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| Project: | Independent Verification of the Clean Cooking Services and Selected Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the Modern Cooking Facility for Africa (MCFA) |
| Project Countries: | The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe (the Project Countries) |
| Sector: | Clean cooking |
| Funding sources: | Modern Cooking Facility for Africa, financed by Sweden, Norway and the European Union |
| Type of contract: | Consulting Services |
| Type of notice: | Invitation for Expression of Interest |
| Issue date: | 12 March 2024 |
| Closing date: | 22 April 2024 at 12:00 (noon) local time in Helsinki (Eastern European time (EET)). |

Assignment Description: The overall objective of the Modern Cooking Facility for Africa (MCFA) programme is to accelerate access to modern, higher-tier clean cooking services (CCS) for consumers in the seven Project Countries. MCFA will do this by incentivising private companies, so called Cooking Service Providers (CSP) to establish or scale up existing innovative sustainable local businesses in these African countries to create a local market for high-technology clean cooking solutions. Further information on the MCFA is available at <https://moderncooking.africa/>.

In April 2022 the MCFA launched its first call for proposals (MCFA1) inviting interested companies selling modern cooking solutions to compete for funding. In January 2024, MCFA closed its second call for proposals (MCFA2) aimed at scaling up clean cooking businesses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Nefco as the facility manager of the MCFA intends to contract a qualified service provider: a consultancy firm, international organisation, service provider or a consortium of organisations (“**Consultant**”) to undertake an independent verification of the Clean Cooking Services (CCS) contracted between the MCFA-supported Cooking Service Providers (CSPs) and their clients in the partner countries (the “Assignment”). The Assignment also includes the verification of selected programme Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and fuel availability in the case of some CSPs.

The main **purpose** of this Assignment is to carry out annual independent verifications, conducted by hiring an Independent Verification Agent (IVA), of Clean Cooking Services (CCS) reported by contracted Cooking Service Providers (CSPs) to Nefco to ensure the effectiveness, integrity, and accountability of the results-based finance incentives provided by MCFA. The verification process will assess the accuracy and truthfulness of data submitted by CSPs during the review processes, particularly for claim management, prevent subsidy-related fraud, and contribute to monitoring, evaluation, and learning at CSP and fund levels.

The **objectives** of the independent verification are to:

1. Verify the accuracy and reliability of the reported results and data provided by the CSPs;
2. Provide CSP-level and fund-level aggregate figures on relevant Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), e.g. fuel availability and convenience of acquisition;
3. Ensure compliance with consumer protection requirements by the CSPs;
4. Assess customer experience and satisfaction, and impact on the quality of life in the end-user households, including from the gender-equality perspective;

5. Identify opportunities for improving CSP performance and to generate insights for the companies themselves, Nefco, and the investors, and to support the sector at large.

The independent verification will serve multiple intended users and fulfil various uses, including:

- Nefco as the fund manager: Ensuring the correct use of funds, managing risks, and facilitating adaptive management within the results-based finance programme.
- Donors: Providing insights into how their funds are being utilised and acquiring information on the achievement of desired results within the programme.
- CSPs: The companies will obtain feedback from the IVA in terms of the quality of the data provided in results-based payment requests to Nefco, and they will obtain qualitative and quantitative feedback from their customers, enabling them to address customer satisfaction and overcome challenges encountered in delivering clean cooking services.
- Wider community in the clean cooking sector: Facilitating mutual learning and knowledge sharing on how to achieve clean cooking objectives in Sub-Saharan Africa, contributing to the collective advancement of clean cooking initiatives in the region.

Nefco will enter into a framework agreement with the selected Consultant and will seek to call off verifications in batches of several Cooking Service Providers (CSPs).

Assignment Start Date and Duration: The Assignment is expected to start in October 2024 and be completed at the latest by Q4/2028.

Maximum Budget Available for the Assignment: Up to EUR 1,500,000 (exclusive of VAT), of which EUR 360,000 are reserved for reimbursable costs. The budget also includes a contingency reserve of 10% of the total budget.

Funding Source: Modern Cooking Facility (MCFA) via NEFCO.

Eligibility: There are no eligibility restrictions on the nationality of the Consultant.

Consultant Profile: The Consultant will be a company or a consortium of companies with in-depth experience from independent verification of results-based financing programmes, clean cooking and/or energy access in developing markets, and conducting household-level surveys.

In terms of previous experience and financial standing, the Consultant or lead consultant in case of consortia should demonstrate the following minimum criteria:

- A minimum of 2 contracts of similar annual value (EUR 1 million), nature and complexity implemented in the last five years;
- A minimum average annual turnover of EUR 750,000 for the last three years;
- At least 5 household surveys conducted in developing country context, including a minimum sample size of 500 interviews in the last 5 years.

Submission Requirements: Interested Consultants are hereby invited to submit their Expressions of Interest for the purposes of being shortlisted. To assess the qualifications and competence of the Consultants seeking to be shortlisted, the information submitted should include the following:

- Company profile;
- Clearly indicated information on the Minimum Requirements; and

- Details of experience in similar assignments, including their locations (especially assignments in DRC, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and/or Zimbabwe or references from other Sub-Saharan African countries).

The above information shall not exceed 3 pages, excluding reference cards.

Notes:

1. The shortlist of qualified and experienced Consultants will be made from responses to this notification. The short-listed consultants will be asked to submit technical and financial proposals, from which the highest-ranked consultant will be selected.
2. Nefco will evaluate received Expressions of Interest only from those Consultants that meet the Minimum Criteria defined above.

Next steps:

The preliminary timeline is as follows: NEFCO expects to distribute a Request for Proposal, including Terms of Reference with specific evaluation criteria among the shortlisted Consultants in May 2024. The expected submission deadline for consultants' proposals is early August 2024 and the Assignment is expected to start during October 2024.

Expressions of Interest shall be submitted in English in one pdf file by email to Nefco at procurement@nefco.fi with copy to petra.mikkolainen@nefco.int with subject: "MCFA IVA Service Provider - Expression of Interest" to reach NEFCO no later than **22 April 2024 at 12:00 (noon) local time in Helsinki (Eastern European time (EET))**.

Please allow sufficient time for the submission taking into account the time differences and noting that NEFCO will not accept any late submissions.

Questions and Answers:

Any questions on this Invitation for Expression of Interest shall be provided in writing to NEFCO by e-mail: at procurement@nefco.int with copy to petra.mikkolainen@nefco.int no later than **31 March 2024** after which all questions will be compiled by NEFCO without any editing in the form they are sent to NEFCO. Answers to the questions will be published at <https://www.nefco.int/procurements/>.

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