

**Request for Quotes
USAID CSS RfQ 2018-14**

Subject: Provision of technical and operational assistance in facilitation of gathering export-ready soft fruit producers

Contracting Entity: Cardno Emerging Markets USA Ltd., Washington DC, Belgrade Representative Office

Location: Serbia, Belgrade

Issuance Date: October 24, 2018

Cardno Emerging Markets USA, Ltd. (Cardno), the Contractor, acting on behalf of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) as implementer of the Competitive Economy Project, is soliciting bids from qualified, legally registered U.S., EU or Serbian, non-profit or for-profit companies and organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) interested in providing the consultancy services as described in Section I. Background and Scope of Work. The successful bidder will be responsible for ensuring achievement of specified tasks/deliverables.

I. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF WORK

About the Project

USAID Competitive Economy Project (Project) is a four-year activity with overall goal to establish systemic approaches to strengthening Serbia's food-processing sector in order to generate export-led growth, and greater integration with European and global markets. This will be achieved by strengthening selected value chains (VC) with a focus on aggregate sales, particularly exports. The Project will identify gaps in the current competitiveness system and address them by creating platforms for exchange and knowledge sharing between system actors based on clear, market driven principles, making capacity building an integrated process.

While initially focusing on the fruits and vegetables sector, the Project is expected to result in a model that can eventually be applied more broadly across the industry.

Background to SOW

Serbia's F&V industry is one of the leading sectors of the Serbian economy, however there is an issue of low value of output and integration of food processing industry with the high-value

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international markets, and consequently low visibility in these markets and limited knowledge transfer. Serbia has many small berry producers, with limited export potential due to small quantity.

Serbia's growth potential depends on expansion of export markets, with domestic and CEFTA markets growing slowly or not growing at all. However, the current export performance also showed troublesome signs in a sense that the industry mostly exports low value product and the offer is limited – only few crops, such as raspberries and apples, dominate statistics. In case of raspberries, they are exported in frozen form, mostly to Germany and France. Responding to this demand for higher-value products is the sector made up of large number of SMEs, receiving limited support from the business support system.

The Project addressed this issue by developing a comprehensive marketing strategy that identified the areas of intervention conducive to systemic improvements in services delivered to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) working in food processing sector in Serbia. Industry associations play a key role in European and other markets in this segment, as well as in marketing and promotion. The Project envisions these associations as the key system player with capacity to assist SMEs improve their performance. The recommendations of marketing strategy suggest that the establishment of industry associations of different types of F&V producers could enhance the knowledge sharing, improve cooperation between producers and positively impact the overall export revenue to F&V sector.

In the last few years demand for fresh fruit segment, especially soft fruit is increasing globally, and thus has become popular in Serbia. Number of blubbery producers is increasing, and what is even more interesting – several fresh raspberry producers. The project has recognized the opportunity to facilitate establishment and build capacity of Serbian Berry Association and help its members access of new markets and increase export.

Objective

The objective of this Request for Quotes is to select a Consultant that will facilitate establishment of Berry association and provide technical assistance to the founding companies for accessing to foreign markets, introduce quality standards and capacity building for the Association.

The objective of this Request for Quotes is to select a Consultant, with:

- Background and practical experience in working in soft fruit sector;
- Linkages with soft fruit producers;
- Quality standard implementation experience;
- Experience in cooperation with Ministry of Agriculture, and relevant global institutions to assist with implementing the above-mentioned strategy.

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This activity is in accordance with the adopted Project Work Plan with the designated Outcomes.

Intervention:

I2-4 New industry associations formed and functional Key industry associations capacitated to improve member services

I2-4.1 Consultant engaged for forming new association, producing training materials and training the new association

Output indicators:

T1-1 Increase in number of high-value, niche Serbian products in new markets

T1-2 Increase in number of Serbian firms attending trade shows and buyer's missions

T1-5 Increased revenues for Serbian firms

T1-6 Increased added value for exported Serbian products

T1-9 Increase in number of firms applying improved standards

T2-2 Increase in number of associations with improved business practices

T2-3 Increase in number of associations

T2-5 Visibility of Serbian products in domestic and international markets increased

T2-6 Increase in number of firms feeding into anchor firm VC

Outcome indicator:

On the output level it is expected that this activity will support Projects' Sub-Purpose 2: Business Support Systems Coordination Strengthened Sub IR 2.2.2: Economic and Business Development Services Enhanced.

