

Terms of Reference

Call for Designing and Conducting a Research to Understand Quality Rice Seed Category in Bangladesh

ACI Agribusiness, a business division of the Advanced Chemical Industries Limited (ACI), is driven with a unique vision to create wealth for farmers through providing complete solution to the problems of farmers. ACI is continuously working to improve the quality of life in food, nutrition, protection, lifestyle, and health, with its four divisions – Agribusiness, Consumer Brands, Logistics and Pharmaceuticals. ACI Agribusiness, the largest agriculture integrator in Bangladesh, is enabling the farmers to achieve 'prosperity', not only 'food security', through agriculture through its SBUs - Seed, Fertilizer, Farm Mechanization, Crop Care & Public Health, Agrolink, Premiaflex Packaging, Premio Plastics and Animal Health. ACI Seed has seed offerings in market for rice (inbred & hybrid), maize, potato & vegetables. ACI Seed has own R&D, Production & distribution of seeds and represents several globally known seed companies in Bangladesh.

We expect to receive proposals from reputed market research firms who are interested to provide ACI with the services sought in this call.

1 BACKGROUND

ACI Agribusiness is a leading player supplying quality seeds to farmers as an input product for crop cultivation. Rice is the pre-dominant crop in Bangladesh (75% of cultivated land is under rice farming). Seed related costs being the tiniest amount of all input costs in rice production, rice seed market is still a fragmented one dominated by a large number of players from organized and non-organized providers. Quality seed can, aided by a number of other factors, increment rice yield by 10% - 30%, thus increasing farmer's income and contributing towards national food security. ACI Agribusiness is interested to understand the rice seed market for better decision making and serving the need of farmers and other stakeholders.

2 SCOPE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

To aid the strategy setting of ACI Seed business, the selected consulting firm will design and conduct a research and deliver an extensive report, on rice seed as per the scope and output listed below.

Buyer Profiling

- A. Factors influencing farmer's decision on
 - Accessing rice seed & variety.
 - Motivation for buying quality seed or not buying it.
 - Triggers for choosing a particular rice seed variety and brand/any other attributes
 - Dependencies such as cultivation practice followed for a growing rice from a particular seed variety.
 - Responding to extension efforts on the introduction of quality seed and improved techniques.

- Investment and farming activities against input price (seed) and output price (paddy) relationship
- B. Farmers' understanding and attitude towards quality rice seed and perception on major rice seed brands/ sources by variety, by type etc.

Market Mapping

- Listing and digging into the practice, problems, or issues which farmers, trade channel partners or extension agents/ local service providers face while dealing with rice seed and off-shoot issues.
- Making an exhaustive list of rice seed varieties and brands available in market.
- Present demand of varieties by season, locality and by any other special purpose
- Listing various rice value chain actors and overview of their role in the Value Chain up to 'Post Harvest & Milling'.
- Role of rice crop in important Agro-Ecological Zones (AEZs) of Bangladesh vs. other crop options that are emerging to farmers.

Additional Output

- Potential market size (by type and season) for selling rice seed by formal and non-formal actors in Bangladesh
- Analysis of the evolution of rice seed category in major rice intensive AEZs.
- Competitor Analysis in rice seed supply scene to farmers.
- An examination of each VC actor's role (up to Post Harvest & Milling), decision process, influence and emerging trends, in rice value chain, that affect quality rice seed supply & demand.
- An assessment of the potentials of further Value Addition in each actor's domain and the role quality seed can play to support it.
- A review of trade practice followed by formal and non-formal suppliers in rice seed business.
- Discover the Communication Keys to enable the company for engaged communication with value chain actors.
- Recommend steps for effective conversion of non-user farmers to adopters of quality rice seed.

Notes:

Rice Value Chain Nodes to be covered for this study:

R&D – Seed Supply – Financing for Farmers – Extension Service (govt. & non govt.) - Cultivation Practice - Harvest – Post Harvest & Milling – Transportation & Storage – Distribution, Wholesale & Retail – Consumption

Agro-Ecological Zones: <https://www.bamis.gov.bd/en/page/aezs-maps/>

The consultant firm may propose additional inquiries to aid the analysis and reaching actionable recommendations for ambitious growth of ACI's rice seed business.

3 KEY TIME LINE

Tentative timeframe of the selection process for Consulting Firm is as follows:

Date	Activity
Dec 01 - 10, 2020	Interested consulting firms raise queries to and get clarification by ACI about the assignment.
Dec 15, 2020	Proposal submission by interested consulting firms.
Dec 21 – 22, 2020	Presentation of proposal by the shortlisted firms.
Dec 27, 2020	Shortlisted firms submit detailed plan (incorporating feedback, if any) to ACI.
Dec 28 – 31, 2020	Commercial negotiation and contract signing with selected firm.
Consulting Firm to propose tentative timeline for these activities, adding further milestones if required.	<p>Attend discussion sessions with ACI's Digital Strategy team to understand the project goal, objective, the assignment, research methods and deliverables in details.</p> <p>Submit plan for implementing the research methods, the identification and screening methods of participants, tentative dates of milestone reaching in the assignment.</p> <p>Submit a Discussion Guide/ Data Collection Guide outlining the directives for field work staff as per chosen research methods.</p> <p>Collect data to cover the scope of study.</p> <p>Conduct a robust and through analysis.</p> <p>Submit collected data, analysis and report of findings.</p> <p>Submit draft report and make a presentation of findings.</p> <p>Prepare and submit final report.</p>

4 SELECTION CRITERION

The proposal will be selected based on the following criterion –

- Experience of previous studies (title, short description & client/sponsor) (10%).
- Profile of the firm's key staff members to be engaged in this project (10%)
- Study design and quality control mechanism (25%)
- The methods and tools to be applied for analysis and potential of linkage to ACI's business for better decision making (25%)
- Commercial Proposal (30%)

ACI holds the right to add/ remove/ change the criteria, if needed, prior to contract signing.

5 PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

The language of the proposal and report will be English. The proposal may be submitted in MS Word and/or MS Power Point in pdf format. Technical and commercial parts of the proposal are to be submitted in separate files. Only shortlisted applicants will be invited for the presentation and discussion to get further clarity and understanding of the proposal.

The presentation and discussion with shortlisted consulting firms will take place at ACI Centre, 245 Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka - 1208.

6. RIGHTS & CONFIDENTIALITY:

ACI Agribusiness reserves the right to reject or cancel any proposal without showing any reason. During the course of the research assignment, all materials produced shall remain the property of ACI agribusiness and cannot be used by the service providing consulting firm for a purpose other than agreed upon by both the parties. The developed materials cannot be published, shared in public domain and sold in any case without the prior permission of ACI agribusiness.

7. KEY CONTACTS & PROPOSAL SUBMISSION:

For any clarification on this ToR, please contact-

Contact Person:

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Kindly mention 'Research on Rice Seed' in the subject line of all correspondence. Please submit your proposal to the aforementioned official, via email, no later than Tuesday, 15 December 2020, 5:00 pm.