Request for Proposals (RFP)
Proposal Development Support Services

Issue Date: January 2, 2020
Due Date for Questions: January 8, 2020
Closing date: February 7, 2020 (Proposals approved on a rolling basis)
RFP No: NBD-2020-01
Place of Performance: Washington, DC preferred; remote work as mutually agreed
Period of Performance: January 1, 2020-December 31, 2020
Application submission: To: Duncan Nelson, Program Development Coordinator, dnelson@cnfa.org; CC to: Lenoure Recanatini, Associate Vice President Program Development, lrecanatini@cnfa.org

1. Background:
CNFA (Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture) is dedicated to increasing the quality of life of rural households by empowering farmers and rural entrepreneurs worldwide. CNFA brings more than 30 years of experience promoting private-sector and agriculture development programs in Africa, Europe, and Asia, facilitating productive partnerships between smallholders, agribusinesses, financial institutions, investors, and other private-sector, civil society, and government stakeholders. CNFA is seeking service providers to deliver proposal support between January 2020 and January 2020. Interested service providers should respond to this solicitation by submitting an application by the due date above in compliance with the Statement of Work and Instructions below. While this solicitation will remain open through the closing date, submissions will be accepted and approved for award on a rolling basis until our needs are fulfilled. Early submissions are strongly encouraged.

2. Statement of Work:
The selected service provider(s) will provide CNFA with consultant experts in capture and proposal management, recruitment, proposal writing, business development processes, and other areas to support development of proposals and to strengthen and support program development team operations. CNFA anticipates awarding a blanket service agreement to the successful Offeror(s), under which CNFA and selected service provider(s) will develop and execute work orders for proposal development support consultancies. Specific tasks and deliverables will be described within each work order.

Illustrative examples of consultants include the following: capture managers, proposal managers, recruitment managers, lead writers, capture coordinators, proposal coordinators, editors, graphic designers, researchers, and other relevant experts. Anticipated illustrative qualifications, tasks, and deliverables of illustrative consultants are described below.
Lead Writers

Illustrative Qualifications

- At least seven years of proposal writing experience for USAID, USDA, and other US government agencies required; expertise in agriculture, food security, private sector engagement, market systems, nutrition, or other relevant technical areas preferred;
- Bachelor’s degree in agriculture, economics, journalism, or a related field required;
- Familiarity with USAID and/or USDA regulations for proposal compliance required;
- Strong organizational, interpersonal, and communication skills required; and
- Experience devising concepts for graphic designs and text boxes strongly preferred.

Illustrative Tasks

- Lead the proposal team in the development and articulation of strategic technical approaches and activities and write the technical proposal.
- In advance of each draft revision, incorporate oral and written inputs from technical experts and respond to comments provided from reviewers.
- Support the proposal team in developing graphics and text boxes and editing all proposal sections for consistency and compliance.

Illustrative Deliverables

- Produce compliant drafts of the technical proposal within deadlines and page limits.

Capture/Proposal Managers

Illustrative Qualifications

- At least five years of proposal management experience in international development required; expertise in agricultural development or related field preferred;
- Knowledge of relevant USAID and/or USDA regulations for proposal compliance required;
- Strong communication skills, organizational skills, and attentional to detail required; and
- Bachelor’s degree in agriculture, economics, journalism, or a related field required.

Illustrative Tasks

- During capture, lead the team to identify and fill staffing and partnering needs and produce drafts for capture documents and materials.
- During live proposals, lead the team to produce a compliance matrix and calendar, a compliant outline, and compliant drafts throughout, and manage production and submission.
- Oversee and facilitate design, recruitment, partnering, and regular team check-in meetings;
- Write or supervise writing of back chapters, annexes, text boxes, and graphics.
- Ensure all proposal sections are complete, responsive, and compliant for each review.
- Identify partners with the proposal team, facilitate teaming negotiations and agreements, and develop and communicate requirements and deadlines to the partners throughout the process.

