

Request for Qualifications

Seed Consultant to support sunflower and rapeseed trials, import and promotion by Ethiopian oilseed processing businesses

TechnoServe invites you to participate in this competitive solicitation for qualifications related to improved seed advisory to SAMANU, a major Ethiopian FMCG and oilseed processing group that will drive improved incomes for tens of thousands of (SHFs) in Ethiopia.

Position Location: Remote and fieldwork in Ethiopian highlands

Anticipated start date: September 2023

Estimated Duration: 18 months, c.70-90 days level of effort (LoE)

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., BII, FMO, Norfund) or an impact/patient capital investor (e.g., DoB Equity, C4D Partners, Acumen ARAF) 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

One of CASA TAF's supported businesses is SAMANU – a leading Ethiopian FMCG group that has recently invested in a solvent extraction plant that will allow it to source oilseeds such as sunflower, rapeseed and soybean from farmers in Ethiopia, rather than importing crude oils. CASA TAF partnered with SAMANU in April 2023 to deliver an inclusive business plan which was completed in August 2023.

Sunflower and rapeseed cultivation in Ethiopia is currently very limited, with a small number of farmers cultivating a handful of old sunflower and rapeseed varieties that are registered in the country. In order to access sufficient supply of sunflower and rapeseed, SAMANU will need to promote the uptake and cultivation of high performing sunflower and rapeseed varieties that can capture smallholder farmer interest while accommodating the limitations of smallholder agriculture (e.g., suboptimal GAP, limited access to fertilizer and agrochemicals, etc.)

SAMANU proposes to promote improved varieties of sunflower and rapeseed seed to farmers through selected agro-dealer intermediaries, while supporting clusters of farmers with high quality extension to ensure successful harvests and word-of-mouth demand for future seasons. Success will require careful trial of prospective varieties

Given the timeline to trial and register improved varieties, however, SAMANU is pursuing a two-phase approach to piloting its model:

- Ongoing trials of existing sunflower and rapeseed varieties (since June 2023) with the aim to promote best varieties to pilot clusters during the 2024 season
- 2024 trials of improved sunflower varieties (from June 2024) with the ambition to promote the best varieties during programme scale-up from 2025 programme onwards

This seed consultancy will play a critical role in:

- Supporting current sunflower and rapeseed trials (during Aug to Oct 2023)
- Identifying and shortlisting improved sunflower and rapeseed seed candidates
- Facilitating the import of trial varieties for 2024 trials
- Guiding 2024 trials and making recommendations to support effective scale-up
- Advising on localisation strategy for seed multiplication to ensure long term access to seed supply

CASA TAF will guide an overall technical assistance programme – of which this seed consultancy is a key component – in order to ensure ongoing alignment between different project stakeholders and maximise the chances of programme success.

III. Duties and Responsibilities

1. Support current sunflower and rapeseed trials (**timing: during Sep to Oct 2023**)

a. Activities:

- i. Review current sunflower and rapeseed trials and recommend improvements to trial management, including field practices, methodology and reporting, providing real-time feedback and supplementary training content to SAMANU agronomists in order to improve extension team training that will be conducted during this period
- ii. Review Ethiopia agro-ecological data to identify areas likely to be most suitable for smallholder sunflower and rapeseed cultivation
- iii. Build knowledge of key challenges faced by smallholder farmers in Ethiopia (e.g., suboptimal GAP, limited access to fertilizer and agrochemicals, limited access to mechanisation etc.)
- iv. Based on the above, identify key technical criteria for sunflower and rapeseed variety selection including but not limited to:
 1. yields and oil content
 2. total cost of production to smallholder farmer (seed, fertilizer, labour costs etc.)
 3. suitability to smallholder context (e.g., tolerance of suboptimal GAP, disease, drought, etc.)

b. Deliverable:

- i. Real-time verbal feedback to SAMANU team during this period
- ii. Short report summarising key findings and rationale
- iii. Supplementary training content for SAMANU extension officer ToT based on observation of trials

