

## **Request for Proposals**

# **Youth Economic Empowerment Program**

### **Under**

**USAID Agriculture and Food Systems Development Activity (AFDA)**

### **PROJECT BACKGROUND**

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Feed the Future Agriculture and Food Systems Development Activity (AFDA) will facilitate the transformation of agriculture and food systems by increasing productivity, inclusiveness, and competitiveness of key sectors in the Zone of Influence: Shan, Kachin, Mandalay, Sagaing, and Magway. It has four intended outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Increased economic interdependence among market actors of different ethnic backgrounds
- Outcome 2: Increased access to agricultural support services
- Outcome 3: Increased availability of improved inputs
- Outcome 4: Smallholder supply chains expand domestic and international market access

In order to achieve this, AFDA will identify existing and potential market opportunities and incentivize firms to invest in their operations and supply chains, while pulling smallholder farmers and rural participants, many in ethnically diverse areas, into expanded markets. AFDA will facilitate systemic change by using adaptive management and stakeholder-led processes to facilitate improved conditions and incentives for markets to work better for poor and marginalized populations. This will result in strengthened market linkages and improved service provisions, input supply, and post-harvest value addition to meet market demand in a conflict-sensitive manner.

AFDA's Youth Economic Empowerment (YEE) component aims to integrate youth-specific activities and interventions into the program's 4 overarching objectives and the Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment cross-cutting objective. AFDA's long-term vision for YEE is to develop the skills of young people to successfully enter and thrive in agriculture and food systems, while strengthening the enabling environment and working with market system actors to create opportunities for youth inclusion.

## OBJECTIVES

Initial research, assessments, and focus group discussions conducted with private sector market actors, youth-serving organizations, skills training providers, and youth themselves revealed that young people do not have access to information on trainings on workforce readiness, employability skills, and other technical skills demanded by market actors. Additionally, youth lack connections to local business associations. The research also revealed that local youth networks (who do a lot of outreach to youth across the ZOI) do not offer demand-driven economic empowerment programming, particularly workforce development programming such as trainings and information about job opportunities, as well as business development support opportunities. Additionally, private sector employers hire employees through word-of-mouth referrals and struggle to find skilled youth employees for their businesses' needs. The research also demonstrated the interest and eagerness of young people to learn more about technology as it related to improving agricultural practices, innovations, and increasing their employment chances.

In the agricultural sector, the majority of youth employed in agriculture are on-farm laborers, factory workers, operation workers, and some middle management. Across the ZOI, young people face common challenges in accessing the technical trainings necessary to upgrade their skill sets, and therefore miss out on job opportunities necessary for upgrading their roles and continuing to progress in their careers. From the perspective of market actors, they prefer to recruit local/regional skilled labors that are hard to identify, but to which youth workforce can fill the gap once they possess employability and workforce readiness skills required by such employers.

To address this gap in the supply of skilled labor and demand from employers for that labor, AFDA is seeking to partner with Youth-Serving Organizations (YSO), such as Local Youth Networks, Private Institutions and TVETs, Youth Capacity Building Centers, and NGOs/CSOs that are serving young people from AFDA's Zone of Influence (ZOI), namely the regions and states of **Shan, Kachin, Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway**. The organizations will support the launch, piloting, and oversight of several YEE activities.

Partners should ensure that their proposals include concrete models and plans for youth to better access relevant technical and workforce readiness trainings, support, and capacity building opportunities. Partners should reach 1000-2000 male and female youth. **[Note: this target is not meant for one partner only. Applicant should propose their desired target to contribute to 1000-2000 youths.]** Proposals should also include plans for how the partner proposes to link trained youth to employment and internship opportunities with market actors (e.g., employers, businesses, enterprises, and firms). This includes plans for these market actors to more broadly network with youth-serving organizations and women's associations that focus on promoting young women's capacity development, etc. and that can create a more sustainable pipeline of talent, thus meeting the demand for skilled labor from these market actors.

## Deliverables

- Develop workplan on how the applicant will implement employability and other skills, trainings, and programs, as well as monitor progress of workplans.
- Attend TOT Training provided by AFDA (AFDA developed a comprehensive youth employability skills and workforce readiness curriculum, including topics such as digital

literacy) (Requirement and # of days TBD based on the experience and readiness of the applicants.)

