



(1st) Memorandum of information European tender 'Business development support for SMEs in the poultry and horticulture sector in the Sahel region

Date: 13 May 2022

In this memorandum of information, the contracting authority provides answers to the questions asked and remarks posted in the context of the above-mentioned European tender. This memorandum of information forms an integral part of the tender document (with reference 202202032).

Question	Chapter/ Paragraph from the tender document	Question	Answer
1.		The tender document mentions 'horticulture' as a sector. Horticultural crops include fruits (mangoes, bananas, avocados, papaya, pineapples, watermelon, strawberries) vegetables (onion, potatoes, carrots, garlic, beans, cassava, tomatoes, eggplant, cucumber) cereals (corn, sorghum, millet, rice, fonio), seeds and nuts (sesame, peanut, cashew, shea), and maybe also baobab fruits, cotton, moringa, rubber, palm oil, sugar cane, Arabic gum etc. Is a specific focus on certain crops expected? For example; crops aimed for local human consumption, or crops for export?	No specific crops are expected. However, given the purpose of improving regional trade, crops with export potential in the region are preferred.
2.		a. The tender document does not describe precisely whether the focus for both horticulture and poultry should be on the production side only, or if this could be broader in the value chain. For poultry, could we also select businesses active in, for example, the (cold chain) logistics,	Indeed, it is not only production. Companies in processing and even marketing could be involved. However, they do need to be able to contribute to improving trade in the region (and potentially with the Netherlands) by growing their business, so their participation should be in harmony with the underlying theory of change contributing to more regional trade But a broad representation of the total sector in the group would

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		processing, slaughtering or further processing of meat, and on the input supply delivery for example Day old Chicken, equipment, building stables, etc? b. And on horticulture can we select business champions who are, apart from cultivating, active on for example: input supply (seeds, fertilizers, crop protection agents, irrigation, covered cultivation materials, mechanisation materials) Maintenance of mechanisation materials, cold chain logistics, distribution, drying, certification and meeting standards, packaging, marketing, processing, etc? These sectors related to the production of agriculture might also be a source of inspiration for the youth.	even be an advantage. Final decisions on participants will be judged on a case to case basis.
3.		Under 'purpose' (page 8, first point) trade with the Netherlands is mentioned as an objective. Under results export is mentioned to coastal countries only. Is trade from the Sahel countries with the Netherlands / Europe an objective of this programme? Both for export and import?	No, the objective is to increase regional trade. Import and/or export to the Netherlands would be a plus, but is indeed not an objective in itself.
4.		The Netherlands is well known for high quality, affordable input materials, and knowledge and expertise in both poultry and horticulture. As an example, Dutch hybrid and OPV seeds could contribute to higher yields, better quality of the produce, and thus better market prices. The Sahel countries could benefit a lot from these input materials, as well as the knowledge from Dutch companies. These companies could focus on variety trials to select the right varieties suited to the local	The Dutch private sector could very well play a role in the project. However, the aim of this project is to support local companies in the Sahel. Dutch companies are therefore not a target group and activities should always benefit the local companies. But if that also helps Dutch companies to gain access to markets, that is a plus.

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		agro-ecologic conditions, variety demonstrations and on farm trainings in areas like nursery management, seedling selection, soil preparation, crop nutrition and protection, irrigation techniques, harvesting, storage etc. The tender document does not specifically mention whether the Dutch private sector is a target group, in the sense of supporting them to get access to markets in the Sahel countries. Could you elaborate more on their foreseen role?	
5.		Result 3 aims for increased awareness on entrepreneurial opportunities for youth; with an expected outcome of 'more resilience due to mentorship'. Increasing awareness could be achieved by storytelling, social media, increasing visibility of role models, and linking champions in the sector with start-up / incubator programmes. For 'more resilience' mentorship to these starting entrepreneurs is mentioned as an activity. In addition, on page 10, knowledge transfer to young people working in the same sector is mentioned as a goal. This would require a selection of entrepreneurs in the three countries, a needs assessment, and a clear goal on both knowledge transfer and mentorship. Does the RVO expect the implementer of this programme indeed to support these young starting entrepreneurs in the Agri sector with both business growth support, knowledge transfer as well as mentoring? Would it be possible to quantify the expectations here? How many youths should be	We expect the implementer to propose a method to include knowledge transfer in their program. This could be e.g. through organising an day event where champions demonstrate their business in schools, it could be by collaborating with an ongoing mentorship program; other creative and innovative but feasible approaches are encouraged. Our expectation is that each champion supports at least one young (= <35 years old) entrepreneur. The mentorship should lead to a more resilient business, meaning that knowledge transfer on 'how to run a business' is just as important as technical knowledge.

