



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE WORLD INITIATIVE FOR SOY IN HUMAN HEALTH (WISHH)

I. DATE

November 2, 2021

II. PROJECT OBJECTIVE & BACKGROUND

The purpose of this request for proposals is to solicit a contractor to serve as a technical lead for the American Soybean Association's WISHH program's efforts to increase the use of U.S. soy in the domestic value chains of sub-Saharan Africa. WISHH requests proposals for the implementation of a research study and subsequent strategic recommendations on a pilot-level program in Ghana with the following desired characteristics:

- The study will focus on the development of modular and replicable tools and strategies to diagnose barriers to small and medium enterprises in accessing affordable financing for fixed asset acquisitions and working capital.
- The study will present methods and strategies to engage local financing institutions that maintain interest in servicing the local soybean utilization value chains, with a specific focus placed on the increased use of soybeans in the poultry, aquaculture and human foods sectors.
- The study will develop methods and strategies aimed at evaluating the presence or lack of vertical integration within the soybean processing and related utilization value chains. The initial evaluation under this program for Ghana will serve as a model for other sub-Saharan Africa markets and will offer recommendations regarding the viability of vertical integration as a solution to "loose" value chains and improved profitability.

According to the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) account for up to 90 percent of all businesses in Africa. The World Bank also notes that lack of financing is the second most cited obstacle facing SMEs to grow their businesses in emerging markets and developing countries. In Africa, a relative lack of lending institutions makes accessing capital extremely competitive – lenders have an array of potential borrowers to interact with, and generally disburse loans within sectors that provide the best potential return on investment. Unfortunately, the category of borrower that most WISHH private business partners fall under tend to be too large for microfinancing, while larger banks find the transaction levels for the entities to be high risk - expensive to service and low on return – particularly compared to opportunities in other sectors. Traditional financing from local banks

also often comes with very high interest rates (25-40%) and often is not large enough to meet the capital needs of growing companies (\$500,000-\$1,500,000).

This program will seek to identify barriers to capital lending experienced by companies that typically partner with WISHH, propose solutions and interventions, and implement programming based on those conclusions as funding allows.

This project is intended to act as a pilot program to address one of the most significant factors in preventing WISHH supply chain partners, stakeholders and other partners from growing their businesses through affordable capital in the form of credit. On a parallel path, the study component focused on vertical integration is a complementary investigation to determine the viability and potential added value to producers and processors that show interest in consolidating control of value chain nodes from post-harvest handling through delivery of intermediate and finished products to the customer. The contractor will be required to build a list of financial institutions and processors interviewed for the study for subsequent follow up by ASA/WISHH.

The primary goal of the project is to address a portion of the known barriers to lending and capital flows to targeted agriculture sectors in sub-Saharan Africa. The secondary goal will be to collect additional first-hand information from key informants to formulate future activities that address market specific barriers to lending and capital flows. This project will be piloted in Ghana and will be used to build a larger strategy for addressing the lack of agriculture sector financing in sub-Saharan Africa. It will provide insight into the decision making and evaluation criteria of lenders, and help borrowers develop competitive and sound loan applications and future investment opportunities. The proposed project provides a unique strategy that provides extra emphasis on addressing the shortcomings of lending institutions.

III. ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The American Soybean Association (ASA) was founded in 1920 by soybean farmers and extension workers to promote soy for high protein applications in developmental settings. Overseas activities initiated in the mid-1950s, and to date ASA has worked in over 80 countries. The World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH) was founded in 2000 to expand the work of the American Soybean Association (ASA) in developing emerging markets to improve health, nutrition and food security, building the groundwork for future markets of soy. WISHH provides services in food technology, business development, nutrition services, and program and proposal development. WISHH expertise extends its network into additional areas, such as aquaculture and animal feed.

ASA/WISHH connects trade and development to strengthen agricultural value chains in emerging markets, creating trade and long-term demand for U.S. soy. Trade can improve lives worldwide for both farmers and consumers. U.S. soy trade in emerging markets is pivotal to improve accessibility, affordability, and acceptability of high-quality plant and animal-sourced proteins in developing economies. Rising incomes in emerging economies generate further opportunity for trade. ASA/WISHH builds opportunity for long-term trade by improving

agricultural value chains, human and animal nutrition, and farmer net incomes. ASA/WISHH initiatives broadly fit in two arenas: (1) trade-building long-term, early-stage market development, and, (2) trade-building international agriculture and economic development. The St. Louis-based Program operates in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Central America.

