

RFP No_RPF-KE-1133-FY26-RFP

Q&A

1. Level of detail on feed and forage types

For the baseline surveys and analysis, how detailed should the classification of feeds be?

For example, should the study clearly distinguish between:

- Natural vs improved forages
- Cut-and-carry vs grazing systems
- Conserved forages (hay, silage)
- Compounded feeds and supplements
- Imported or alternative feed ingredients

CI Response- The baseline should apply a practical but sufficiently disaggregated classification that reflects LIFT's ToC and planned interventions described in the RFP. At a minimum, the evaluation should be distinguished among above those five bullet points:

- Imported and alternative feed ingredients (including U.S.-origin inputs where applicable)

The intent is not to conduct highly technical feed ration analysis, but rather to capture meaningful distinctions that influence productivity, adoption behavior, and market demand. Final classification will be validated during the inception phase.

2. Definition of livestock productivity

When measuring livestock productivity at baseline, does Counterpart expect:

- Basic animal-level indicators (e.g. milk per cow, growth rates, feeding practices), or
- Mainly farm- or firm-level indicators (e.g. total production, sales, revenues)?

CI Response - Counterpart expects a combination of animal-level and farm/firm-level indicators, consistent with FFPr's standard indicator definitions and feasibility of collection at baseline. The baseline should prioritize simple, self-reported productivity measures that are reliable on a scale, without requiring intensive biological measurement.

3. Expected depth of baseline analysis

Is the baseline expected to:

- Mainly describe current conditions, or
- Also explore simple associations (e.g. feeding practices and reported productivity or income), clearly without causal claims?

CI Response - The baseline is expected to go beyond descriptive profiling and may include exploratory, non-causal analysis, such as:

- Associations between feeding practices and reported productivity or income
- Differences across subsectors, counties, or producer types

All analysis must clearly state that findings are associational, not causal. This level of analysis is encouraged to strengthen learning and inform adaptive management.

4. Use of existing data and studies

Is the evaluation team encouraged to use existing datasets, reports, or studies on livestock feeds and forages in Kenya (where relevant) to complement primary data collection and avoid duplication?

CI Response - Yes. Offerors are strongly encouraged to use relevant existing datasets, reports, and studies (e.g., government statistics, industry studies, prior donor-funded research) to:

- Complement primary data collection
- Provide market and policy context
- Avoid duplication

Primary data collection remains essential for establishing project-specific baseline values.

5. Gender and youth expectations

For gender and youth, does Counterpart expect:

- Only sex- and age-disaggregated indicators, or
- Additional analytical discussion of barriers and opportunities related to feed access, adoption of improved forages, and participation in feed and livestock markets?

CI Response - Counterpart expects both: Sex and age disaggregated quantitative indicators, and qualitative and analytical discussion of gender, and youth-specific barriers and opportunities, particularly related to:

- Access to feed and forage
- Adoption of improved practices
- Participation in feed and livestock markets
- Access to finance and producer organizations

This aligns with USDA expectations for inclusive market systems analysis.

6. Sample size and statistical expectations

Does Counterpart or USDA have minimum expectations for:

- Sample sizes by actor type (producers, manufacturers, importers, retailers)?
- Statistical confidence levels beyond what is mentioned in the RFP?

CI Response - Minimum expectations are outlined in the RFP (95% confidence level; multi-stage stratified sampling). Beyond this:

- There are no fixed minimum sample sizes imposed by USDA for each actor type.
- Offerors are expected to propose technically justified sample sizes that balance rigor, representativeness, and budget constraints.

Sample adequacy will be assessed during proposal review and finalized during the inception period.

7. County-level representativeness

Should the baseline aim for:

- County-representative results, or
- Aggregated results across the five counties, with county-level analysis where feasible?

CI Response - The baseline should aim for: Aggregated representativeness across the five target counties, and County-level disaggregation where sample size permits, particularly for major indicators and learning questions. County-level inference is desirable but not mandatory for all indicators.

8. Policy and regulatory analysis

For policy and regulatory aspects of the feed sector, is the baseline expected to:

- Rely mainly on document review and key informant interviews, or

- Include more structured assessment tools or scoring frameworks?

