

CAST Cambodia

Baseline Study FAQ

A composition of questions asked by interested companies and/or individuals before 5pm CST on Friday, January 25th, 2019 with answers provided by ASA/WISHH

File(s) of interest: CAST Cambodia Baseline RFP_01.14.19v2.pdf
 CAST Abbreviated Strategic Analysis_01.29.19v2.pdf
 CAST M&E Plan Excerpt_01.29.19.pdf

Coverage Areas (Districts, Communes, villages) in each targeted province by the program?

The Baseline Study will help to determine the scope and reach of services to be provided in Years 2-4 of the project. Applicants should display a good understanding of the aquaculture sector in Cambodia. Please reference the abbreviated strategic analysis plan for more information about CAST's intervention strategy, implementation of the intervention strategy through activities, and targeted beneficiaries and geographies.

Who are direct beneficiaries and who are considered as stakeholders of the program?

Page 10 of the RFP describes a number of partners, stakeholders, and beneficiaries. ASA/WISHH has partnered with World Vision, Kansas State University (KSU), and Auburn University for this project. These organizations, as well as members of EU-CAPFISH, are also considered stakeholders and should be included in key informant interviews. The examples provided in the second two bullet points on Page 10 of the RFP are considered program beneficiaries but they are also stakeholders. ASA/WISHH has conducted a preliminary stakeholder analysis and this information will be shared with the Consultant to conduct the Baseline Study.

How many target people/households (beneficiaries), villages, communes, and districts in six provinces and Phnom Penh will the program cover?

We estimate that ~5,500 individuals will directly benefit from CAST's activities during the stated implementation period (i.e., October 1, 2019 – September 30th, 2022). It is expected that ~47,000 individuals will indirectly benefit from services provided during this period of time. The number and type of beneficiary differs by activity. Please reference the abbreviated strategic analysis plan for more information about CAST's intervention strategy, implementation of the intervention strategy through activities, and targeted beneficiaries and geographies. The Consultant will be provided with a detailed performance monitoring plan (PMP) and indicator performance tracking table (IPTT).

With regard to the baseline study, do you limit the population size? If so, how many participants do you recommend?

We do not limit the size of the sample used for the baseline study. Applicants should propose a reasonable sample size for each subgroup of beneficiaries. Please reference the abbreviated strategic analysis plan for more information about CAST's intervention strategy, implementation of the intervention strategy through activities, and targeted beneficiaries and geographies.

Do you have a specific CV format? Or applicant can use the format of his/her choice?

ASA/WISHH does not require applicants to adhere to any specific CV formatting requirements.

In case the lead consultant partners with a service provider, does the proposal needs to include a support letter from the partner (service provider)?

The inclusion of a letter of support will strengthen the applicant's proposal but applicants are not required to submit this document at this time.

The number of target beneficiaries for each indicator and beneficiary type, the estimated sample sizes for the baseline data collection, and/or the total estimated budget?

Please reference the abbreviated strategic analysis plan for more information about CAST's intervention strategy, implementation of the intervention strategy through activities, and targeted beneficiaries and geographies. The Consultant will be provided with a detailed performance monitoring plan (PMP) and indicator performance tracking table (IPTT). The maximum budget for this exercise is \$250,000. Applicants should note that proposals will be scored for their financial competitiveness. Please see Table 3 of the RFP for more information about ASA/WISHH's criteria for scoring proposals.

What are the total number of beneficiaries for this project? Additionally, what are the total number of beneficiaries that will be included in the study?

We estimate that ~5,500 individuals will directly benefit from CAST's activities during the stated implementation period (i.e., October 1, 2019 – September 30th, 2022). It is expected that ~47,000 individuals will indirectly benefit from services provided during this period of time. The number and type of beneficiary differs by activity. Please reference the abbreviated strategic analysis plan for more information about CAST's intervention strategy, implementation of the intervention strategy through activities, and targeted beneficiaries and geographies. The Consultant will be provided with a detailed performance monitoring plan (PMP) and indicator performance tracking table (IPTT).

