

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST TO PARTNER IN FEED THE FUTURE ZONE

Expression of Interest Details

Project Name	The Feed the Future Bangladesh Cereal Systems Initiatives for South Asia Mechanization Extension Activity (CSISA-MEA)
Implementing agency	CIMMYT, iDE, Georgia Tech
Date of issue	September 18, 2024
Closing date of Application	Applications will be received no later than October 01, 2024 . From the day of Eoi circulation.
EOI theme to apply	Developing innovative channels to ensure eAwareness to the farmers through digital platforms for appropriate agricultural practices, agricultural mechanization and Integrated Pest Management (IPMA) which will be financially sustainable and scalable in next years
Eligible entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered, social enterprises, digital and e-commerce solution providers • The project seeks partnership with one or more partner(s) or consortia of partners in each category, subject to alignment with CSISA-MEA and USAID’s priorities, due diligence, and agreement on terms.
Contents of EOI application	The application package must include a technical proposal and a financial proposal.
Evaluation criteria	Legal entities and due diligence set by the project will be considered as go or no-go criteria. Alongside of the above, the organization's capacity (20%), technical capability (60%) and financial capability (20%) will be assessed by a review committee.

The Feed the Future Bangladesh Cereal Systems Initiatives for South Asia Mechanization Extension Activity (CSISA-MEA) is seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI) from interested private companies (i.e., social enterprises, digital and e-commerce solution providers) engaged in eAwareness solutions on agricultural information to the farmers through digital platforms.

CSISA-MEA Call for EOI Y6 – Sustainable eAwareness innovation to the farmers

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

CSISA-MEA is a five-year project, funded by USAID and implemented by International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) in partnership with International Development Enterprises (iDE) and Georgia Institute of Technology (GT). The activity works in the FtF zone of influence in southern Bangladesh and in the Rohingya crisis-impacted zones of the Cox's Bazar district. CSISA-MEA is a five-year development project that aims to support the mechanization of agriculture in Bangladesh by developing the capacity of the private sector to develop, manufacture, and market innovative new technology which will enable the country's farmers to mechanize their agricultural production.

With the rise of digital literacy and penetration of smartphones among the rural population, awareness raising for agricultural machinery products and services comes as an opportunity to reach out to more farmers, particularly who are outside of areas covered by company staff or Machinery Solution Providers (MSPs) which leads to converting interest to sales.

Working areas: CSISA-MEA will only support activities to be implemented in the Patuakhali district within specific 02 upazilla.

SCOPE OF WORK

CSISA-MEA is inviting companies/MSEs/firms/ABLEs/SEs which are interested in designing new and innovative business models and activities targeting the farmers of its working areas. All concepts are expected to focus the overarching areas of -

- Innovative digital/smart online-based solutions to ensure eAwareness to the farmers through digital platforms that target and benefit for a large number of farmers, Ag machinery companies, machine solution providers (MSPs) / local service providers (LSPs) and underserved farmers in the project working areas focusing appropriate agricultural practices, agricultural mechanization and Integrated Pest Management (IPMA).
- Ability to scale up the business solution beyond the project support that ensures the sustainability of the initiative.

CSISA-MEA partnership

As a partner, the project may provide both technical and financial support to execute the proposed and agreed upon business model/idea:

- Financial support agreements, with CSISA-MEA contribution will be a maximum 50% of the total cost. The final agreement will be negotiated with selected, qualified companies/Firms. This support must contribute to a significant investment that the companies/Firms will make themselves.
- Facilitation of fine tuning/improving the proposed business models or strategic plans.
- Technical support as needed for successful implementation of the proposed models/ initiatives.
- Facilitation of identifying or developing business linkages with other market actors CSISA-MEA can also offer follow-on partnership agreements to/support to grantees to scale- up successful interventions.

The financial support cannot be used for the following:

- Working capital (e.g., day-to-day operational costs, salaries of regular staff, rent of buildings/office space/storage houses, purchases of raw materials).
- Direct payments/subsidies to producers/farmers.
- Common fixed assets (e.g., computers, vehicles, tools, capital machineries).
- Common physical assets (e.g., buildings, warehouses, storage houses and office equipment).
- Improving or expanding a company's procurement to government or donor programs.

Expected Results

It is expected that participating companies/firms/ will commercially benefit from the proposed business model. Participation will lead to inclusive, scalable and sustainable businesses through which the companies will be able to provide innovative and improved solutions for the betterment of the farmers in the FtF zone. It is also expected that farmers, LSPs/MSPs, relevant companies and other local level market actors will have improved knowledge and skills regarding the agri machinery and crops production and its commercialization. The project will lead to improved commercial relationships and trust among the companies/firms, farmers and other market actors that are involved in the crop value chains/ sectors.

Contract Award Information

Any amount that may be indicated below are projections. Applicants should not use them as targets or assume them to be guaranteed amounts.

