HARVESTPLUS VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

CONSULTANCY:  SME MARKET & FINANCE ADVISOR (SOUTHERN AFRICA)
LOCATION:  LUSAKA, ZAMBIA
SUPERVISED BY:  MULTILATERAL & POLICY ADVISOR
POSTING DATE:  MARCH 11, 2021
CLOSING DATE:  MARCH 28, 2021

POSITION DESCRIPTION
The Advisor will promote HarvestPlus’ private sector development agenda & enable growth-oriented small and medium enterprises to access both technical assistance and financing in three target countries – Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi.

JOB SUMMARY
HarvestPlus Solutions seeks a highly motivated SME Market and Finance Advisor to join the HarvestPlus Program (“HarvestPlus”) Zambia team. The Advisor is expected to enable growth-oriented small and medium enterprises to access both technical assistance and financing in three countries – Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi; promote HarvestPlus’ private sector development agenda; and develop and manage new financing partnerships. The candidate shall be based in Lusaka.

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 the 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 on enablement through capacity development and market linkage of SMEs. 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. There are additionally many SMEs in the nutrition sector more broadly that can adopt biofortification products with the appropriate access to capital.

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 three target countries – Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi, there are local stimulus financing facilities already provided through government support however have been underspend for a range of reasons. We will partner with banks that are already implementing these finance facilities through our local SME market and finance Advisor to better understand constraints to accessing this capital and match SMEs to banks to ease the flow of capital. The advisor 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 Advisor will build a network of banking (and other SME finance provider) and government relationships across the three countries to accelerate access to finance in biofortification and other nutritious food value chains. Overall objectives will be to: map constraints in access to finance; identify and develop relationships with key stakeholders; provide advice in managing business planning competitions, and the application and monitoring process of finance activities. This will be a 1-year consultancy, contract renewable, and a performance review will be conducted at the end of the first 3 months of the contract.

The Advisor 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 for learning activities as also a separate project track focused on savings groups.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS
• 5-6 years of professional experience in SME Banking with a commercial bank, non-bank financing company or digital finance provider in at least one Southern African country preferably Zambia.
• Graduate degree in a relevant field such as business management, commerce, economics or agribusiness management.
• Professional diplomas and undergraduates may apply if they have higher experience.
• Candidate should have a track record both in SME relationship management and credit management specifically in the rural segment.
• Strong credit and business planning skills. Experience in conducting trainings.
• Advisor should be very familiar with the landscape of financial service providers, innovative products in the Southern African region.
• 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.

TO APPLY
Please submit a complete resume, detailed letter of interest, and two references by March 28, 2021. Please submit your materials to harvestplus@cgiar.org with the Subject Line: “Submission - SME Market & Finance Advisor, Zambia”. We are unable to respond to every applicant individually, therefore we will only contact applicants that are selected for an interview.