- Organize youth and select participants for employability skills trainings using selection criteria approved by AFDA.
- Develop or adapt existing curriculum on business development skills and other youth capacity building related training sessions in collaboration with AFDA or approved by AFDA.
- Deliver employability skills and workforce readiness trainings, provide mentoring and coaching, and submit a training report.
- Identify host employers and connect trained youth to workplace-based learning opportunities and internships (with private sector partners such as AFDA/MSDF partners and other market actors.)
- Support youth program participants as needed through initiatives such as mentorships, workplace visits, referrals, etc.
- Monitor risks associated with youth participation, including considerations around youth exploitation, abuse, neglect, gender-based discrimination, and the prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation in workplaces.
- Provide specific analyses and reports to AFDA in the form of progress report (two times), including a presentation to AFDA's Senior Management Team.
- Reach out and engage with other local youth and women networks, private sector partners, local actors, and community leaders as needed.
- Provide final report to AFDA with a presentation to Senior Management Team.

## TENTATIVE TIMEFRAME

|                     | Particular   | Due Date                          |
|---------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Deliverables</b> |  |                                   |
| 1                   | Participant selection criteria and list of participants selected | April 2022                        |
| 2                   | Co-designing tools and curriculum                                | April 2022                        |
| 3                   | Receive Training (ToT)   | April 2022                        |
| 4                   | Deliver trainings to youths                                      | May 2022                          |
| 5                   | On-job learning (Internship Program)                             | June 2022 onwards                 |
| 6                   | Progress report (with presentation to SMT)                       | End of Month Three and Month Five |
| 7                   | Final report (with presentation to SMT)                          | End of Month Seven                |

## Selection Criteria of Partnership

- At least **three** years of experience and knowledge in working with young people across the ZOI with particular experience working with youth in agriculture and food systems. The partner should also have a sound and in-depth understanding of the challenges faced by young women that hinder their employability. The partner should have the ability to design support activities addressing those challenges.
- Demonstrated technical expertise and experience in youth development, capacity building, mentoring, and coaching. The partner should have approaches to working with youth, digital literacy, etc.
- At least two years of experience in designing, facilitating, and delivering skill-building trainings for youth.

- Understanding of market systems and experience in workforce development preferred.
- Experience working with diverse communities, including ethnic minorities is highly preferred.
- Experience working with private sector companies or with local businesses is preferred.
- Being youth mappers with high enthusiasm in inclusion of IDP youth is preferred.
- Successful history of trained youths establishing their own businesses or attaining employment.

*Organizations affiliated with political parties, groupings, institutions, or their subsidiaries and affiliates, as well as those promoting anti-democratic policies or illegal activities are ineligible.*

**Interested applicants (youth networks, youth serving organizations, private TVETs, capacity building centers) that meet the selection criteria should submit a proposal using the below template in Annex 1 and respond to the selection criteria above.**

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis starting the day of the release of this Request for Proposal until the deadline. The selected organizations will present the YEE model to the AFDA team. These include, among others, geographic focus, commercial viability, approach to target, impact, incremental benefits from without and with the project, and requested support from AFDA.

Applicants must have internet connectivity for effective and expeditious communication. They should submit the EOI to this email address: [afdaprocurmnt@acdivocamm.org](mailto:afdaprocurmnt@acdivocamm.org). The **extended** deadline for submission is (11 March 2022) but we will continue to accept applications until suitable candidates are identified.

Please note that the USAID-AFDA **fully respects the confidentiality** of proprietary information of all participating organizations.

Submit all inquiries and requests for information regarding requests for RFP to [afdaprocurmnt@acdivocamm.org](mailto:afdaprocurmnt@acdivocamm.org).

Condition: Issuance of this Request for EOI in no way constitutes a commitment by the USAID AFDA or by USAID to execute any agreement or to pay any costs incurred by any applicant for application submissions.

Annex 1: Template for presentation (maximum 3 pages)

## **1. GENERAL INFORMATION**

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Date of submission:           |  |
| Name of the organization/firm |  |
| Type of organization/firm     |  |
| Registration Number           |  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Please provide registration status if you are still trying to register.</i>  |   |
| Period of Business Operation (number of years the firm has been active)   |   |
| Address of the organization/firm  |   |
| Owner of the organization/firm/enterprise<br>Please provide list for joint ownership with m/f & age.  | Name:   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Age more than 29 <input type="checkbox"/> Age 15- 29 |
| Manager<br><i>(if different from the owner)</i><br><i>Please provide list for multiple management roles or an organization chart with m/f &amp; age</i> | Name:   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Age more than 29 <input type="checkbox"/> Age 15- 29 |
| Contact information   | Address, email, phone:  |
| Geographic focus the applicant can cover.   |   |

2. Background history and relevant experiences
3. Proposed model of implementation and estimated budget
4. Sample of previous work
5. Samples of outline of relevant program/training curriculum (to decide the need for receiving a TOT by the selected applicant/s.)

Note: List of staff with organizational structure may be provided.