Currency in which budget of the contract will be finalized for payment	Bangladeshi Takas
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Tentative period of each contract (<i>duration in months</i>)	Maximum of 10 months
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Type of contract that may be offered:

(NOTE: The final type of contract will be determined after all elements of the EOI application and proposals have been evaluated, including any risk that may be identified by CSISA-MEA.)

Eligibility of Prospective Applicants:

Applications from potential new partners are encouraged. All applicants must be able to demonstrate that they meet the following mandatory eligibility requirements.

1. Properly document its legal status in its country of operation or place of performance of the grant, if awarded. It must be able to provide proof of its registration in the relevant jurisdiction and other appropriate documents that it is formally constituted, recognized by and in good standing within such jurisdiction, and compliant with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations.
2. Not identified in the System for Award Management (SAM) as ineligible to receive U.S. government funds.
3. Not appear on the Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) and Blocked Persons List maintained by the U.S. Treasury for the Office of Foreign Assets Control, or “OFAC List”.
4. Not listed in the United Nations Security designation list.
5. Agree to be subject to a pre-award assessment to examine its possession or ability to obtain the necessary management competence to plan and carry out the activities to be funded and the Applicant will practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for the funds and other assets to be provided under the funding.
6. Can and willing to sign and submit the following required certifications if funded by USAID:
 - *Assurance of Compliance with Laws and Regulations Governing Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs*
 - *Certification Regarding Lobbying*
 - *Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing*
 - *Key Individual Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking*
 - *Participant Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking*
 - *Certification of Recipient*
7. Have an interest in expanding or developing inclusive, sustainable and scalable business models based on this eAwareness innovations
8. Ideally, have been a legally registered company for at least the past two (2) years in Bangladesh.
9. Have a commercial interest and incentive to invest in the capacity development of farmers, MSPs/LSPs, Ag machinery and inputs companies and other market actors.
10. Make an investment of at least 50% of the total program budget
11. Is not involved in an activity prohibited by USAID and is not in default with any development project.

12. Legal support documents (*e.g., Certificate of incorporation, trade license, Tax Identification Number, VAT registration number, proof of bank account and/or any other legal document which might be deemed necessary as per the rule of the country and requirement of CSISA-MEA*) will need to be submitted as part of a due diligence process.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Applications will be evaluated against the evaluation criteria in the table below.

Criteria	Maximum Score
Legal entities and due diligence	Go or no-go decision
EOI application form (organization capacity and work experience)	20%
Technical Proposal (merit of the proposed business model/concept, commercial viability, domestic dependency and potential for reaching the maximum customers possible, with emphasis on women and youth)	60%
Financial Proposal (budget proposed and scope for profitable return on investment)	20%
Total	100%

Application and Submission Information:

- All applications must be submitted following the template and instruction provided in Annex for the EOI application form, technical and financial proposal.
- Application Format: Applications must be submitted in English and using 11 point font size.
- All costs associated with responding to this solicitation shall be the sole responsibility of each applicant.
- CSISA-MEA reserves the right not to make any award from this solicitation.
- Legal documents: This should include documents mentioned in the eligibility section and any other documents that relate to your functioning in Bangladesh.

Please submit your application along with technical and financial proposal d.lama@cgiar.org and CC to shahida@cgiar.org and k.uddin@cgiar.org with the subject line '**CSISA-MEA Feed the Future Expression of Interest on Innovative eAwareness to the farmers on agri-mechanization**'. Only shortlisted firms will be contacted for the next round of the selection and co-designing process.

Annex 1: Expression of Interest form

1. Letter for Expression of Interest

[Applicants are requested to forward Letter of Expression of Interest in the Letterhead Pad of their respective organization and send the hard copy with signature in person or by mail or scan the hard copy of this letter and send by email with relevant attached documents.]

Date...

To:

Team Leader, CSISA-MEA project

Through the administration and procurement

Dear Sir/Madam,

1. Being duly authorized to represent and act on behalf of..... hereinafter referred to as “the Applicant”), and having reviewed and fully understood all of the information provided in the call for Expression of Interest, the undersigned hereby expresses its interest to apply for the advertised EOI date on _____
2. Team Leader, CSISA-MEA Project or Authorized representative of CSISA-MEA Project is hereby authorized to conduct any inquiries or investigations to verify the statements, documents and information submitted in connection with this Expression of Interest, and to seek clarification regarding any financial and technical aspects. This Expression of Interest will also serve as authorization to any individual or authorized representative of any institution referred to in the supporting information to provide such information deemed necessary and as requested by CSISA-MEA Project to verify statements and information provided in this Expression of Interest.
3. This Expression of Interest application is made with the full understanding that:
 - All information submitted in this Expression of Interest for qualification and selection for short-listing will be subject to verification at the time of submitting proposals by short-listed applicants;
 - The Representative of CSISA-MEA Project reserves the right to reject or accept any application, cancel the qualification and selection for short-listing process at any stage, and reject all applications;
 - The Representative of CSISA-MEA Project shall not be liable for any such actions and shall be under no obligation to inform the Applicant of the grounds for them.