CI Response - Policy and regulatory analysis is expected to rely primarily on: Document review, and Key informant interviews with relevant GoK institutions and industry stakeholders. Structured scoring tools (e.g., institutional capacity or readiness frameworks) are welcome where appropriate, but not required unless proposed by the Offeror as value-added.

9. We would, however, appreciate clarification regarding the statement indicating that no advance will be provided. Could you kindly confirm whether this implies that the selected firm is expected to pre-finance the activities and subsequently seek reimbursement based on agreed milestones or deliverables?

CI Response - Yes. The statement indicates that no advance payment will be provided. The selected firm is expected to pre-finance activities and receive reimbursement based on agreed milestones or deliverables, consistent with Counterpart's standard contracting procedures.

10. Sample Size Expectations & Universe

- Populations and sampling: Has Counterpart carried out studies or mapping of the following targeted respondents to assist in identifying populations and sampling, and can you provide the details for our considerations during sampling. Alternatively, can you provide the project targets for these targeted respondents?
 - Feed manufacturers
 - Active importers
 - Feed retailers across the five counties
 - Livestock producers
 - Producer organizations- e.g., cooperatives.

CI Response - Counterpart has not conducted a comprehensive census of all targeted respondents prior to baseline. However:

- The project has estimates and targets for key groups (e.g., Tier I and II feed manufacturers, active importers, producer organizations) that will be shared with the selected firm.
- Offerors should propose sampling approaches based on best available secondary information, to be refined during inception.

11. Stakeholder Access & Facilitation- Will Counterpart provide introduction letters or facilitate access to feed manufacturers, particularly Tier I companies, who may have commercial sensitivity concerns?

CI Response - Yes. Counterpart will provide introductory letters and facilitation support to enable access to key stakeholders, including Tier I feed manufacturers and other commercially sensitive actors. However, the evaluator remains responsible for securing consent and managing relationships professionally.

12. Finalization of Indicators and Baseline Measurement Scope

Annex B lists indicators requiring baseline establishment versus those requiring only target review. The RFP notes that "the final set of indicators to be measured will be confirmed collaboratively prior to contract signing" (page 12). Should offerors design and cost the baseline assuming:

- All indicators listed in Annex B will be measured, or

- A prioritized subset will be confirmed at inception, allowing for scope adjustments?

CI Response - Offerors should design and cost the baseline assuming that all indicators listed in Annex B are to be measured. Counterpart, USDA, and the selected offeror will discuss if any updates are required. This allows for methodological refinement and scope optimization without compromising evaluation rigor.

13. Sample Size Guidance and Stakeholder Coverage

The RFP requires a 95% confidence level and multi-stage stratified sampling across 5 counties and multiple subsectors. Given the budget ceiling of \$160,000 and need for statistical rigor:

- Are there indicative minimum or expected sample size ranges per stakeholder group (livestock producers by subsector, Tier I/II manufacturers, importers, retailers) that Counterpart and USDA consider acceptable for baseline rigor and future comparability?
- What is the expected total number of quantitative surveys (household and business combined)?

CI Response - There are no prescriptive minimum sample sizes per stakeholder group. However, as an indicative expectation:

- Livestock producers will constitute the largest quantitative sample (anticipated 2,000).
- Feed manufacturers and importers may follow a census or near-census approach.

Offerors should propose a realistic total number of quantitative surveys aligned with budget and methodological rigor.

14. Panel Design and Longitudinal Tracking Requirements

The RFP indicates a preference for panel design "for future midterm and endline comparisons" (page 14). Should the baseline be explicitly designed and costed to support longitudinal panel tracking, including:

- Respondent re-contact protocols and tracking mechanisms
- Attrition buffers in sample design
- Database architecture for panel management
- Informed consent for future follow-up surveys?

Or will these specifications be determined during later evaluation phases?

CI Response - Yes. The baseline should be explicitly designed and costed to support a longitudinal panel, including all above four bullet points. Detailed panel specifications will be finalized during the inception phase.

15. Geographic Scope: Nairobi County Inclusion

Section II (page 10) lists target counties as "Nairobi, Kajiado, Kiambu, Uashin Gishu, and Nakuru," while Section II, Clause 8 (page 20) references only "Kajiado, Kiambu, Uashin Gishu, and Nakuru." Should the baseline study include Nairobi County in sampling and fieldwork, or should data collection be limited to the four counties listed in the logistics section?

