

# Request for Proposals

## Monetization Services for IESC

<b>Issue Date:</b>	<b>19 March 2024</b>
<b>Closing Date For Proposals:</b>	<b>8 April 2024</b>
<b>Closing Time:</b>	<b>9:00 a.m. Eastern Time, Washington, DC</b>
<b>Project Title:</b>	<b>Monetization Services Benin and/or Cambodia</b>
<b>Offer Reference Number:</b>	<b>MONETIZATION RFP-002-2024</b>

### 1. Disclaimer

The information contained in this request for proposals (hereinafter referred to as RFP) document is provided to the Offeror(s) by Improving Economies for Stronger Communities (IESC) in relation to IESC's anticipated proposal in response to the anticipated U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food for Progress Fiscal Year **2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**.

IESC desires to receive proposals from companies (Offerors) that serve as sales agents, who specialize in the monetization of agricultural products and have expertise in working with USDA Food for Progress (FFPr) projects to support monetization-related efforts for this potential proposal and subsequent project, should IESC's proposal be accepted.

IESC is submitting a proposal for either Benin or Cambodia in response to the NOFO. IESC anticipates awarding a contract for the proposal and also for the subsequent project in either Benin or Cambodia, pending USDA making an award to IESC for the project.

IESC will make the final determination on whether to pursue Benin or Cambodia upon release of the NOFO and after reviewing the full description of activities for both countries included in the NOFO. IESC anticipates submitting a proposal for only one of the two countries. At this time, IESC is requesting a proposal from monetization sales agents to address both Benin and Cambodia. Should the NOFO from USDA be released during the time period of the IESC RFP process, IESC will notify the Offerors of the final selected country to allow them to revise their proposal prior to submission, with page limits adjusted accordingly. If the NOFO is received after the deadline for this RFP, IESC will take the change into consideration for the review of Offeror's proposals.

The purpose of this RFP document is to provide Offeror(s) with information to assist them in the preparation of their proposal for the services that IESC seeks to source. This RFP

document does not claim to contain all the information each Offeror may require. Each Offeror should conduct their own assessment and should check the accuracy, reliability, and completeness of the information in this RFP document, and where necessary obtain independent advice from appropriate sources.

Both large and small businesses are welcome and encouraged to submit proposals. In the event an Offeror is itself a small business or small business concern, the Offeror must indicate whether it is a:

- Small Business Prime
- Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB)
- Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB)
- Historically Underutilized Zone (HUB Zone) Small Business
- Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB) and/or
- Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB)

IESC may cancel this RFP and is under no obligation to make an award as a result of this RFP, although IESC fully anticipates doing so, should IESC's proposal be selected. The RFP will consist of activities in two stages. **Stage One: Proposal** stage is anticipated to begin in April 2024. **Stage Two: Award** stage upon project award, should IESC's proposal be selected in/about August 2024.

Note that USDA determines proposal notification, award, and start dates, and they are subject to change at USDA or IESC's discretion. Any activities under a final agreement are subject to and shall be carried out in accordance with the regulations promulgated by the USDA for foreign donation of agricultural commodities, codified at 7 CFR 1499, 2 CFR 200 and any other subsequently published rule or regulation governing the FFPr program.

IESC may, at its own discretion, but without being under any obligation to do so, update, amend, or supplement the information in this RFP document.

Interested Offerors are responsible for all costs associated with the preparation and submission of proposals and will not be reimbursed by IESC.

## 2. Background

IESC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to equitable, sustainable economic growth in developing countries. We believe that a robust private sector is the cornerstone of resilient economies and stable countries. Since 1964, IESC has focused on market-driven private enterprise development. IESC is currently the award holder for four FFPr projects in the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Sri Lanka, and Central America's Northern Triangle region.

The FFPr program, authorized by the Food for Progress Act of 1985, aims to improve agricultural production and expand trade of agricultural products in developing countries. The program provides for the donation of U.S. agricultural commodities as well as financial and technical assistance to carry out projects with these goals. Projects are primarily funded through the sale of these donated commodities within the foreign market where the project is implemented. Implementing organizations request commodities and USDA purchases those commodities from the U.S. market. USDA donates the commodities to the implementing organizations and pays for the freight to move the commodity to the recipient country. Depending on the agreement, the commodities donated through FFPr may be sold in the recipient country, and the proceeds used to support agricultural, economic, or infrastructure development projects.

### **3. Period of Performance**

The anticipated period of performance for Stage One is April to May 2024 for the proposal and then if IESC is awarded the project, implementation for Stage Two would commence in/about August 2024 until the end of the final monetization.

