#### REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

**Hiring Consultants/firm/agency**

For

**" Impact Evaluation of USAID-funded initiative "**

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| To: Consultants/firm/agency | Date: 17 May 2022 |

**Solidaridad Network Asia (SNA)** is hereby inviting interested Consultants/firm/agency to submit their proposals in the form of soft copy in non-editable mode (PDF/Scan) with your organization letterhead pad or on email body through email: recruitment.hrsna@gmail.com, or in the form of hardcopy in quotation box kept at Solidaridad Network Asia, Apartment # A1, Merrydale, 1st Floor, House # 32, Road # 10A, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1209.

Please see details information below with annexures:

### RFP Terms and Conditions and Instructions:

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| **RFP Name:** | **“Impact Evaluation of USAID-funded initiative”** |
| RFP Reference: | SNA/DAC/PR/04.22.127 |
| **Submission of Proposal:** | Separate **Technical and Financial proposals** require to be sent directly through email in PDF format to: It is mandatory to keep maximum file size: 9MB  **RFP reference**: " Impact Evaluation of USAID-funded initiative“ Shall be mentioned in subject line. |
| Deadline for the submission of proposals: | Proposal shall be submitted **On or before 23 May 2022 within 5.00 P.M** |
| Procurement Focal Point: | Probir Kumar Biswas, Email: probir.biswas@solidaridadnetwork.org |
| Technical Assistant and Specification of SNA | Mohammad Moziball Hoque, Senior Manager-Supply Chain and Business Development Email: [moziball@solidaridadnetwork.org](mailto:moziball@solidaridadnetwork.org) |
| Annexures: | Annexure-1: Guidelines to consultants/firm/agency**:**  Annexure-2: General Terms and Conditions  Annexure-3:Consultant /Company/Vendor’s Information  Annexure-4: Terms of Reference (ToR) |

**Annexure- 1**

**Guidelines to consultants/firm/agency:**

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| **Language of the proposal:** | The complete proposal including all sort documents as well as correspondence relating to the proposal exchanged between the consultant and SNA should be written in English. |
| **Cost of proposal:** | The consultant /bidder shall bear all cost related with the preparation and submission of the Proposal, the **Solidaridad Network Asia (SNA**) will be no responsible or accountable for those costs, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the solicitation. |
| **Proposal requisite** | Proposals must offer services for the total requirement. Proposals o Proposal must be submitted as per given terms and conditions as well as ToR. The consultant should comply all sort of corresponding instructions, terms and conditions, forms enclosed in the given documents. Failure to comply with these documents will be at the Offer or risk which may affect the evaluation of the Proposal. |
| **Proposal Prices** | **All prices shall be quoted in BDT and Including VAT & Tax** |
| **Late submission** | In case of late submission or received by SNA after the deadline, the submitted proposal will be rejected. |

**Annexure- 2**

**General Terms and Conditions**

1. Individual Consultants/firm/agency are requested to submit Financial and Technical Proposals separately through email: recruitment.hrsna@gmail.com.
2. The Proposal should be submitted or reached at the given email or address no later than 5 PM on the closing date.
3. SNA will pay in BDT for total consultancy by account payee cheque/BEFTN. Consultant will be responsible to pay VAT and other Taxes, as per government policy.
4. The deliverables should be delivered within the stipulated time period mention in the ToR and Agreement.
5. Please sign on the offered form and include all sort of essential documents for this proposal.
6. Solidaridadreserves the right to accept or reject any or all the proposals in full or part with or without assigning any reason whatsoever.

**Annexure-3**

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| **Consultants/firm/agency Information** | | |
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| SL# | Required Information | Information to be Provided here |
| 1 | Category of Vendor | Consultancy |
| 2 | Trade License Number |  |
| 3 | Tax Identification Number (TIN) |  |
| 4 | VAT Registration Number |  |
| 5 | Address of Business Center |  |
| 6 | Contact Telephone Number |  |
| 7 | Contact Mobile Number |  |
| 9 | Email Address: |  |
| 10 | Webpage Address (Optional) |  |
| 11 | Contact Person's Name |  |
| 12 | Vendor's Bank Name |  |
| 13 | Name of Bank Branch |  |
| 14 | Bank Sorting Code (Optional) |  |
| 15 | Bank Account Name |  |
| 16 | Bank Account Number |  |
| 17 | Bank Routing Number/Swift Code |  |

**Authorized Signature**

**Date:**

**Annexure-4: Terms of Reference (ToR)**

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**Solidaridad Network Asia**

**Terms of Reference (ToR)**

**Terms of Reference (ToR) For Impact Evaluation of USAID-funded initiative**

**Digital Inclusion and Empowerment for Women Dairy Farmers in Bangladesh**

**STANDARD GRANT NO: AID-OAA-A-17-00033**

1. **Background**

<https://www.solidaridadnetwork.org/> is a global non-profit organization focused on improving the social, environmental and economic sustainability of several commodity supply chains globally, with an emphasis on empowering smallholder producers, including farmers, workers and miners. In Asia, we have programs in Bangladesh focused on various commodity supply chains including dairy, fruits and vegetables, and aquaculture, among others.

