

# CADMUS

**REQUEST FOR QUOTES (RFQ)  
Business Model Innovation  
Amendment No. 01**

TO: Potential Bidders

FROM: Darlene Irby, Project Director  
The Cadmus Group  
Digital Forward  
Contract No. 7200AA23C00131

ISSUANCE DATE: Monday, January 6, 2025


DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF QUESTIONS: Friday, January 10, 2025, 5:00 PM EST

SUBMISSION DATE: Friday, January 31, 2025, 5:00 PM EST

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The Cadmus Group hereby issues Amendment No. 01 to the Business Model Innovation Request for Quotes. The purpose of Amendment No. 01 is to provide responses to questions submitted on the RFQ.

**All other terms and conditions of the RFQ remain unchanged.**

DocuSigned by:  
  
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Darlene Irby, Project Director  
The Cadmus Group  
Digital Forward

1/15/2025  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Responses to Questions from Offerors

- 1. Please confirm that the total estimated budget for the activity, as listed on Page 1 of the RFQ is \$100,000.00, not \$10,000.00.**

The total estimated cost for this activity is \$100,000.00.

- 2. Page 7 of the RFQ states that “No travel is required for this activity,” while Page 6 states that the final report will be “presented during at least two virtual or in-person events.” Please confirm that offerors will not be required to attend events in person and should not budget for travel.**

The intention is for the report to be presented at virtual event(s) and/or in-person event(s). If the bidder already is based in a city where an in-person event will be taking place or they propose to organize an event in a city where they are based, then that is allowable. Otherwise, there is no requirement to attend events in person.

- 3. For the rapid analysis, is there a minimum number of key informant interviews that Cadmus is expecting?**

This is up to bidders to propose. The number of individuals engaged through key informant interviews and other modalities (such as focus groups, online surveys, etc.) will be factored into the evaluation of the proposal.

- 4. The RFQ states no travel, but will travel and attendance costs be provided separately for the contractor to present the report's findings?**

No additional travel budget will be provided. If there are costs to present at an event in a location where the selected bidder is based, those costs can be proposed.

- 5. Are there any internal or external deadlines driving the suggested timeline?**

The final report must be ready for publication by the end of August and the final slide deck to present at public events by the first week of September.

- 6. Are there specific expectations or additional details that can be provided regarding the assessment "tool" mentioned in the practical guidance section?**

We are looking for bidders to propose what they think would be the most effective modality for this “tool”. As mentioned in the RFQ, the intention is for it to include practical guidance to help donors and their implementing partners assess the likely financial viability of a given digital agriculture solution.

- 7. Are there aspects of the RFQ that are essential versus those that are less necessary, so that bidders can fit within the budget envelope? If not, are additional funds available?**

There are no additional funds available. If bidders feel that it is not possible to complete the totality of the SOW within the budget ceiling, they should explicitly note in their proposal what aspects they are planning to cut back or deemphasize.

- 8. In the Past Performance Section the RFQ states that the offeror shall submit a list of “up to five” of current and past similar work, but later states that “at least 5” relevant past performance examples be included. Can you confirm that offerors should not submit more than 5 past performance examples?**

No more than 5 past performance references should be submitted.

- 9. The RFQ states that the activity seeks to identify promising business models for digital agriculture solutions in LMICs and notes the involvement of FAO and the United Nations’ Regional Office for Africa. In addition to SSA, does Digital Forward or USAID prioritize other regions or countries of focus for this activity, e.g. Latin American and the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, Middle East and North Africa, etc.?**

USAID is interested in business model innovations that have shown promise in low- and middle-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South and Southeast Asia, or those that have shown promise in LMICs from other regions that may be relevant to the aforementioned regions.