Illustrative Deliverables

- Drafts of the technical proposal through close work with other team members.
- On-time, compliant submission of the technical and cost proposals to the client.
For Recruitment Managers:

*Illustrative Qualifications*

- At least three years of proposal recruitment experience required; USAID, USDA Food for Progress, and other US government experience strongly preferred;
- Successful experience recruiting for large teams of multiple key and other positions on large, complex proposals required; and
- Bachelor’s Degree in a related field and strong written and oral communication skills, organizational skills, and attentional to detail required.

*Illustrative Tasks*

- Support full-cycle recruitment including sourcing, vetting, negotiations, and packaging.
- Develop position descriptions to meet proposal requirements and attract top candidates.
- Communicate with the proposal manager regarding required meetings and next steps for recruitment and provide qualifications review matrices at all candidate review meetings.
- Support the development of relevant proposal inputs including personnel sections and CVs.

*Illustrative Deliverables*

- Lists of candidates with CVs, and packaging of selected candidates through developing comparison matrices and candidate write-ups for presentation to the proposal team.
- Daily communication of metric-driven identification of key candidates and regular interim check-ins with the proposal manager.
- Documentation including CVs, 1420s, LOCs, and others as required by the solicitation.

For Capture/Proposal Coordinators:

*Illustrative Qualifications*

- At least two years of proposal coordination experience in international development required; knowledge of agriculture or related field preferred;
- Knowledge of relevant USAID and/or USDA regulations for proposal compliance required;
- Strong communication skills, organizational skills, and attentional to detail required; and
- Bachelor’s degree in agriculture, economics, journalism, or a related field required.

*Illustrative Tasks*

- Support the proposal manager in writing PPRs, CVs, and other back chapters.
- Lead recruitment for proposal positions.
- Provide support for hiring consultants, organizing travel, compiling partner documents, and final production.
- Support the Proposal Manager in research and other tasks, as needed.

*Illustrative Deliverables*

- On-time submission of the technical and cost proposals to the client.
- Daily communication of metric-driven identification of candidates.
- Documentation of proposed partners and staff as required by the solicitation.
- Complete drafts of assigned proposal sections, incorporating revisions from review teams.
3. Required Qualifications of the Service Provider
The purpose of this service agreement is to support CNFA during periods in which surge support is needed and resources are stretched. Therefore, the selected service provider(s) will be expected to manage consultants closely, communicating with them frequently to ensure they are working independently and producing deliverables in a timely and effective manner. The selected service provider(s) must have the demonstrated capacity to provide and manage high-quality, self-motivated consultants to support proposal development. CNFA will give preference to service providers who can provide consultants who reside in the Washington, DC area. CNFA will also consider service providers that provide consultants who are based remotely but are able to work in our office as needed and mutually agreed. CNFA requires that all consultants are provided access to appropriate software, tools, materials, and equipment through their respective service providers to perform the duties and responsibilities required by this RFP, including but not limited to Microsoft Word, Microsoft Visio, Microsoft PowerPoint, conference calling software, and a speaker for conference calls. For cases in which CNFA deems consultants to be underperforming, or not completing tasks and deliverables at an appropriate or acceptable level required under the agreement, CNFA will provide feedback to the service provider and expects the service provider to communicate with and oversee consultants, providing day-to-day feedback and guidance as needed. CNFA requires that termination of consultants be handled directly by the service provider.

4. Compensation and Payment:
The payment for services will be defined in accordance with the individually authorized work orders. Total payments must not exceed the dollar ceiling amount stipulated in each work order without an amendment to the work order. Payments to the service provider will be structured according to the authorized daily or hourly rate and number of days/level of effort assigned to the service provider in work orders, plus any additional costs and fees as mutually agreed in writing.

5. General Instructions for Submission of an Application:
Offers must be received no later than January 23, 2020. Offers must be submitted by email to Duncan Nelson at dnelson@cnfa.org, with a copy to Lenoure Recanatini at lrecanatini@cnfa.org. Each Offeror must submit a complete proposal including official quotation and responses to evaluation criteria. The email submission must be clearly marked with the following reference: RFP No: NBD-2020-01 Offeror Name.