CI Response - Nairobi County should be included in the baseline study. The reference to four counties in the logistics section reflects fieldwork considerations, not exclusion. Sampling and analysis should account for Nairobi's role as a commercial and regulatory hub in the feed value chain.

16. U.S.-Based Data Collection: Modality and Budget Expectations

The methodology requires key informant interviews with U.S. grain exporters including U.S. Grains Council, United Sorghum Checkoff Program, and National Sorghum Producers (page 15-16). Should these interviews be:

- Conducted remotely (video/telephone), or
- Conducted in-person with international travel included in the budget?
- If remote is acceptable, what is the expected number of U.S.-based interviews? And will Counterpart and USDA provide the database/ contacts of the relevant persons to be interviewed?

CI Response - U.S.-based key informant interviews are expected to be conducted remotely (web-based calling or telephone). In-person travel is not required and should not be budgeted.

- The expected number of U.S.-based interviews is approximately 8–12, subject to refinement.
- Counterpart and USDA will support identification of relevant organizations, but Offerors should demonstrate capacity to manage outreach and scheduling.

17. Can Counterpart provide numbers on # of project beneficiaries and counties?

CI Response - CI Response - The LIFT project is being implemented in five target counties: Nairobi, Kajiado, Kiambu, Uasin Gishu, and Nakuru. At this stage, Counterpart can provide indicative estimates of targeted beneficiary groups (e.g., livestock producers, feed manufacturers, importers, producer organizations) based on proposal-stage planning. However, final beneficiary numbers will be refined during implementation and should not be treated as fixed population totals for sampling purposes. Offerors are expected to propose sampling approaches using best available secondary data, to be validated and finalized during the inception phase.

18. Could Counterpart please clarify the page limits listed on p 4-5 of the RFP? Specifically, can you confirm the following:

- 1) Proposed Methodology and Evaluation structure (max 10 pages)
- 2) Baseline study team (max 5 pages excluding CVs)
- 3) Gantt chart, subcontracting arrangements not included in page limit

CI Response - Counterpart confirms the following page limits for the technical proposal:

- a) Proposed Methodology and Evaluation Structure: Maximum 10 pages
- b) Baseline Study Team Composition and Structure: Maximum 5 pages, excluding CVs (CVs should be annexed and are not counted toward the page limit)
- c) Gantt Chart and Subcontracting Arrangements: Not included in the page limits and may be submitted as annexes.

Offerors should ensure that core technical content remains within the stated limits.

19. Will Counterpart provide a list of targeted stakeholders including feed manufacturers by tier, US grain exporters, producer organizations, feed input retailers and all the other targeted stakeholders and study participants?

CI Response - Counterpart will provide a letter and when possible help facilitate discussions with key stakeholder groups (e.g., Tier I and II feed manufacturers, U.S. grain exporters, producer organizations, and relevant government entities) after contract award. At the proposal stage, Counterpart will not provide

a finalized list of individual stakeholders, as these will be confirmed collaboratively during the inception phase. Offerors should demonstrate their approach and capacity to identify, recruit, and engage the required stakeholder groups as it will ultimately be the contracted applicant's responsibility to recruit participants.

20. Should the cover letter be placed within the technical volume?

CI Response - Yes. The cover letter should be included at the front of the technical proposal volume and does not count toward the technical page limits unless otherwise specified in the RFP.

21. Should the budget narrative be submitted within the Cost Proposal Excel file, or should it be submitted as an additional Word or PDF document?

CI Response - The budget narrative should be submitted as a separate Word or PDF document, accompanying the Cost Proposal Excel file. The Excel file should include detailed line-item costs, while the narrative should clearly explain assumptions, unit costs, staffing levels, and any major cost.

22. This question refers to the "Data Transfer" provision in Counterpart's Standard Terms and Conditions:

"Counterpart includes contractual language with third parties regarding data protection, confidentiality, and secure guidelines to ensure that the transfer will be under an agreement which covers the EU GDPR requirements."

Question:

Given that this award will be performed outside the EU, does not involve processing personal data of EU citizens, and both our organizations (Counterpart and ours) are non-EU entities, would it be possible to remove the GDPR-related contractual language from the future award?

CI Response - Counterpart's inclusion of GDPR-related data protection language reflects its organizational data protection standards and global compliance framework. While the LIFT baseline study does not involve EU-based data subjects, Counterpart does not remove this language from its standard contractual terms.

