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| **Tender No: HQ407** | **Responses to questions raised by prospective tenderers** |
| **Tender Name: RFP to conduct research and writing of annual insights series for Mercy Corps Ventures** | **Date Issued: 7th June 2023** |

1. **Geographic focus of the study:**  *The RFP mentions 'emerging markets' as the focus of the study. Every geography would have its own policy/ regulatory landscape and its own maturity of data availability and accessibility. Given the constraint in timelines, are there any specific focus geographies or geographies of interest for this study?* 
   * RESPONSE:   
     Mercy Corps Ventures works in emerging markets across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and our portfolio companies operate across 23 countries within these regions.
   * We would prefer vendors that can work across all of these regions, though understand that we can't cover every market and will work with the successful vendor on narrowing down geographies as/if required.
   * REFER TO 7
2. **Learning outcomes:**  *Are there any boundary conditions for the scope of this engagement that you would like to maintain? This could be around the following illustrative aspects:*
   * + *Definition of climate-smart data*
     + *Focus Sectors: Sectors where climate-smart data can be applied*
     + *Depth of analysis to be conducted (business case assessments, future estimations, etc)*
   * RESPONSE:   
     The core exploration of this research must be on data and the related potential/opportunities for data to have a positive impact on underserved users and drive their resilience to climate change.
   * Mercy Corps Ventures expects this research to cover the following sectors/areas, though this initiative will be a collaborative process and are open to suggestions from the successful vendor on how to refine or expand on this:
     + Supply chain & logistics (i.e. monitoring, traceability, regulatory compliance, optimization, market access, supply)
     + Sustainable / regenerative agriculture (i.e. precision ag, weather forecasting, credit, insurance, mechanization, productive assets, advisory)
     + Inclusive FinTech (specifically for managing and transferring climate-related risks through insurance, savings, credit, SME finance)
     + Nature-based solutions, climate tech and environmental analytics (i.e. carbon emissions tracking, carbon credit production, climate risk analytics, flood mapping, land use and planning)
     + Other digital products / services for small businesses and populations in informal, urban settlements
3. **Engagement overview:** *Is the bidding team expected to share the designed visuals and article or the entire designing part (of the article and the visuals) will be taken care of by the MCV team?*
   * RESPONSE:

Mercy Corps Ventures will lead the final packaging and design of the content, i.e. the design of article PDFs and transferring the visuals provided by the vendor to our brand style.

The final products delivered by the successful vendor under this initiative should be:

* + - 1) a minimum of 5X written articles presented in a Google Document (or similar collaborative and editable document platform). Each article should be approximately 2,500 words in length and be written and proofed by the successful vendor to a publishable standard
    - 2) These articles should feature visuals such as graphics, charts, tables, and landscaping visuals where relevant. We would expect roughly 5X visuals per article. These visuals can be a combination of graphics sourced or created from landscaping research, or charts, tables, and models created from the findings of the research completed through this initiative. Visuals sourced from an external source (and not built from the initiative research) should be credited appropriately