The undersigned declaration on the statements made and the information provided in this Expression of Interest are complete, true, and correct in every detail.

Signed: Name:
For and on behalf of (name of Applicant):

2. Information about the firm/company/MSE/ABLE/FI

Name of the company/ firm (in case of consortium, name of lead organization)		
Company/firm address and/or website		
Contact Person (on behalf of the company/ firm)	Name	
	Designation	
	Contact Number	
	Email:	
Legal status/ registration form		
Place and year of incorporation/registration		

2.1 Organization capacity [maximum 2 pages]

The description should include the following:

- A Brief on the background of organization, capacity in working agricultural sector and similar partnership, particularly focused on agricultural mechanization services, agricultural financing, rural

supply networks, and demand creation of technologies.

- Current geographic area of work.
- Details of current work and/or work experience in agricultural mechanization services, agricultural financing and capacity building of agriculture sector market actors.
- Inform if the organization has work experience or partnership with any development projects/agencies, government projects, any USAID funded projects, NGOs, international entities or social programs. This is not a requirement but to inform if the applicant is currently active with other development projects. A sample of to outline the experience is given below:

Sl. Nos.	Project Name/Type of partnership	Name of development agencies (NGO, donors etc.)	Status of engagement (active/closed)	Geographic working area: Patuakhali district (Upazila, union)

3. Technical Proposal [maximum 5 pages]

Name of proposed business model/concept	
EOI category	[please mention which EOI category the application is applied]
Total outreach	[market actors that will be reached through the proposed concept]
Proposed duration of the project (maximum 12 months)	
Proposed total budget (in BDT)	

I. Market opportunities and constraints

- What are the business opportunities and market constraints that need support to explore?
- The challenge(s), or opportunity(ies) the proposed concept/model is trying to address,

including the core business interests and objectives which motivates the company to address the challenge or opportunity in question.

2. Proposed business model adding value to existing system

- What is the proposed business model to address the key market constraint and explore the market opportunity?
- How will the proposed business model add value to the current system of service delivery?
- How will the proposed business model benefit the market actors to improve access to services?

3. Target group and Geographic working area

- Who are the target group benefitting from the proposed model? How will farmers/companies/ machines/Machinery service providers/ women & youth be reached?
- Please mention the district, upazila, union.

4. Proposed activities, risks/assumptions and work plan

- What are the key activities and expected results to achieve and within what time frame?
- Please note that applicants may provide a Gantt chart for at least 1 year support.
- Please mention what risks are foreseen or assumptions considered to implement the activities. How will these risks be managed?

5. Expected results from the activities

- How many farmers will be benefited, disaggregated by gender and youth?
- How much additional sales (machine volume or revenue) for you and for farmers, MSPs, dealers companies?

6. Sustainability plan

- Please indicate the future plans beyond the project period and funding support.
- How will the proposed business model sustain?
- How will you expand in new geographic areas, reach more target groups?

7. Reasons for seeking the partnership

- Why are the funds from CSISA-MEA required instead of commercially available finance?
- Mention if there are other sources of funding used to test this business model/concept. Details may be explained as part of the financial proposal.

4. Financial proposal

NOTE: Financial proposals must follow the budget template below.

- The budget may be shared in a Microsoft Excel file but not mandatory.

- All the costs stated should include tax (10%) and VAT (15%) as per Bangladesh Govt policy.
- The proposed cost will be 50-50 (higher company leverage preferable) shared between CSISA-MEA and the company.
- CSISA-MEA does not cover costs of existing core team salary, fixed assets, working capital, office and operational equipment.
- If any applicant wants to add additional information relevant to the budget or any line item of the budget, please add columns to the right of the above template.

Budget							
	Head of Expense	Unit name (e.g. month/ day/ session/ number/ batch)	Unit Quantity	Unit cost	Total cost (BDT)	Company contribut ion	CSISA-MEA contribution
1							
2							
	Total cost in BDT						
	Total contribution (in %)						

The proposed budget should only show costs that are necessary and reasonable to perform the activities described in the technical proposal.

The financial proposal is required to include a budget narrative that explains and justifies the need for the expenses proposed in the budget. The narrative should help the reviewer understand why an item of cost is necessary and how it will be used for the activity for which it will be incurred. The budget narrative should demonstrate the relationship between the proposed activities and the budget. Just as the technical proposal should reflect the applicant's understanding of the objectives and the proposed approach to achieve those objectives, the budget and the accompanying narrative should be realistic and show a similar understanding of the financial requirements of the proposed program of activities.