### **4. Scope Statement**

IESC is seeking a monetization agent to develop monetization plans and monetize commodities for supporting an agricultural development project through the FFPr initiative. All quotations must be valid for one hundred and twenty (120) days.

### **5. Statement of Work**

#### **5.1. Schedule of Authorities**

The sales agent for monetization will report to the assigned IESC proposal manager for Stage One and the IESC home office program manager for Stage Two.

#### **5.2. Activities**

The sales agent for monetization is expected to undertake the following tasks:

##### **Stage One: Proposal**

The Offeror will participate in the full proposal process and develop the monetization plan for the proposal, based on the requirements of USDA's NOFO. The Offeror will be required to research and recommend monetization commodities in the proposed country/region that meets market needs and provides value for the project. The Offeror will develop and write the monetization plan. The write up will be reviewed at least twice and the Offeror is

expected to further the draft responsive to reviewer comments within the required timeframe as the proposal stage is finalized.

## **Stage Two: Award**

Should IESC be awarded an FFPr project, the Offeror will undertake the following:

1. Assist IESC in monetization aspects pertaining to its negotiation of the USDA award(s) (Agreement) as required;
2. Prepare a detailed monetization plan for IESC monetization of the approved commodity(ies). The monetization plan will be presented to IESC for approval prior to conducting sales. The plan is anticipated to include proposed sales methodology; proposed timing of commodity shipments; identification of potential purchasers of monetization commodities; applicable import requirements and identification of any potential risks re: import of commodity; a contingency plan if the project's tonnages cannot be sold as planned; and any other requirements by USDA. The sales agent will then implement the plan as approved by IESC and USDA;
3. Prepare tender documentation in consultation with IESC for submission to, and for approval of, USDA;
4. Conduct the sale of monetization commodities in country, upon USDA approval of tender documentation, negotiating terms and conditions on behalf of IESC; thereby, representing the interests of IESC. The sales agent will consult with, and keep IESC informed, throughout the monetization sales process;
5. Work with IESC to submit tender results to USDA and provide relevant guidance/feedback for approval of sales prices and other relevant terms of sale;
6. Prepare sales contracts in consultation with IESC, after approval by USDA of sales tender prices and other relevant terms of sale. The sales agent should note that IESC shall retain final review and signing authority for all actions hereunder as pertaining to IESC commodities. The sales agent shall not have any authority to bind IESC in any contract(s) of sale with buyer(s);
7. Work with buyers/buyers' financial institutions to put in place deposit(s) and secure payment instruments (such as letters of credit) and ensure timely payments are received by IESC in accordance with the approved sales contracts. In consultation with IESC, the sales agent will evaluate buyers' payment instruments prior to moving forward with call forward(s) and provide oversight to assure compliance with sales contracts;
8. Assist IESC and the freight forwarder in preparing USDA call forward(s) for commodity(ies);
9. Provide all information with respect to the monetization process that is necessary for IESC to report on a semiannual basis in accordance with USDA requirements;

10. Serve as a key informant interview with the post-monetization assessment studies consultants to provide necessary details on the monetization process; and
11. Oversee billing and ensure timely receipt of payments from the commodity buyers to IESC's nominated bank account as per the sales contract.

## 6. Contract Type

The contract is anticipated to be a fixed unit price, as a percentage of sales, and the contract is to be paid in stage two based on the successful monetization of the awarded commodity.

## 7. Instructions to Offerors

### 7.1. Submission

- 1) Offers received after the closing date may not be considered;
- 2) Offers must be in U.S. Dollars; and
- 3) Technical and cost proposals must be submitted as two separate documents. Cost information must not be included in the technical proposal.

Offerors must submit their proposals by the closing date and time, as listed on page one, to the following: **IESC Global Awards**, at [globalawards@iesc.org](mailto:globalawards@iesc.org).

### 7.2. Clarification and Amendments

Offerors may request clarifications via email to **IESC Global Awards** at [globalawards@iesc.org](mailto:globalawards@iesc.org) no later than **5:00 p.m., Washington, DC, Eastern Time, on Tuesday, March 26, 2024**. IESC will provide answers to these questions and requests for clarification asked by all Offerors simultaneously via email and posted on the IESC website with the RFP before the close of business on/or before **Thursday, March 28, 2024**. IESC may not answer questions before the proposal submission deadline outside of the allotted response period for clarifications. **No questions will be answered over the phone or in person.**

### 7.3. Cover Page and Markings

In addition to the required proposal documents listed in sections 10 and 11 below, please include a cover page with your submission for the technical and the cost proposals (separate cover pages). The cover page should be on company letterhead and should contain the following information:

