



USAID
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WEST AFRICA

ISSUANCE DATE: July 14, 2015

CLOSING DATE: July 27, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. Ghana Time

**SOLICITATION # 624-15-010 FOR PERSONAL SERVICE CONTRACTOR
PROJECT MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST**

Ladies/Gentlemen:

The United States Government, represented by the United States Agency for International Development/West Africa (USAID/West Africa), is seeking applications from qualified Third Country Nationals interested in providing Personal Services Contractor (PSC) services as described in the attached solicitation.

Submissions must be in accordance with the requirements of the solicitation, at the place and time specified. In order to be considered for the position, a candidate must meet the minimum qualifications listed in the solicitation and must submit all required documentation. The Project Management Specialist position will be located in Accra, Ghana.

All application packages are to be submitted to:

Via email: accrapsc@usaid.gov. Or Via courier: **Regional Executive Office
USAID/West Africa
No. 24 Fourth Circular Rd. CT
P.O. Box 1630
Accra, Ghana**

Please cite the solicitation number and position title within the subject line of your email application. Any attachments provided via email must be in a format compatible with Microsoft Word 2003 or PDF and not zipped. Note that attachments to email must not exceed 3 MB. Form OF-612 must be signed. Incomplete and unsigned applications will not be considered.

USAID/West Africa anticipates awarding one (1) Personal Service Contract as a result of this solicitation. Please note that this does not constitute any guarantee that a PSC will be awarded as result of this solicitation nor does it constitute any authorization by USAID to reimburse costs incurred in the preparation of an application. Any questions on this solicitation may be directed to Vida Aggrey at vaggrey@usaid.gov or the undersigned at dbrady@usaid.gov.

Sincerely,

//Signed//

Don Brady

Supervisory Executive Officer

U.S. Agency for International Development
No. 24 Fourth Circular Rd.
P. O. Box 1630, Accra-Ghana

Tel: 233-302-741-200
Fax: 233-302-741-365

SOLICITATION NUMBER: 624-15-010

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CLOSING DATE/TIME: July 27, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. Ghana Time

POSITION TITLE: Project Management Specialist, Agriculture

MARKET VALUE: (\$86,399.00 - \$112,319.00) the market value for this position is equivalent to GS-14 level. Final compensation will be negotiated within the listed market value based upon the candidate’s past salary, work history and educational background. **Salaries over and above the top of the pay range will not be entertained or negotiated.**

AREA OF CONSIDERATION: Open to Third Country Nationals (TCNs)

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: Two (2) years with option to extend for three (3) additional years. Extensions will be contingent on satisfactory performance, continued need for the services and availability of funds.

PLACE OF PERFORMANCE: Accra, Ghana

SECURITY/MEDICAL CLEARANCE: Selected applicant must obtain Employment Authorization and Medical Clearance within a reasonable period of time (USAID will provide details regarding these clearances to the selected candidate). If such clearances are not obtained within a reasonable time or negative suitability issues are involved, any offer made may be rescinded.

1.0 BACKGROUND:

USAID/West Africa is a regional operating unit of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), responsible for managing development programs that cover 21 countries¹, seven of which have bilateral USAID missions. The USAID/West Africa Regional Agriculture Office is responsible to manage the cross-cutting FTF initiative in West Africa. It contributes to the overall economic growth Development Objective of “Advancing Economic Growth and Resilience through African Partners” under the newly designed Draft Regional Cooperation Development Strategy and to the FTF Strategy for West Africa.

¹ Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, and Sao Tome & Principe.

With more than 300 million inhabitants, the West Africa region ranks as the poorest with the lowest level of human capital development, and the highest in population growth, and maternal and child mortality. Most institutions have limited absorptive capacity. Inter-governmental and national partners are limited by weak regional and national systems and inadequate financial support. The agriculture sector is critical to job creation and sustained economic growth in West Africa. The ECOWAS Policy for Agriculture (ECOWAP), together with its associated implementation plan, the Regional Agriculture Investment Plan (RAIP), guides the investments under the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program for the region, and provides an overarching framework for policies and programs to increase agriculture-based economic growth and food security in West Africa.