80% of Bangladesh’s population lives in rural areas and most of the labor force is engaged in agriculture. Women are actively involved in different activities related to dairy farming. However, despite an improvement in gender dynamics in the community and women’s growing participation in farm management, marketing, and entrepreneurship, Solidaridad Network Asia has identified two important challenges that women dairy farmers still need to overcome:

(i) Currently, even though women farmers are engaged in all the activities related to milk production, they do not receive the money obtained from the sale of milk due to limited mobility, existing gender dynamics, and restrictive power relations. This ultimately results in reduced access to and control over financial/productive resources and limited participation in decision-making at the household level.

(ii) There is a huge gap in knowledge levels and adoption of good livestock management and dairy farming practices by the women dairy farmers due to lack of access to extension services. Often men attend the training sessions, while the work related to cattle rearing is done by the women in their homes. This results in the application of inefficient practices instead of improved ones, thereby generating low revenues from dairy farming.

In early 2020, Solidaridad Network Asia started implementing the “Digital Inclusion and Empowerment for Women Dairy Farmers in Bangladesh” initiative, a two-year project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to address these challenges through digital solutions. The project was awarded under USAID’s Women Connect Challenge (WCC) initiative.

The project’s goals were advancing economic empowerment of women dairy farmers and strengthening their capabilities as dairy entrepreneurs through the deployment of digital solutions. The project started in February 2020 and will end in June 2022. The project has introduced two digital solutions including the

i) Inclusion through Integration (i2i) mobile phone application and

ii) Interactive Voice Response (IVR)” system

The project has been implemented in two upazilas – Dumuria and Monirampur in Khulna and Jashore districts respectively. The project targeted 12,000 dairy women farmers to receive digital technical assistance through the IVR system. Out of this larger group, 4,500 women dairy farmers have also received support to become economically empowered through digital financial inclusion tools.

The project has designed its activities around the two main project objectives:

(i) Ensuring economic empowerment of women through digital financial inclusion

(ii) Provision of Digital Dairy Advisory Services.

**• Ensuring economic empowerment of women through digital financial inclusion**

The project targeted 4,500 women dairy farmers for activities related to advancing digital financial inclusion for economic empowerment. The initiative was geared towards addressing the issue that the earnings from the sales of milk typically reached the family members (often male) who delivered the milk, instead of the actual owner (women farmers), who own, milk, and look after the cows.

The project registered 4,500 women dairy farmers who are in the vicinity of 15 Milk Collection Centers (MCCs) in the project’s working area and linked them to mobile banking/bKash accounts. The project developed a mobile phone application called the “Inclusion through Integration (i2i) app” for ensuring that the earnings from the sale of milk go to the digital wallets of women dairy farmers. To ensure efficient management of the i2i digital app, the project delivers capacity-building training to the registered 4,500 women farmers, 15 MCC operators, and 150 community mobilizers on i2i app management, bKash account operation, and financial literacy. Through these activities, 15 MCC operators and 150 community mobilizers have been serving 4,500 women farmers over the life of the project.

The MCC operators input milk purchase data into the i2i app daily, including the amount owed to each farmer. Women receive information about the quantity, quality, and price of milk sold to the Milk Collection Centers (MCCs), and the money owed to them, via text messages. Upon getting these text messages, the women farmers can cash-out their money from their nearby bKash agents as per their need. Simultaneously, i2i app also works as a ledger and records/reports manager of transactions for the women farmers as well as MCC operators.

To ensure sustainable behavior change in the household and the community, the community mobilizers who were trained by the project organized sensitization programs for the 4,500 women’s family members on the importance of financial inclusion for women farmers. The 4,500 women farmers also received training on financial literacy and joint decision-making in the family.

**• Provision of Digital Dairy Advisory Services.**

In line with the objective of strengthening dairy farm management capacities, the project is addressing the problem of lack of awareness among women dairy farmers about modern dairy farming practices. Women have very little access to knowledge about critical topics such as feed management, disease management, adoption of artificial insemination, etc. This contributes to low quality and quantity of milk, ultimately impacting household incomes.

The project developed and started implementing an “Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system” since April 2021. The system sends text and voice messages to the mobile numbers of 12,000 registered farmers with the objective of improving their knowledge and skills on improved dairy farming practices. Women farmers can also call the IVR helpline on demand and access information from the system. The ultimate goal is to increase the quantity and quality of milk as well as reduce inefficient dairy farm management practices, thus increasing incomes. With the support of external experts, the project has developed text and voice messages (based on well-established dairy-related training modules) on 11 main topics and over 64 sub-topics based on the identified needs of women dairy farmers.

Registered women farmers are dialing 09604500740 for getting dairy farming-related information. The service is available 24/7 and currently, the service is available free of charge for the women farmers. Over the project period, the project reached 12,000 women dairy farmers. The project currently sends two text messages and two voice messes each month, and a total of 288,000 text messages and 288,888 voice messages have been sent. This digital system has been designed to complement the field-based training received throughout the year.

To achieve the objective, the project trained 65 Community Livestock Service Providers (CLSP) who provide support to 12,000 women farmers regarding the use of the IVR system.