- 1) Project or Title (from the front page of this RFP document)

- 2) Offer Reference Number (from the front page of this RFP document)
- 3) Company Name
- 4) Company Address
- 5) Name of Company's authorized representative
- 6) Contact person if different than Company's representative
- 7) Telephone Number, Cellular/Mobile Phone Number, Email address
- 8) Duration of Validity of proposal
- 9) Payment terms
- 10) UEI # (Applies to companies, not to individuals)
- 11) If a small business, type of small business or small business concern
- 12) Total Proposed Price (**cover page of cost proposal only**)
- 13) Signature, date, and time

## 8. Eligibility Requirements

Offeror may be required to present a business license and must have experience in monetizing commodities for USDA FFPr projects. Offerors may need to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and an eligibility notice prior to receiving any award. Award will be contingent upon USDA final approval.

## 9. Basis for Award

IESC anticipates that award will be based on best-value principles. Accordingly, award will be made to the technically acceptable Offerors whose proposals provide the greatest overall value to IESC and the USDA FFPr project, price, and other factors considered. The winning proposal must conform to all solicitation requirements.

To determine the best value, proposals will be evaluated on the criteria below. The number of points assigned, totaling 100 points, indicates the relative importance of each individual criterion. Offerors should note that these criteria serve to (a) identify the significant factors that Offerors should address in their proposals; and (b) set the standard against which all proposals will be evaluated.

## 10. Technical Proposal Evaluation

Please read carefully, the following are instructions for preparing proposals. Proposals must be organized into sections corresponding to the sections presented in **10.1 Technical Evaluation Criteria** and numbered accordingly. Please stay within the page limits given below. Only include the requested information and avoid submitting extra

content. Any pages exceeding the page limitation for each section of the proposal may not be evaluated.

Proposals shall be written in English with each page numbered consecutively. Cover pages, dividers, and tables of contents are not subject to the page limit.

Contents should include the following if the Offeror is submitting a proposal that covers both Benin and Cambodia:

- Cover Page (maximum 1 page).
- Executive Summary (maximum 2 pages).
- Technical and management approach (maximum 5 pages).
- Past performance (maximum 6 pages).
- Personnel Experience and Capabilities (maximum 3 pages).
- Attachments – listed, e.g. samples of work, CVs, References, as required or offered in accordance with described page limitations in the relevant section under **10.1 Technical Evaluation Criteria**.

\*Should the NOFO be released during the time period of the RFP, IESC will revise page limits by RFP modification.

\*\*If an Offeror selects not to submit a proposal that would include both Benin and Cambodia, and opts to submit a proposal for only one of the two countries the Offeror must state the country in the Technical and Management Approach section, at a minimum, adhere to all requirements of the RFP, and follow the modified page limitations listed below:

- Cover Page (maximum 1 page).
- Executive Summary (maximum 2 pages).
- Technical and management approach (maximum 3 pages).
- Past performance (maximum 4 pages).
- Personnel Experience and Capabilities (maximum 3 pages).
- Attachments – listed, e.g. samples of work, CVs, References, as required or offered in accordance with described page limitations in the relevant section under **10.1 Technical Evaluation Criteria**.

### **10.1. Technical Evaluation Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria. Points will also reflect the overall presentation of the proposal, which should be clear, complete, well organized, and

well written. Most importantly, proposals should address all the requirements listed in this RFP.

**[1] Technical and management approach: 5 page limit if submitting for both countries or 3 pages if submitting for one country); 50 possible points**

Proposals will be scored on the effectiveness of the proposal to meet the requirements of the monetization process for the project, as outlined in **Section 5.2 Activities**. IESC plans to submit a proposal for either the **Benin or Cambodia** funding opportunity, pending the final NOFO. IESC and is seeking proposals for monetization services for both of these opportunities under this RFP.

Monetization services proposals will be scored based on the following:

**Stage One: FFPr Proposal**

Offerors must provide a brief description of the process for assisting IESC to prepare a proposal for USDA with a description of their qualifications in preparing monetization plans for proposals. This description must include the process for identifying and recommending commodities that provide value for the project and meet the market needs for monetization. (If submitting for one country, this section only needs to be completed once as a general overview and is estimated to be, but not limited to, one page).

**Stage Two: FFPr Award**

Offerors must describe their planned methodology for conducting the monetization in the proposed countries for funding each of the USDA FFPr Benin and Cambodia projects. The commodity monetization methodology description should include the following and is estimated to be two pages per country:

- Description of the proposed country of monetization, commodity proposed and why, timing for completing a monetization plan for USDA, which is the initial deliverable in the award stage;
- Description of the commodity sales process, including a description of necessary steps and approximate duration of each step of the process;
- Assessment of storage, transportation, and sales options in the proposed country of monetization; and,
- A demonstrated understanding of the market environment in the proposed country of monetization.