ASA/WISHH offers over six years of proven feed sector capacity and decades of accumulated knowledge from ASA programs. Principal approaches include market and economic assessments, technical assistance and capacity building, food and feed trials and demonstrations, farmer field days, youth mentorship programs, food and feed value chain development, and market linkages.

ASA/WISHH achieves its mission by working in close partnership with: (1) the public sector (e.g., USDA, USAID, U.S. land grant universities, and host country governments), (2) the private sector (e.g., trade associations: Qualified State Soybean Boards and U.S. Soybean Export Council), and (3) private voluntary organizations. The Program draws upon the resources and experience of these partners and the services of a cadre of ASA/WISHH consultants with technical expertise in agricultural, international and commercial development spheres. ASA/WISHH relies on decades of experience in food commercial development and agricultural development programming. The Program takes pride in its growing portfolio of success with U.S. government-funded projects, including USDA (Food for Progress, McGovern-Dole, Global Broad-Based Initiative, Foreign Market Development, Market Access Program, Emerging Markets Program, and Quality Samples Program) and USAID funding in both prime and sub-recipient capacities. ASA/WISHH has also attracted both private sector and other complementary funding sources from various donors to build on and leverage core funding from Qualified State Soybean Boards.

The WISHH program receives funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through the Emerging Markets Program (EMP), Market Access Program (MAP), Foreign Market Development Program (FMD), Agriculture Trade Promotion Program (ATP) and the Global Broad-Based Initiative (GBI). WISHH's objective is to increase the international consumption of soy protein in the human, livestock, and aquaculture sectors in new markets and thereby create new opportunities for soybeans and providing higher economic returns to U.S. soybean producers.

IV. SCOPE OF WORK

A consultant will be hired to assist with the implementation of several key activities. The consultant should have a strong understanding of the issues facing private industry in sub-Saharan Africa, experience in the agriculture sector, and knowledge of the strategies needed to strengthen the relevant agriculture value chains. The consultant will be responsible for completing the below activities.

Activities

1. Identification of major lending institutions servicing the soybean processing sector

- a. Rationale:** WISHH is interested in identifying lending institutions that are known for their willingness to engage with agriculture sector business. A key part of this study will be an overview of past lending into the agricultural sector as well as information to create individual lender profiles. While there are potentially many financial institutions, it is important to identify those that are interested in future collaboration and partnership opportunities with WISHH. A consultant should be prepared to collect the required information through desk research, partner contacts and potential travel to the market for key informant interviews with lending stakeholders.
- b. Goal:** Conduct a gap analysis to understand past involvement in the sector, identify constraints and limitations to agriculture sector financing, and identify opportunities for future programming.
- c. Deliverables:** At least 10 major lending institutions servicing agriculture sectors will be identified. We are interested in identifying institutions that have experience lending (or actively seeking new opportunities) to poultry, aquaculture, agro-processors, and food sectors in Ghana, with focus on businesses where soy is a primary component of the business model. The report should include the following information:
- i. Name of the lending institution
 - ii. Description of institution – information on location, services, customers, and loan information.
 - iii. Through discussions with lenders please provide us with insight on the following areas:
 1. What are the considerations/variables that a lending institution looks at when determining whether to invest in the local agro-processing value chain?
 2. What are the main constraints limiting the institution’s ability to provide financing to Ghanaian agribusinesses?
 3. What are the main opportunities for lending to Ghanaian agribusinesses?
 4. How do financial institutions prioritize investment opportunities?
 - a. What do they look for when evaluating an investment opportunity?
 5. Opportunities for cooperation with WISHH and its partners.
 6. Their perception of opportunities to invest in vertically integrated agribusinesses.
 7. Do local financial institutions feel that they have enough information and market intelligence to accurately assign risk to the local soy utilization value chains and evaluate the opportunities?
 - a. What are the processes for gathering this information?
 - b. Are there any forms of assistance that would be helpful in the future?
 - iv. Key contact(s) available for future discussions with WISHH team and for participation in follow-up activities.