The complete Proposal in MS Word or Adobe Acrobat PDF format must be submitted by email by the submission date indicated above. The Proposal should include the following:
- A cover letter with Offeror’s name, address, and telephone number along with the date and RFP number on the cover page of the application, signed by an authorized representative of the Offeror.
- A complete response to the Evaluation Criteria below in up to seven pages, exclusive of cover page and table of contents. Proposal responses should be organized in the order of the Evaluation Criteria. Guidance is provided on page limitations within each evaluation criterion; it is up to Offerors to determine page allocations within these parameters.
• A list of the Offeror’s bill rates for foreseeable consultant categories plus any administrative or other fees the Offeror would charge.
• Annex A: A copy of the Offeror’s business license.
• Annex B: Two references from organizations for which the Offeror has successfully performed similar work (not CNFA).
• Annex C: Signed certification of Independent Price Determination Statement.
• Annex D: Notification of potential real or perceived conflicts of interest.

Proposals must be written in English and typed on standard US Letter Size paper, single-spaced, 12-point font with each page numbered consecutively. The reasonable use of tables and graphs with 10-point font of similar style to Times New Roman is permitted. Proposals must include Offeror name, date, RFP number and title, and page numbers in the header and footer.

Questions about this RFP must be submitted via email to Duncan Nelson (dnelson@cnfa.org) with a copy to Lenoure Recanatini (lrecanatini@cnfa.org) before the deadline noted above. The email must be clearly marked with the following reference: RFP No: NBD-2020-01 – Offeror Name. Questions must be submitted in writing; phone calls will not be accepted. Questions and requests for clarification – and the responses thereto – that CNFA believes may be of interest to other Offerors will be circulated to RFP recipients who have indicated an interest in submitting an offer.

Only the written answers issued by CNFA will be considered official and carry weight in the RFP process and subsequent evaluation. Any verbal information received from employees of CNFA or any other entity should not be considered as official responses regarding this RFP.

Issuance of this solicitation does not constitute an award commitment on the part of CNFA, nor does it commit CNFA to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.
6. Evaluation Criteria:

Awards will be made to responsible Offerors whose offers follow the RFP instructions, meet the eligibility requirements, and are determined via a trade-off analysis to be the best value based on the below evaluation criteria. Best-value determination considers both technical and financial proposals, i.e. the best approach and anticipated results in combination with a reasonable cost. The relative importance of each individual criterion is indicated by the number of points below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria and Instructions (total of five pages)</th>
<th>Scoring</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Sound consultancy and relationship management (up to 2 pages)</strong></td>
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<td>CNFA expects the selected service provider(s) will actively oversee and manage selected consultants, providing feedback and guidance as needed to ensure optimal performance. Offerors will be evaluated based on demonstrated ability to support the CNFA proposal team in the identification and management of consultants for proposal development and operational support, based on the requirements outlined in Section 3. Required Qualifications of the Service Provider.</td>
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<td>Within the Technical proposal:</td>
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<td>a. Explain the process through which the Offeror will recruit and manage candidates, including ensuring they arrive on-site or check in as agreed and perform tasks.</td>
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<td>b. Describe the process through which the Offeror will develop and provide scopes of work in response to CNFA requests for work orders.</td>
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<td>c. Describe the process through which the Offeror will provide day-to-day feedback and guidance as requested by CNFA, addressing performance concerns should they arise, including in the rare event that a consultant needs to be terminated.</td>
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<td>d. Describe the steps to be taken to ensure consultants have the tools and equipment to perform the duties and responsibilities required by this RFP, including but not limited to Microsoft Word, Microsoft Visio, Microsoft PowerPoint, conference call software and hardware.</td>
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<td>e. Identify and describe illustrative areas of operational support to help CNFA improve business development processes.</td>
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<td><strong>2. Quality of proposed consultants (up to 3 pages)</strong></td>
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<td>Offerors will be evaluated based on demonstrated ability to provide highly qualified consultants to support the development of proposals. CNFA will evaluate illustrative consultants based on their demonstrated capacity to support the development of proposals in the Lead Writer, Capture Manager, Proposal Manager, and other capacities.</td>
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<td>Within the Technical Proposal:</td>
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<td>a. Provide summaries of qualifications for consultants available for anticipated assignments in the categories listed in this solicitation or other categories Offerors are interested in supporting.</td>
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<td><strong>3. Successful performance supporting proposal development (up to 2 pages)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Offerors will be evaluated based on a demonstrated ability to draft responsive scopes of work and provide proposal development services, as described above</td>
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within sections 1-3 above. Work on proposals for USAID and USDA Food for Progress or in the agriculture sector will be evaluated more highly.

