



Request for Proposals

Activity to track the link between production and urban markets (formal and informal) in the context of a secondary city in Bangladesh - NICE project

An innovative Swiss consortium composed of Swiss TPH, ETH Zurich (Sustainable Agro-ecosystems Group and World Food System Centre), Sight and Life, and the for Sustainable Agriculture Foundation, has come together to make nutritious, and agroecologically produced foods available for vulnerable secondary city populations in Africa and Asia. Sustainable Agriculture Foundation Bangladesh carries the responsibility for selecting a consultant for this assignment in Dinajpur district of NICE project.

This Request for Proposal details this particular undertaking.

Date of Issue: **3rd November 2024**

Closing Date: **14th November 2024, 11:59 PM**

Please direct questions and submissions to: saf.bangladesh@susagfoundation.org

Who we are:

The **Sustainable Agriculture Foundation (SAF)**, formerly known as the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture (SFSA), boasts a remarkable 40-year legacy as a Swiss-based not-for-profit organization. Our unwavering commitment centers around a compelling vision: “a world in which smallholders, communities, and nature thrive together.” We deliver demand-led innovations in agriculture, ensuring sustainable market access. Since 2011, our Bangladesh office has spearheaded groundbreaking projects across agriculture, climate change, risk mitigation, carbon offset, nutrition, and rural economic development. These initiatives have positively impacted over a million smallholder farmers through strategic collaborations with local, regional, and international partners.

In July 2024, SFSA Bangladesh underwent a transformative rebranding, emerging as the ‘Sustainable Agriculture Foundation Bangladesh (SAF Bangladesh).’ As a legacy organization of the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture, we remain steadfast in our mission “scaling up collective action on markets and innovations so that farming can better serve smallholder families, rural communities, and nature”. Our ongoing and upcoming projects continue to enhance smallholder farming and agrifood systems in Bangladesh. Join us in shaping a sustainable future—one where agriculture thrives, communities flourish, and nature prospers.

Context of the Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE) project:

Food systems are essential to feed the world. However, current food systems also largely contribute to pollution and soil devastation while hunger and malnutrition persist. Also, people who earn their livelihoods in food systems are amongst the most exploited and vulnerable (ILO & OECD, 2019). Furthermore, most food systems lack the ability to adapt to shocks and stresses, become unsustainable and reinforce longstanding power imbalances and inequities, including – but not limited to those of -gender, ethnicity, wealth, and land ownership.

It is in this context that a multi-country and multi-stakeholder project entitled “The Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE)” was developed and funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to contribute to healthy nutrition through sustainable food production and more diverse and healthy dietary choices in urban food systems. The project is implemented in specific secondary cities (a secondary city is defined as a settlement with fewer than 500,000 inhabitants and that faces challenges related to their relative lack of resources) in Kenya, Rwanda and Bangladesh. The project is working in a participatory way with urban governments and local leaders (mayors, counselors, entrepreneurs, and leaders of agriculture and food sectors etc.) on relevant policies, sustainable food system concepts, and to change behavior with regards to the demand for food.

The Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE) project began its first phase of project activities on 1st August 2021. The NICE project focus on 6-9 food value chains (VC) per city in Bangladesh. To select the value chains the project focus on, a group of experts with key stakeholders will meet and agree on the value chains according to guidelines of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The working group included the following key stakeholders: city officials, women and youth group, farmers representative, agroecological, value chain and nutrition experts.

To achieve its goals, the NICE project works towards four outcomes:

- The first workstream promotes good governance of food systems through the strengthening of multisectoral platforms at city level.
- The second workstream relates to increasing the availability and production of nutritious, local, and agroecologically produced foods. Social business models like the farmers hub are being introduced according to an analysis of the selected value chains.
- The third workstream focuses on the demand side, involving youth leaders, and the health and education sectors to increase the consumption of nutritious, local and agroecologically produced foods.
- The fourth workstream facilitates peer learning between the cities, across the workstreams, and countries. There will also be a scale up strategy that the 2 front-runner cities in each country start to share their learning with the national level and up to 4 other cities in their country, allowing NICE to contribute to learning about nutrition in secondary cities.

