



Terms of Reference

Marketplace Lead

1. General Background

Conservation International Mexico (CI Mexico) is a non-profit organization that since 1990 has supported the development of a healthy and sustainable economy, based on the recognition and conservation of nature for human well-being. Progress has been achieved by linking public policies at different decision levels and by integrating various actions between organizations, government agencies and academic institutions that contribute to the conservation of the country's environmental services.

The Sustainable Landscape Ventures (SLV) Activity is a five-year, USD \$10 million-dollar project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that is being implemented by CI Mexico. The Activity will serve as a financial mechanism for existing landscape projects in the country and will be led by CI Mexico in collaboration with six consortium partners. The purpose of the Activity is to develop sustainable and inclusive value chains at scale in four landscapes. The economic activities promoted must be market-driven and investor-ready. It aims to consolidate long-term partnerships among small-scale producers, investors, and buyers in Mexico in sustainable and inclusive value chains. Small-scale producers in the four landscapes will be organized into twelve Collective Business Entities (CBE) to reach scale and ensure quality; and a **Blended Finance Engine (BFE)** that will provide services to the CBEs, such as project curation, a marketplace to link producers with buyers, and access to blended finance solutions from new and existing funds.

For more information, visit: <https://www.conservation.org/mexico/eps-usaid>

2. Objective

Design and operate the BFE Marketplace to attract buyers that are willing to partner and share risks and profits with small producers.

3. Estimated Timeline

November 1, 2021 thru March 31, 2025.

4. Estimated Budget and Reporting

\$320,000 - \$338,000 USD for the life of the project with monthly progress reporting and specific products delivery according to annual workplans.

5. Location of Task/Applicable Trips

Tasks will require travel to each of the selected four landscapes, as well as availability to perform the key tasks required by the Project.

6. Expected Tasks

The selected applicant will have the following responsibilities which will be developed in close coordination and collaboration with CI Mexico – SLV staff and the SLV project partners to:

- Design and innovative an effective mechanism to bring agriculture and forest buyers to meet the CBEs, to match products and services of sustainable and ethical producers with responsible and ethical companies/buyers that are willing to commit to transparent and sustainable supply chains. This coordination mechanism between buyers and suppliers is what we call a Marketplace, which is an integral part of the BFE.
- Lead outreach efforts to engage responsible buyers and organizations with interest in products or services from the four defined landscapes (*Sierra Sur – Oaxaca; Sierra Madre – Chiapas; Mascota and Tapalpa – Jalisco; Calakmul - Campeche*). Identify and cultivate relationships with private sector organizations committed to sustainable and ethical supply chains.
- In close coordination with CI Mexico and the financial partners of SLV, support the design and operation of the expert tables mechanism which aims to support the curation process for matching the CBEs business proposals with blended finance opportunities. These tables will bring experts from different fields including finance, sales & marketing, value chains, among others, that will help improve the business proposition to access credits from the BFE partners.
- Develop a strategy to minimize the gaps between market requirements and the current state of products on a case-by-case basis.
- Support capacity building for market knowledge, sales, and marketing for producer organizations in the four landscapes for closing the gaps identified in the expert tables.
- Collaborate in the creation and shaping of the four defined landscapes and producer organizations' value propositions.
- Support the development of new and non-traditional revenue opportunities for producer organizations.
- Support the development of market readiness of the CBEs to result in increased sales and access to new markets.
- Ensure the proper integration of environmental and social safeguards and grievance mechanism into the Marketplace.
- Participate and contribute to the BFE (Blended Finance Engine) Steering Committee meetings.
- Assist in gathering, processing, and analyzing lessons learned yearly from the Marketplace, through the life of the project; and contribute to the learning community named "Social Business Networks" led by CI, with the experiences and lessons from the Marketplace, CBEs and buyers.

Operational Tasks:

- Plan and coordinate the expert tables during the life of the project.
- Prepare and analyze the results from expert tables 30 days after their conclusion.
- Ensure the proper integration of environmental and social safeguards and grievance mechanism into the Marketplace
- Participate and contribute to the BFE (Blended Finance Engine) Steering Committee meetings.
- Assist in gathering, processing and analyzing lessons learned yearly through the life of the project; especially from the expert tables, marketplace, and BFE process.

- Carry out the implementation of a learning community named “Social Business Networks” that aims to disseminate knowledge and information obtained from the expert tables, marketplace, and BFE process to the CBEs and Buyers.
- Assist in gathering, processing, and analyzing lessons learned yearly from the Marketplace, through the life of the project; and contribute to the learning community named “Social Business Networks” led by CI, with the experiences and lessons from the Marketplace, CBEs and buyers.

7. Required experience

Work Experience:

- Commercialization of agriculture and forest products
- Commercial relationships with traditional and niche buyers of agriculture and forest products
- Exceptional knowledge applying relevant processes and systems.
- Value chain design and development.
- Market analysis and trends
- Basic knowledge of buyers’ sustainability goals (emissions, biodiversity and social)
- Innovation in product development and branding.
- Previous experience or partnerships with development donors or projects.

Key team members skills:

- More than 10 years’ experience in the agriculture and forest sectors in Mexico or Latin America.
- More than 10 years’ experience in value chains.
- Deep knowledge and experience related bringing gaps and creating processes or systems to agriculture and forest value chains and business development.
- Previous experience setting up traceability processes based on buyers’ requirements, including sustainability goals (emission reduction, biodiversity, social standards or other).
- Strong commercial relationships with buyers.
- Knowledge on requirements for commercialization of products in Mexico and export markets.
- Capacity to conduct analysis and reports on current market demands and trends, relevant for the sustainable agriculture and forest sectors.
- Negotiating skills to innovate in this sector so that buyers adapt their internal purchasing policies to be more inclusive and reduce barriers to conduct business transactions with rural enterprises with sustainable practices.
- Experience applying systems change and basic knowledge of the sustainable development goals.
- Ability to communicate clearly across diverse socioeconomic and cultural spectrum.
- Proven track record cultivating relationships with key decision-makers.