Within the Technical proposal, provide a list of relevant consultancies for which the Offeror has provided proposal and business development services during the past two years. Please note it is not necessary to provide the name of the proposal that the Offeror supported. For each consultancy:

a. Provide the period of performance;

b. Describe the services provided, including the number and types of consultants assigned to each work order;

c. Describe any performance issues and how they were resolved; and

d. Describe whether the support was provided remotely or in the office.

In addition, Offerors should indicate the overall success rate of proposals supported by the Offeror’s consultants and describe problems that have arisen and measures used to address those problems and avoid them in future assignments.

In Annex B, Offerors must include two references from clients for which they provided services of similar size and scope during the past year. Please include the name, title, and contact information of the point of contact. Please also briefly describe the scope of work of the services provided.

4. Realistic and competitive fee (up to 2 pages)
Provide your anticipated fee structures, payable in US Dollars, with applicable taxes, fees, and other charges clearly identified. This may be in the form of a list of the Offeror’s bill rates for foreseeable consultant categories plus any administrative or other fees the Offeror would charge. This should include information about payment terms and any other pricing information or conditions you determine to be useful in the selection process. 5

Total Points Possible 30

Best offer proposals are requested. It is anticipated that award will be made solely on the basis of original proposals. However, CNFA reserves the right to conduct negotiations with and/or request clarifications from any Offeror prior to award or cancel this solicitation at any time. CNFA anticipates awarding a one-year blanket service agreement to the successful Offeror or to multiple Offerors.

7. Certifications:
All proposals must include the following statement signed by an authorized representative on company letterhead.

Certification of Independent Price Determination

(a) By sending a bid, the Offeror certifies that--

(1) The prices in this offer have been arrived at independently, without, for the purpose of restricting competition, any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other Offeror,
including but not limited to subsidiaries or other entities in which Offeror has any ownership or other interests, or any competitor relating to (i) those prices, (ii) the intention to submit an offer, or (iii) the methods or factors used to calculate the prices offered;

(2) The prices in this offer have not been and will not be knowingly disclosed by the Offeror, directly or indirectly, to any other Offeror, including but not limited to subsidiaries or other entities in which Offeror has any ownership or other interests, or any competitor before bid opening (in the case of a sealed bid RFP) or contract award (in the case of a negotiated or competitive RFP) unless otherwise required by law; and

(3) No attempt has been made or will be made by the Offeror to induce any other concern or individual to submit or not to submit an offer for the purpose of restricting competition or influencing the competitive environment.

(b) Each signature by the Offeror is considered to be a certification by the signatory that the signatory--

(1) Is the person in the Offeror's organization responsible for determining the prices being offered in this bid or proposal, and that the signatory has not participated and will not participate in any action contrary to subparagraphs (a)(1) through (a)(3) above; or

(2) (i) Has been authorized, in writing, to act as agent for the principals of the Offeror in certifying that those principals have not participated, and will not participate in any action contrary to subparagraphs (a)(1) through (a)(3) above; (ii) As an authorized agent, does certify that the principals of the Offeror have not participated, and will not participate, in any action contrary to subparagraphs (a)(1) through (a)(3) above; and (iii) As an agent, has not personally participated, and will not participate, in any action contrary to subparagraphs (a)(1) through (a)(3) above.

(c) Offeror understands and agrees that --

(1) Violation of this certification will result in immediate disqualification from this RFP without recourse and may result in disqualification from future RFPs; and

(2) Discovery of any violation after award to the Offeror will result in the termination of the award for default.