Will the comparison group be constructed from a stepwise procedure or constructed within provinces without treatment?

Applicants should prepare to collect control data from a similar provinces when it is appropriate to do so. The provinces proposed for this effort are Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Speu, and Takéo. Applicants can propose alternative control provinces if they can also provide acceptable justification for doing so. ASA/WISHH is interested in developing multiple strategies to assess the impact of CAST on program beneficiaries and recognizes that establishing a counterfactual using dissimilar geographies is not the only way to realize this objective. Applicants are encouraged to take a critical look at CAST's activities and to propose alternative sampling strategies and analysis techniques, such as a stepwise design or propensity score matching (PSM). ASA/WISHH will work with the Consultant to ensure that data collection strategies align with techniques described in the Data Analysis Plan. The Baseline Study excerpt from CAST's M&E Plan includes some more information about this topic.

What is your best estimate of the population sizes of the target audiences in the program and control provinces? Alternatively, do you expect the contractor to determine these figures?

We estimate that ~**5,500** individuals will directly benefit from CAST’s activities during the stated implementation period (i.e., October 1, 2019 – September 30th, 2022). It is expected that ~**47,000** individuals will indirectly benefit from services provided during this period of time. The number and type of beneficiary differs by activity. Please reference the abbreviated strategic analysis plan for more information about CAST’s intervention strategy, implementation of the intervention strategy through activities, and targeted beneficiaries and geographies. The Consultant will be provided with a detailed performance monitoring plan (PMP) and indicator performance tracking table (IPTT).

What is your budget for the project?

The maximum budget for this exercise is \$250,000. Applicants should note that proposals will be scored for their financial competitiveness. Please see Table 3 of the RFP for more information about ASA/WISHH’s criteria for scoring proposals.

1. Can ASA/WISHH clarify what specific activities will be the focus of the impact evaluation (i.e., study component with a comparison group)?

Applicants should propose which beneficiary groups should be included in the impact evaluation. Please reference the questions and outcome indicators included on Page 11 of the RFP for more information.

2. For each of the targeted groups of beneficiaries (e.g., SMEs, feed mills, other value-chain actors), can ASA/WISHH indicate whether they will provide lists to construct sampling frames? To what extent can ASA/WISHH provide sampling frames for comparison regions? If not, are there data sources available to construct sampling frames? Will these sources be immediately available?

The Baseline Study will help to determine the scope and reach of services to be provided in Years 2-4 of the project. Applicants should propose a sampling frame that communicates a good understanding of the aquaculture sector in Cambodia. Please reference the abbreviated strategic analysis plan for more information about CAST’s intervention strategy, implementation of the intervention strategy through activities, and targeted beneficiaries and geographies.

3. Can ASA/WISHH specify what other secondary or administrative data sources will be made available to the study team to support secondary analysis?

ASA/WISHH will share the results of their strategic analysis and other supporting documentation with the Consultant. The former includes 65 citations of which seven are included in the abbreviated version of our strategic analysis cited above. Applicants are not required to conduct a literature review but are encouraged to include citations in their technical proposal.

4. Can ASA/WISHH clarify if there a budget ceiling for the baseline evaluation and, if so, what this ceiling is?

The maximum budget for this exercise is \$250,000. Applicants should note that proposals will be scored for their financial competitiveness. Please see Table 3 of the RFP for more information about ASA/WISHH's criteria for scoring proposals.

5. **On Page 10, the RFP includes 4 bullet points of partners, stakeholders, and beneficiary categories for data collection. However, within these bullets there are different types of stakeholders, such as retailers and transporters, which may each require a different survey. Given this, can ASA/WISHH clarify the exact beneficiary groups to be surveyed and the number of different groups to be surveyed, to allow us to budget appropriately?**

Page 10 of the RFP describes a number of partners, stakeholders, and beneficiaries. ASA/WISHH has partnered with World Vision, Kansas State University (KSU), and Auburn University for this project. These organizations, as well as members of EU-CAPFISH, are also considered stakeholders and should be included in key informant interviews. The examples provided in the second two bullet points on Page 10 of the RFP are considered program beneficiaries but they are also stakeholders. ASA/WISHH has conducted a preliminary stakeholder analysis and this information will be shared with the Consultant to conduct the Baseline Study.