The project has identified and contextualized seven indicators (Two Standard and Five Custom) to track project progress, outcomes, and impact.

**B. Objectives**

Solidaridad now seeks to carry out an impact evaluation of the project. The overall objective of the evaluation is to assess the extent of success that the women have achieved as entrepreneurs through measuring (a) the economic performance of their enterprises, (b) the ability of the women to effectively run their enterprises. More specifically, the evaluation shall provide evidence related to: (a) Economic empowerment of women, (b) Reduced digital divide, (c) Better adoption of good dairy practices, (d) Social empowerment of women entrepreneurs.

Additionally, the impact evaluation will gather information on:

• The ripple effects that the project has created. Questions should include, but need not be limited to (a) Have more women started dairy enterprises? (b) Have other women started to exercise control over income? (c) Are women now being given greater respect/recognition and roles in the society and household? Are more women interested in using mobile phones to improve their enterprises? Are more women interested in using digital financial transactions?

• What is the pattern of income usage by women and what does it imply for the overall household, and village? What potential impact can it create for Bangladesh?

• The impact assessment shall also provide lessons learned in terms of which project activities were most impactful and which ones were not, identify factors of success, and opportunities for improvement.

• To the extent possible, the assessment will also identify strategies to scale the impact of the program.

**C. Methodology**

The study should follow a mixed-methods approach, including quantitative and qualitative approaches. For the collection of quantitative data, a sample-based study should be conducted by applying appropriate sampling formula to make the findings representative across the population. In addition, for generating lessons learned, qualitative tools such as Focus Group Discussions (FGD)and Key Informant Interviews (KII) need to be conducted. A set of indicators have been defined for measurement and the selected agency will be expected to assess the predefined indicators. The methodology adopted, which will be finalized after consultation with Solidaridad, will have an analytical model that provides insights into the causal and significant factors that affect the outcome indicators.

The target groups for the survey will be:

• 12,000 Women Dairy farmers,

• 15 Milk Collection Center Operators,

• 65 Community Livestock Service Providers,

• 165 Community Mobilizers,

• What about family members, especially male members?

**D. Team Composition and Requirements:**

The agency is expected to have experience and expertise in Sector Analysis especially Dairy, gender equality, digital solutions, and women’s empowerment programming, and conduct rigorous evaluations in agricultural commodities. The agency should meet the following criteria:

• Track record and expertise in the management/evaluation of agriculture projects, especially the dairy sector;

• In-depth knowledge and extensive work experience in performance monitoring, research, and evaluation of women’s economic empowerment programming and digital solutions programming;

• Experience evaluating projects/activities funded by USAID;

• Knowledge and experience of USAID’s evaluation guidelines

• Preference for experience with the application of the “Women Empowerment Agriculture Index (WEAI)” Tool

• All the proposed members of the team must have a demonstrated track record of conducting evaluating USAID-funded projects, especially related to women’s economic empowerment and digital solutions, with a high degree of proficiency.

**E. Timeline**

This survey is scheduled to take place from 25th of May and End 20 June,2022

1. **Deliverables**

Final deliverables are to be submitted to include:

* A detailed report (both soft and hard copies) with the sections: Executive summary, Introduction/Project background, Objectives of the evaluation, Methodologies (sampling, list of the sample, tool, and techniques used for the data collection and analysis methods, including limitations, challenges encountered, and solutions applied), Analysis of findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations. Relevant use of graphics (graphs, pie charts, photographs etc.) to be included.
* Softcopies of data files.

1. **Application Instructions**

Solidaridad Network Asia invites interested companies/consulting firms to apply for the Impact Assessment assignment. Interested companies/firms must provide the following information during application: (a) CVs of the principal person who will lead the evaluation, (b) Technical proposal (maximum 6-7 pages) with include: methodologies (sampling methods, list of the sample, tools and techniques used for data collection and analysis methods), data quality ensuring mechanisms, team composition, 3 past report examples (c) Impact assessment execution plan including activities and timeline, (d) financial proposal

The key evaluation factors for technical proposals will include:

* Technical proposal is relevant to the overall project’s objective
* Proposed methodology of the impact assessment to address defined objective
* Prior experience in implementing impact assessments of projects funded by USAID, with an emphasis on women’s economic empowerment and digital solutions
* Quality of previously conducted evaluation reports

1. **Submission Instructions**

Mail or hand-deliver hard copies of technical and financial proposals **in separate sealed envelopes** to the following address:

recruitment.hrsna@gmail.com or in the form of hardcopy in quotation box kept at Solidaridad Network Asia, Apartment # A1, Merrydale, 1st Floor, House # 32, Road # 10A, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1209 by 23 May 2022.

1. **General terms**

* Solidaridad reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal without giving any verbal and/or written rationale.
* The intellectual Property rights for all reports and documents prepared during the assignment will be with Solidaridad.
* The reports/documents or any part, thereof, cannot be sold, used and reproduced in any manner without the prior written approval of Solidaridad.
* Solidaridad reserves the right to monitor the quality and progress of the work during the assignment.