West Africa's lack of robust intra-regional trade exacerbates food insecurity, pushes vulnerable populations into reoccurring crises, and aggravates already low malnutrition rates among rural poor and newly urban populations. Improvements in regional and national level policies will lead to expanded trade and access to new markets, stronger resilience to man-made and natural disasters among vulnerable populations, and increased availability and access to nutritious foods. West Africa's farmers and traders operate in local marketplaces and fail to penetrate the larger swaths of purchasing power residing in domestic, regional, and internal markets. Improved trade facilitation and lowering barriers to engaging those marketplaces to open opportunities capturing higher earnings.

A number of regional institutions in West Africa continue to play vital roles in addressing the region's development challenges. Inter-governmental regional organizations have strong political mandates, commitment and support from national governments. Key regional organizations in West Africa include: the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); the Permanent Intergovernmental Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS); the West and Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD); and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA). ECOWAS has made great strides in developing important regional policies and initiatives such as the Zero Hunger Initiative, the Rice Self-Sufficiency Policy, the Fertilizer Regulations, the Trade Liberalization Scheme, and the Nutrition Fortification standards. Private sector engagement in policy development, creation, and implementation is critical. In many cases, drives toward making achieving sustainable integration of regional policies at the country level have not included private sector entities.

2.0 BASIC FUNCTION OF POSITION

The position is located in the USAID/West Africa Economic Growth Team's Regional Agriculture Office (RAO). The Incumbent serves as a Project Management Specialist to implement key aspects of USAID Feed the Future (FTF) programs to increase food security and agriculture investment in the region. The Project Management Specialist coordinates major regional programs under the Presidential FTF Initiative that is administered by USAID's Bureau of Food Security in Washington, D.C. The applicant must possess an in-depth knowledge of the sector, based on years of practical experience and be able to build partnerships among regional groups and institutions to greatly enhance the effectiveness of food security programs in West Africa.

Agricultural producers, traders, processors, distributors and consumers in West Africa face numerous operational and systemic challenges. USAID/West Africa implements various programs to address these challenges on a regional scale. The overall goal of the RAO is to improve food security for West Africans. This goal will be accomplished by enhancing the effectiveness and ability of regional institutions to address the myriad problems facing both ends of the agricultural spectrum, from the producers to the consumers.

The USAID/West Africa/RAO, with a technical team of three full-time specialists, is responsible for directing approximately \$22 million USD of technical assistance to meet the regional challenges of food security. The three specialists deliver direct support to regional institutions, but also target critical gaps in the agriculture sector such as a lack of quality seeds and fertilizer, the inability to trade efficiently across borders, the lack of market and trade related information for all those involved in the industry, and other barriers. The Agriculture Project Management Specialist is part of that team.

3.0 MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Technical Assistance, Agriculture Program Management and Administration 35%

USAID/West Africa implements regional programs through contractors and grantees, and in some cases directly with beneficiaries in West Africa. These programs conform to approved strategic frameworks, are implemented in compliance with U.S. and other government regulations, and follow standard USAID operating procedures. The task of agriculture program management and administration is to facilitate the smooth operations of these programs and to report on compliance with applicable rules and regulations. Specific duties will include drafting and tracking of internal financial approval documents, performance-monitoring plans, and monthly and annual reports to USAID headquarters, particularly to the USAID/Bureau of Food Security which administers FTF programs worldwide, and to other segments of the U.S. government.

