



ROOTS of PEACE

Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEOI) for CBARD-AIM In-kind Matching Grants

Roots of Peace (ROP) is implementing the 36-month, UNDP-funded Community-Based Agricultural Rural Development – Access to International Markets (CBARD-AIM) Project. The CBARD project supports the production and sales of high value fruits and vegetables as an alternative to poppy cultivation in the three target Provinces of Nangarhar, Farah and Badghis.

CBARD-AIM's objective is to link the production areas of the CBARD-East and West projects with cold chain facilities, and then connect these areas to domestic and international markets. The project assists farmers in the three provinces to sell their high value produce to traders, and then for those traders to export the produce to international markets.¹ Exporting better quality products to international markets is expected to lead to higher incomes for both CBARD farmers and traders and, consequently increase the adoption of licit trade. The project has three main areas of focus: (1) International Markets for High-Value Crops Identified; (2) Cold Chain Infrastructure for Target High-Value Crops Improved; (3) Market Linkages Established Between Farmers and Traders.

The CBARD-AIM grants program supports, with matching contributions from applicants, funding to support proven, private-sector investments in equipment and training, aimed at improving Afghanistan's agricultural supply chains, marketing and exports to international markets. The grants program focuses primarily on cold chain infrastructure but will also consider investments and activities relating to processing, packaging, storage, quality certification, and export facilitation.

Grants should contribute to CBARD-AIM's three primary objectives of:

- Reducing opium poppy cultivation;
- Creating licit economic development for former poppy farmers and women in the community;
- Supporting more sustainable peace.

The purpose of this Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEOI) is to obtain competitive and viable concept notes from various exporting firms, which will assist CBARD in achieving one or more of the three above mentioned objectives. may then be invited to respond to a Request for Applications (RFA) once the EOI has been reviewed.

Grant Objectives

In addition to meeting CBARD-AIM's primary objectives, grants should result in increases in business capacity and output, productivity, sales to domestic and export markets, quality improvements, increased profitability and employment of value chain participants. Grant recipients should also encourage the adoption of new technologies and be financially viable and sustainable in the long term. CBARD-AIM particularly welcomes applications from women-owned businesses.

Grant Activities

The grants program focuses primarily on cold chain infrastructure but will also consider investments and activities relating to processing, packaging, storage, quality certification, and export facilitation, so long as

¹ Some produce may also target domestic markets when prices are favorable for farmers and traders, generally early in the season prior to major harvests, or late in the season when produce is scarce.

they benefit farmers in Farah, Badghis and Nangahar. Cold chain infrastructure includes pre-cooling facilities, cold storage warehouses, reefer transportation and mobile cooling facilities.

Grant Type

All grants issued under the CBARD grants program will be disbursed “in-kind” with all goods and/or services being procured directly by CBARD-AIM, in close collaboration with the grantees.

Grant Geographical Focus

Grants are targeting businesses in Nangahar, Farah and Badghis provinces (CBARD East & West) either directly by supporting firms located in these three provinces, or indirectly by supporting businesses in neighboring provinces that will source agricultural products from the three targeted provinces.

Grant Size & Partner Contribution

CBARD-AIM will issue grants between US\$10,000 and US\$150,000. Applicants must be willing to contribute 50% (30% for women-owned and managed enterprises) or more of the total investment required. Partner contributions must not originate from other donor programs or government entities. Contributions can be in-kind or in cash. In-kind contributions (such as buildings, land or equipment) will only be accepted if they were procured within 12 months prior to the submission of the Concept Note. Operational costs will not be accepted as part of a grantee’s financial contribution. The procurement of land will be accepted as a contribution but is limited to US\$50,000 per Jerib.

Eligibility

Only businesses officially registered with the Afghan Ministry of Industries and Commerce will be eligible for CBARD-AIM grants. Businesses must be located either in the target provinces of Farah, Badghis and Nangahar or in neighboring provinces. If they are in neighboring provinces, they must source a significant volume of produce from the target provinces. The businesses must be engaged in the agricultural sector or provide products or services to agribusinesses.

Educational institutions, NGOs and Government Agencies are not eligible to receive grants. Startup businesses are eligible to receive grant funding but must prove and demonstrate that they have the management and/or personnel with the skills necessary for the proposed activity.

Expressing Interest

Businesses interested in the CBARD-AIM grants program are required to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) in the form of a Concept Note to the project. A template for submission is attached.

The deadline for responding to this RFEOI is December 31, 2020.

Responses should be emailed to Grants@rootsofpeace.org Questions can also be submitted to this email address.

Responses will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Responses must be received in English.

All information provided by businesses in response to this RFEOI will be treated confidentially. ROP will not use the information in any other context or setting and will not reveal details to other parties.

ROP will not reimburse respondents for costs incurred in preparing a response, nor does issuance of this RFEOI obligate ROP to award a grant.

ROP may require a respondent to submit additional information in order to better evaluate Concept Notes.

Upon receipt and review of the Concept Note, ROP will notify businesses on the outcome of the review.

Evaluation Criteria

Concept Notes will be reviewed by CBARD-AIM based on the following objective and subjective criteria:

Objective Criteria

- 1) The Applicant is a MOIC-registered Afghan business;
- 2) The business is located in Farah, Badghis or Nangahar OR is located in a province neighboring Farah, Badghis or Nangahar and will source produce from these three provinces;
- 3) The business is directly engaged in the agricultural sector, or supports the agricultural sector;
- 4) The proposed activity is related to cold chain infrastructure, processing, packaging, storage, quality certification, and/or export facilitation;
- 5) The activity requires in-kind grant support;
- 6) Grant support is requested between US\$10,000 and US\$150,000;
- 7) The business will provide a minimum cost share (contribution) of 50% (30% for Women-owned and Managed enterprises) of the total cost of the investment.

Subjective Criteria

- 1) The proposed activity will result in increases in business capacity/outputs, sales/exports, productivity, profitability and/or employment, and will adopt new technologies;
- 2) The proposed activity is aligned with CBARD-AIM objectives;
- 3) The proposed activity is financially viable and sustainable;
- 4) The Applicant has a good understanding of challenges and appropriate solutions to mitigate these challenges;
- 5) The proposed activity is appropriate to overcome challenges;
- 6) The proposed budget is realistic;
- 7) The company personnel have the necessary experience, skills and qualifications to implement the proposed activity;
- 8) Potential impact on the environment from solid waste, liquid waste, noise, construction, etc. will be minimized and controlled to satisfy Government of Afghanistan compliance regulations.

Disclaimer: Please note that the issuance of this Request for Expression of Interest (RFEOI) does not constitute any commitment for funding or grant award by ROP and will neither refund any costs associated with developing Concept Notes or Applications.