2. Study of vertical integration as a potential solution to soybean value chain inefficiencies and to highlight investment opportunities for lending institutions.

- a. **Rationale:** This investigation will focus on the viability of developing the capacity of agribusinesses to vertically integrate in the target markets and examine how such efforts would be received by financial service providers. This study will determine the viability of vertically integrating aspects of several soy utilization value chains including the poultry, aquaculture, and food sectors. The study should provide insight on how lending institutions view such an integration in terms of tightening the value chain and reducing risk for increased investment. The results of the study will be used to inform investment decisions for borrowers and lenders, identify the best ways to maximize returns on investment, and provide insight on the process to obtain funding. The results will also reduce some of the perceived risk experienced by lenders. This information will inform future investment on WISHH's part and with other partners.
- b. **Goal:** Conduct a gap analysis to understand past involvement in the sector, identify constraints and limitations to ag sector financing, and identify opportunities for future programming.
- c. **Deliverable:** Report outlining the findings of the study which will be used in creating a larger strategy for accessing financing on the continent. The report should include the following information:
 - i. Identification of vertically integrated companies in the aquaculture, poultry, and agro-processing sectors that can be used as examples for other companies.
 - ii. Risk perceived by lenders when considering financing requests from vertically integrated enterprises.
 - iii. Does vertical integration offer a viable path towards strengthening the targeted value chains?
 - iv. To what degree is vertical integration profitable? In what situation would it be unprofitable?
 - v. Identify American-based models that make the most business sense in a Ghanaian context.
 - 1. This information will be communicated to banks, while farmers would receive similar information to help guide their investment decisions.

3. Strategic Leadership

- a. At the conclusion of the study WISHH would like to receive follow-up recommendations for Ghana and suggestions for next steps in other WISHH markets (Nigeria, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Togo, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania).

- i. Recommendations on how to expand lessons learned to new countries and the process for implementing them.
- ii. Recommendations on interventions for both lenders and borrowers, and what main constraints need to be addressed.
- iii. Overview of potential negative consequences associated with this evolution of business/vertical integration.
 1. Does this strategy leave behind important groups of farmers and business people?
 2. Discussion of pros and cons of a vertical integration strategy in Ghana and other regional markets.

V. TIMING

All activities must be completed by July 31, 2021

Questions due to ASA/WISHH	November 19, 2021
Answers posted to WISHH website	November 24, 2021
Proposals due to ASA/WISHH	December 20, 2021
Contract awarded	January 10, 2022
Contract signed and activities begin	January 21, 2022
Final deliverables due	July 31, 2022

VI. SELECTION CRITERIA AND CRITERIA WEIGHTS

Proposals submitted will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Comprehensiveness	40%
Consultant skills/experience	35%
Cost	20%
Timing	5%
TOTAL	100%

Special consideration will be given to Women or Minority Owned Small Business (WMOSB) entities with SBA certifications (proof of certification must be provided at time of submission).

VII. INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

Proposals must contain at a minimum the specific criteria requested in the Request for Proposal:

1. A description of the bidder's capabilities and experience
2. A proposal that includes the following sections (not to exceed 10 pages):
 - a. Proposal executive summary
 - b. Proposed action plan for the completed scope of work
 - c. Proposed methodology

- d. Proposed budget including materials, service fees, and travel
 - e. Proposed timeline for completion of activities
3. Checklist of additional items that must be submitted:
- Attachment A Technical Proposal Authorization Cover Page Completed and Signed
 - 100-word executive summary of the proposal
 - Full detailed proposal (not to exceed 10 pages)
 - Proposal detailed budget
 - WMOSB Proof of Certification (if applicable)

Proposals should be submitted no later than 5:00 PM CDT on December 20, 2021. To be considered for award, proposals must be submitted by e-mail to the following: Chris Slempe (cslempe@soy.org), Josh Neiderman (jneiderman@soy.org), and Theresa Fang (tfang@soy.org). WISHH will confirm receipt of each proposal; if receipt has not been confirmed, your proposal has not been received.

If your proposal is not authorized by signature on Attachment A Proposal Authorization Cover Page, it may not be considered and may be rejected.

