

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Issue Date: February 26, 2026

Subject: Request for Proposals for Baseline Evaluation for the USDA Food for Progress (FFPr) - Cooperative Agreement No FCC-514-2025/013-00 – Colombia

RFP Number: 1132-FY26-RFP-01

Questions Deadline: March 9, 2026; 5:00 pm (EST)

Proposal Deadline: March 30, 2026; 5:00 pm (EST)

Submit proposals to: procurement.co1132@counterpart.org

Counterpart International (Counterpart) is seeking professional services to conduct the baseline study for the five-year United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food for Progress (FFPr) Mutual Agricultural Growth Alliance project in Colombia (“*Alianza Mutua para el Crecimiento Agrícola – AMCA*, per its name in Spanish”). The AMCA employs a private-sector-led approach to strengthen Colombia’s cacao value chain, expand bilateral agricultural trade, and support the growth of U.S. export markets.

This Request for Proposal includes background information on the AMCA project, the desired methodology, including objectives and illustrative evaluation questions, the timeframe for conducting the baseline study, and a list of required deliverables.

Firms submitting proposals in response to this publicly posted RFP (hereinafter “Offerors”) to submit offers (hereinafter “proposals”) for the services described in the attached supply schedules are under no obligation to do so. The Offeror shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of its proposal.

This RFP includes the following sections:

- I. Instructions to Offerors
- II. Technical Specifications
- III. Annexes

All correspondence and/or inquiries regarding this RFP should be requested in accordance with Section I, Clause 8, Clarifications.

The Instructions to Offerors (Section I) shall not form part of the proposal or the resulting award, if any. They are merely intended to aid Offerors in the preparation of their proposals. For the purposes of interpretation of Section I, unless otherwise stated, the number of days stated herein shall be consecutive calendar days. Submission of proposals must comply with Section I, Clause 9, Submission of Proposals.

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SECTION I: INSTRUCTIONS TO OFFERORS

1. Introduction

RFP No. 1132-FY26-RFP-01, dated **February 26, 2026**: Counterpart hereby solicits proposals to conduct the baseline study of the Food for Progress Project in Colombia as described in Section II, Technical Specifications.

2. Eligibility Restrictions for Goods and Services Providers

Eligible Offerors include U.S. and non-U.S. firms and organizations.

An Offeror will be considered ineligible if it or any of its principal officers has been suspended, debarred, or otherwise determined to be ineligible, as indicated on either (1) the “List of Parties Excluded from Federal Non-procurement Programs” or (2) the “Consolidated Lists of Designated Nationals.”

2.1 Minimum eligibility requirements:

Offerors must demonstrate technical competence, methodological rigor, contextual understanding, and the operational capacity required to deliver a USDA-compliant baseline analysis for a complex, private-sector driven value chain project. However, Counterpart reserves the right to evaluate technical and cost proposals only for offerors that meet the following minimum eligibility requirements:

- Proven experience conducting rigorous baseline, midterm, or final evaluations in agricultural development, market systems, SPS, trade facilitation, or agricultural finance.
- Proven experience in conducting mixed-methods evaluations in agriculture value chains, or rural development, within the last five to ten (5 to 10) years in Colombia.
- Experience with USDA Food for Progress, McGovern-Dole, or other U.S. Government evaluations.
- Demonstrated expertise in:
 - Cacao or specialty crop value chains
 - SPS and food safety systems (optional/desirable)
 - Trade and market access assessments
 - Agricultural productivity analysis
 - Financial inclusion or blended finance evaluations
- The offeror’s proposed team leader must be fluent in both, English and Spanish.

3. Preparation of Proposals

Offerors are expected to examine the specifications and all instructions contained in this RFP. Failure to do so shall be at the Offeror’s risk.

An Offeror’s proposal and all correspondence related to the proposal and exchanged by the Offeror and Counterpart shall be in English.