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		reached with this mentorship, can you specify per country? Who are considered 'youth'. Are the expectations on knowledge transfer related to technical knowledge (for example a training in good agricultural practices) or also, for example, on financial literacy, investment readiness etc?	
6.		The tenderer is expected to present their own ideas and proposals for other activities. This liberty is well appreciated. Would it be possible to request additional budget for the 'own ideas and additional activities'; or is it expected that this will be financed within the available budget for three years for the three countries? Could these ideas also be proposed after the development of the ToC / and go / no go moment at the end of the inception phase?	The proposed budget, the results to be achieved and the time line are fixed. How the implementer will reach the results, through which activities, is very much open.
7.		On page 13 under monitoring and evaluation; a number of investable business plans aim at 60, is mentioned as an expected result. Investable business plans are however not mentioned under results and activities. Are investable business plans a specific goal? Would you agree that this also requires cooperation with banks, and (impact) investors, or microfinance institutions (if the young starters are the main target) in order to get the foreseen outcomes? Are you referring here to the 60 companies mentioned under result 1? Or to the 'young entrepreneurs' mentioned under result 3?	The business plans refer to the youth that is mentioned (at least 1 per champion). They should already have business, so they should be supported in improving their business plan by a champion. The Champions should be preparing them for and directing them towards (innovative) finance opportunities Whether they are investable and obtaining financial support through those plans is indeed out of the scope of this project.
8.		Not all companies with growth potential necessarily require financial investments to grow their business. The type of support to achieve this goal of access to investments might be quite different from for example knowledge transfer in GAP, better use of	This is indeed acceptable. It is acceptable that you include an analysis on the needs for investment readiness support and guidance during the inception phase, and then propose a number of companies / entrepreneurs who require this type of support

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		seeds and input supplies, improving biosecurity management, and also inclusivity, climate awareness, gender policies, ownership management) (types of business support which could also assist companies in increasing the sustainability of the company, increasing production and profitability). Would it be acceptable to include an analysis on the needs for investment readiness support and guidance during the inception phase, and then propose a number of companies / entrepreneurs who require this type of support? Or is the expectations that we select the businesses based on a clear need for investments?	
9.		On page 6; under Monitoring and evaluations 'capacity building of governments & institutions' are mentioned; with expected results such as changes achieved in laws and regulations, and strengthening (govt, semi govt and other) organizations for a sustainable business climate. This subject is not mentioned (directly) under the result areas and activities. Is policy influencing and change in regulations a specific goal? To which result area or activity are you referring here?	No it is not. Strengthening the BSOs is. This is therefore referring to result 2; building their capacity and contributing to regional policy development of BSOs.
10.		Page 11, inception phase, mentions an action plan including a budget as part of the go / no go for the implementation phase. A budget is also part of the tender requirements. Does this mean that revising the budget (including increasing or decreasing the requested contract value) based on the needs assessment and for example the suggested 'own	Revising the budget based on your proposed action plan is definitely an option. However, increasing is not.

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		ideas and activities' is a possibility?	
11.		On Page 8, under Institutional Setting, a 'local team that will prepare and support the selected implementer exists of around 10 people, including the embassy's economic advisor' is mentioned. Are Dutch BSOs also eligible to contribute and support the businesses champions, the BSOs, and potentially also the youth, and policy influencers in the context of this tender?	Yes they are. We do aim for a strong local component, to make sure the intervention addresses local needs, strengthens local capacity, and to make traveling an option.
12.		The business support services in this programme are of course subsidized. Also (semi) commercial knowledge transfer organisations and consultancies offer similar types of support to businesses with growth potential. This gives a risk of market distortion. Entrepreneurs might get acquainted to low prices for business support, and existing non-subsidized business support organizations could be negatively influenced by subsidized offers. Would it be acceptable to charge a part of the actual costs to the 60 companies?	Yes it would be acceptable. However, the cost of participation cannot become a hindrance for participation.
13.		The implementation phase of the assignment is divided into two parts. In each part a cohort of 30 companies are supported (10 per country). Questions that we have related to this are: a. Why does the tendering authority propose to have two cohorts of 10 companies per country? b. Is it mandatory to propose 2 cohorts per country in our proposal?	Two cohorts makes it possible to learn and adjust along the way, it makes traveling (visits to e.g. the SARA fair in Ivory Coast, Africallia in Burkina Faso, Sahel'innov in Niger and each other's companies) easier, it gives more time to select the companies. If the implementer has good reasons to not divide the 60 companies in two cohorts that's an option too.