However, the GDPR-related provisions will be applied proportionately and contextually, consistent with the nature of the data collected, the geographic scope of activities, and applicable local laws. These clauses do not impose additional operational requirements beyond standard ethical data protection, confidentiality, and secure data transfer practices expected under USDA-funded evaluations.

23. The RFP includes among the research questions (p. 13): "What are the current baseline values for KPIs across LIFT's result areas (e.g., feed import volumes, feed sales, and livestock productivity)?"

Could Counterpart clarify whether baseline values for trade- and market-level indicators are expected to be established primarily through evaluator-led primary data collection, or whether the project will facilitate access to relevant secondary or administrative data sources where available?

CI Response - Baseline values for trade- and market-level indicators are expected to be established through a combination of primary data collection and secondary/administrative data sources. The evaluator should propose primary data collection approaches where firm-level or perception-based data are required, while also leveraging existing trade statistics, administrative records, industry reports, and regulatory data where available. Counterpart will facilitate access to relevant secondary sources during the inception phase where feasible.

24. Activity 5 refers to engagement with “high-potential producer groups.” Could Counterpart clarify whether these producer groups have already been identified by the project, or whether identification of such groups is expected to be informed by baseline findings and conducted in collaboration with the selected evaluator?

CI Response - High-potential producer groups have not yet been fully identified. Identification is expected to be informed by baseline findings and conducted collaboratively during early implementation. The baseline study should therefore generate evidence to support targeting criteria (e.g., scale, market engagement, governance capacity), rather than assume pre-identified groups.

25. The RFP references page limits for different components of the technical proposal. Could Counterpart please clarify whether the technical proposal is subject to a single overall page limit (e.g., 10 pages inclusive of all subsections), or whether separate page limits apply to each subsection (e.g., 10 pages for Proposed Methodology and Evaluation Structure, 5 pages for Baseline Study Team Composition and Structure), with the Gantt Chart and Subcontracting Arrangements excluded from page limits? Additionally, please confirm whether the cover letter, cover page, table of contents, and list of acronyms count toward any page limits.

CI Response - Separate page limits apply to each subsection:

- Proposed Methodology and Evaluation Structure: Maximum 10 pages
- Baseline Study Team Composition and Structure: Maximum 5 pages, excluding CVs
- Gantt Chart and Subcontracting Arrangements: Excluded from page limits

The cover letter, cover page, table of contents, and list of acronyms do not count toward page limits.

26. Instructions to offerors indicate that the proposal should include three components: technical proposal, cost proposal, references. Can Counterpart please clarify whether these three components should be submitted as separate emails or if all three may be included in one email submission? Additionally, please confirm whether the required cover letter should be submitted as a PDF, if it will be counted as part of any page limitations, and which of the three proposal components (technical, cost, or references) it should be submitted with.

CI Response - All three components (technical proposal, cost proposal, and references) must be submitted in a single email, clearly labeled and separated into distinct files. The cover letter should be submitted as a PDF, included with the technical proposal, and does not count toward page limits.

27. We understand that CVs for proposed candidates should be included as an annex to the technical proposal. Please confirm if this is correct, and whether any additional annexes should be included in the technical proposal.

CI Response - Yes. CVs should be included as annexes to the technical proposal and are excluded from page limits. Additional annexes (e.g., Gantt chart) may also be included where relevant.

28. Should proposals include any of the following: Cover page, Table of Contents, Acronym List? If so, are they required and will they count against the page limit?

CI Response - A cover page, table of contents, and list of acronyms should be included. These elements are optional but recommended and do not count toward page limits.

29. The submission requirements do not explicitly request a standalone section addressing the applicant's past performance, institutional capacity, or relevant experience. Could Counterpart please clarify whether applicants should include this information, and if so, where within the proposal it should be incorporated and in what format?

CI Response - Applicants are encouraged to include a brief institutional experience and past performance section within the Proposed Methodology and Evaluation Structure. References will be assessed separately as part of the evaluation criteria.

30. The RFP requests submission of a Gantt chart but does not indicate whether offerors may also include a brief narrative explanation of activities and sequencing to accompany the chart. Could Counterpart please clarify whether narrative explanatory text is permitted or expected in this section, or whether only the Gantt chart itself should be submitted? If narrative text is allowed, please indicate any applicable page limits.

