Call for Expression of Interest

The Verde Ventures Fund (VV), an enterprise investment fund for biodiversity protection at Conservation International Foundation (CI), with the support of Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM), is seeking to engage a service provider to provide capacity building support for one of our partners in Madagascar.

1. Background Information

CI's Verde Ventures Fund invests directly in SMEs by providing debt financing to businesses that benefit healthy ecosystems and human well-being, such as businesses in the sectors of alternative energy, agroforestry, ecotourism, sustainable harvest of wild products and marine and fisheries initiatives. VV's investments enable such business partners to advance the important role of small business in conservation and responsible development. They employ local people in jobs that give them and their communities a personal and economic stake in safeguarding their local natural resources.

In Madagascar, VV has invested funds with two businesses in vanilla and cacao value chain respectively. Our cacao partner works with 70 farmers organized into 3 producer organizations (approx. 70 members) in Ambanja district region. We aim to support this partner improve the post-harvest handling of the cacao as well as achieve organic certification.

2. The Assignment

To work with the company's technicians and cocoa suppliers (3 co-operatives) to improve market-established sustainable production, fermentation, drying and quality control processes. The goal is to equip farmers supplying to our partner with skills and capacity for;

1. Post-harvest handling of produce
2. Electronic record keeping
3. Organic certification compliance

Additionally, ensure the farmers are meeting partner-established Internal Quality Control Systems (ICS). The consultant would work in the lower Sambirano Valley, with approximately 70 farmers spread out across the Ambanja District.

3. Tasks & Deliverables

On appointment, the consultant will be taken through partner Internal Quality Control Systems (ICS). The tasks and deliverables are expected to be implemented in harmony with the already existing ICS.
4. Deliverables

a. **Training and demonstration on Post-Harvest Product Handling** – including supply and installation of fermentation boxes, drying slabs, quality control sacks, gunny sacks and storage pallets. The consultant will further mentor the farmers through the fermentation process through various post-harvest test-runs on the installed hardware.

b. **Training on Electronic Record keeping and traceability with 3 producer organizations**: The consultant will introduce and train cocoa farmers in on electronic record keeping. The consultant will additionally install a desktop computer and an electronic scale for each co-operative and undertake necessary test runs with the farmers.

c. **Organic Certification Preparations for selected cacao farmer beneficiaries** (re-audit for 2 organizations and initial audit for the third organization). This will include audit criteria compliance support and mock audits.

5. Profile of Targeted Service provider

Due to the diversity of the tasks and deliverables as enumerated above, the consultant is expected to be an organization that has a team with complimentary skills and backgrounds. The consultant organization should designate a lead consultant and support consultants for the successful delivery of this assignment. Below are desirable skills and competencies of the team.

- Extensive experience in working with community based enterprises.
- Professional and academic qualification in soil/earth sciences, agriculture, crop/plant science or animal science.
- Experience with organic certification pre-audit support
- Experience in cocoa post-harvest handling
- Quality control knowledge.
- Proven capacity in management and in delivering agricultural training to rural farmers.
- Possess the ability to work outdoors and have personal means of transportation.
- English and Malagasy skills in both speech and in writing are mandatory. French language skills are optional.
- A demonstrated knowledge of cocoa and/or chocolate markets is a plus.
- Ability to effectively analyze and interpret data.
- Available during the term of the contract.

How to Apply

Interested parties are requested to submit an Expression of Interest containing both technical and financial aspects to Amos Thiongo (athiongo@conservation.org) by the close of business 10th September 2016. Detailed Terms of Reference are available upon request.