- 10. What is the maximum budget value for this assignment? The RFQ mentions a "total estimated value of this RFQ is up to USD \$100,00.00".**

\$100,000.00

- 11. Are there any specific countries/geographies within LMICs that should be prioritized? Is there a minimum number of countries or regions that should be included in the analysis?**

See response to question #9 above. There is not a minimum number of countries. The study should look at a broad representation of LMICs in the aforementioned regions, including countries with different degrees of ecosystem maturity. While it may draw from examples from more robust and competitive markets, it should also examine factors that influence success in less advanced digital agriculture ecosystems. See Appendix 1 of the [State of the Digital Agriculture Sector report](#) for their classification of digital agriculture maturity based on three tiers: leaders, emergent, and nascent. While bidders are not necessarily required to use this classification, they should consider a similar type of classification of ecosystem maturity to inform their focus and recommendations.

- 12. Is there a preference for the types of digital agriculture solutions to be covered (e.g., advisory services, market linkage platforms, fintech solutions)?**

The study should cover the full range of digital agriculture solutions, noting, where relevant, differences in the applicability of business model approaches to different solution types. Again, here the [State of the Digital Agriculture Sector report](#) may serve as a guide for classifying different types of solutions, although bidders are welcome to use a different approach as well.

- 13. What is the minimum acceptable number of key informant interviews expected? The RFQ mentions that we need to specify this in our proposal, but having a baseline expectation would help in accurate budgeting and planning.**

Please refer to the response to question #3.

**14. Is there a preference or requirement for including local experts/consultants from the target regions, particularly for conducting interviews with stakeholders in different regions?**

There is no requirement for this. Bidders are invited to propose whatever staffing configuration they feel will enable them to best gather information to inform the study's findings given the responses in previous questions related to the geographic focus of this study.

**15. Are there specific requirements for technical expertise (e.g., agriculture, digital technology, business modelling, etc.)?**

Bidders are invited to propose whatever technical expertise they feel would result in high quality execution of the required deliverables. As noted in section 2.2 of the RFQ, bidders should "explain how the staffing plan will result in successful implementation of the proposed technical approach and accomplish the objectives of the activity."

**16. Has USAID Digital Forward identified any priority countries, regions, or value chains for this initiative?**

Please refer to the response to questions #9 and 11 for countries and regions. There is no specific focus on particular value chains. However, a focus on some value chains may facilitate financial viability of a digital agriculture solution over others. This is a factor that should be analyzed through the study.

**17. Could you provide more details on the specific development objectives that the digital technologies should address? For example, are there particular challenges related to market access, financial inclusion, or climate resilience that you'd like to see addressed?**

There are specific development objectives that the digital technologies should address. The study should focus primarily on digital agriculture solutions that are targeting smallholder farmers (either directly as users or indirectly through an intermediary, such as cooperatives, extension agents, or agribusinesses, for example). The solutions could be addressing one or more needs that farmers have. Please refer to the response to question #12 for more details on this point.

**18. Could you elaborate on the ideal qualifications and experience you're seeking for key personnel on this project? This will help us ensure we propose the most suitable team.**

Key personnel should be well versed in topics related to digital agriculture and business model innovation in LMICs, as well as have prior experience conducting similar types of studies and developing both analytical reports and practical guidance.

**19. Is the scope of the business model assessment to be interpreted as cutting across all types of digital agriculture solutions?**

Please refer to the responses to questions #12 and #17.

**20. Is there a particular categorisation of business models in digital agriculture solutions that the client would like us to build on? The RFQ references two reports, Digital Agriculture State of the Sector (USAID/Beanstalk, 2023) and Business models and key success drivers of agtech start-ups (CTA, 2019), which use quite different methods to define the business model of each solution.**

Bidders are invited to proposed whichever categorization they feel is appropriate. This could be a pre-existing categorization or one specific to the bidder.

