



Subaward Request for Applications

RFA Release Date:	4 March 2022
Deadline for Questions:	6 May 2022 (<i>extended</i>)
Closing/Submission Deadline:	20 May 2022, 23:59 GMT (<i>extended</i>)
RFA Code:	IB14TAP5
SUBJECT:	Communication Centre
Eligible Organizations/Criteria:	Organisations with extensive experience in contact centres; specific experience with setting up farmer contact centres supporting digital payments, financial services and extension services an advantage

Dear Applicant,

This document constitutes a request for applications (RFA) from eligible bidders for a project 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 Ana Herrera aherrera@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

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.

The CASA TAF is an £8 million FCDO funded 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., China-Africa Development Fund, Root Capital, Acumen, AgDevCo) 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 Niche Cocoa Sourcing, Ltd, 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 smallholder farmers. The project stated in this RFA will be part of a broader program supporting Niche Cocoa's targeted extension and digital financial services initiatives.

B. Project Description:

Project goal

The project's overall goal is to develop a blueprint for a communication centre that would leverage technology and other complementary channels to support existing digital payment channels, proposed extension and financial services, farmers' digital trainings, NCS' monitoring activities and impact assessment, as well as broader farmer-facing marketing and communication efforts.

Deliverables and High-Level Activities

Deliverable: Communication centre blueprint

- Activity 1: Identify information gaps and specific pain points that the contact centre will address through an assessment of the extension model and potential financial services offered by Niche Cocoa, existing data sets and surveys.
- Activity 2: Conduct a rapid landscape assessment of existing and successful contact centres for smallholder farmers in Ghana and other geographies.
- Activity 3: Present various models of farmer contact centres highlighting opportunities, investment needed and the potential business case. The model should also identify complementary channels that can be leveraged (e.g., IVR platforms, SMS aggregators, radio)

and identify areas that will facilitate two-way feedback loops between farmers and Niche Cocoa to enable Niche Cocoa to provide appropriate and timely information to farmers. The communication centre is also envisioned to complement in-person farmer group training activities.

- Activity 4: Develop a blueprint to help NCS set up a communication centre in the context of the project goal stated earlier. Some of the communication centre design elements expected to be included (but not limited to) in the blueprint are:
 - Workforce optimization, call routing and monitoring, standard operating procedures and database management
 - Technology stack and set up, including interoperability between different systems
 - Staffing and training requirements
 - Key performance indicators
 - Initial dashboard design for performance management, analytics and sample reporting
 - Stakeholder experience of the communication centre
 - Capability to provide support in multiple local languages
 - Leveraging the communication centre for marketing campaigns including field activities and social media platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube)
- Activity 5: Present the blueprint with an implementation plan and finalise recommendations and detailed work plan to the agribusiness

Budget

A total of up to £10,000 is available for the cost of implementing this project. These funds are provided by the CASA TA Facility, FMO and Niche Cocoa. A performance-based fixed fee contract will govern the fee payments for the project.

Location

The project will be based in Ghana.

Timing

The project duration is estimated between 4-6 months.

TA mechanism

Open

Value for money

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

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

Required Qualifications

- Proven track record in designing, setting up, operationalising and maintaining contact centres in Ghana and other geographies
- Proven track record in utilising and deploying a suite of delivery channels and technology platforms (e.g., IVR, SMS)
- Proven track record in using technology and digital tools to enhance in-person client or farmer experiences
- Experience in incorporating social media channels
- Understanding of human-centred design processes an advantage
- Demonstrated experience in developing support systems and helplines with clear goals on response times and client satisfaction
- Key personnel with at least 5 years of experience in operating contact centres; setting up farmer support centres a plus
- Demonstrated ability to facilitate consultative meetings with farmers, clients and executive teams and synthesize technical findings to a wide audience
- Ability to work independently, flexibly, and responsively
- Ability to adapt to changing working conditions
- Ability to prioritise and meet deadlines

C. The Application and Subaward Process

Application Submission

The subaward 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:

- How the organisation intends to carry out the project – proposed approach, actions/activities and timelines, and project/stakeholder management plan.
- Milestones and results to be achieved over the life of the project
- Team structure; roles and responsibilities of each team member
- Budget details (including any value for money arguments) with the level of detail similar to the budget template provided for guidance, 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 project success, the size/importance of each risk to the project, and the proposed mitigation strategy that the TA Provider will take to minimise the risk becoming a reality. The table should also include a column indicating how the TA Provider will track the status of the risk and how this will be reported on during the project.
- Referees: Names and contact information for work completed on similar projects (references will only be collected if bidder is shortlisted and bidder will be notified prior to communication with any referees listed).
- Signed declarations – Attachment 1 to this RFA

- Duty of Care Response – Attachment 2 to this RFA

Step 1:

Applications will be developed and submitted by the Applicant to TechnoServe utilising 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 5 pages.

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 project to the RFA; feasibility of planned activities and anticipated results (including project sustainability and impact on target beneficiaries/communities)	30
2. Illustrated capacity of the applicant to implement the project and past experience with similar projects	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 new subrecipients to provide an orientation outlining the main requirements for performance and reporting.

Step 7:

Throughout the duration of the subaward, TechnoServe will monitor the subrecipient’s performance and compliance with all subaward terms and conditions.

D. Project Budget Submission and Costing guidelines

Individual subawards 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 £10,000. Subawards 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 program 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 subrecipient'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, organizational 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 subaward. 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: Ana Herrera

Email Address: aherrera@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 subaward. No financial reporting on expenditures is required.

2. **Program Reporting**

Program/technical reporting will be defined during the contract negotiation stage and is expected to be closely linked to the milestones to be defined in the Subaward.

Attachments to this RFA: please click [here](#)

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