

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Subject RFP #:	RFP-CATALYZE-217772-Ethiopia-2022-0311
RFP Issue Date:	June 17, 2022
Terms of Reference / Specifications:	SME CERTIFICATION ADVISORY SERVICE
Project	USAID CATALYZE Ethiopia:MS4G
The Company	Palladium International, LLC
Country of Performance	Ethiopia
Closing Date and Time	July 01, 2022, at 11:59 PM, Nairobi time (UTC+3)
Questions Deadline	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted at ethiopiams4g.procurement@thepalladiumgroup.com by June 22, 2022, at 02:00 PM, Nairobi time (UTC +3) <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Bidders' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Virtually on June 23, 2022, at 2:00-3:00 PM, Nairobi time (UTC +3) <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Details for Submission	Submissions will be accepted: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Electronically: email to ethiopiams4g.procurement@thepalladiumgroup.com <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In hard copy (sealed bids) (1 st Floor Noah Building, Bole Road Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)
Offer Validity Period	90 days

Thank you for your interest in the above procurement. As implementer for the CATALYZE Innovative Blended Finance Project funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Palladium invites you to submit a proposal for the scope of work attached in Annex A. Your proposal must be valid for the Validity Period.

Please email your notice of intention to submit a proposal by the Questions Deadline. Answers to questions shall be distributed to all offerors that have indicated an intention to submit a proposal by the deadline.

Please submit your proposal in accordance with the Details for Submission above by the Closing Date and Time. This RFP in no way obligates Palladium to award a contract nor does it commit Palladium to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal. Palladium bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

Yours sincerely,

CATALYZE Procurement Team

Terms and conditions

1. Proposal Conditions

By submitting a proposal, potential suppliers are bound by these terms and conditions. Potential suppliers must submit offers with all details provided in English and with prices quoted in a single currency.

2. Proposal Lodgement

The Company may grant extensions to the Closing Time at its discretion. The Company will not consider any quotes received after the Closing Time specified in the RFP unless the Company determines to do so otherwise at its sole discretion.

3. Evaluation

The Company may review all proposal to confirm compliance with this RFP and to determine the best proposal in the circumstances.

4. Alterations

The Company may decline to consider a proposal in which there are alterations, erasures, illegibility, ambiguity or incomplete details.

5. The Company's Rights

The Company may, at its discretion, discontinue the RFP; decline to accept any proposal; terminate, extend or vary its selection process; decline to issue any contract; seek information or negotiate with any potential supplier that has not been invited to submit a proposal; satisfy its requirement separately from the RFP process; terminate negotiations at any time and commence negotiations with any other potential supplier; evaluate proposals as the Company sees appropriate (including with reference to information provided by the prospective supplier or from a third party); and negotiate with any one or more potential suppliers.

6. Amendments and Queries

The Company may amend, or clarify any aspect of the RFP prior to the RFP Closing Time by issuing an amendment to the RFP in the same manner as the original RFP was distributed. Such amendments or clarifications will, as far as is practicable be issued simultaneously to all parties.

Any queries regarding this RFP should be directed to the Contact Person identified on the cover page of this RFP.

7. Clarification

The Company may, at any time prior to execution of a contract, seek clarification or additional information from, and enter into discussions and negotiations with, any or all potential suppliers in relation to their proposals. In doing so, the Company will not allow any potential supplier to substantially tailor or amend their proposal.

8. Confidentiality

In their proposal, potential suppliers must identify any aspects of their proposal that they consider should be kept confidential, with reasons. Potential suppliers should note that the Company will only agree to treat information as confidential in cases that it considers appropriate. In the absence of such an agreement, potential suppliers acknowledge that the Company has the right to disclose the information contained in their proposal.

The potential supplier acknowledges that in the course of this RFP, it may become acquainted with or have access to the Company's Confidential Information (including the existence and terms of this RFP and the TOR). It agrees to maintain the confidence of the Confidential Information and to prevent its unauthorised disclosure to any other person. If the potential supplier is required to disclose Confidential Information due to a relevant law or legal proceedings, it will provide reasonable notice of such disclosure to the Company. The parties agree that this obligation applies during the RFP and after the completion of the process.

9. Alternatives

Potential suppliers may submit proposals for alternative methods of addressing the Company's requirement described in the RFP where the option to do so was stated in the RFP or agreed in writing with the Company prior to the RFP Closing Time. Potential suppliers are responsible for providing a sufficient level of detail about the alternative solution to enable its evaluation.