CI Response - Offerors should include a brief narrative explanation to accompany the Gantt chart. The Gantt chart itself is required; any narrative should be concise and is excluded from page limits if annexed.

31. In 'SECTION I: INSTRUCTIONS TO OFFERORS, 4. Proposal Content', it is mentioned 'A. Technical proposal (10 pages maximum)'; however, this is then followed by 'Proposed Methodology and Evaluation Structure (Maximum 10 pages):' and 'Baseline Study Team Composition and Structure (Maximum 5 pages not including Curriculum Vitae(s)'. Could you please clarify whether the Technical Proposal page limit is 10 pages or 15 pages?

CI Response - The page limits are not cumulative. The technical proposal consists of:

- 10 pages for Proposed Methodology and Evaluation Structure, plus
- 5 pages for Baseline Study Team Composition and Structure (excluding CVs)

32. Under 'Proposed Methodology and Evaluation Structure (Maximum 10 pages):' is the point 'Proposed recruitment strategy and approach'; could you please clarify if this is referring to the recruitment of enumerators and facilitators for data collection or the recruitment of producers and other stakeholders to take part in the baseline study?

CI Response - "Recruitment strategy" refers to the recruitment of study participants (producers, firms, institutions), not enumerator recruitment, which should be addressed under fieldwork and quality assurance.

33. Does Counterpart have Nacosti approval for the LIFT project or is it expected that this is obtained by the offeror for the baseline study?

CI Response - The evaluation firm is responsible for obtaining required Kenyan research approvals, including NACOSTI, with facilitation letters provided by Counterpart where appropriate.

34. Will LIFT primarily be working with smallholder farms (<5 ha), medium- to large-scale commercial farms, or both?

CI Response - LIFT works with both smallholder and medium-to-large commercial farms, with an emphasis on commercially oriented producers relevant to feed manufacturers.

35. Have all the producer organizations that LIFT will be working with been identified?

CI Response - Producer organizations have not all been finalized. Baseline findings will inform prioritization.

36. Also, is LIFT actively in contact with the feed manufacturers, feed importers, and feed input retailers that will be part of the LIFT project and the baseline data collection?

CI Response – At this time, the LIFT project is not working with or supporting feed manufacturers, feed importers and/or feed input retailers. Counterpart will provide a letter and help facilitate, where possible, meetings with these stakeholders. However, applicants should demonstrate their recruitment strategy for these stakeholders as it will be their responsibility to recruit participants.

37. As the offeror is expected to propose the number of interviews or sample sizes across the different stakeholder categories (livestock producers in dairy, beef, and poultry; feed manufacturers; feed importers; feed input retailers; U.S. grain importers; and other stakeholders such as GoK, financial institutions, producer associations, and development partners) for the LIFT project in the five target counties of Nairobi, Kajiado, Kiambu, Uasin Gishu, and Nakuru. Would it be possible for the Counterpart team to share the project population figures or proposed targets for these groups? This would help guide the sampling approach.

CI Response - Indicative estimates may be shared during inception; final sampling is expected to be proposed by the offeror and validated collaboratively.

38. From our understanding, the available budget for fees and expenses is USD 134,400, when VAT is applied. Are there any other withholding taxes applied on top of the VAT taxes for international firms/consultants? Would payment be from Kenya or HQ?

CI Response - The budget ceiling is inclusive of applicable VAT. Any additional withholding taxes depend on Kenyan tax regulations and firm status. Payments will be processed through Counterpart's Washington DC office.

39. 1. With respect to the requirement for “compliance with Kenyan research requirements,” could you please clarify what specific approvals, registrations, or processes you expect the evaluation firm to obtain or demonstrate (e.g., NACOSTI approval, local research permits, institutional affiliations)?

CI Response - Expected compliance includes NACOSTI approval, local permits where applicable, and adherence to ethical research standards.

40. Approximately how many target beneficiaries across the different stakeholder groups (e.g., producers, feed manufacturers, feed importers, feed input retailers, etc.) does the LIFT project aim to support over the project period?

CI Response - LIFT anticipates directly supporting approximately 100 firms (feed manufacturers, feed importers, and feed input retailers) during the project and hundreds of thousands of producers indirectly. Findings from the Baseline Study will help determine the final figures.

