

**Request for Quotes
USAID CSS RfQ 2019 - 04**

Subject: Provision of logistics and operational assistance in export of fresh produce to European market

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

Location: Serbia, Belgrade

Issuance Date: March 4, 2019

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., 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 (F&V), 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 Serbian economy. There are many small fruit producers, however, their export potential is low, due to disintegrated market and lack of linkages with the local traders and international buyers.

Serbia's growth potential depends largely on expansion of export markets, considering that domestic and CEFTA markets are growing slowly or are in stagnation. Currently, Serbian industry mostly exports low value products with limited number of competitive products – only few crops dominate export statistics, such as raspberries and apples, etc.

In the past few years, international F&V buying companies have established models of cooperation with local producers in almost all countries with substantial production of F&V. The model is based on trading through agents or national representatives, whose job is to find the local companies ready to both invest in the quality of the produce (by implementing required quality standards) and in capacity building, in order to meet international companies' logistics and operational requirements. Only by fulfilling required criteria defined by these international companies, local businesses have the real opportunity to export their produce to international market.

During the consultations with SMEs, farmers organizations, national associations and other industry stakeholders, it was realized that the range of services carried out through business integrators and coordinators/logistics service providers are essential for the export success in Serbian fresh F&V sector. Traditionally these services were considered as pure logistic and transport, disregarding the importance of proper preparation of companies for export, including production and organizational capacities, as well readiness to deliver the demanded quantity of quality produce.

Therefore, the Project has recognized the need and opportunity to support Serbian fresh produce companies in obtaining logistics and operational assistance in export and sales. This will result in building capacities of export companies and enabling them to access new markets.

Objective

The purpose of this activity is to support export-led growth of Serbian companies producing fresh F&V and their greater integration with European and global markets. In order to achieve this, the objective of this Request for Quotes is to select a service provider that will deliver logistic and operational assistance in export of fresh fruits and vegetables.

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

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I. Intervention:

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

II. 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

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

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

III. 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:

1. Preparation phase – selection and capacity building of export companies

The services to be delivered in the first project phase include the following elements: 1) visit to and selection of F&V producers with soft and stone fruit, including vegetables with high export potential (e.g. new varieties of peeper as demanded by international buyers); 2) liaison between international buyer and selected Serbian F&V export companies; 3) assisting companies in building and strengthening their networks of primary producers/suppliers; 4) preparing information regarding export procedures and standards (guidelines for companies) in line with European regulations; 5) preparation of the export plans for each selected company with an emphasis on delivery quantities of each produce on weekly basis; 6) organize a visit to Greenyard distribution center and facilitate participation at Global Berry Congress in

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Rotterdam, March 25-27, 2019; 7) facilitate negotiation between international buyer (e.g. *Greenyard*) and selected Serbian companies to agree on the following:

- F&V species and varieties (focus shall be put on peppers, berry fruits and plums)
- Estimated quantities / per week / per year
- Quality standards and other requirements
- Packaging, storage and operation capacities

2. Realization phase – full execution of the export plans for each selected company

- On-site supervision of companies during the harvesting, transport to local distribution center, packaging and loading the trucks.
- In parallel, service provider will organize supervision and monitoring of the selected fresh produce growers, with an aim to consolidate the production process and ensure all required conditions are met for them to export in the next season;
- Assistance in preparation of all necessary documentation for export (invoices, customs, phytosanitary, insurance, etc.)
- Assisting international buyer and selected companies in mitigation of possible disputes regarding quality of produce;

3. Follow up phase - summarize performance of the selected companies in the first export season and prepare report with conclusions and recommendations for improvement and expansion of export activities

III. Period of Performance

Period of performance of the contracted services is from March 20, 2019 to February 18, 2020.

IV. Deliverables

All documents will be prepared in English and Serbian.

Preparation phase by May 1, 2019:

- 1) organized visit and selection of F&V fresh producers. Detailed information regarding this activity will be submitted within technical report;
- 2) facilitated participation of companies at Global Berry Congress in Rotterdam together with organized visit to Greenyard distribution center;

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- 3) facilitated communication and cooperation between international buyer and selected Serbian companies, which will be proved with contracts signed and/or invoices issued;
- 3) up-graded suppliers' networks of export companies;
- 4) prepared comprehensive guidelines for export companies, containing export procedures, regulations and standards, which are fully in line with European regulations;
- 5) export plans for each selected company prepared, with an emphasis on delivery quantities of each produce on weekly basis;
- 6) facilitated negotiation between international buyer (e.g. *Greenyard*) and selected Serbian companies with agreed all provisions required for export of their products, resulting in contracts signed with selected companies

Realization phase – full execution of the export plans for each selected company

- 1) Selected products fully prepared and ready for export, meeting all required criteria defined by international buyer
- 2) All necessary documentation for export (invoices, customs, phytosanitary, insurance, etc.) prepared and submitted
- 3) Feedback of the exported goods received from the international buyer;

Follow-up phase

- 1) Report, summarizing performance of the selected companies in the first export season and including conclusions and recommendations for improvement and expansion of export activities, prepared and submitted

V. INSTRUCTIONS TO OFFERORS

Submission of Quotes

Quotes/Offer must be received no later than **15:00h Friday, March 18, 2019.**

Late Quotes/Offer will be considered at the discretion of Cardno.