10. Reference Material

If the RFP references any other materials including, but not limited to, reports, plans, drawings, samples or other reference material, the potential supplier is responsible for obtaining the referenced material and considering it in framing their proposal. And provide it to the Company upon request.

11. Price/Cost Basis

Prices or costs quoted must show the tax exclusive price, the tax component and the tax inclusive price.

The contract price, which must include any and all taxes, supplier charges and costs, will be the maximum price payable by the Company for the Goods and/or Services.

12. Financial information

If requested by the Company, potential suppliers must be able to demonstrate their financial stability and ability to remain viable as a provider of the Goods and/or Services over the term of any agreement.

If requested by the Company, the potential supplier must promptly provide the Company with such information or documentation as the Company reasonably requires in order to evaluate the potential supplier's financial stability.

13. Referees

The Company reserves the right to contact the potential supplier's referees, or any other person, directly and without notifying the potential supplier.

14. Conflict of interest

Potential suppliers must notify the Company immediately if any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest arises (a perceived conflict of interest is one in which a reasonable person would think that the person's judgement and/or actions are likely to be compromised, whether due to a financial or personal interest (including those of family members) in the procurement or the Company).

15. Inconsistencies

If there is inconsistency between any of the parts of the RFP the following order of precedence shall apply:

- (a) these Terms and Conditions;
- (b) the first page of this RFP; and
- (c) the Schedule

so that the provision in the higher ranked document will prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

16. Collusion and Unlawful Inducements

Potential suppliers and their officers, employees, agents and advisors must not engage in any collusive, anti-competitive conduct or any other similar conduct with any other potential supplier or person or quote any unlawful inducements in relation to their proposal or the RFP process.

Potential suppliers must disclose where proposals have been compiled with the assistance of current or former the Company employees (within the previous 9 months and who was substantially involved in the design, preparation, appraisal, review, and or daily management of this activity) and should note that this may exclude their proposal from consideration.

Potential suppliers warrant that they have not provided or offered any payment, gift, item, hospitality or any other benefit to the Company, its employees, consultants, agents, subcontractors (or any other person involved in the decision-making process relating to this RFP) which could give rise to a perception of bribery or corruption in relation to the RFP or any other dealings between the parties.

17. Jurisdiction

This RFP shall be subject to the laws of the District of Columbia, United States of America. The language of the arbitration will be English.

The Potential Supplier and the Company will use their best efforts to settle amicably any dispute, controversy, or claim arising out of, or relating to this RFP or the breach, termination, or invalidity thereof. If no agreeable settlement can be found, any dispute, controversy, or claim arising out of or relating to this RFP or the breach, termination, or invalidity thereof, shall be settled by mediation through the American Arbitration Association by filing a request for mediation with the AAA and the other party. The Parties will be bound by any arbitration award rendered as a result of such arbitration as the final adjudication of any such dispute.

Company Information

Palladium is a global leader in the design, development, and delivery of Positive Impact — the intentional creation of enduring social and economic value. We work with corporations, governments, foundations, investors, communities, and civil society to formulate strategies and implement solutions that generate lasting social, environmental and financial benefits.

Project Background

The CATALYZE Blended Finance Mechanism is a \$250 Million, 8-year contract (5-year base period, with 3 single year option periods) which uses a facilitated partnership model to craft solutions to crowd in \$2 Billion in blended finance (i.e., blended concessional and commercial finance) to USAID partner countries and initiatives. CATALYZE allows USAID Bureaus and Missions to efficiently deploy investment facilitation solutions that respond to the needs of specific sectors, issues, and geographies. Initial programs focus on education finance to implement sustainable education business models serving low-income communities, and achievement of the W-GDP objectives, but the mechanism can be applied to any development challenge or region.

USAID CATALYZE Ethiopia: MS4G is designed to benefit the Ethiopian people, build community resilience, and strengthen rural-urban linkages in the areas of food security, and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH). MS4G invests in developing relationships with private sector players, co-investing in inclusive business models, advisory services, digital solutions, and market-based initiatives that increase the resilience and sustainability of Ethiopian enterprises and employment for women and youth. The project supports activities in Addis Ababa and the secondary cities of Ethiopia.

MS4G seeks to assist high growth potential SMEs in the Food Security and WASH sectors obtain certifications through procuring certification advisory service providers on a pay for results basis to assist enterprises obtain relevant and applicable certifications. The certification advisory service provider will identify the required certifications, assess the enterprises' readiness through undertaking a gap analysis, develop an implementation plan and assist firms with implementation.