41. Looking ahead, do you anticipate issuing separate RFPs at each evaluation milestone, or are you seeking to engage a firm to partner across all three evaluations over the planned five-year period, beginning with the baseline?

CI Response - Separate procurements are anticipated for midterm and final evaluations.

42. Does the LIFT project operate across all areas of the listed counties (Nairobi, Kiambu, Kajiado, Nakuru, and Uasin Gishu), or is implementation concentrated within specific sub-counties? If implementation is limited to specific areas, could you please indicate which sub-counties are included?

CI Response – Specific sub-counties with the five counties have not been selected or envisioned.

Applicants should focus their efforts on gathering data from commercially oriented livestock producers within the five counties and not concentrate on specific sub-counties.

43. We also noted in the RFP a preference for separate household surveys for dairy and beef farmers, as well as for broiler and layer poultry producers. Given that some households may engage in multiple value chains, would Counterpart consider a single standardized household survey with built-in question routing? This approach would allow all farmers to respond to a shared set of core questions required for the indicator table, while routing respondents to value-chain-specific sections (e.g., dairy, beef, broiler, layer) based on their activities. Households involved in multiple production areas could therefore respond to all relevant sections within one survey instrument.

CI Response - Yes. A single modular household survey with routing is acceptable and encouraged where methodologically sound.

44. Geographic scope and where different data collection activities are expected

a) The RFP references Nairobi alongside four program counties (Kajiado, Kiambu, Uashin Gishu, and Nakuru). Please confirm whether producer household surveys and producer FGDs are expected in Nairobi, or whether Nairobi is primarily for KIIs/market actor engagements and coordination, with producer data collection conducted in the program counties.

b) Within each county, will baseline data collection cover all sub-counties, or only selected sub-counties? If selected, could you share the list (or the selection logic)?

CI Response - Nairobi is primarily for KIIs and market actors. Producer surveys and FGDs are expected mainly in the four livestock-producing counties.

45. Sampling allocation by county and subsector (producer surveys)

a) To operationalize proportional allocation “by county and subsector” at 95% confidence (and to design the sample to be panel-ready), could you share LIFT’s current target estimates or planning assumptions disaggregated by:

- county, and
- subsector/producer type (e.g., dairy, beef, poultry—and broiler/layer if available)?

b) If LIFT applies specific eligibility criteria for “high-potential” producer groups/producers, could you confirm what criteria should be reflected when constructing the sampling frame?

CI Response - Offerors should propose proportional allocation. Eligibility criteria for “high-potential” producers will be refined collaboratively.

46. Sampling frames / rosters and approximate counts (to support recruitment planning)

a) Will Counterpart/LIFT be able to provide (or facilitate access to) sampling frames/rosters for:

- producer groups/cooperatives and their members,
- Tier I and Tier II feed manufacturers,
- feed importers,
- feed input retailers (and relevant associations)?

b) If these rosters exist, could you share approximate counts by stakeholder group (and by county if available), and confirm whether the Tier I/Tier II manufacturer list is already defined?

CI Response - Where rosters exist, Counterpart will facilitate access post-award.

47. Business surveys: coverage expectations (manufacturers, importers, retailers)

a) The RFP requests bidders to propose the number of business surveys and KIIs by stakeholder group.

To calibrate our proposed sample sizes, do you have any internal planning assumptions or preferred ranges (if any) for business surveys/KIIs by stakeholder group?

b) Should business surveys be limited strictly to firms physically located in the five target counties, or may they include firms headquartered in Nairobi (or elsewhere) that actively supply the four program counties?

CI Response - a) No fixed ranges; offerors should justify sample sizes. b) Firms supplying target counties may be included even if headquartered elsewhere.

48. U.S. grain exporters (KIIs and access facilitation)

Will Counterpart/USDA facilitate introductions to the final selected U.S. grain exporters for KIIs? If possible, is there an expected range for the number of exporter KIIs?

CI Response - Yes, introductions will be facilitated. Expected range: 5–10 KIIs, conducted remotely.

49. Language, CAPI/data management, and data security expectations

We will implement CAPI with secure role-based access and encrypted data storage. Please confirm whether Counterpart has any specific requirements/preferences regarding the platform, hosting location, and data security standards—particularly given sensitive firm-level sales/finance/sourcing information.