4. Proposal Content

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP must consist of the following three components:

- A. Technical proposal
- B. Cost proposal
- C. References

A. Technical proposal:

The technical proposal will be submitted as single Microsoft Word files comprising the following documents:

Tech 1. Corporate Capabilities and past experience (Maximum 3 pages). The offeror must describe in this document the firm’s past experience and capabilities, elaborating on the following:

i) Minimum eligibility requirements:

- *Requirement 1.* Proven experience conducting rigorous baseline, midterm, or final evaluations in agricultural development, market systems, SPS, trade facilitation, or agricultural finance.
- *Requirement 2.* Experience in conducting mixed-methods evaluations in agriculture value chains, or rural development, within the last five to ten (5 to 10) years in Colombia.
- *Requirement 3.* Experience with USDA Food for Progress, McGovern-Dole, or other U.S. Government evaluations.
- *Requirement 4.* Demonstrated expertise in:
 - o Cacao or specialty crop value chains
 - o SPS and food safety systems (optional/desirable)
 - o Trade and market access assessments
 - o Agricultural productivity analysis
 - o Financial inclusion or blended finance evaluations

Offerors are required to use the following table to provide experience addressing the above requirements, in addition to any other information offerors wish to provide. Please use Excel or Word for this table and include information on projects implemented only over the past 10 years (January 2016 onwards).

Minimum Past Experience Requirements Table – Offeror’s name

Project name and objective	Brief description of activities	Amount in USD	Contract term	Requirement (mark the requirement(s) applicable to each project)			
				1	2	3 (Funding agency’s name)	4 (Sector(s) associated with the project)
Add as many lines as needed							

ii) Additional past experience information:

- Quantitative and qualitative research and analytical skills.
- Proficiency with statistical software such as Stata or R.
- High capacity for writing in English and preparing quality written products.
- Ability to hire experienced enumerations that speak Spanish.

Tech 2. Proposed Methodology and Evaluation Structure (Maximum 10 pages): The Technical proposal will be submitted as single Microsoft Word file and must include the following information:

- Proposed sampling methodology
- Proposed evaluation design with a detailed description of tools to be used
- Quality control method(s) and tools

Tech 3. Baseline Study Team Composition and Structure (Maximum 8 pages not including Curriculum Vitae(s)): Briefly describe the proposed personnel structure and their responsibilities on the Baseline Study. In addition, take the following into consideration:

- a. Include proposed personnel’s Curriculum Vitae (CV) as an annex (maximum 5 pages per CV).
- b. As noted under the “Minimum eligibility requirements” section, the offeror’s proposed team leader must be fluent in both, English and Spanish.
- c. If the applicant is not based in Colombia, the proposal must identify the local data-collection firm and team and detail their qualifications, experiences, and role in fieldwork activities.
- d. Applicants must also describe the proposed management and supervision structure, quality-assurance protocols, and compliance with Colombian research requirements.
- e. Proposals should demonstrate prior experience overseeing remote field teams for U.S. government-funded studies or evaluations and present a clear plan for coordination, oversight, and risk mitigation from outside Colombia.

Tech 4. Gantt Chart: A detailed timeline of activities in weeks and proposed number of days for each stage of completing the Baseline Study. For purposes of the proposal, applicants should assume the Baseline Study begins in May 6, 2026, and the final version, including Counterpart’s comments, is submitted to USDA no later than August 19, 2026. We estimate three weeks for USDA’s reviews and update the Baseline Report with USDA’s comments on/about September 9, 2026.

Tech 5. Subcontracting arrangements (if applicable): If the execution of work to be performed by the Offeror requires the hiring of subcontractors, the proposal must clearly identify the subcontractor(s), contact information of subcontractor(s), and the work they will perform. Counterpart will not refuse a proposal based upon the use of subcontractors; however, Counterpart retains the right to approve or reject the specific subcontractors selected. Please note it is the offeror's responsibility to ensure proposed subcontractor(s) are not a debarred, blocked or restricted party for receiving US government funds; please provide back-up documentation supporting this.

B. Cost Proposal:

Counterpart anticipates issuing a **firm-fixed-price-type contract** as a result of this RFP. The total Cost Proposal should not exceed a ceiling of **USD \$165,000**. Proposals must be for a firm fixed price, expressed in US dollars. Colombian offerors, please provide the exchange rate used for calculating costs in US dollars and the source consulted. This exchange rate will be used to convert costs to COP if a Colombian offeror is selected.

When preparing the Cost Proposal, offerors shall take the following instructions into consideration:

1. The Offeror shall submit a **cost proposal in Microsoft Excel format**, unlocked and with intact macro formulas, that provides:
 - (i) A tab with detailed (line-item) cost breakdown, including the total price of the services offered in response to this RFP; and
 - (ii) A tab with the Payment Schedule Table with proposed prices for each Deliverable (see Section II, 20. Payment Schedule).
2. The cost proposal must indicate the unit price in USD for each service, a description, the quantity, and the total cost in USD of the entire cost proposal. As indicated above, Colombian offerors must indicate the exchange rate used to convert costs into USD.
3. The Cost Proposal is used to establish the best value among proposals and serves as a basis of negotiation for the signing of the contract.
4. In addition to the Excel file, the Cost Proposal **must include a budget narrative, in Word**, which explains the basis for the estimate of **each** budget element included in the Excel. Supporting information should be provided in sufficient detail to allow a complete analysis of each cost element.
5. Prices must be quoted on a lump-sum, all-inclusive basis, except for any taxes (including VAT taxes). Therefore, please do not include VAT tax or any other Colombian tax in the Cost proposal. Counterpart will provide the selected offeror the corresponding tax exemption certificate.