2. Support long term localisation strategy to ensure access to seed supply (**timing: by Jan of 2024**)

a. Activities

- i. Provide recommendations on potential pathways to localise seed multiplication of chosen varieties taking into account inter alia
 1. financial and operational impact on SAMANU
 2. likely willingness of potential seed breeders to participate in model
- ii. Provide ad hoc support to SAMANU to drive scale-up of seed supply, including facilitating meetings with breeders to explore longer term partnership with SAMANU to localise seed trials and multiplication

b. Deliverable

- i. Real-time verbal feedback to SAMANU team during this period
- ii. Short report detailing localisation recommendations and introductions to a minimum of 2 breeders to explore localising

3. Seed variety shortlist (**timing: by Jan 2024**)

a. Activities

- i. Identify long-list of key sunflower and rapeseed breeders
- ii. Prioritise breeders as potential suppliers to SAMANU based on key selection criteria including: depth of sunflower and/or rapeseed seed portfolio, commercial significance of the opportunity to the breeder, ability to meet SAMANU requirements, and likely willingness to localise multiplication in Ethiopia in the medium term
- iii. Identify short-list of varieties from priority breeders based on agreed technical criteria, breeder prioritisation, and evidenced by technical specifications from breeders
 1. 5-10 trial varieties of sunflower
 2. 3-5 trial varieties of rapeseed

- b. Deliverable:
 - i. Real-time verbal feedback to SAMANU team during this period
 - ii. Short report summarising long-list of breeders considered, rationale for prioritisation of target breeders and varieties
 4. Facilitate import of trial varieties (**timing: by April 2024**)
 - a. Activities
 - i. Obtain key documents (e.g., phytosanitary certificate, non-GMO certificate, pro forma invoice, CPVO DUS, etc.) for hybrid/improved seed import to Ethiopia (*note: SAMANU will manage import licence application to Ethiopian authorities*)
 - ii. Act as key coordinator between SAMANU and target breeders in order to facilitate sale and export/import of trial seed
 - b. Deliverables
 - i. Key documents provided
 - ii. Minimum 5 varieties of sunflower and 3 varieties of rapeseed contracted for import as evidenced by Material Transfer Agreement
 5. Guide next season trials and recommendations for scale-up (**timing: during May-October 2024**)
 - a. Activities
 - i. Develop trial protocols and standard operating procedures, adapted to context and constraints of SAMANU
 - ii. Review trial plots periodically during the trial period and provide guidance to SAMANU team to maximise utility of the trials (*minimum of two field trips during the trial period*)
 - iii. Assess variety performance against key selection criteria (e.g., yield and oil content, total cost of production, suitability to smallholder context)
 - iv. Recommend key varieties for distribution, as well as optimal input packages and key agricultural practices for SAMANU extension teams and agro-dealers to promote
 - b. Deliverable:
 - i. Real-time verbal feedback to SAMANU team during this period
 - ii. Key report assessing variety performance against technical selection criteria and detailing input and practice recommendations

IV. Skills Required

- Deep experience in oilseed trials required, with specific sunflower and rapeseed experience highly preferred
- High quality network within leading international seed breeders with sunflower / rapeseed portfolios required
- Experience working with smallholder farmers in developing markets highly preferred, but not essential provided the candidate can demonstrate necessary technical skillset and network, combined with an openness to adapting to fit the smallholder context
- Bachelor's Degree with a minimum of 10 years of relevant work experience required
- Should possess excellent business management skills
- Proven 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

V. Instructions

Interested candidates should submit their CV and an indicative budget (including their proposed daily rate and level of effort) via email to Ana Herrera (aherrera@tns.org).

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. TechnoServe also reserves the right to award contracts to multiple bidders. 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: 13 September 2023 18h00 EAT.

Questions regarding this request may be addressed to Ana Herrera (aherrera@tns.org) and must be received no later than 8 September 2023, 18h00 EAT.

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 TechnoServe contractual terms and conditions and contingent on the availability of donor funding.
5. TechnoServe 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. TechnoServe reserves the right to accept all or part of the submission when award is provided.
7. All information provided by TechnoServe 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. TechnoServe is not responsible or liable for any use of the information submitted by bidders or for any claims asserted therefrom.
8. TechnoServe 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.
10. TechnoServe may select and/or award contracts to multiple bidders.