

**Request for Quotes**  
**USAID CSS RfQ 2018-12**

**Subject: Provision of Services of conducting a workshop for the Faculty of Agriculture on creation and implementation of the short-term innovative certification courses in the field of food processing industry**

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

**Location:** Serbia, Belgrade

**Issuance Date:** October 4, 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 the 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 systemically strengthening selected value chains (VC) with a focus on aggregate sales, exports and jobs. The Project will identify gaps in the current competitiveness system and strengthen these systems through capacity development and the facilitation of partnerships among system actors.

In order for this to be achieved, the Project will actively seek partnerships with key industry stakeholders to create platforms for exchange and knowledge sharing 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**

Workforce development is one of the outmost priorities for further development throughout all public and private economy sectors in Serbia. Due to rapid changes in the market and fast developments of technology in food industry, companies often face challenges how to meet these demands and to be competitive on the national and international markets. Universities offer mostly academic courses (Bachelor, Master and PhD), that are long, and usually lack practical component. Although Universities in Serbia provide the high quality academic theoretical knowledge, they are lacking flexibility in responding to the practical industry needs and the way they teach is rather old-fashioned as the university system in Serbia has not gone through the thorough reform after socialistic era was finished in early 90'. In addition, undeveloped workforce presents a great challenge to Serbian companies that are trying to find their space in the competition, especially in the large European market. Young people eager to work, without developed skills and competencies that can be acquired exclusively in the work environment, cannot fulfill companies' needs. On the other hand, most of employers stated that there is a lack of knowledge and skills of staff to organize internships

To overcome these impediments, the Workforce Development component (WKF), as one of four Project components (Access to Market, Access to Finance, Operations Improvement and Workforce Development) focuses on two specific activities:

- 1) Developing sustainable Internship model for university students that will empower targeted companies will to develop and implement high-quality internships. Internship efforts will be gradually integrated with mainly Market Promotion efforts so new generation of traders/marketing managers is built.
- 2) Introducing university system improvements through development of innovative, short term certification courses for staff development or quick exposure to topics of interest. Under this task, the Project aims to develop innovative, short term certification courses in collaboration with Serbian universities that will respond to industry needs: initial focus will be on export and trade, with technology area specific topics, and modern business practices to follow. These courses should offer more flexibility to attendants compared to regular academic courses in terms of timing and mean of delivery. It is envisioned that companies (based on their needs) send their employees to attend these short courses and improve their business in effective way. Initial set of certification courses will target export and trade topics, the most critical missing element in the industry. The courses would be opened to a wider public as well.

This program will resemble standard practices in the US, where the education system regularly responds to critical market needs, and a possible partner for this effort will be identified.

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As a local Serbian partner, the CSS identified the Faculty of Agriculture (FoA) as a credible system partner and signed the Memorandum of Understanding with them. This MoU was signed on July 13th, 2018 setting for the intention of both Parties for collaboration on projects that will include building partnerships with international faculties to introduce specialization courses for addressing most pressing needs of the industry and developing students' internship programs in food-processing industry (F&V sector).

Collaboration with FoA is part of the CSS Project efforts towards workforce development compatible with and cross-cutting other project aspects in a sense that this will be another service offered to the companies working with the Project, building networking partnerships between academic institution and the industry. FoA has a long tradition and represents a teaching and research institution whose activities cover all aspects of agricultural production and food technology: crop science, fruit science and viticulture, animal science, soil management, phytomedicine, agricultural engineering, food technology and agricultural economics. After the announcement of the latest Shanghai List, the Faculty of Agriculture is positioned on the 35th place in the field of food technology and it is better than even nine out of the top ten universities in the world.

This sub-activity will support Project's Activity Sub-Purpose 2: Business Support Systems Coordination Strengthened (Sub IR 2.2.2: Economic and Business Development Services Enhanced), which will lead to outcome T2-1 Increase in improved/new services offered to Serbian firms.

## **Objective**

The objective of the consultancy is to transfer the knowledge to the Belgrade Faculty of Agriculture to get acquainted with good international practices for cooperation between academia and industry, which will result in creation of a sustainable model of continuous education of food processing industry through offering innovative certification courses to the industry responding to the industry needs.

## **II. Tasks**

The Consultant will conduct following tasks:

1. Identify expert/s to travel to Serbia to conduct the assignment of delivering 2-day workshop for the Faculty of Agriculture in Belgrade, Serbia on creation and implementation of the short-term innovative certification courses in the field of food processing industry, based on their own previous experience;

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2. Consultant/s are expected to prepare and provide inputs, and actively engage and contribute in the workshop with the Serbian university partners as participants on the workshop; Based on the consultant's input, FoA is expected to design the short certification courses for the Serbian food industry, and start delivering them for the Serbian companies in 2019;
3. Based on the workshop and consultations with the local partners, provide recommendations to the Project team on the strategic & operational directions of support for better linkages between University/academia and food processing industry that will help to embed the practice of providing short certification courses by the Faculty to the companies in Serbia.

### **III. Period of Performance**

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

### **IV. Deliverables**

1. Report on conducted visits to the relevant Serbian institutions/faculties/projects conducted; visit to the Biosense Institute/Novi Sad ([https://biosens.rs/?page\\_id=6597&lang=en](https://biosens.rs/?page_id=6597&lang=en)); visit to selected companies; meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture;
2. Delivered 2-day Training/ workshop with the Belgrade Faculty of Agriculture (curriculum, list of participants, training report);
3. Status report on current situation and recommendations for interventions;
4. Final technical report with recommendations for next steps submitted.

All documents will be prepared in English.

### **V. Requirements for eligible bidders**

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

- At least 5 years of professional experience in academia in agriculture field;
- At least 5 years of design & delivery of certification courses for industry
- Analytical, processing and reporting skills and knowledge
- Strong networking, communication and facilitation experience
- Fluent written and oral knowledge English language

## **VI. Award**

Cardno/the Project anticipates awarding a contract (Purchase order) under this Request for Quotes. The price of the Purchase order to be awarded will be an all-inclusive fixed price with the amount not exceeding 18 000\$. No profit, fees, taxes, or additional costs can be added after award. Under a Purchase order 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.*

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. All cost information must be expressed in US Dollars. Bids including CV and references of proposed

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staff clearly showing adequate technical background and relevant work experience should be sent by e-mail to: [konkursi@konkurentno.rs](mailto:konkursi@konkurentno.rs), by October 16, 2018, 4 p.m. CET. Bidders can submit any questions concerning this RfQ in writing via email to [konkursi@konkurentno.rs](mailto:konkursi@konkurentno.rs).