**21. Clarification on Task Two: Regarding the development of a "Practical guidance for donors and their implementing partners, in the form of a user-friendly tool, to assess the likely financial viability of a given digital agriculture solution," could you please confirm if the intention is for this tool to serve as a rapid diagnostic to map and scout key digital agricultural innovations in emerging markets? Specifically, should the tool focus on providing insights into an organization's trajectory toward sustainable growth and impact in the target market, based on secondary data and self-reported data points from the enterprises? If so, we understand that further due diligence on claims from enterprises (e.g., verification of financial records, supporting documentation, and follow-up discussion with enterprise, their investors/funders, and clients) would be a subsequent step taken during the pre-award phase. Note that we raise this question because enterprises may hesitate to provide detailed supporting information unless direct funding or investment opportunities are on the table.**

The intention of this tool is to help donor and their implementing partner staff assess the likely financial viability of a given digital agriculture solution in order to understand how to engage with them. This could be to inform their decisions for partnerships and/or funding, although it will not always be linked to direct funding or investment opportunities. The tool should be designed in a way that takes into account likely data availability. As the question rightly points out, digital agriculture service providers may be reluctant to share some types of financially sensitive information, such as their revenues and expenditures. Other information, related to their investors, may already be publicly available through databases such as [Aqbase](#) or other sources. Therefore, the tool should not be dependent on having access to proprietary data that may not be shared, although it can account for that data, if shared.

The tool should not provide users with a precise go/no go or invest/don't invest decision based on a series of required data inputs. Rather, it should provide users with guidance on the types of questions to ask; the types of answers and data points to look for, how to understand them, and why they matter (for example, how the total number of users is often less meaningful than the percentage of active users); what factors may or may not influence financial viability, and how to evaluate those given other ecosystem level factors; and given the likely financial trajectory of a given service, what types of support (financial and non-financial) could that service provider use to facilitate their path to financial viability and/or ecosystem level support that might be necessary.

The tool is not necessarily a rapid diagnostic to map and scout key digital agricultural innovations in emerging markets, although bidders are welcome to propose that as well, if they think it is consistent with the objectives of this activity.

**22. Clarification on Event Organization Costs (Tasks Three and Four): We understand that approximately four events are anticipated for discussing, refining, and sharing findings across tasks three and four. Could you kindly confirm whether the event organization costs—such as stakeholder outreach, agenda setting, platform/venue management, and invitations—would be the responsibility of the recipient or managed by Cadmus? If the latter, and the contractor's role is focused solely on the technical aspect in the preparing, delivering, and facilitating event sessions, we believe the requested budget is sufficient.**

Costs related to the organization or participation in events required to implement this SOW, excluding travel, should be included in the bidder's cost proposal. Bidders are not required to incur these types of expenses, as in some cases they may be able to deliver the expected outputs without them.

It is expected that the feedback sessions mentioned in task 3 will be conducted virtually. USAID and Cadmus can support the selected bidder with identifying and reaching out to stakeholders. If the bidder does not have access to a virtual platform to host these sessions, which we anticipate having no more than 40 people in attendance, then USAID or Cadmus can create the virtual event using their existing event management tools (Google Meet or Microsoft Teams).

For the two events mentioned in task 4, bidders are invited to propose how they would like to approach this. For example, organizing a standalone event will require more financial and human resources than presenting at a pre-existing event that is being organized by a third-party. Bidders are welcome to propose whatever they feel is most appropriate to effectively deliver the SOW. In addition, while the SOW mentions two events, if the bidder feels that a different number would be more appropriate, they are welcome to propose that change. For example, promoting the key findings of the report at one pre-existing event that is likely to reach 200 people is likely to have more impact than organizing two events that target 50 people each. In other words, bidders should make clear how their overall promotional approach, which includes events and social media promotion, will maximize public awareness of the key findings and outputs from this SOW given the available financial resources. Also, the selected bidder will not be required to cover event organization costs for the webinars that the FAO will co-organize.

The cost of promotion (including presentation at events) is an important piece of this SOW, but it is not the most important piece. In terms of financial prioritization, bidders are encouraged to focus a significant majority of their proposed budget on tasks 1-3, as those are most critical towards developing the final report.