The FTF Initiative is a high profile and important program for the U.S. Government. Staff are frequently called upon to prepare position papers, report and advise on food security, agriculture and related policies and issues in West Africa. The incumbent will be expected to perform the above tasks to a wide range of stakeholders including but not limited to USAID/West Africa Mission management, USAID headquarters, other high level officials of the U.S. Government, host country governments, high level regional government and institution officials, other donors, and segments of the private sector involved or affected by agriculture, trade and environment related issues that can ultimately impact regional food security. Thus, the incumbent will be expected to possess excellent interpersonal skills, and perform with a high degree of tact and diplomacy and be expected to resolve any potential disagreements between stakeholders, partners and other donors if necessary.

The staff will also assist the RAO to assess progress towards achievement of the CAADP /ECOWAP goals, at the regional level and at national levels throughout the region. This may include the following duties: assist to advance integration and harmonization of policies and

systems throughout the West Africa region; foster the strengthening of regional organizations, networks, and civil society organizations; actively identify and develop opportunities for improved coordination with other major donors active in the region to leverage greater results; and to serve as a liaison, when necessary, with national and regional authorities and organizations such as ECOWAS, other Missions, organizations, industry, the academic sector, and other donors on environmental issues.

B. Contractor/Implementing Partner Oversight 35%

Agriculture program management and administration entails working directly with USAID contractors and grantees on tasks specifically assigned by contract, agreement, and technical officers. These tasks may include consultations with colleagues to develop USAID position papers on alternative program-implementation plans, the research and development of concept papers on new programs to increase trade in agricultural products, and participation on study teams to analyze the effectiveness of ongoing activities in achieving program goals.

The job holder of this new position will serve as a full-time Contracting/Agreement Officer's Representative (COR/AOR) for USAID projects/activities in the agricultural, food security and environment sectors. Major current projects in the office include the: cotton program, \$16 million over four years; fertilizer program, \$20 million over five years; West Africa seed program, \$9 million over five years; food security policy programs which include several programs amounting to \$2 million per year; trade program, \$49 million over five years; capacity building program, \$1 million over five years; and support to regional institutions (ECOWAS, CILSS, CORAF), \$5 million per year. Additionally, this person will be directly involved in budget formulation, analysis, forecast and control.

As AOR/COR, the incumbent is directly and administratively responsible for reviewing vouchers from partners, monitoring expenditures and account status, and authorizing them for payment. S/he establishes budgets for partners, monitors their execution and is responsible for all accruals. S/he will be responsible for managing at minimum \$6-10 million in program funds annually.

As AOR/COR or Alternate, the incumbent will be directly responsible for supervising a minimum of two Chiefs of Party and will be responsible for providing oversight and monitoring of the budgets of responsible COR/AOR assigned projects and/or activities.

The incumbent will initiate contact and provide expert technical advice and direction to contractor and grantee professionals for which direct oversight responsibilities are exercised, and with contractor professionals in other areas of program focus, working to improve food security in West Africa. This will include informing partners of U.S. strategic priorities in West Africa, and in the realm of food security. S/he will analyze partner reports for validity, accuracy and progress towards meeting annual and overall program goals, to include tracking indicators and ensuring partners are capturing data accurately and accordance with FTF monitoring and evaluation guidance.

The incumbent also serves as a senior technical contact, with important position responsibilities including keeping the Contracting and Agreements Officers informed of progress, proposed contract and grant modifications, validity of claims, analysis of proposals, and assessment of contract time extensions. Work complexities will require the development of alternate solutions to reduce time and costs, versatility and innovation. S/he will have full autonomy to resolve programmatic related problems without assistance. S/he will be the person team members and other stakeholders will first go to resolve issues and problems pertaining to the incumbent's projects/responsibilities.

C. Program-Wide Reporting and Information Management 20%

The incumbent will assess program effectiveness for the improvement of complex program and management processes and systems encompassing difficult and diverse functions or issues that affect critical aspects of the major programs of the USAID/West Africa RAO. As an expert on long-range planning, s/he recommends and participates in developing strategies for implementing planning for a major program. Recommends short- and long-range goals of the organization, develops detailed plans for implementing them, and oversees implementation of the goals through contractors and grantees. S/he also helps to determine if adjustments or changes in objectives or emphasis are needed in organization functions, and recommends organizational or process changes.

