HARVESTPLUS CONSULTANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

CONSULTANCY: SME FINANCE CONSULTANT
LOCATION: WASHINGTON, DC, USA
SUPERVISED BY: MULTILATERAL & POLICY ADVISOR
POSTING DATE: FEBRUARY 9, 2021
CLOSING DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2021

CONSULTANCY SUMMARY
HarvestPlus seeks a highly motivated SME Finance Consultant. Applications are being invited for a project focusing on COVID related stimulus financing for agribusinesses. The Consultant is expected to enable growth-oriented small and medium enterprises to access both technical assistance and financing in four target countries - Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Bangladesh; promote HarvestPlus' private sector development agenda; and develop and manage new financing partnerships. The Consultant will preferably be based in Washington, DC or in one of the project countries and should have international experience in the countries/regions of focus.

BACKGROUND
HarvestPlus improves nutrition and public health by developing and promoting biofortified food crops that are rich in vitamins and minerals and providing global leadership on biofortification evidence and technology. HarvestPlus is part of CGIAR. CGIAR is a global agriculture research partnership for a food secure future. Its science is carried out by its 15 research centers in collaboration with hundreds of partner organizations. HarvestPlus is based at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and collaborates with multiple CGIAR centers and partner organizations. Mainstreaming and scaling up biofortification depends in part on its adoption by private sector actors like farmers, SMEs and larger businesses in nutritious seed, grain and food value chains and its inclusion in government policies and programs. HarvestPlus already works with SMEs - we have long term relationships at the local level and have been providing technical assistance to hundreds of SMEs in the target countries.

COVID-19 has deeply and adversely affected the business performance and continuity of SMEs across the world. A survey among SMEs in 132 countries shows that the business operations of micro, small and medium firms are strongly affected by the crisis, with one-fifth indicating potentially shutting down permanently within three months. This is particularly true for women and youth owned enterprises.

HarvestPlus is now rolling out a new agribusiness financing project to address some of these needs. In the four target countries there are local stimulus financing facilities already provided through government support however have been underspent for a range of reasons. We will partner with banks that are already implementing these finance facilities through our local SME market and finance specialist to better understand constraints to accessing this capital and match SMEs to banks to ease the flow of capital. The Consultant will also be expected to engage with key government and industry stakeholders, train SMEs on bank products and other technical areas and support related research and learning activities.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES
The Consultant will help build a network of banking (and other SME finance provider) and government relationships across the four countries to accelerate access to finance in biofortification and other nutritious food value chains. Overall objectives will be to: support the design and set up of the project, conduct an
The Consultant is expected to carry out the following tasks and deliverables:

- Testing a new approach to facilitating stimulus finance for agribusinesses.
- Building partnerships with financial institutions.
- Delivering training on basic financial education for SMEs.
- Designing a business planning competition.
- Coordinating applications for stimulus finance.
- Facilitating due diligence on selected agribusinesses.
- Collating portfolio reports on a regular basis.
- Documenting cases studies of entrepreneurs and their experiences.
- Expanding the stimulus finance program through partnerships with national donors, government, and financing institutions.
- Providing support as needed for learning activities as also a separate project track focused on savings groups.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- 8-10 years of project management experience in rural financial inclusion programs with a commercial bank, non-bank financing company, digital finance provider or financial services funder.
- Graduate degree in a relevant field such as business management, commerce, economics or agribusiness management.
- Country experience in at least two of the target countries.
- Credit risk assessment and business planning skills. Experience in conducting trainings.
- Consultant should be very familiar with the landscape of financial service providers, innovative products.
- Demonstrated experience interacting with stakeholders at various levels of government, including Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Education, etc. as well as with non-government organizations, including donors, private sector, and research organizations.
- Excellent English written and oral communication skills.
- Able to travel.

TIMELINE / SPAN OF CONTRACT

- The initial contract is estimated at 60 workdays over a 6-month period.

TO APPLY

Please submit a cover letter, CV with daily rates, and names of two references via Taleo by February 20, 2021. We are unable to respond to every applicant individually, therefore we will only contact applicants that are selected for an interview.

Taleo Link: https://phf.tbe.taleo.net/phf04/ats/careers/v2/viewRequisition?org=IFPRI&cws=50&rid=2313