6. **The indicators in the RFP include a need to determine whether “seed or feed meet international quality standards” (Page 11). Can ASA/WISHH clarify the preferred process for determining if seed or feed meet international quality standards, to allow us to budget appropriately?**

ASA/WISHH is reviewing current international quality standards and these criteria will be shared with the Consultant when available.

7. **On Page 11, the RFP mentions the need to collect data for all applicable indicators and then shows an amended list of standard and custom indicators. For budgeting and planning purposes, should the consultant consider the indicators shown on Page 11 to be the extant list of indicators we need to collect data on?**

CAST's outcome indicators are described on Page 11 of the RFP. The six standard indicators described there are defined as outcome indicators in USDA's performance indicator handbook. The 11 custom indicators referenced on that page are currently being defined by ASA/WISHH. As described in the RFP, the list of custom indicators included on Page 11 is a preliminary list. It is likely that the Consultant will also be asked to collect baseline data for Custom #6, Custom #7, and Custom #10.

8. **On Page 13, the RFP mentions that qualitative thematic analysis should be conducted using approved qualitative data analysis software. Can ASA/WISHH provide a list of approved qualitative data analysis (QDA) software?**

Applicants will not be required to use specific QDA software but we recommend that they consider ATLAS.ti, NVivo, or Dedoose. ASA/WISHH is also open to alternative methods for identifying recurring themes during the Baseline Study and will discuss this topic with the Consultant before the Data Analysis Plan is developed.

9. **Can ASA/WISHH clarify whether the interventions will cover all areas in the provinces listed or whether the interventions will be restricted to specific districts within these provinces?**

The Baseline Study will help to determine the scope and reach of services to be provided in Years 2-4 of the project. Applicants should propose a sampling frame that communicates a good understanding of the aquaculture sector in Cambodia. Please reference the abbreviated strategic analysis plan for more information about CAST's intervention strategy, implementation of the intervention strategy through activities, and targeted beneficiaries and geographies.

10. **Can ASA/WISHH clarify the expected contract type for this work, as this is not explicitly stated in the RFP?**

The contract for the Baseline Study will be a Fixed Price Contract.

11. **Can ASA/WISHH clarify if there is a particular form or language that they would like us to use to disclose or certify a lack of conflicts of interest?**

Applicants are not required to include a conflict of interest form with the technical proposal.

12. **On Page 17, the RFP mentions references of similar work conducted by the applicant and recommendations if available. Can ASA/WISHH clarify whether the proposal should include only the names and contact information of references, or if they would rather have reference letters completed? If the latter, does ASA/WISHH have a form or template that they would like us to use?**

Applicants are encouraged to submit letters of recommendations but this is not a requirement. ASA/WISHH does not have a form or template. If letters are not available, applicants should include a list of recommenders with contact information. Applicants are encouraged to also provide a brief background

13. **Would ASA/WISHH prefer to receive the proposal in PDF, including the budget? Or would it be acceptable to send the budget as a separate Excel file?**

ASA/WISHH prefers that the technical proposal be sent as a Word document and that the budget be sent as a separate Excel file.

14. **Page 10 identifies the purpose of the baseline survey as fulfilling a monitoring function ("To provide baseline data for the PMP and serve as the basis for updating the yearly and life of project (LOP) targets described in the IPTT...") and an evaluation function ("...provide the benchmark for the project's midterm and final evaluations."). Below this, the RFP states "This will necessitate a quasi-experimental design that uses both quantitative and qualitative methods for collecting baseline data." Please explain what is intended here by "quasi-experimental design"? Is a rigorous impact evaluation expected for the midterm and final evaluations? (Page 13 of the RFP mentions intervention and control provinces and propensity score matching, which seems to imply an impact evaluation is contemplated, but other prescriptions in the RFP—see Question 15 below—seem to imply a cross-sectional representative sample design.)**

For the purposes of the Baseline Study, a quasi-experimental design is one that establishes a treatment and control group without randomly assigning beneficiaries to one of these conditions. The Baseline Study excerpt from CAST's M&E Plan includes some more information about this topic.