Submission of Questions: All questions regarding the preparation of proposals must be submitted in writing (by e-mail) to Chris Slempe at cslempe@soy.org (cc: tfang@soy.org and jneiderman@soy.org) **no later than 5pm CST on November 19, 2021**. All questions and responses will be available on the WISHH [website](#) on or shortly after November 24, 2021. No questions will be answered over the phone or in person; all questions must be in writing and sent via email.

Non-Discrimination Statement: In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. ASA/WISHH is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

The firm or individual selected will be required to sign the ASA/WISHH code of conduct and conflict of interest statement.

Award: This RFP does not commit the ASA/WISHH to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in the preparations or submission of proposals, or costs incurred in making necessary studies for the preparation thereof or to procure or contract for services or supplies. The ASA/WISHH reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received in response to this RFP and to negotiate with any of the vendors or other firms in any manner deemed to be in the best interest of the ASA/WISHH. The ASA/WISHH reserves the right to negotiate and award only a portion of the requirements; to negotiate and award separate or multiple contracts for the elements covered by this RFP in any combination it may deem appropriate, at its sole

discretion to add new considerations, information or requirements at any stage of the procurement process, including during negotiations with vendors; and reject proposal of any vendor that has previously failed to perform properly or in a timely manner contracts of a similar nature, or of a vendor that, in the opinion of the ASA/WISHH, is not in a position, or is not sufficiently qualified, to perform the contract.

This RFP contains no contractual proposal of any kind, any proposal submitted will be regarded as a proposal by the vendor and not as an acceptance by the vendor of any proposal by the ASA/WISHH. No contractual relationship will exist except pursuant to a written contract document signed by the authorized procurement official of the ASA/WISHH and by the successful vendor(s) chosen by the ASA/WISHH.

Offerors submitting proposals must (1) be officially licensed to do such business in the country of *their* business operation, (2) be able to receive USDA funds, and (3) not have been identified as a terrorist prior to being awarded a contract. In addition, Offeror may be required to provide the following information prior to awarding of the contract:

- Documentation to verify licensure (i.e., tax id, registration certificate, etc.)
- Code of Conduct
- Conflict of Interest
- Equal Opportunity

X. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Technical Proposal Submission Sheet Cover Page

ATTACHMENT A: Technical Proposal Submission Sheet

(Complete this form with all the requested details and submit it as the first page of your technical proposal, with the documents requested above attached. Ensure that your proposal is authorized in the signature block below. A signature and authorization on this form will confirm that the terms and conditions of this RFP prevail over any attachments. If your proposal is not authorized, it may be rejected.)

Date of Technical Proposal:	
RFP Number:	
RFP Title:	

We offer to provide the goods/services described in the Scope of Work, in accordance with the terms and conditions stated in Request for Proposal referenced above. We confirm that we are eligible to participate in public procurement and meet the eligibility criteria specified.

The validity period of our proposal is ___days/weeks/months from the time and date of the submission deadline.

Type of Business/Institution (Check all that apply)

Offeror certifies that it is:

Non U.S. Owned/Operated Government Owned/Operated

(If Non U.S. Owned/Operated is selected, continue to Anti-Terrorism Certification)

OR FOR US ORGANIZATIONS ONLY:

Nonprofit For-Profit Government
 Large Business Small Business College or University
 Women Owned Small and Disadvantaged Business

Anti-Terrorism Certification

The Offeror, to the best of its current knowledge, did not provide, within the previous 10 years, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it does not and will not knowingly provide, material support or resources to any individual or entity that commits, attempts to commit, advocates, facilitates, or participates in terrorist acts, or has committed, attempted to commit, facilitated, or participated in terrorist acts.

The Offeror also verifies that it does not appear on 1) the website of the Excluded Party List: <https://www.sam.gov>; or 2) the website of the United Nations Security (UNSC) sanctions committee established under UNSC Resolution 1267 (1999) (the “1267 Committee”): <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1267/consolist.shtml>.

The undersigned declares s/he is authorized to sign on behalf of the company listed below and to bind the company to all conditions and provisions stated in the original RFP document including attachments from ASA/WISHH.

Proposal Authorized By:

Signature: _____

Position:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Authorized for and on behalf of:

(DD/MM/YY)

Company: _____

Address: _____

Business Registration Number _____