Purpose

The purpose of the RFP is to select a certification advisory service provider to **support 8 SMEs in Food Security and WASH sectors** in Ethiopia to obtain product quality and safety certifications.

Bidders are advised to be aware of the definition of Food Security and WASH as listed below.

- **Food Security** Enterprises supported by certification advisory service providers under this category must be conducting business in the food security value chains (VC). A VC is the process or activities by which a company adds value to an article, including production, marketing, and distribution. Examples of value chain actors eligible for support include, but are not limited to, input dealers, farmers/producers, processors, aggregators, traders, retailers, exporters, agriculture logistics firms, and agriculture technology providers. At least 50% of the approved enterprises must be active in secondary cities across Ethiopia ^[1].
- **Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)** – Certification advisory service providers may provide support for enterprises in the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene sector to improve services, innovations, and/or access to safe drinking water, sanitation solutions, and hygiene in Ethiopia.

[1] Secondary cities mean *cities with a population of 300,000 or more.*

A complete scope of work is attached as Annex A.

Type of Contract

Palladium intends to issue a Pay-for-Performance (P4P) subcontract to the selected offeror.

Anticipated Contract Period of Performance

Subcontracts will be offered to winning bidders for a period of **12 months** (July 2022 to June 2023) with the option for renewal based on performance and the availability of funding, at the sole discretion of MS4G.

Place of Performance

The activities to be performed under this subcontract will take place in Ethiopia: See the Instructions for Submission of Cost Proposal for travel assumptions.

Key Deliverables and Timeline

Deliverable #	Report and Deliverable	Deadline
1	Business diagnostics, recommendation, and implementation plan a. Selection of SME b. Establishing implementation milestones c. Signing of agreement	Within 45 days from subcontract date
2	Quarterly Report a. Execution of Implementations and change management based on agreed milestones	Quarterly basis from date of submission of the implementation plan.
3	Certification a. Certification audit b. Attainment of certification (8 SMEs in Food Security and WASH sectors)	Within the 12-month contract period.

Instructions to Offerors

Separate technical and cost proposals must be submitted by email no later than the time and date specified on the cover page.

1. Technical Proposal

For the technical proposal, the offeror must submit:

- (a) Cover letter with the following information:
 1. Firm contact info and address
 2. Type of company or organization
 3. Signed by an authorized representative of the company
- (b) Background on the firm and relevant expertise (max 2 pages)
- (c) Past Experience Information/Capability Statement
- (d) Technical Proposal & Management Approach
- (e) Proposed work plan showing how the firm would execute this project including a timeline (max 2 pages)
- (f) Description of relevant projects previously performed by the firm, demonstrating expertise in detail. (max 4 pages)
- (g) Contact details for three referees (max 1 page)
- (h) Executive summary of project reports for commercial smallholder projects with linkages to commercial off-takers (max 3 report submissions, max 2 pages each)
- (i) All supporting documentation specified below in the pass/fail evaluation criteria.
- (j) All offerors are required to complete, sign, and submit the Due Diligence Questionnaire (Attachment 1) with their technical proposal.

2. Cost Proposal

Offers must submit a cost proposal. CATALYZE will provide a budget template upon request through ethiopiams4g.procurement@thepalladiumgroup.com The cost proposal consists of:

- (a) Budget in Microsoft Excel with all formulas visible (unlocked) **Attachment 3**
- (b) Accompanying Word Document with all cost assumptions and explanations
- (c) Unique Entity Identification (UEI) Number (see further guidance below)

Note: GSA has developed a useful interactive PDF tool that guides through the most common scenarios about UEI (https://www.fsd.gov/sys_attachment.do?sys_id=af05f8fb1b44851006b09796bc4bcb6d)

- Offerors who already have the **Unique Entity Identified (UEI)** number, should submit the UEI number with cost proposal submission.
- Offerors who have no **Unique Entity Identified (UEI)** are required to apply following the UEI guideline and submit with the proposal if they secure the number.
- Offerors who applied and are waiting to receive the **Unique Entity Identified (UEI) number**, should attach proof of application (application screenshot) with proposal submission.

Key Assumptions

- Budget in Ethiopian Birr
- All prices are to be inclusive of relevant taxes
- Separate unit cost and number of units
- Break down activity costs into as much detail as possible
- Offerors should budget for: Labor, Travel and Other costs
- Offeror should budget for:
 - Defense Base Act (DBA) insurance in accordance with FAR 52.228-3, as applicable.