- 15. Page 12 of the RFP describes the survey as a “population-based survey.” Such an approach to survey sample design usually implies a sample structure representative of the (sub)groups of interest, which in this case would seem to be project beneficiaries. However, an impact evaluation requires a different approach to sample design and would include both a treatment sample (project beneficiaries) and a comparison sample (households similar to beneficiary households, but not participating in the project). Please clarify what type of sample is expected—one based on a representative design (i.e., beneficiaries only) or one suitable for supporting an impact evaluation (treatment and comparison groups).**

The Baseline Study is the first of three external evaluations to be conducted for CAST Cambodia. ASA/WISHH will be releasing an RFP for our midterm performance evaluation in Year 3 and another RFP for our final evaluation in Year 5 of the project. The latter of these will be an impact level assessment that builds upon the methodology and results of the Baseline Study. Applicants are expected to collect counterfactual data from beneficiaries in provinces not receiving services from CAST. The Baseline Study excerpt from CAST's M&E Plan includes some more information about this topic.

- 16. Pages 13-14 of the RFP reference “findings” from the survey. As this is a baseline survey, our expectation is that the findings would consist of descriptive statistics for the populations of interest and, assuming an impact evaluation design, an assessment of statistical balance between the treatment and comparison groups. If there are other specific questions that are expected to be addressed by the baseline report, please identify these. (We note that the questions listed on page 11 are not questions that can be addressed at baseline, as they require post-intervention data to assess.)**

Correct. ASA/WISHH expects that the findings from the Baseline Study will be descriptive. An assessment of the statistical balance between the treatment and control groups would be helpful. As described on Page 11 of the RFP, applicants should propose a “detailed and reproducible strategy” for our five evaluation questions. Additionally, the Baseline Study should 1) provide baseline data for the PMP and serve as the basis for updating the yearly and life of project (LOP) targets described in the IPTT and 2) provide the benchmark for the project's midterm and final evaluations.

- 17. Page 15 references experience conducting focus groups. However, the RFP does not indicate that focus groups are required; please confirm that focus groups are not expected as part of the baseline.**

Correct. ASA/WISHH will be conducting focus groups in Year 2 and Year 4 of the project. Applicants should prepare to conduct key informant interviews with all stakeholder groups described on Page 10 of the RFP. It is however expected that the applicants exhibit experience facilitating these type of sessions because ASA/WISHH will expect a number of open-ended items to be included in the key informant interviews.

- 18. Our previous experience in Cambodia indicates that permission from the Ministry of Interior may be required to conduct the survey. Please indicate what assistance can be provided by ASA/WISHH in obtaining such permission if it is required.**

ASA/WISHH will assist the Consultant with obtaining permission from the Cambodian Ministry of the Interior if it is determined that this is necessary to conduct the Baseline Study.

Technical

- 1. On page 2 of the RFP, ASA/WISHH states that all team members must provide a signed statement attesting to a lack of conflict of interest. Should this be included at the proposal stage? If so, does ASA/WISHH have a standard form/template they would like bidders to use?**

Applicants are not required to include a conflict of interest form with the technical proposal.

- 2. Pages 6-10 of the RFP list the activities that support the CAST Cambodia objectives. Can ASA/WISHH clarify whether these activities have already begun?**

ASA/WISHH has not started delivering services to beneficiaries and will not do so until October 1st, 2019.