CI Response - Platform choice is flexible. Data must meet industry-standard encryption, access control, and secure hosting requirements.

50. Ethics/approvals and photography

a) Please confirm whether the consultant/subcontractor is expected to secure any required Kenyan approvals (e.g., national research permit and/or ethics review where applicable) and whether Counterpart will provide any facilitation letters, if needed.

b) The TOR requests timestamped photos. Please confirm whether photos may include recognizable individuals and what consent approach you require for photography.

CI Response - a) Approvals are required; facilitation letters will be provided. b) Photos with identifiable individuals require explicit consent.

51. AI tools clause (compliance)

The RFP requires disclosure and approval prior to using AI language or evaluation models. Could you clarify what tool types fall under this rule (e.g., transcription tools, translation aids, qualitative coding assistants, grammar tools) and the process/timeline for obtaining approval?

CI Response - AI tools for transcription, translation, or coding must be disclosed and approved during inception.

52. Would Counterpart consider a hybrid approach—such as a panel design for livestock producers and repeated cross-sectional samples for firms and importers—to be responsive to the RFP, or is a full panel design across all stakeholder groups preferred?

CI Response - A hybrid design (panel for producers; repeated cross-sections for firms) is acceptable.

53. The RFP notes that the final set of indicators to be measured will be confirmed collaboratively after contract award. Could Counterpart clarify whether bidders are expected to propose preliminary measurement approaches for all Annex B indicators, or only those explicitly requiring baseline establishment?

CI Response - Offerors should propose approaches for all Annex B indicators, clearly noting which require baseline establishment versus validation.

54. The RFP notes that use of artificial intelligence tools must be disclosed and approved. Could Counterpart clarify whether this applies to transcription, qualitative coding, or data cleaning tools, and whether any restrictions or approval processes are anticipated?

CI Response - See response to Question 46.

55. Are there any preferred or restricted digital data collection platforms (e.g., Kobo Toolbox, ODK), or is platform choice left to the bidder provided data security standards are met?

CI Response - No restricted platforms; bidder choice is acceptable subject to data security standards.

56. Will Counterpart or USDA be sharing any existing baseline-relevant datasets, market assessments, or sector studies during the inception phase?

CI Response - Relevant datasets and studies may be shared during inception where available.

57. Are there any specific indicators (in Annex B) that USDA considers “highest priority” for baseline versus those for validation?

CI Response – All indicators and their targets require validation. Those indicators listed in Annex B as requiring baseline values require both the selected applicant to establish baseline values and to validate the annual and life of project targets.

58. Does Counterpart or USDA have minimum sample size expectations for surveys or should the applicant propose sample sizes based solely on methodology?

CI Response - No fixed minimums. Sample sizes should be methodologically justified.

59. For the panel design, should the applicant prepare to establish a respondent tracking system to potential future enable midline and endline follow-up?

CI Response - Yes. Baseline should establish panel tracking protocols, including consent.

60. For the stakeholder interviews, will Counterpart facilitate introductions to key stakeholders or should the applicant assume independent recruitment?

CI Response - Counterpart will facilitate introductions to priority stakeholders post-award.

61. Will local IRB-equivalent “ethical approval” be required? If so, what is the expected process/agency for approval?

CI Response - Yes. NACOSTI serves as the primary authority.

62. Do you already have agreements in place with stakeholders, particularly the Government of Kenya, financial

CI Response - As the project is in start-up phase, agreements do not exist.

63. institutions, producer associations, or development partners, to share data? If so, is this data in digital form?

CI Response - As the project is in start-up phase, agreements do not exist.

64. Could you please clarify what, if any, type of data you intend to provide to the provider regarding potential beneficiaries’ location, contact information, etc.?

CI Response - Only non-PII, high-level data may be shared, subject to consent and safeguards.

65. We understand it is the bidder’s responsibility to make recruiting arrangements for data collection. Will the project team facilitate certain introductions, and if so, which?

CI Response - The evaluator leads recruitment; Counterpart will facilitate introductions where appropriate.

66. Thank you for sharing the USDA results framework. Are you able to share your project-level theory of change at this time?

CI Response - Yes. The project-level ToC will be shared during the inception phase with the awarded applicant.