We are looking for a consulting firm or an individual consultant with knowledge in mapping our selected nutrition sensitive value chain (NSVC) commodities (brinjal, bitter gourd, sweet gourd, cucumber, tomato, drumstick, zinc enriched rice, mango, and eggs). The consulting firm should have a team of experts well-versed in value chain analysis methodologies, tools, and best practices. The bidder of this assignment should be able to understand complex value chains across various industries and identify critical areas for improvement. This value chain mapping should have collaboration with various stakeholders across the value chain, including suppliers, processors, distributors, retailers, and consumers. The consultancy firm should be adept at facilitating discussions, workshops, and interviews to gather information and insights from all relevant parties. Clear and concise communication is essential in consulting engagements. The firm should be able to communicate complex concepts and findings in a way that is easily understandable to clients and stakeholders.

Objectives of the assignment

Broad objective:

- Identify and visualize on a map of Dinajpur where production of the NICE project's NSVC commodities value chains occur. These are brinjal, bitter gourd, zinc enriched rice, mango, and eggs. The interest is in production through NICE Farmers' Hubs as well as through other producers. Satellite data and other geographical resources will be drawn on.

Specific objectives:

- The first step is to identify the main stakeholders that share value within the value chains, and how they negotiate on quality, quantity and price.
- In a second step, the map will show the main formal and informal physical places of sales in the urban/peri-urban areas and establish where the foods that are sold there come from, how often they have changed hands, and what has happened to the prices along the value chain (produce flows).
- In a third step, the assignment involves investigating where else the food (from the specified value chains) goes to outside of Dinajpur, eventually to Dhaka.
- In a fourth step, analyse historical demand trends and patterns for each of the five main value chains. Study the factors influencing local demand growth, such as population growth, economic indicators, consumer preferences, and government policies. Integrate the projected demand growth into the overall value chain analysis to evaluate the potential market changes.
- A specific focus should be given on the role of the women and youth in each value chain.

Approach and methods

This consultancy will be carried out by a small mixed gender team that has demonstrated knowledge of urban food systems in Bangladesh, especially in the Dinajpur city.

The work will be done in person, visiting the city and moving around to track production, transportation, storage and exchanges along the value chains.

Develop methodology: Develop detailed methodology work plan to collect quality data, analysis and reporting as per SOW.

Data Collection: Gathering relevant data from primary and secondary sources, including market surveys, government reports, industry associations, and academic research.

- Review secondary information
- Visit Agroecological production zones of NICE project in Dinajpur
- Visit all urban markets and food supply units of Dinajpur and nearby Dinajpur City Corporation
- Visit major wholesale markets and surrounding of the city

Stakeholder Interviews: Conducting interviews with key stakeholders, including producers, transporters, distributors, retailers, and consumers, to gain insights into their roles and challenges.

- Interview with producers, suppliers, transporters, wholesalers, processors, retailers – mobile vegetable sellers, city kitchen market, departmental stores, different consumers segmentation of the city
- Interview with KII – Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Department of Agricultural Marketing (DAM), Nutrition related department or organization at city level
- Interview with national level stakeholders – Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA), Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC), Hortex Foundation, Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association (BFFEA)
- Interview with Trade Associations and City Corporation
- Conduct sample surveys in urban areas to understand consumer preferences, product origin awareness, and willingness to pay for agroecologically produced food

Data Analysis: Analyzing the collected data using statistical tools and data analytics to identify trends, patterns, and linkages.

Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping: Utilizing GIS technology to map the geographical distribution of production centers and urban markets.

Scope of Work

This Scope of Work includes facilitating the following activities:

- Proposing a methodology including data sources
- Data collection
- Preparation of a value chain map showcasing the relationship between the main stakeholders and the distribution along the value chains in Dinajpur city for each main products (Brinjal, Bitter Gourd, Eggs, Mango, Zinc Enriched Rice)

- Preparation of a physical map showcasing the produce flows as well as the most important points of selling and processing for the main products (Brinjal, Bitter Gourd, Eggs, Mango, Zinc Enriched Rice) within Dinajpur city and foodshed
- Provide recommendation on ways forward based on the information gathered through the value chain and physical maps with the change in demand projection through the work of behaviour change to understand the potential market changes.
- Preparation of a summarized information in a PowerPoint with visualisations for the NICE team
- Update of the work based on inputs received for presentation to stakeholders from the city, food system platforms and local businesses for validation

Case Studies and Research: Study successful models where the link between production and urban markets has been optimized, and draw lessons from them to apply in other regions.