O1-1. Number of firms receiving USG-funded technical assistance to export

O1-3. Number of business linkages between Serbian food processors and local, regional and international buyers established

II. Tasks

The Consultants will conduct following tasks:

- Provide technical expertise and facilitate the integration of export-oriented companies (forming a Berry Association) for fresh conventional or organic berries;
- Assist in facilitating cooperation among producers and cooperation between producers and cold storages/regional buying centers;
- Improve the visibility of berries' Association under the Serbia does Berries brand, used for promotion of the industry, firms and berry products;

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- Select and target market for berry export;
- Provide support for exhibiting in Fruitnet Forum South-East Europe, November 21-22, 2018, in Belgrade;
- Assist in organizing B2B meetings (seek out for international buyers for berries and soft fruits);
- Facilitate the visit to Green Yard distribution center in Munich;
- Provide support for Berry Association members to exhibit at Fruit logistica in Berlin, February 2019;
- Facilitate participation in “Global Berry Congress”, in Rotterdam, March 2019;
- Conceptualize local berry fruit industry workshop/roundtable that will be organized during 2019.

III. Period of Performance

Period of performance of the contracted services is November 19, 2018, until June 18, 2019.

IV. Deliverables

1. Prepared documentation including the draft of Founding Act and Statute for Berry Association;
2. At least 2 B2B events organized;
 - Visit to Green Yard Distribution Center in Munich;
 - Fruitnet Forum South-East Europe, November 21-22, 2018, in Belgrade;
3. At least one technology mission planned and organized that includes visit to Green Yard Distribution Center;
4. At least 2 fresh food fair/events participated by the Association members, including Fruit Net;
5. Berry Association (Presentation of Serbian berry sector and potential) presented at Berry Congress in Rotterdam, March 2019;
6. At least 2 international buyers established networks with the Association;
7. Local berry fruit industry workshop organized;
8. Technical progress reports on the status of above listed tasks;
9. Final report with recommendations for next steps.

All documents will be prepared in English and Serbian

V. Requirements for eligible bidders

Legally registered U.S. or Serbian, non-profit or for-profit companies and organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), with the following Consultant (s) requirements:

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- Own licenses in quality system such as Global Gap, IFS, and BRS.
- At least 5 years of professional experience in delivering consultancy and training services in areas such as implementation of quality standards (integrated management system QMS, Global Gap, IFS, and BRS);
- Demonstrated knowledge and at least 5 (five) years' experience in working with Serbian fruit production and processing;
- Analytical, processing and reporting skills and knowledge.
- Relevant experience working with donors' agencies programs.
- Strong networking, communication and facilitation experience.
- Experience in working with primary berry producers
- Fluent written and oral knowledge English language.

VI. Award

Cardno/the Project anticipates awarding one Service Agreement under this Request for Quotes up to 19,000 in USD (US Dollars), payable in RSD (Serbian dinars), in funding to be allocated over 6-month period. The price of the Service Agreement to be awarded will be an all-inclusive fixed price. No profit, fees, taxes, or additional costs can be added after award. Under a Service Agreement all payments will be a fixed-sum, payable upon completion of deliverables. Deliverables and payment amounts, and dates will be defined in detail during negotiations.

Cardno/the Project will select the bid that offers the best value based upon the following evaluation criteria:

1. Management, Professional Qualifications (30)

The bidder should describe their overall capability to undertake work in this area. A description of proposed Consultancy qualifications and relevant experience to carry out the Scope of Work should be included.

2. Past Performance and Experience (50)

Bidder's experience and capabilities in undertaking similar activities should be detailed here, including references and certifications (if relevant). If desired, bidders may share website links to relevant examples for consideration.

3. Cost proposal (20 points)

Ensure consistency of the costs with the proposed effort for implementing specified tasks in line with technical approach.

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The selection of the Offeror for award will be made by the Cardno/the Project Evaluation Committee based on the evaluation criteria above. The award is to be made based on the best overall (i.e., best value) proposal that is determined to be the most beneficial to USAID's Competitive Economy Project with appropriate consideration given to the three evaluation factors: Qualifications, Experience and Price. The non-price factors, when combined, are significantly more important than the Price factor.

Submission and deadline of bids

The bidders should submit firm fixed price cost proposal broken down per tasks and deliverables. All cost information must be expressed in US Dollars. Bids including CV and references of proposed staff clearly showing adequate technical background and relevant work experience should be sent by e-mail to: konkursi@konkurentno.rs, by November 15, 2018, 5 p.m. CET. Bidders can submit any questions concerning this RfQ in writing via email to konkursi@konkurentno.rs .