



Responses to Offeror Clarification Questions

IESC-T-FAST-2020-001

June 29, 2020

Question 1: According to information made available on the Food for Progress web site and copied below, the estimated number of beneficiaries of the Paraguay program is limited to 1,923. Please confirm the number of *direct* program beneficiaries and their breakdown by demographic and socio-economic categories.

fas.usda.gov/programs/food-progress/food-progress-funding-fy-2019

The screenshot shows the 'Food for Progress Funding - FY 2019' page. It features a navigation menu with 'Home', 'Programs', 'Food for Progress', and 'Food for Progress Funding - FY 2019'. A sidebar on the left lists various project categories and reports. The main content area displays a table with the following data:

Country	Participant	Estimated Beneficiaries	Estimated Value
East African Community	Land O'Lakes	5,845	\$13,322,100
Ethiopia	TechnoServe	77,000	\$17,394,361
Indonesia	NCBA/CLUSA	56,000	\$20,610,436
Paraguay	IESC	1,923	\$13,893,195
Philippines	Winrock International	25,200	\$13,301,340
Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria	CNFA	60,000	\$47,311,410
Venezuela	Provisional award contingent upon initiation of a democratic transition in Venezuela	13,000	\$12,674,433
Total		238,968	\$138,507,274

Project beneficiaries will include:

- NTFC staff and cross-agency TFA working groups
- Members of select government institutions involved in the regulation and facilitation of trade in agricultural products, such as customs and border control, agricultural product testing labs, and others
- Members of select trade associations
- Staff of NTFC and other government agencies that will be receiving project equipment and software

A total of 1,145 individuals from government and 127 representatives of the private sector are expected to directly benefit from the T-FAST project, and another 22,181 individuals from the government and private sector are expected to benefit indirectly.

Beneficiaries	#
People in government institutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Administration of Navigation and Ports (ANNP) • Ministry of Foreign Affairs – (MRE)/ National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) • Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MIC) • National Directorate of Customs (DNA) • National Directorate of Health Surveillance (DINAVISA) • National Plant and Seed Quality and Health Service (SENAVE) • National Animal Quality and Health Service (SENACSA) • National Institute of Food and Nutrition (INAN) • National Institute of Technology, Standardization and Metrology (INTN) • National Accreditation Organism (ONA / CONACYT) 	1,145
People in firms of trade associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraguayan–American Chamber of Commerce (PY-AmCham) • Paraguayan Industrial Union (UIP) • Paraguayan Importers Chamber (CIP) • Paraguayan Chamber of Exporters (CAPEX) • Customs brokers association (CDAP) • Paraguayan Chamber of Cereals and Oilseed Exporters and Marketers (CAPECO) • Production Cooperatives Federation (FECOPROD) • Paraguayan Agricultural Technological Center of the Nikkei Foundation (CETAPAR) • Paraguayan Chamber of Terminals and Ports (CATERPPA) • Union of Production Associations (UGP) • Rural Association of Paraguay (ARP) • Müller Laboratory • Riera Laboratory • Laboratory of the University of San Carlos • Multilab Group • CEDI PAS Laboratory • Scienco Laboratory • MICLAB-División JCM Import Export S.A 	127
Total	1,272

Question 2: In relation to the previous question, please confirm that the project beneficiaries are substantially different from the identified list of local stakeholders. The project beneficiaries are essentially the same as the list of local stakeholders except for private laboratories. The National Trade Facilitation Committee has 26 public entities as members and there are 30 private sector trade associations/organizations that average hundreds of members each. Additionally, there are public and private laboratories that will directly benefit from T-FAST.



Question 3: Please also advise if USDA and/or IESC would like to see *indirect* project beneficiaries considered for impact and as part of the program evaluation services.

Please note, the focus of the evaluation services will be on measuring direct project beneficiary impact.

Question 4: As the prime implementer of the Food for Progress Trade-Facilitating Agricultural Systems and Technology (T-FAST) project in Paraguay, IESC has responded and agreed to a specific Request for Proposals and Scope of Work. In order to elucidate the objectives and parameters of the evaluation services and better inform our evaluation scope in line with what IESC has committed to, we would be grateful if you could share the T-FAST RFP, Terms of References, Scope of Work, the IESC Technical Proposal, and any other original documents related to the underlying USDA engagement of IESC in Paraguay.

