

Request for Clarifications and Answers

Global Cocoa Market Study and Dominican Supply Case Study

RFP Issue Date:	Thursday, February 4, 2021
Closing Date for Proposals:	Monday, March 1, 2021
Closing Time for Proposals:	5:00 PM, EST
Project Title:	Exporting Quality Program
Offer Reference Number:	RFP-DREQ-002-2021
Clarifications Issue Date:	Thursday, February 25, 2021

Per RFP Section 7.2 Clarification and Amendments, Offerors may request clarifications not later than 5:00 pm EDT on Monday, February 15, 2021. IESC may not answer questions before the proposal submission deadline outside of the allotted response period for clarifications.

Per RFP Section 1. Background, IESC may, at its own discretion update, amend, or supplement the information in this RFP document. As such, IESC is opting to answer the following clarifications on the above-referenced Clarifications Issue Date which had been received after the February 15, 2021 clarifications close date.

Question 1: Can you provide the RFP, and a recent, completed, IESC report, for a research project of comparable complexity, duration, and cost that we can use to inform a response to this proposal?

Answer 1: Responses should consider the asks within this specific Request for Proposals and the activities and requirements listed therein. Reports produced by IESC through federal awards are available to the public online through USAID's [Development Experience Clearinghouse \(DEC\)](#).

Question 2: From the RFP " Where producers are organized, they might lack market trend insights which could help take full advantage of market opportunities. These insights are part of the body of existing industry information held by just a few industry actors.

Question: Can you provide examples and a list of the actors you are referring to?

Answer 2: Section A list of actors may include, but are not limited to, industry leaders who have the resources to pay for market analyses that, because of the cost of such analyses, are unavailable to small-to-medium cooperatives, small aggregators, and producers.

Clarifications

Question 3: Point 5.2.2a **Question:** Can IESC provide a list of “core stakeholder” group descriptions, typical titles and for key stakeholders, and a list of key individual stakeholders?

Answer 3: Per RFP Section 5.2 Activities, 2.2a, IESC can facilitate access to some core stakeholders, however the contractor should have a credible network and reputation within the industry. Per Section 11.1 Technical and management approach, IESC will evaluate the technical proposal in part based on the Offeror’s demonstrated knowledge of and network within cocoa and derivative value chain stakeholders.

Question 4: Point 5.2.2a Throughout research, the contractor will validate findings with core stakeholders and IESC. **Question:** What expectations does IESC have with regard to the validation process that is to be employed?

Answer 4: Per RFP Section 5.2 Activities, 2.2a, the purpose of the core stakeholder list is to maintain participatory consultation with key industry actors. Section 5.3 Deliverables, 2.a.i – iv; 2.a.d.i – ii; 2.e.i – ii; and 5.a.ii – iv outline the types of participatory activities through which the contractor should expect core stakeholder feedback. These opportunities for feedback are designed to validate or amend the contractor’s work.

Question 5: Point 5.2.2a "Participatory Consultation." **Question:** What requirements does IESC have with regard to the “participatory consultation” process to be employed? How is “validation” to be determined (e.g. simple majority consensus of core stakeholders) and what is the process to be employed in the absence of consensus?

Answer 5: IESC expects the contractor to consider and incorporate themes consistently expressed by the core stakeholders during the times when their feedback is solicited. Divergent themes may occur on occasion. As part of a validation process, IESC expects that all stakeholder feedback would be documented. Divergence of ideas should be included in this documentation, regardless of the outcome.

Question 6: Point 5.2.2a "Access to Core Stakeholders." **Question:** How large a group of “core stakeholders” does IESC require engagement with?

Answer 6: The contractor has the opportunity through RFP Section 5.2 Activities, 2.2a and 5.3 Deliverables, 2.a.i to identify a core group of stakeholders.

Question 7: Point 5.2.2d "Design Key Industry Parameters." **Question:** Will IESC provide a current list of key parameters and their definitions, or a list of topics which are known to require attention?

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Answer 7: The contractor has the opportunity through RFP Section 5.2 Activities, 2.2d and 5.3 Deliverables, 2.d., to submit a list of key industry parameters that will be used in the study with their respective definitions and limitations.

Question 8: Point 5.4.4a "Interactive Graphics." **Question:** Can IESC provide examples of reports that employ high-quality interactive graphics and descriptive images that represent what you are asking respondents to incorporate in a final report?

Answer 8: IESC welcomes the offeror's creativity in the proposal for effective messaging.

Question 9: I am just checking to see if there is a proposal template per se or if the guidelines are included in the attached PDF between Sections 7 and 15?

Answer 9: For the technical proposal, please refer to RFP Section 7. Instructions to Offeror through Section 11. Technical Evaluation Criteria for the requirements and guidelines to structure the technical proposal. For the cost proposal, Offerors must use the Excel budget template linked to the IESC procurements page named "EQ Program RFP – Global Cocoa Market Study and Dominican Supply Case study, Attachment B: Budget Template". Offerors must submit an editable version of the Excel budget template. Offerors should pay particular attention to Section 7.4 Table of Contents and order of sections and present their proposal accordingly.