Directs the capture, reporting, and analysis of statistical data relating to the organization's operations and directs or personally performs special studies or projects. Prepares and contributes to reports and other presentations on program planning and evaluation. Designs and conducts a wide variety of comprehensive studies and detailed analyses of complex functions and processes related to program planning and management. Identifies and proposes solutions to management problems that are of major importance to planning program direction.

D. Communications 10%

The incumbent prepares a variety of documents for publication and dissemination to suit numerous key constituencies both within and outside the U.S. government. Effective communications will generally involve selecting the most appropriate medium and applying the skills necessary to take advantage of particular media, for example the "success story" presented on a glossy one-page handout as well as a web page, the "reporting cable" disseminated to all U.S. diplomatic posts worldwide, and the "spoken remarks" and "scene setters" prepared for the USAID/West Africa Mission Director or other senior U.S. government officials for presentation at a ceremony or other public event.

The task of communications is to analyze RAO information, consult with office staff on program priorities and communications objectives, and then assure that the work of the office is described and presented in ways that are relevant and compelling to each of the targeted audiences. The incumbent should be able to understand and interpret defined program objectives, exercising judgment to proceed with implementation of routine communications tasks, yet recognizing when special circumstances require consultation with the office chief or other senior USAID/West Africa management.

Additionally, as a representative of USAID and during execution of her/his AOR/COR duties, the incumbent will be expected to occasionally perform public speaking engagements. But more often, the incumbent will represent the USG in regional meetings with high level regional and national government counterparts and other donors. Incumbent will prepare speeches for high level USG representatives such as the Mission Director and U.S. Ambassador.

E. The Incumbent is expected to:

- Mentor a designated FSN staff in the Office to assume responsibilities for the position. This will be assessed annually.
- Ensure that the FSN joins in travel, and participates in meetings and official functions as much as time permits.
- Maintain a contact list and ensure that the FSN is introduced to official contacts within and outside of USAID.
- At the end of five years, the FSN should have gained relevant experience and exposure of the incumbent's job elements to be able to take over from him/her at the end of the TCN contract.
- Provide an annual report to include a summary of follow-up action to be taken by the Office to allow smooth transition and continuous operation.

4.0 QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE

- A. **Education:** Master's Degree in agriculture or related social science required. A higher degree is desirable.
- B. **Prior Work Experience:** A minimum of ten years of job related, professional-level experience in a related role is required. Prior experience in project design, management, and implementation, and usage of database systems for project monitoring and evaluation, and results/ budget tracking and documentation is required.
- C. **Post Entry Training:** Acquisition and assistance, accruals, program management is required.
- D. **Language Proficiency:** English Level 4 proficiency (speaking, reading, writing) is required. Level 3 French proficiency (speaking, reading) is required.
- E. **Job Knowledge:** Service in, or substantial and regular contact and/or dealings with, key U.S. Government agencies and/or other donor agencies involved in food security and agriculture related programs is required. Substantial experience with West Africa regional organizations such as ECOWAS, CILSS CORAF and UEMOA is highly desirable.

- F. **Skills and Abilities:** Excellent computer skills (especially MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint) including the ability to operate required software effortlessly and with minimal instruction or mentoring is required. Ability to handle multiple activities simultaneously and effectively, and at times under tight deadlines is required. Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to cultivate relationships with high-level representatives of regional organizations is required.