All offers must be emailed to konkursi@konkurentno.rs

Please reference the RfQ # (USAID CSS RfQ 2019-04) in the subject line of the email.

Questions and Clarifications

All questions and/or clarifications regarding this RfQ must be **submitted in writing to konkursi@konkurentno.rs no later than 17:00h on Wednesday, March 14, 2019.**

All correspondence and/or inquiries regarding this solicitation must reference the RfQ number.

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Questions and requests for clarification, and the responses thereto, that Cardno believes may be of interest to other offerors, will be circulated to all RFQ recipients who have indicated an interest in bidding.

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:

- Background and practical experience in working with international buying companies;
- Demonstrated knowledge of and at least 5 (five) years' experience in working with Serbian fruit production and processing;
- Experience in working with primary fresh F&V producers;
- Practical knowledge and experience in local and international trade;
- Established linkages with local companies;
- Experience in administrative procedures (customs, insurance, transportation, phytosanitary documents, etc.);
- Practical knowledge in organization of tasks in the distribution center, cool storage and shipping of the produce;
- Practical experience in establishing and operating of purchase and distribution centers;
- Experience in coordination of production of PL products;
- Analytical, processing and reporting skills and knowledge;
- Relevant experience working with donors' agencies programs;
- Strong networking, communication and facilitation experience;
- Fluent written and oral knowledge English language.

Required Documents

The following documents are required in any Quote/Offer submission:

- Offeror's Identification and supporting document(s)
- Offeror's Brief description of professional capacities and experience;
- Offeror's Price Quote

Format of Quote/Offers submission, along with the required documents' requirements is herewith attached under Section VII

Quotations

The Offerors should submit firm fixed Price Quotes broken down per deliverables. Prices must be quoted on a lump sum, all-inclusive basis. No profit, fees, taxes, or additional costs can be added after award. All cost information must be expressed in US Dollars. Payments shall be

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executed in Serbian Dinars at the exchange rate of Cardno corporate bank in Serbia at the date of payment approval. Cardno is VAT-exempt, per the bilateral agreement between the United States and the Republic of Serbia, therefore no VAT costs are eligible.

Validity Period

Offers must remain valid for not less than thirty (30) calendar days after the offer deadline.

Negotiations

Best offer quotations are requested. It is anticipated that awards will be made solely based on these original quotations. However, Cardno reserves the right to conduct negotiations and/or request clarifications prior to awarding a contract.

Award

Cardno/the Project anticipates awarding a contract under this Request for Quotes up to 30,000 USD (US Dollars), payable in RSD (Serbian dinars), in funding to be allocated over 11-month period. The price of the contract to be awarded will be an all-inclusive fixed price. No profit, fees, taxes, or additional costs can be added after award. Under a contract, 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.

Evaluation and Selection Criteria

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

1. Professional Qualifications (30)

The Offeror 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, along with the CV detailing Offeror's qualifications and capability

2. Past Performance and Experience (50)

Offeror's experience and past performance 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. Price Quote (20 points)

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The Offeror will ensure consistency of the costs with the proposed effort for implementing specified tasks in line with the requirements set forth in this RfQ.

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 March 18, 2019, 3 p.m. CET. Bidders can submit any questions concerning this RfQ in writing via email to konkursi@konkurentno.rs.

VI. FORMAT OF QUOTE/OFFER

I. Offeror's Identification

Full Name of the Offeror	
Solicitation Ref. No.	USAID CSS RfQ 2019-04
Address of the Offeror	
Registration number	
Tax/VAT number	
Account number and the bank name	
Title and name of the person authorized to sign a contract	
Telephone/fax and mobile phone	
E-mail	
Supporting documents:	_____ Proof of Registration

Stamp / Signature of the authorized person

Date: _____

II. Offeror's Brief description of professional capacities, past performance and experience
Ref: USAID CSS RfQ 2019-04

Maximum length: one page.

Offeror should describe their qualification, overall professional capacities, experience and past performance relevant and similar to the Scope of Work/Tasks of the subject RfQ. Also, Offeror should present the work plan and describe approach to the tasks at hand.

Obligatory/Required Attachment: CVs

Optional Attachments: Other attachments Offeror deems appropriate (e.g. certificates; awards, website links to relevant examples, etc.)