

Request for Qualifications
Consultant, Aggregator Model Development

TechnoServe invites you to participate in this competitive solicitation for qualifications related to the consultancy position focused on aggregator model development to support Farmerline to implement an aggregator pilot providing input provision, advisory and offtaking services.

Position Location: Northern, Upper East and West, and Brong Ahafo regions, Ghana

Anticipated start date: 1 December 2022

Estimated Duration: 4 months, part-time

Budget ceiling: GBP 25,000

I. About TechnoServe

TechnoServe (www.technoserve.org) is a non-profit, economic development organisation with sustained commitment to its 50-year old founding mission to work with enterprising men and women in the developing world to build competitive farms, businesses, and industries. 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 2021, TechnoServe assisted 407,000 farmers and businesses resulting in \$250 million of new revenues and wages for participating farmers, businesses, and employees.

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 provides grants and technical assistance to agribusinesses that have received financing from a DFI (e.g., CDC, FMO) 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.

II. Background

CASA TAF is working with Farmerline, an agriculture technology company founded in 2013 that has developed a robust marketplace combining digital tools and field agents to provide farmers with streamlined support on inputs, market linkages and logistics. CASA TAF and Farmerline are launching an **aggregator pilot** that has the following components:

1. **Aggregator engagement and scale up:** This will focus on developing the strategy and operational model to build aggregators that can also provide input services specifically to soybean and maize farmers. The project will target 20 aggregators in year 1 and will initially work with the current aggregator network of Farmerline. This may be expanded to include new ones depending on the finalised aggregator profiles designed, gender inclusive strategies, performance, targets set, and ability and willingness to cross sell inputs. An incentive system and scale up strategy will also be designed under this component.
2. **Aggregator management:** This focuses on project execution. A Pilot Manager will be recruited and embedded in Farmerline's operations and will be responsible for aligning Farmerline's current business processes and coordinating with the Sourcing, Inputs, Corporate Services, and Impact business units to execute the TA's desired results. S/he will also be responsible for tracking the project's performance and validating the business case of the aggregation model. Additional services such as mechanised threshing, will also be explored. Lastly, the Pilot Manager will also oversee the training of aggregators. Since we plan to start working with crop off takers and there will be a gap in the technical knowledge on input service delivery, the TA will build on the lessons learned from the crisis response TA and provide advisory services focused on climate adaptation and agricultural practices, fertiliser composition and optimisation based on soil conditions in target areas. Business management skills and digitised processes will also be included in the training programme.

This RFQ directly contributes to the 1st component above.

III. Duties and Responsibilities

- a. Strategy development
 - Review inclusive business plan developed by CASA TAF and Farmerline, specifically the key hypothesis to be tested on coordinated provision of inputs, advisory and offtake via aggregators
 - Share relevant experience and draw lessons from case studies on other initiatives taking the hypothesis into account and highlighting different types of aggregator profiles in the cashew, maize, and soybean value chains; identify key success factors of thriving aggregators
- b. Aggregation model for coordinated services
 - Identify input or output needed from each business unit for operationalisation of the enhanced aggregator model
 - Develop business processes that can be enhanced based on existing SOPs, workflows, team contributions (input, sourcing, extension, and finance) and developed aggregator profiles
 - Develop incentive system for aggregators
 - Contribute to dashboard development and KPI identification for monitoring services
- c. Business case development
 - Together with Farmerline business units, validate assumptions and draft business case for each type of aggregator for effective onboarding
 - Validate business case with field monitoring data
- d. Scale up design
 - Develop a scale up strategy with clearly identified enablers for an enhanced aggregator model including investments needed for implementation

IV. Deliverables

Deliverable 1: Shortlisted aggregators for the pilot

- Finalise aggregator profiles for Farmerline based on initial profiling done during the inclusive business plan phase, transaction history and current database
- Develop selection criteria and process for aggregators in the pilot with the Sourcing team

Deliverable 2: Operational model

- Operational framework that Farmerline can adopt with the envisioned coordinated services of input provision, advisory and off taking
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities of Farmerline business units and its members with identified points of convergence to deliver end to end services to farmers
- Incentive model for aggregators
- The operational model should be documented in Word format

Deliverable 3: Aggregator business case

- Develop aggregator business case for participating aggregators in the pilot
- The business case should be in Excel with clear assumptions, cost, and revenue drivers
- Present final business case to agribusiness senior management

Deliverable 4: Scale up strategy

- The scale up strategy should be in PPT format
- Present strategy and secure buy-in from agribusiness senior management and project teams

V. Expected Impact:

Through this initiative, it is expected that Farmerline will develop 20 to 50 aggregators with enhanced services for farmers across the soybean, cashew and maize value chains.

VI. Skills Required

- Bachelor's Degree in agriculture, business management or relevant field
- At least 10 years' experience in developing or managing aggregator models for input delivery or crop sourcing and trading
- Demonstrated experience in working for or with agribusinesses in aggregation and input provision
- Deep experience in the soybean, cashew, or maize value chains preferred
- Deep experience in agronomy, advisory services, or farmer extension programs
- Experience in working in the Northern and Brong Ahafo regions preferred
- Advanced degree in agronomy, business management or other relevant field preferred
- Demonstrated ability to facilitate consultative meetings with farmers, input dealers, franchise shops and executive teams
- Ability to synthesise technical findings to a wide audience
- Should possess excellent business management and project management skills
- Experience working with agribusinesses around shared value initiatives required
- Full professional language proficiency in English required
- Strong 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 and budget (including daily rate in GBP) for implementing the required assignment and deliverables outlined in this document.

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: 21 November 2022

Questions regarding this request may be addressed to Ana Herrera (aherrera@tns.org) and must be received no later than **14 November 2022**.

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 with TNS as well as Farmerline.
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.