Thank you for this inquiry. IESC is unable to publicly post this proprietary information. Please note, the requested documents will be shared with the selected Offeror once a contract and a confidentiality agreement clause have been signed.

Question 5: Please also share any implementation guidelines, program targets, or evaluation parameters established by USDA in relation to the T-FAST project and communicated to IESC. This would be very helpful for aligning the specific objectives of the evaluation with the donor Framework.

Please note, the T-FAST project includes 15 performance indicators and their associated results and targets, and 4 context indicators. The indicator definitions and targets will be shared with the selected Offeror.

Question 6: We noticed that IESC advertised in November 2019 to engage an individual Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Specialist. Given the relevance of the position's scope of work to the evaluation services, please kindly share any data or reports emanating from the work of this Specialist.

Thank you for this inquiry. IESC is unable to publicly post this proprietary information. Please note, the requested documents will be shared with the selected Offeror once a contract and a confidentiality agreement clause have been signed.

Question 7: Please clarify whether IESC would need the third-party contractor to elaborate the performance and impact indicators at the onset of the baseline study or these have already been pre-defined by USDA.

Performance and impact indicators have already been established concordant with USDA.

Question 8: For the purposes of the proposal preparation, we have been reviewing the recent statistics from the Informe Estadístico – Cierre 2019 by the Dirección Nacional de Aduanas and other sources (please see the screenshots below). We would like to clarify if the evaluation services should cover the entire universe of



agricultural exports or we should rather prioritize certain crops and other exports by virtue of their weight and importance to the country's trade volume.

Thank you for this inquiry, the entire universe of agricultural imports and exports should be covered, however, please note the importance of the following crops for export and import respectively. Exports: soy (grain, oil and meal), corn, rice, wheat, and bovine meat (frozen and fresh). Imports: Processed food for human consumption, animal food, beverages, wines and spirits, agrochemicals, and animal, vegetable fats and oils.

Question 9: To level the playing field and align bidders' expectations with the IESC program limitations, please provide an illustrative budget or budget range for the evaluation services with the understanding that bidders might go above the estimated budget in line with their methodology and the project objectives. A yearly breakdown of the estimated evaluation budget would also be beneficial to the cost realism of all bidders' proposals.

Thank you for this inquiry. IESC requests that Offerors submit Cost Proposals based on previous experience. As illustrated in *Section 12.1 Technical Evaluation Criteria* in the RFP, the most important criteria for review will be the Proposed Evaluative Approach, Past Performance, and Staffing. The winning Offeror will be selected on a best value basis, that is, the lowest cost will not necessarily be the most favorable. Rather, the Offeror will be selected based on a combination of technical score and cost.

Question 10: Is there a proportion of the T-FAST project budget allocated for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) services?

Thank you for this question. Yes, there is a portion of the T-FAST project budget allocated for MEL services. Please note that the budget publicly available on the USDA website includes commodity freight costs. The actual implementation budget for the project is \$8.93 million (not including cost share). The budget percentage for MEL is roughly 3%. This budget is allocated to cover expenses related to special studies and other activities in addition to the evaluation services outlined in this RFP.

Question 11: Given the extensive involvement of local expertise, please advise if the CVs of local specialists could be submitted in Spanish.

CVs of local specialists may be submitted in Spanish.



Question 12: In view of the additional clarification questions, the necessary time to respond to them and reflect the answers in the bidders' proposals as well as the extra time necessary to translate the local CVs and materials from Spanish to English, we would be grateful for your consideration of extending the current submission deadline through July 10th, 2020 or as otherwise possible.

Thank you for this inquiry, as IESC has already extended the closing date for proposals to July 3, 2020 with Amendment 1 posted on June, 23, 2020, we will not be extending the closing date for proposals further. If this was to change for any reason, IESC will notify all Offerors and publicly post Amendment 2 with extension details.