- 3. Pages 9-10 of the RFP list the provinces targeted by the program. Does ASA/WISHH have a list of the full population of each subgroup in each province? If not, will a list of targeted beneficiaries be available prior to the baseline?**

The Baseline Study will help to determine the scope and reach of services to be provided in Years 2-4 of the project. Applicants should propose a sampling frame that communicates a good understanding of the aquaculture sector in Cambodia. Please reference the abbreviated strategic analysis plan for more information about CAST's intervention strategy, implementation of the intervention strategy through activities, and targeted beneficiaries and geographies.

- 4. Page 12, under Population based surveys, notes, "A sample of beneficiaries should be selected for each of our subgroups". The sample size and targeted respondent groups will significantly affect the budget.**

- a. Could ASA/WISHH please clarify which subgroups?**

ASA/WISHH expects that the population-based survey(s) be administered to the subgroups described in the second two bullet points on Page 10 of the RFP (e.g., feed mills, hatcheries and nurseries, financial institutions).

- b. Does ASA/WISHH have a desired level of precision or sample size? If so, is that defined for each sub-group (or province) or overall?**

We estimate that ~5,500 individuals will directly benefit from CAST's activities during the stated implementation period (i.e., October 1, 2019 – September 30th, 2022). It is expected that ~47,000 individuals will indirectly benefit from services provided during

this period of time. The number and type of beneficiary differs by activity. Please reference the abbreviated strategic analysis plan for more information about CAST's intervention strategy, implementation of the intervention strategy through activities, and targeted beneficiaries and geographies.

- 5. Page 12 states that the study should comprise a mix of both quantitative and qualitative methods and tools. Will qualitative data be collected in both treatment and control areas, or just in treatment areas?**

Applicants should propose their strategy for collecting quantitative and qualitative data. It is likely that the majority of this data will be collected during key informant interviews in the six provinces to receive services from CAST. However, ASA/WISHH expects a limited number of open-ended questions to be included in the population-based surveys to be administered in treatment and control provinces.

- 6. Page 13 outlines the requirements of the data analysis plan. Is the bidder expected to provide an analysis plan for the baseline only or for final analysis after follow-up data collection?**

The Consultant will be required to submit a data analysis plan specific to the baseline study. Applicants are not required to submit this plan along with their technical proposal. As indicated in the RFP, the Consultant will have until April 8th, 2019 to submit this plan to ASA/WISHH.

- 7. Page 17 of the RFP lists the documents to be submitted as part of the proposal. Can ASA/WISHH clarify which elements can be included as annexes so as to not count against the 10-page limit of the technical proposal?**

Applicants should submit the following as attachments:

- CVs of lead consultants and assistants
- References of similar work conducted by the applicant
- Recommendations if available
- Technical proposal not to exceed 10 pages
- Line item budget
- Detailed work plan

Please see Page 17 of the RFP (i.e., Attachment A: Proposal Guidelines and Selection Criteria) for more information about what should be included in applicant's electronic submission.

Applicants should include a short budget narrative in their technical proposals.

- a. May the bidder include a one-page Executive Summary not to be counted against the 10- page limit of the technical proposal?**

Applicants should include an Executive Summary in the 10-page technical proposal.

Cost

- 1. Can ASA/WISHH clarify which type of contract it intends to issue?**

The contract for the Baseline Study will be a Fixed Price Contract.

2. Should the bidder submit base rates for example or fully loaded labor rates?

Applicants should submit an all-inclusive budget that describes all of the costs to be incurred while executing the activities described in the technical proposal.

3. Can ASA/WISHH provide a budget estimate for this activity?

The maximum budget for this exercise is \$250,000. Applicants should note that proposals will be scored for their financial competitiveness. Please see Table 3 of the RFP for more information about ASA/WISHH's criteria for scoring proposals.

4. Should the bidder submit the budget under separate cover or may it be included in the email with the technical submission?

The budget can be included as an attachment to the technical proposal. We recommend using Microsoft Excel for drafting this line item budget but this is not a requirement.

5. Should any supporting documents be included with the cost submission?

Applicants should include a short budget narrative in the technical proposal. ASA/WISHH will ask for additional justification from short-listed candidates.