5.0 **POSITION ELEMENTS**

- A. **Supervision Received:** Incumbent will be supervised by EG/RAO Director and/or his/her designee. As a recognized authority, the employee is subject only to administrative and policy direction concerning overall project priorities and objectives. The employee is typically delegated complete responsibility and authority to plan, schedule, and carry out major projects concerned with the analysis and evaluation of programs or organizational effectiveness. Analyses, evaluations, and recommendations developed by the employee are normally reviewed by management officials only for potential influence on broad agency policy objectives and program goals. Findings and recommendations are normally accepted without significant change.
- B. **Supervision Exercised:** As requested by Office Director or her/his designee, staff will have limited authority over other FSN staff. For example, this person may plan the work of the admin assistant as it pertains to the incumbent's activities/projects and any associated needs pertaining to regional government organizations.
- C. **Available Guidelines:** Broad USAID and U.S. Government administrative and program policy guidelines, statements, and basic legislation, related court decisions, or treaties and international agreements that require extensive interpretation. The employee is recognized as an expert in the development and/or interpretation of guidance on program planning and evaluation in a specialized area.
- D. **Exercise of Judgment:** This position requires substantial discretion, independent thinking, and sound judgment on complex and sensitive matters. The employee uses judgment and discretion in determining intent, and in interpreting and revising existing policy and regulatory guidance for use by others within or outside USAID/West Africa. Decisions concerning planning, organizing, and conducting studies are complicated by conditions, such as conflicting program goals and objectives. Assignments are complicated by the need to deal with subjective concepts.
- E. **Authority to Make Commitments:** None.
- F. **Nature, Level and Purpose of Contacts:** The incumbent has frequent contact with Key officials of the West Africa Regional Economic Community (ECOWAS), and other affiliated regional institutions including The West and Central African Council for Agriculture Research and Development (CORAF), and its Regional Centers of Excellence, The Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and others. Other public and private entities with relationships vital to accomplishing RAO objectives include

but are not limited to: other Donors, Heads of Private Businesses, Heads of Financial Institutions, West African Government officials involved in agriculture and food security steering and related committees, Heads of Private Sector bodies etc. With individuals outside USAID/West Africa, key relationships may include consultants, contractors, or business executives in a moderately unstructured setting. Contacts may also include the Director, Deputy Director, and Program Officer of USAID/West Africa, as well as Ambassadors, Deputy Chiefs of Mission, and Section Chiefs in U.S. Embassies throughout West Africa. The purpose is to influence managers or other officials to accept and implement findings and recommendations on organizational improvement or program effectiveness issues.

- G. Time Requirement to Perform Full Range of Duties:** One year (with option to extend if mutually desirable).
- H. Travel:** Travel will be a routine part of fulfilling the duties of this position. Travel will occur within Ghana and in the West Africa region, with possible travel outside of the region for trainings and conferences.

6.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA

- A. Education:** Master’s Degree or higher in agriculture or related social science required. **10 points**
- B. Prior Work Experience:** A minimum of ten years of job related, professional-level experience in a related role is required. Prior experience in project design, implementation, and usage of software systems for monitoring and evaluation of projects and results/ budget tracking and documentation is required. **30 points**
- C. Language Proficiency:** English (4/4/4 speaking, reading, writing) fluent. French (3/3 speaking, reading) **15 points**
- D. Job Knowledge:** Service in, or substantial and regular contact and/or business dealings with, key U.S. Government agencies and/or African institutions / organizations involved in agriculture and/or food security-related fields is required. **20 points**
- E. Skills and Abilities:** Excellent computer skills (especially MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint) including the ability to operate required software effortlessly and with little instruction or mentoring is required. Strong technical, analytical and conceptual skills to analyze issues and recommend and present solutions and/or options is required. Demonstrated ability to manage a variety of tasks simultaneously is required. **15 points**
- F. Interpersonal Skills/Communication:** Must have the ability to establish and maintain an extensive range of mid to high level contacts within and outside USAID and within the region. Ability to travel regionally and work collaboratively as part of a team is required. Ability to interact effectively with senior level officials, and others representing all segments of public and private sectors, from government officials to business leaders to community representatives across West Africa is required. **10 points**

7.0 INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS:

Interested individuals are required to submit the following:

- Fully completed and hand-signed copy of Application for Federal Employment Form (OF-612). Include OF-612 continuation sheets as needed. Form OF-612 can found at: <http://www.usaid.gov/forms/>

(Note: All applicants must submit complete dates (months/years) and hours per week for all positions listed on the OF-612 to allow for adequate evaluation of your related and direct experiences.)