Submission of Offers

Electronic proposals must be submitted by sending two separate emails, one for technical proposal and one for cost proposal with the RFP number RFP-CATALYZE-Ethiopia-2022-0311 in the subject lines. If submitting in hard copy, the technical proposal and cost proposal must be in **separate sealed envelopes**. Mark envelopes with the RFP number RFP-CATALYZE-Ethiopia-2022-0311 and offeror’s name. Ensure all required documents are attached.

Offers received past the deadline stated on the cover page will be deemed non-responsive and will not be considered for award.

Evaluation and Award Process

Proposals will be evaluated using a best value trade off methodology. This is a three-stage process.

- (1) The first set of criteria is graded on a pass/fail basis. Offerors must meet the following minimum eligibility qualification criteria and provide supporting documentation:

	Requirement	Supporting Documentation
(a)	Must be a registered legal entity in Ethiopia for a minimum of one year	Copy of Certificate (Renewed business license, TIN and VAT/as applicable) or articles and memorandum of associate
(b)	Must not have any active exclusions from the working with the US government (www.sam.gov), the UN (Sanctions List), or the US Department of the Treasury Office of Foreign Asset Control	N/A

- (2) If these minimum criteria are met, the offer’s technical proposal will be evaluated as follows:

Evaluation Criteria	Documents Evaluated	Points
1. Geographic coverage, sector coverage and firm profiles: a. Evidence of local presence in secondary cities. b. Certification advisory service provider works within preferred sectors food security and WASH; c. Identified and profile of a minimum of eight (8) growth-oriented companies as per SoW some of whom are women-owned, women-led businesses	a. Proof of office rental agreement in secondary cities b. Reference to the service provided c. Indication of Interest from enterprises	10
2. Certification advisory service provider is majority women-owned (50%), women managed or led businesses	Shareholder Agreement or equivalent	5
3. Key personnel and staffing plan: a. Proposed team-lead CVs demonstrating at least five years' experience supporting enterprises in business development and sales related activities. b. CVs of two key personnel demonstrating ability to support and carry out the SoW	CVs	20
4. Past Performance a. Demonstrated and evidence experience in supporting enterprises obtain HACCP and ISO certifications.	Evidenced Performance and reference of enterprises and contact person.	30
5. Technical proposal a. Management approach b. Workplan		35
TOTAL		100

(3) The offeror's cost proposal will be evaluated for:

- Proposed total price, relative to other offers received
- Realism and reasonableness of the work to be performed
- Price reflects a clear understanding of the requirements
- Price is consistent with various elements of the technical proposal
- Compliance with USAID cost principles (select one: Non-profit entities – Cost Principles in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E or for-profit entities – Cost Principles in FAR Part 31)

Palladium reserves the right to award under this solicitation without further negotiations. The offerors are encouraged to offer their best terms and prices with the original submission.

PROCUREMENT INTEGRITY AND ETHICS

It is Palladium's Policy that no gifts of any kind and of any value be exchanged between vendors/contractors and Palladium personnel. Discovery of the same will be grounds for disqualification of the vendor/contractor from participation in any Palladium's procurements and may result in disciplinary actions against Palladium personnel involved in such discovered transactions.

Resulting Award

This RFP in no way obligates Palladium to award a contract. Palladium may opt to select multiple offers in response to this RFP.

Any contract/purchase order resulting from this solicitation must be signed by both parties in order to be considered valid and in force. All costs associated with, but not limited to, production, preparation and/or delivery of goods or services, including deliveries, accepted by Palladium staff, without a fully executed (signed by both parties) contract/purchase order, are at the vendor's risk only. Palladium shall not pay for any costs, without limitation, associated with production, preparation or delivery of goods and/or services under this or any other contract/purchase order, which has not been signed by both parties.

If your proposal is successful, you will be required to enter into the Company's standard contract for the types of goods or services being provided. In the provision of the Goods and Services, you will be required to comply with the Company's policies, including (without limitation) its Business Partner Code of Conduct and any relevant client terms and conditions. Potential suppliers must also comply with the Company's Business Partner Code of Conduct in the submission of any proposals pursuant to this RFP.

If you are bidding as part of a joint venture, partnership or similar, please make this clear in your submission. Likewise, if you propose to subcontract any part of the goods or services provision, then disclose this fact within your submission. The Company may require additional information from you and approval for subcontracting will not be automatic as subcontractors will be subject to Palladium's Due Diligence process.

Attachments

Please review the additional documentation and proposed contract terms and conditions which should be given consideration when preparing your proposal. By submitting your bid, you will certify that you are in agreement with the contract terms and conditions as included in this solicitation and that all prices include all aspects of the required compliance with the terms and conditions of the proposed contract.