SWOT analysis: Analyze the SWOT, PESTEL and overall constraints and opportunities to promote nutritious vegetable production and sales to a sustainable urban market.

Deliverables:

Physical map showcasing the produce flows of brinjal, bitter gourd, zinc enriched rice, mango, and eggs in Dinajpur city, as well as the most important points of sell and points of processing for the named items within Dinajpur city.

Comprehensive report: A detailed report outlining the findings, analysis, and insights from the activity.

- A comprehensive map showing supply and demand of those selected NSVC commodities of NICE project
- Illustration of an individual NSVC commodity explaining the supply chain actors with their numbers, segregation of amount they carry
- The map showing price differentiation in every actor of the supply chain along with the profit margin of an individual actor
- The link between production and urban market of each NSVC commodity showing supply and demand at city level
- Segmentation of consumers on the basis of economic class of the respective city
- The satisfaction level of consumers focusing the areas of quality, price, and food safety measurement

Recommendations: Actionable recommendations for optimizing the link between production centers and urban markets, improving supply chains, and enhancing efficiency.

GIS maps: Visual representations of the linkages between production centers and urban markets.

Timing and Duration of the Assignment

The activity is expected to be completed within 60 working days after commencement of work. This includes data collection, analysis, stakeholder consultations, and report preparation.

Resources:

The following resources will be required to conduct the activity:

Research team: Qualified researchers with expertise in supply chain management, market analysis, and data analytics. Team member should consist of i) PhD in any agricultural subject e.g. Agricultural Extension and Information Systems, Horticulture, Agri-Business, Agricultural Marketing as team leader ii) Masters in Agricultural Economics, iii) Masters in Statistics

Data sources: Access to relevant databases, market reports, and other sources of information.

Survey tools: Necessary tools and instruments for conducting market surveys and interviews.

Required components

Required components for proposal submission (see also evaluation criteria for additional guidance) are:

- a) Description of previous relevant work (maximum 1 page)
- b) Composition of team with names and brief (maximum 3 page) bio of all key staffs
- c) Detailed proposal explaining how the areas of work mentioned in Scope of Work will be addressed (maximum 15 pages)
- d) A detailed budget will be prepared, outlining the estimated costs for conducting the activity, including personnel, data acquisition, travel expenses, and other relevant costs.
- e) Risk and mitigation strategy
- f) Timeline

Submission

Completed proposals should be submitted to saf.bangladesh@susagfoundation.org by **11:59 PM** Bangladesh standard time on **14th November 2024**

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed by the Selection Team. The following indicate a list of the significant criteria against which proposals will be assessed. This list is not exhaustive or 100% inclusive and is provided to enhance the applicants' ability to respond with substance.

Applicants are required to submit the following information, conforming to the guidelines given in this section:

- Understanding of the scope of work:
 - Proposal shall demonstrate a clear understanding of the project objective and deliverables as outlined earlier.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the technical requirements of this RFP:
 - Providing detailed technical documentation of the proposed strategy.
 - Evidence of experience delivering solutions using the proposed information technology platform.
- The creative approaches required to implement each of the parts of the scope of work.
- Comprehensiveness of work plan and reasonableness of proposed time frame:

- Proposal shall include a feasible work plan to ensure successful completion of deliverables.
 - The work plan details how activities will be coordinated.
- Detailed budget and cost-effectiveness with explanation of the proposed approach.
- Management and personnel plan:
 - The team members working on this project shall have the relevant qualifications and overall experience required to successfully implement the project.
 - Roles and responsibilities of each team member shall be clearly defined.

Right to Amend:

SAF Bangladesh reserves the right to amend or supplement this Request for Proposal by providing notice of amendments to all who have received the proposal document. Respondents may request to be notified of any amendments.

Rejection of Proposals:

SAF Bangladesh also reserves the right to negotiate with the successful respondent changes in their proposal prior to, and/or as part of awarding a contract.

This Request for proposals neither expresses nor implies any obligation on the part of SAF Bangladesh to enter a contract with a vendor submitting a proposal.

NICE reserves the right to contact the individuals and contractor(s) in order to verify the information provided as part of the proposal.