1. **Documents required in the proposal submission:** *The RFP has an attachment on the "Supplier Modern Slavery Questionnaire". Are the bidders expected to share a filled and signed version of the same as well?*
   * RESPONSE:   
     Yes, all proposals will be required to have a completed and signed modern slavery questionnaire.
2. **Budget:** *Is there an indicative budget that you have in mind for this study? We could then decide on the most important research areas of enquiry, sectors, geographies etc.*
   * RESPONSE:   
     We will not be sharing the budget at this point as this is a competitive tender process. Additionally, the tender evaluation will be a combination of both technical and financial proposal (the budget should be reflective of proposed activities).   
     Please indicate any areas of budget flexibility/areas we could increase or decrease spend, and any minimum budget threshold (the number under which this would not be economically viable for you to engage).
3. **Budget:** *What is the budget for this project?* 
   * RESPONSE: REFER TO 5
4. **Geography:** *Which countries are the startups based in?*
   * RESPONSE: REFER TO 1
   * Regarding the startups best fit for this research, the spread will likely be the following, though this is not final or limited to:
     + Kenya
     + Ghana
     + Tanzania
     + Nigeria
     + Uganda
     + India
     + Indonesia
     + Mexico
     + Colombia
     + Brazil
     + Some companies operate at a systems level with global coverage and work with local partners - e.g. in areas such as carbon credits or flood mapping, etc. These might be headquartered in the US, EU or Israel. For the purposes of this research, we are exclusively focused on how these companies / technologies are being deployed in the emerging markets listed above
5. **Stakeholders:** *Are we required to interview 25 startups plus industry stakeholders or 25 organisations in total, including startups and industry stakeholders?*
   * RESPONSE:   
     25 stakeholders in total, inclusive of both startups and industry stakeholders.
6. **Deliverables:** *Is the 2,500-word limit for all blogs in total or 2,500 per blog?*
   * RESPONSE:  
     Given the complexity of this topic we expect these insights to be presented as a series of articles. The 2,500 word count is per article and we expect a minimum of 5X articles to be produced from this initiative.
7. **Contracting terms:** *My company would rely on associates joining for the duration of the project. Would MCV accept this approach?*
   * RESPONSE:  
     The successful vendor must have the requisite skills to perform the Services in accordance with the scope of work. The vendors must also possess all governmental and other certifications and licenses necessary to perform the Services, and will be solely responsible for and have control over the means, methods, techniques, personnel and procedures for performing the Services. Please find more in sections 6, 7, and 8 of the [Service Contract issued within the RFP](https://www.mercycorps.org/tenders/request-proposal-conduct-research-and-writing-annual-insights-series-global).
8. **Stakeholders:***We have seen from previous series that Mercy Corps partners with the organization selected to lead the work to identify stakeholders. Will this project follow a similar format, and does Mercy Corps already have some stakeholders in mind?*
   * Mercy Corps Ventures will connect the successful vendor to all the relevant startups. Mercy Corps Ventures will connect the successful vendor to some key industry. stakeholders within its network but also expect the vendor to source and lead outreach to additional stakeholders as needed.
9. **Geography & stakeholders:** *Are you looking for an even spread of areas and startups or would you like particular weight given to some?*
   * RESPONSE: REFER TO 1 & 2
   * In addition to answers to questions 1 & 2, this initiative will be a collaborative process. As the research evolves the successful vendor and Mercy Corps Ventures may jointly decide that the deliverables (final insights articles) should focus on certain sectors/areas not mentioned in the RFP scope of work.
10. **Geography**: *Are there specific emerging markets in mind or would it be general coverage - if so, how would you prefer to address and categorise these?*
    * REFER TO 1 & 2
11. **Timeline:** *In relation to the publication of the series ahead of COP28 – will you be considering further engagement with the COP agenda as part of, or a follow on from this series?*
    * RESPONSE:  
      Climate adaptation and resilience financing is a key focus of our work at Mercy Corps Ventures so we aim to engage in key climate-focused conferences and moments throughout the year. As COP is currently the leading global climate conference, we expect to continue to attend or engage as appropriate in 2023 and beyond. However, we do not have any expectation from the successful vendor to prepare materials as it relates to any COP28 or COP29 engagement led by Mercy Corps Ventures, unless the vendor has suggestions or connections in how to amplify these insights at COP28 and beyond.
12. **Contracting terms:**  *Is this RFP open to individual consultants? Or only to firms?*
    * RESPONSE:  
      This RFP process is intended for firms though any type of vendor can submit a proposal. This is a substantial initiative to be delivered within the timeframe so the bidding vendor is expected to outline how they are equipped to perform the Services in accordance with the scope of work.
13. **Submission details:** *Page 5 of the RFP refers to a 500-word company profile and a 1,000-word project description that is required for evaluating applications. Page 5 and subsequent sections of the RFP also mention a cover letter with a detailed proposal. Is the detailed proposal the same as the 1,000-word project description? If not, do you have any guidance on the format and length of the detailed proposal?*
    * RESPONSE:  
      The detailed proposal and 1,000-word project description are the same document.
14. **Timeline**: *Pages 9 and 11 of the RFP mention that a project duration of 6 months. However, the schedule on Page 11 states that the work will begin in July and the deadline for the final article is 9th October 2023, which is a four-month timeline. Would you be able to clarify what timelines we should work with as we draft our proposal?*
    * RESPONSE:  
      The project duration of 6-months refers to the entire process, from onboarding the vendor through to the final publication of the insights articles (which are intended for release over November and December). Though Mercy Corps Ventures will lead on the packaging, publishing, and dissemination of the articles we expect to continue communications with the vendor on article promotion should they wish to support, and to share feedback that we receive from our target audience.
15. **Timeline**: *While we are committed to conducting at least 25 stakeholder interviews, analyzing and drafting all research outputs within the stated timeframe, based on our previous experience, we recognize that it may be challenging to schedule interviews during July and August because people working in the US and Europe tend to take time off during this period. Will MCV help schedule some of these meetings or do you have any guidance on how we can work around this challenge and meet the project deadlines?*
    * RESPONSE:  
      Many of the startups we expect to engage for this series are based outside of the US and Europe, so can be prioritized for interviews during this time. Mercy Corps Ventures will facilitate introductions to startups and industry stakeholders directly in our networks, though the successful vendor will be expected to coordinate scheduling.

All other tender instructions remain unchanged.