8. Issuance of Award and Disclaimers:

CNFA reserves the right to issue an award based on initial evaluation of offers without further discussion and reserves the right to waive minor proposal deficiencies that can be corrected prior to award determination to promote competition. CNFA may reissue the solicitation or issue formal amendments revising the original RFP specifications and evaluation criteria before or after receipt of proposals. CNFA may modify specifications without issuing a formal notice to Offerors when the revisions are immaterial to the scope of the RFP. CNFA may choose to award only part of the activities in the RFP, or issue multiple awards based on multiple RFP activities. CNFA reserves the right to order additional quantities or units with the selected Offeror.
Issuance of this RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of CNFA, and CNFA will not compensate Offerors for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a response to RFP. Final award of any resultant contract cannot be made until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed by CNFA. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for award. In addition, CNFA may cancel this solicitation at any time without making an award and may reject any or all responses received, including based on failure to follow RFP instructions or meet criteria requirements. Proposals that are incomplete or are received after the deadline may not be considered.

CNFA will contact all Offerors to inform them whether or not they were selected for award, and proposals shall remain valid for 60 calendar days.

In submitting a response to this RFP, Offerors understand that CNFA’s respective Clients (i.e. USAID, USDA, the USG, etc.) are not a party to this solicitation and the Offeror agrees that any protest hereunder must be presented – in writing with full explanations – to CNFA for consideration. CNFA, at its sole discretion, will make a final decision on any protest for this procurement.

This document is provided for the exclusive use of your organization and copies shall not be made available to any other party, during or after closing of this solicitation, without written consent from CNFA.

9. CNFA Terms and Conditions:

9.1 Ethical and Business Conduct Requirements: CNFA is committed to integrity in procurement, and only selects suppliers based on objective business criteria such as price and technical merit.

CNFA does not tolerate fraud, collusion among Offerors, falsified proposals/bids, bribery, or kickbacks. Any firm or individual violating these standards will be disqualified from this procurement, barred from future procurement opportunities, and may be reported to the Office of the Inspector General. Employees and agents of CNFA are strictly prohibited from asking for or accepting any money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, object of value or compensation from current or potential vendors or suppliers in exchange for or as a reward for business. Employees and agents engaging in this conduct are subject to termination and will be reported to the Office of the Inspector General. In addition, CNFA will inform the Office of the Inspector General of any supplier offers of money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, object of value or compensation to obtain business.

Offerors responding to this RFP must include the following as part of the proposal submission:

- Disclose any close, familial, or financial relationships with CNFA or project staff. For example, if an Offeror’s cousin is employed by the project, the Offeror must state this.
• Disclose any family or financial relationship with other Offerors submitting proposals. For example, if the Offeror’s father owns a company that is submitting another proposal, the Offeror must state this.
• Certify that the prices in the offer have been arrived at independently, without any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other Offeror or competitor for restricting competition.
• Certify that all information in the proposal and all supporting documentation are authentic and accurate.
• Certify understanding and agreement to CNFA’s prohibitions against fraud, bribery and kickbacks.

Please contact dnelson@cnfa.org, with a copy to lrecanatini@cnfa.org, with any questions or concerns regarding the above information or to report any potential violations. Potential violations may also be reported directly to CNFA at to FraudHotline@cnfa.org.

9.2 Other Terms and Conditions: This solicitation is subject to CNFA’s standard terms and conditions. Any resultant award will be governed by these terms and conditions; a copy of the full terms and conditions is available upon request. Please note the following terms and conditions will apply:

(a) Payment will only be issued to the entity submitting the offer in response to this RFP and identified in the resulting award; payment will not be issued to a third party.
(b) No commodities or services may be supplied that are manufactured or assembled in, shipped from, transported through, or otherwise involving any of the following countries: Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Syria.
(c) Any international air or ocean transportation or shipping carried out under any award resulting from this RFP must take place on US-flag carriers/vessels.
(d) US law prohibits transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. The supplier under any award resulting from this RFP must ensure compliance with these laws.
(e) US law prohibits engaging in activities related to Trafficking in Persons. The supplier under any award resulting from this RFP must ensure compliance with these laws.
(f) The title to any goods supplied under any award resulting from this RFP shall pass to CNFA following delivery and acceptance of the goods by CNFA. Risk of loss, injury, or destruction of the goods shall be borne by the Offeror until title passes to CNFA.

9.3 Eligibility: By submitting an offer in response to this RFP, the Offeror certifies that it and its principal officers are not debarred, suspended, or otherwise considered ineligible for an award by the U.S. Government. CNFA will not award a contract to any firm that is debarred, suspended, or considered to be ineligible by the US Government.