Attachment 1 - Due Diligence Questionnaire

Attachment 2 - FFP Subcontract Template

Attachment 3 - Budget Template

Palladium Business Partner Code of Conduct and Child Protection Guidelines can be downloaded in full at: <http://www.thepalladiumgroup.com/policies> or request through email from Catalyze.procurement@thepalladiumgroup.com

Annex A: Scope of Work

1. Objective

MS4G seeks to assist high growth potential SMEs in the Food Security and WASH sectors obtain certifications through procuring certification advisory service providers on a pay for results basis to assist enterprises obtain relevant and applicable certifications. The certification advisory service provider will identify the required certifications, assess the enterprises' readiness through undertaking a gap analysis, develop an implementation plan and assist firms with implementation. The service provider will be required to undertake the following:

2. Activities: Selected certification advisory service provider will be responsible for the four activities described below.

- a. Identify businesses. The certification service advisory must identify at least 8 growth- oriented enterprises to support in the Food Security and WASH sectors from its own network or the MS4G ecosystem. Growth-oriented is defined as a company with three or more years of active business operation with progressive growth. The company is characterized by rapid sales and revenue growth with a net cash flow. This activity will be linked to another MS4G intervention and facility to ensure companies get the necessary capital to accelerate their growth.
 - i. *Gender Parity: At least 50% of the companies must be women-owned or led.*
 - ii. *Geographic Diversity: At least 50% of the companies must be in secondary cities with a population of 300,000 or more.*
 - iii. *Firm Commitment: Certification advisory service provider must obtain signed commitment from participating firms indicating the firm's willingness to contribute 25% of the cost of the service and cooperate in the delivery of the services.*
- b. Firm-specific Diagnostic. Conduct a gap analysis between the requirements for each certification and the current practices of the enterprise. For example, for the ISO 9001 Certification, check the enterprises' quality management system and compare with the requirements of the ISO 9001 standard to determine the gap in practices.
- c. Based on the diagnostic, submit a proposal for services to be rendered. The firm must approve the proposed changes required to achieve the certification. The certification advisory service provider must recommend the strategy, workplan and timeline to achieve such objectives. The technical support must produce attainment of the certification.
- d. Certification. Ensure the attainment of the certification and ensure the appropriate procedures and controls are in place to for the audit and are working effectively in accordance with the requirements of the certification.

3. Acceptance of Deliverables

Deliverables will be reviewed by the Technical Manager (or his/her designee) for completeness before being accepted and approved for payment.

No.	Deliverables	Acceptance Criteria
1	Business diagnostics, recommendation, and implementation plan <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Selection of SMEs b. Establish implementation milestones c. Signing of agreement 	The certification advisory service provider will identify and select food security and WASH businesses, then sign and submit a contract to provide certification consulting services. Company profile, diagnostic and recommendation report. The report must include implementation plan, timeline, and expected outcome. The enterprise must sign-off on the report and the recommendations.

2	Quarterly Report a. Execution of Implementation and change management based on agreed milestones	Documented progress on interventions outlined in the implementation plan in the business diagnostic report for each participating enterprise.
3	Certification a. Certification audit b. Attainment of certification (8 SMEs in Food Security and WASH sectors)	Audited documents Proof of certification

Delivery Timetable

No.	Deliverables	Due Date
1	Business diagnostics, recommendation, and implementation plan a. Selection of SME b. Establish implementation milestones c. Signing of agreement	Within 45 days from contract date
2	Quarterly Report a. Execution of Implementations, Change management	Quarterly basis
3	Certification a. Certification audit b. Attainment of certification (8 SMEs in Food Security and WASH sectors)	Within the 12-month contract period.

Payment Schedule

- MS4G will cover the cost of the certification cost.
- The enterprise is expected to contribute **25%** of cost related to the services. The contribution can be provided in cash or in-kind.
- **75%** will be covered by USAID CATALYZE Ethiopia

Payment for each output per firm

The table below is an illustrative payment structure. Actual payments will be determined during final contracting.

No.	Deliverables per firm	Payment Percentage
1	Business diagnostics, recommendation, and implementation plan a. Selection of SME b. Establishing Implementation milestones c. Signing of agreement	20%
2	Quarterly Report d. Execution of Implementations and Change management	10% per quarter
		10% per quarter
		10% per quarter
3	Certification a. Certification audit b. Attainment of certification (8 SMEs in Food Security and WASH sectors)	50%
	Total	100%