**[2] Offeror’s past performance and references: 6 page limit if submitting for both countries or 4 page limit if submitting for one country (not including references or samples of previous work, which may be attachments); 30 possible points**

The proposal must provide a detailed account of the Offeror’s record in implementing similar activities to those outlined in the tasks and activities. The technical proposal shall include a summary of past performance conducting monetization for Food Aid Programs. Offerors should provide experience in general, and specifically include experience in the FFPr NOFO listed priority countries of **Benin and Cambodia** and/or geographically related countries in **West Africa and South/Southeast Asia**.

This part should include sufficient information to demonstrate the Offeror’s performance for the above tasks and activities and include how the overall approach, including problem solving, is based on extensive prior experience monetizing a wide variety of commodities for USDA projects.

Offerors should provide one example in this section of how they mitigated a situation when the market price of a commodity was lower than anticipated, in order to increase the price. Information should not include any proprietary or implementor identification information.

As an attachment, and which does **not** count toward the page limit, Offerors should provide a minimum of three (3) references for past and present programs, to include the contact information of three prior or current employers or clients for which the sales agent for monetization has completed a similar task, at least one of which must be under an FFPr program. The three references with contact information should not be included in the proposal but provided as an attachment.

Offerors may include up to two pages of samples of previous work, per country, with preference for examples related to regional project monetization efforts, which are not included in the page limit.

**[3] Offeror’s Personnel Experience and Capacities: 3 page limit (not including resumes or CVs, which are attachments); 20 possible points**

The technical proposal must include a description (biographical sketch acceptable) of the individual, or for companies a minimum of one, but not more than two, senior management personnel, who would directly work on the monetization plans (Stages One and Two) and be engaged in the commodities sale.

Resumes **must be submitted as attachments** for individuals submitted in this section and do not count within the page limitations of this section.

This section will be scored based on the extent to which the Offeror or its personnel have experience in the monetization of USDA FFPr-funded projects and experience with **Benin and Cambodia**, and/or geographically related countries in **West Africa and South/Southeast Asia**.

### **11. Cost Proposal Evaluation**

The Offeror shall submit a separate cost proposal, to include the project cost of performing the monetization. Project costs should either clarify that the same project cost is for both countries or specify the country if the project cost is not the same for both.

There will be no payment for work completed during the proposal stage.

Offerors must indicate the fixed rate as a percentage of commodities' sales that they would charge during Stage Two should USDA award a project to IESC. Offerors must also specify if the fixed percentage rate is the same for any monetization amount or if they have a scale based on total proceeds. Travel is expected during Stage Two. The fixed percentage rate must be inclusive of travel expenses.

All proposed costs must be in accordance with the U.S. Government Cost Principles under 2 CFR 200.

### **12. Deviations**

IESC reserves the right to waive any deviations by offerors from the requirements of this solicitation that in IESC's opinion are considered not to be material defects requiring rejection or disqualification; or where such a waiver will promote increased competition.

### **13. Discrepancies**

Please read the instructions carefully before submitting your proposal. Any discrepancy in following the instructions or contract provisions may disqualify your proposal without recourse or an appeal for reconsideration at any stage.

### **14. Conflict of Interest Declaration for the IESC Monetization Services**

The following steps outline IESC's contract selection process and should be understood by all Offerors to ensure the transparency of awards and avoid conflict of interest.

- 1) RFPs are posted on IESC's website. The offer is open to all qualified offerors;
- 2) Clarifications will be emailed to all offerors submitting questions, as well as posted on IESC's website, simultaneously;
- 3) Once the proposals are received, an evaluation committee scores them;

- 4) Cost proposals are evaluated for reasonableness, accuracy, and completeness;
- 5) The best value proposal is selected based on a combination of the technical score and the cost;
- 6) No activity can be started until both IESC, and the awardee have signed a formal contract; and
- 7) IESC policy against fraud and code of business ethics exists throughout the life of the subcontract and beyond. Even if the contract is closed, if any party is found guilty of fraud, IESC will make a full report to the USDA Office of Inspector General, which may choose to investigate and prosecute guilty parties to the fullest extent of the law.

Any contracts awarded will be required to comply with all administrative standards and provisions required by USDA, as listed in the NOFO, once released, and any final Award made by USDA.

IESC reserves the right to cancel any planned proposal based on final terms of the USDA NOFO.

-END-