- Cover letter and a current resume/curriculum vita (CV). The CV/resume must contain sufficient relevant information to evaluate the application in accordance with the stated evaluation criteria. Broad general statements that are vague or lacking specificity will not be considered as effectively addressing particular selection criteria.
- Applicants must provide a minimum of three and a maximum of five references within the last five years of the applicant's professional life from individuals who are not family members or relatives. Three references must be from direct supervisors who can provide information regarding the applicant's knowledge of contracting work. Applicants must provide e-mail addresses and/or working telephone numbers for all references.
- Applicants also must address the above Section 4.0: Selection Criteria in a summary statement to be included in the application. This summary statement, limited to two pages, must describe specifically and accurately what experience, training, education, and/or awards the applicant has received that are relevant to each selection factor above. The summary statement must include the name of the applicant and the announcement number at the top of each page. Failure to provide this summary statement may result in the applicant not receiving credit for all pertinent experience, education, training, and/or awards.

8.0 LIST OF REQUIRED FORMS

Forms outlined below can found at: <http://www.usaid.gov/forms/>

1. Standard Form OF-612
2. DS-6561 Physical Examination *
3. SF-86 Questionnaire Sensitive Positions (for National Security) *
4. FD 258 Finger Print Card *
5. AID 500-4 Fair Credit Reporting Act of 1970, as amended *
6. AID 500-5 Notice Required by the Privacy Act of 1974 *
7. AID 6-85 Foreign Activity Data (AID 6-85a continuation page) *
8. AID 6-1 Request for Security Action *

* Forms 2 through 8 shall be completed only upon the advice of the Contracting Officer that an applicant is the successful candidate for the job.

9.0 CONTRACT INFORMATION BULLETIN (CIBs) ACQUISITION AND ASSISTANCE POLICY DIRECTIVES (AAPDS) PERTAINING TO PSCs

CIBs AND AAPDSs contain information or changes pertaining to USAID policy and General Provisions in USAID regulation and procedures concerning acquisition and assistance including Personal Service Contracts. AIDAR Appendix J applies to TCN and can be found at: <http://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/aapds-cibs>.

10.0 BENEFITS/ALLOWANCES:

As a matter of policy, and as appropriate, TCN PSC is normally authorized the following benefits and allowances:

BENEFITS:

- Contribution toward Health & Life Insurance
- Pay Comparability Adjustment
- Annual Increase
- Eligibility for Worker's Compensation
- Annual and Sick Leave

ALLOWANCES (If Applicable):

- (1) Temporary Lodging Allowance (Section 120)*
- (2) Living Quarters Allowance (Section 130)*
- (3) Post Allowance (Section 220)*
- (4) Supplemental Post Allowance (Section 230)*
- (5) Post Differential (Chapter 500)*
- (6) Payments during Evacuation/Authorized Departure (Section 600)* and
- (7) Danger Pay (Section 650)*
- (8) Educational Allowance (Section 270)*
- (9) Separate Maintenance Allowance (Section 260)*
- (10) Educational Travel (Section 280)*

* Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians Foreign Areas).

TCN positions in Ghana are not covered by the ICASS service provider/USG housing pool system. Therefore, in lieu of government provided housing, TCNPSCs are eligible for a housing allowance. TCNPSCs will be allowed an amount for rent equal to the post rental ceiling set by Overseas Building Operations. Other allowances in support of housing costs include furniture and appliances allowance, a generator allowance and a residential expenses allowance. Shipment of Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) is not covered under the contract.

END OF SOLICITATION