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Request for Proposal (RFP) for Consultancy Services: Market Linkage and Enhancement

Introduction

Pepea is a EUR 20 million fund managed by Goodwell Investments on behalf of Oxfam Novib. The fund is proposed to invest in SMEs with high impact potential to support the growth of impact driven East African entrepreneurs. Pepea focuses on innovative, early-growth stage companies that are increasing the involvement of female stakeholders, creating new jobs, facilitating living wages, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The Smallholder Safety Net Upscaling Programme (SSNUP) is a 10-year programme funded by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of Luxembourg (MFEA) as Lead Donor and supported by Lux-Development, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the Liechtensteinischer Entwicklungsdienst (LED).

The programme aims to address issues related to smallholders' resilience and food insecurity by increasing the amount of private capital in local agrifood systems. It relies on the knowledge, experience, and network of impact investors (asset managers) in agriculture to identify technical assistance (TA) needs of the aggregators in agri-food systems and implement TA projects to respond to those issues. The aggregators/beneficiary organisations are agri-SMEs, farmer organisations, or financial intermediaries that are current or future investees of the impact investors.

Gaea Foods Ltd has been approved for under this program to enhance its operations and support its network of farmers. This RFP is issued by Goodwell Investments, investors in Gaea Foods, to strengthen the market linkage of the company and thus make them more sustainable.

We are seeking proposals from qualified consultants to assist in the area of market linkage and enhancement.

Background

Gaea Foods is a pioneering female-founded and led business within Kenya's potato value chain. Founded in 1998, the company has evolved substantially from its origins as a sole proprietorship focused on trading ware potatoes to its current status as a leading potato processor with a vision for expansive growth. Gaea Foods directly sources potatoes from smallholder farmers, who often struggle with market access due to systems largely dependent on middlemen who may not ensure fair pricing. By incorporating direct linkages with farmers, Gaea Foods guarantees steady demand and allows for flexible pricing aligned with market conditions. This dedication to improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers involves increasing their yields, reducing post-harvest losses, and ensuring reliable supply chains. Gaea Foods is now seeking qualified consultants to provide expertise and help implement the approved SSNUP (Smallholder Safety Net Upscaling Programme) project as discussed below.

Project Purpose and Goals

The SSNUP (Smallholder Safety Net Upscaling Programme) project, supported by ADA Microfinance, is designed to enhance the operations of Gaea Foods and support its network of smallholder farmers. Three key objectives of the project are:

1. **Strengthening the Safety Net of Smallholder Households:**
 - Ensure steady demand and fair pricing for the produce of smallholder farmers by reducing their reliance on middlemen. This will provide farmers with more stable and predictable income.
 - The project will include farmer training to promote product quality consistency and enhance technical know-how, leading to better yields and improved livelihoods.
2. **Strengthening Agricultural Value Chains:**
 - The project aims to optimize the potato value chain from seed provision to market delivery. This involves enhancing seed quality, agricultural practices, and market access to transform potato farming into a more robust economic driver, promising enhanced food security and increased GDP contribution.
3. **De-risking or Increasing Investments in the Agricultural Sector:**
 - The project will focus on strengthening the systems, structures, and capacity of Gaea Foods to ensure its continuity and resilience. By adopting robust practices and establishing strong organizational frameworks, the project will mitigate risks and enhance operational efficiency.

Gaea Foods seeks qualified consultants to assist in implementing the approved SSNUP project, providing expertise in market linkage and enhancement. This assistance will help Gaea Foods achieve the project's goals, drive sustainable development in the agricultural sector, and support the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in Kenya.

Scope of Work: Market Linkage and Enhancement

Objective: Develop and implement a robust market linkage strategy for Gaea Foods to enhance brand awareness, market presence and increase sales.

1. **Review of Current Commercial Operations:**
 - Review of business plans and financial forecasts of the business.
 - Route to market including product flow, market coverage (trade universe) and incentive models
 - Trade agreements, services pricing, profitability per product line.
 - Backflow review of trade margins from clients back to Gaea Foods
 - Provide implementation support with clear sales milestones to validate marketing effectiveness.
2. **Commercial Strategy Development:**
 - Support the sales and marketing manager in the drafting of a customer master data, transaction data, setting up systems for operating data collection and analysis.
 - Sales and marketing coverage including route itineraries, marketing activities
 - Optimal pricing review of route to market and recommendations on optimal pricing strategy per SKU.
 - Recommended brand positioning per SKU
 - Develop a creative consumer proposition targeting peri-urban consumers.
 - Explore opportunities and partnerships for contract production and supply.

- Develop master data documentation to enable data based strategies, tactics to inform sales trends and forecast demand planning
- 3. **Sales Training and Motivation:**
 - Advise on performance related payment structure to meet the objectives of the company.
 - Identification of skills gaps in the current sales department and recommendations of key hires in the next three years.
 - Support in upskilling the current business development resource.

Deliverables: The consultancy period will involve a 6-month implementation plan, followed by a monitoring and evaluation plan to be tracked by management post implementation. The consultant will be required to provide an interim report mid-way through the consultancy and a final report at the end of the consultancy.

Selection Criteria

- Demonstrated experience in providing business development consultancy services, particularly in market linkage and strategy development.
- Expertise in developing and implementing route-to-market strategies and establishing effective market systems and structures.
- Proven ability to develop creative consumer propositions, explore partnerships for production/supply, and enhance brand visibility.
- Experience in training and motivating sales teams, with a focus on achieving sales targets aligned with strategic objectives.
- Track record of providing effective implementation support with clear sales milestones to validate marketing programs.
- Strong track record of working with SMEs and smallholder farmers.

Submission Details

- Company profile
- Relevant experience and track record including list of similar companies worked with.
- Proposed methodology and work plan.
- Team composition and CVs of key personnel.
- Financial proposal (including cost breakdown) and terms of payment.
- References from previous clients.

Submission Deadline

Proposals must be submitted no later than **11th October 2024** to anne@goodwell.nl and jennifer@goodwell.nl

Contact Information

For queries or further information, please contact:

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Conclusion

We look forward to receiving comprehensive proposals from qualified consultants who can contribute to the success of the programme and the enhancement of Gaea Foods' operations. Thank you for interest in partnering with us to support smallholder farmers and drive sustainable development.