaluator will be subject to a Risk Assessment Analysis prior to contracting which will ascertain the TAF service provider's value for money capabilities and commitment. Proposed costs will be analysed in relation to market rates. However, payment will be based on performance once the project is contracted.

Duty of care

The contractor owes a duty of care to the contractor personnel and is responsible for the health, safety, security of life and property and general well being of such persons and their property and this includes where the contractor personnel carry out the Services. An assessment of the consultant's duty of care capabilities will be undertaken pre-award.

Required Qualifications

The evaluation team, which may include subcontractors, must have:

- Proven expertise using quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods in projects with the private sector
- Specialised expertise in agricultural development, food security, and gender
- Experience in running large scale surveys in Ghana
- The ability to run data collection processes in local languages
- Strong skills in statistical analysis
- Strong skills in qualitative analysis
- Ability to write reports and present in English

Knowledge of and experience working with projects in the cocoa value chain will be beneficial.

Application Submission

The application process under this RFA will consist of 1 phase of competition where full applications shall be submitted by interested parties to TechnoServe for evaluation. Application sections must include, but not limited to:

- Organisational experience, including track record of delivery of similar assignments
- Team structure; roles and responsibilities of each team member
 - If the contractor intends to subcontract any aspect of the work, this must be explained in the application, and an overview of how the subcontractors will report to the team leader must be included, as well as an overview of how the team leader will quality control outputs from subcontracted team members. Where subcontractors are firms, the Contractor must provide

a description of the firm's relevant expertise and competencies, in addition to information on the subcontractor's staff intended to provide the services.

- Draft proposed method including activities and timelines
- Milestones and results to be achieved over the life of the project
- Budget details (including any value for money arguments) with the level of detail similar to the budget template provided for guidance (you may use your own template), and compliant with FCDO's Cost Eligibility Guidance for Commercial Contracts (found [here](#)).
- Risk Matrix and risk mitigation strategy - A risk matrix should be included that outlines the risks to evaluation's success, the size/importance of each risk to the evaluation, and the proposed mitigation strategy that the contractor will take to minimise the risk becoming a reality. The table should also include a column indicating how the contractor will track the status of the risk and how this will be reported on during the evaluation.
- Three references for work completed on similar projects
- Signed declarations – Attachment 1 to this RFA
- Duty of Care Response – Attachment 2 to this RFA

Application assessment process

Step 1:

Applications will be developed and submitted by the Applicant to TechnoServe using the templates provided (or other referenced material as stated in the RFA) in accordance with all guidelines by the stated submission deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted.

The main body of the technical proposal should be no longer than 7 pages (excluding curricula vitae).

Step 2:

Applications will be vetted by TechnoServe staff to ensure each application meets the requirements set forth in this RFA. Any applications failing to meet minimum requirements will be disqualified from competition. The minimum requirements include the eligibility criteria, use of application templates provided, submission by the deadline, etc.

Step 3:

Applications received within the application deadline that meet the minimum requirements set forth in the RFA will be evaluated by a Selection Committee using the following criteria:

Selection Criteria	Scoring
1. Relevance of the proposed method to the RFA; feasibility of planned activities and anticipated deliverables	30
2. Illustrated capacity of the applicant to implement the evaluation and past experience with similar evaluations	30
3. Quality of proposed personnel	20
4. Budget reasonableness and cost effectiveness	20
Maximum Score	100

Step 4:

The Selection Committee will recommend those applications with the highest scores for award. As applicable, the Selection Committee may request applicants to provide additional information and edit their applications. In such cases, the Selection Committee will also establish a deadline for submission of revised applications.

Step 5:

Successful applicants will be notified by TechnoServe and will begin to work with TechnoServe staff to revise their applications to be incorporated into a full subaward. This step will include a pre-award risk assessment.

Step 6:

Following the successful conclusion of the application process and acquisition of any required donor approvals, TechnoServe will issue the successful applicant(s) with a subaward with details on the scale, scope, cost, and terms and conditions. Whenever possible, TechnoServe will meet with the new contractor to provide an orientation outlining the main requirements for performance and reporting.

Step 7:

Throughout the duration of the evaluation, TechnoServe will monitor the evaluator's performance and compliance with all subaward terms and conditions.

D. Project Budget Submission and Costing guidelines

Individual contracts will vary depending on availability of funding, nature and scope of project activities, the period of implementation, and justification of costs proposed. Although consideration will be given to all applications received by the deadline, it is recommended that the total budget requested from TechnoServe does not exceed £100,000. Contracts will be issued on a competitive basis and only to a selected number of applicants. A budget template is attached for guidance on the level of detail needed in the proposal.

While reviewing application budgets, the Selection Committee will ensure that:

1. The budget application reflects all the resources necessary for evaluation implementation (Direct and Indirect Costs, including taxes, as applicable).
2. The budget notes column provides details on all types of costs planned and cost justification.
3. All costs budgeted are eligible. Information on eligible and ineligible costs can be found [here](#). Budgeted costs categories may include but are not limited to:

- a. **Personnel:** Salaries and benefits for full and part-time staff involved in the project. Staff can be paid only for activities performed within the framework of the proposed project. All personnel expenses must be justified with information on the role of the proposed staff in project implementation.
- b. **Consultants and Other Outside Services:** Fees for any external consultants or contracted firms required to support subaward activities.
- c. **Travel:** Flights, per diem, and any other required travel costs for project personnel to conduct implementation activities.
- d. **Office Costs:** Any required cost for the contractor's local office to support project implementation.
- e. **Supplies and small equipment under £500:** Any project-related supplies and small equipment with a unit cost under **£500**.
- f. **Equipment:** Any project-related equipment with a unit cost above **£500**, such as project vehicles or generators.
- g. **Other Direct Costs:** Any other direct costs of the project, such as costs for conducting trainings, developing publications, etc.
- h. **Indirect Costs:** If applicable, organisational overhead costs. This must be an annually audited rate, or negotiated through FCDO's NPAC procedure.
- i. **Taxes:** The applicant agrees to adhere to the appropriate regulatory requirements and ensures that the correct taxes are included in the proposal in relation to the country in which the applicant operates.

Pre-Agreement Costs - TechnoServe will not reimburse costs incurred prior to the effective date of the award. In special cases where pre-agreement costs are necessary to comply with the proposed delivery schedule, TechnoServe may discuss and negotiate with the applicant the approval of certain pre-agreement costs. Such costs are only eligible with the prior written approval of TechnoServe.



E. Submission Guidelines

Applicants must submit their applications, budgetary information as well as any other information responding to the terms, conditions, specifications and requirements of this RFA to:

TechnoServe

To: Noel Verrinder

Email Address: nverrinder@contractor.tns.org

Applications must be received by the submission deadline specified on the first page of this RFA. Late submissions will not be accepted.

F. Reporting Guidance

1. Financial Reporting

This is a Fixed Amount contract. No financial reporting on expenditures is required.

2. Program Reporting

Evaluation reporting will be defined during the contract negotiation stage and is expected to be closely linked to the milestones to be defined in the contract.

Attachments to this RFA:

[Please follow this link to download the attachments](#)

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| Attachment 1: | Declarations |
| Attachment 2: | Duty of Care Response |
| Attachment 3: | Budget Template |
| Attachment 4: | Letter of Intention |