6. Any employee-related transport, meals, or lodging expenses are the responsibility of the offeror and should be reflected in the cost proposal. All items, services, etc. must be clearly labeled and included in the total price. All costs associated with logistics such as transportation costs should be included in the Offeror's cost proposal as Counterpart will not directly absorb any costs that are not included in the proposal under any circumstances.
7. Offeror cannot exceed the U.S. Department of State foreign per diem rates ceilings for lodging and meals and incidentals expenses established for Colombia (available here: https://allowances.state.gov/web920/per_diem_action.asp). The Offeror may propose lower per diem rates. In addition, international travel, if required, must comply with the requirements of the U.S. Fly America Act (49 U.S.C. 40118) which requires that all air travel must be made on U.S./EU flag air carriers to the extent service by such carriers is available. Regulations for this requirement may be found at 41 CFR Part 301-10
8. No advances will be given. The Offeror is responsible for financing the procurement and pricing its proposal accordingly i.e. if the firm needs to price cost of money and/or obtain a loan from a bank then it should factor in these costs into its bid.
9. The Offeror shall be required to have a bank account to which payments can be made electronically or through wire transfer.
10. The firm fixed-price contract will be payable entirely in the currency indicated in the contract. No additional sums will be payable for any escalation in the cost of materials, equipment or labor, or because of the contractor's failure to properly estimate or accurately predict the cost or difficulty of achieving the results required. Counterpart will not adjust the contract price due to fluctuations in currency exchange rates. Counterpart will only make changes in the contract price or time to complete due to changes made by Counterpart in the work to be performed, or by delays caused by Counterpart.

C. Professional References (1 page maximum):

The Offeror shall submit a list of **three (3) professional references** in Microsoft Word or PDF format that can speak to its experience in conducting mixed-methods evaluations in agriculture value chains, or rural development, **within the last five to ten (5 to 10) years in Colombia**. This list must include the name, title, organization, e-mail address, and telephone number of a contact from each reference that is available for Counterpart to reach. Also include in the list, a brief description of the services provided and contract value. The three references must correspond to projects included in the Minimum past experience requirement Table mentioned in Section I.4.A. Counterpart will not accept certified copies of letters of recommendation.

5. Format and Signing of Proposal

The Offeror shall prepare one proposal in its three parts – technical proposal, cost proposal, and references – with all the required sections and information as listed above under Clause 4, Proposal Content. The proposal shall be signed by a person duly authorized to bind the Offeror. See Section III- Annexes for the template for the Cover Letter.

6. Proposal Validity Period

Proposals must remain valid for no less than 90 days after the proposal deadline listed on the cover page.

7. Deadline and Late Proposals

Offers must be received by e-mail no later than date and time indicated on page 1 of this RFP. It is the Offeror's sole responsibility to ensure its proposal is received by Counterpart on or before the proposal deadline. Any late proposals will be considered only at the sole discretion of Counterpart.

Offerors will be held responsible for ensuring that their proposals are received in accordance with the instructions stated herein.

8. Clarification of Bidding Documents

Clarifications of the administrative and technical requirements of this RFP must be submitted in writing no later than the questions deadline indicated on the cover page to with the subject line procurement.col132@counterpart.org "Clarifications for RFP No **1132-FY26-RFP-01**". The questions and answers will also be published publicly wherever the RFP is initially published or will be circulated to all who have indicated an interest in bidding.

Only the written answers will be considered official and carry weight in the RFP process and subsequent evaluation. Any verbal information received from a Counterpart or LIFT employee or other entity should not be considered as an official response to any questions regarding this RFP.

9. Submission of Proposals

Proposals must be submitted electronically in the formats indicated in Clause 4, Proposal Content, to procurement.col132@counterpart.org with the subject line "Baseline Evaluation Proposal – RFP No. **1132-FY26-RFP-01** – [Offeror's name]". Counterpart will not accept hard-copy or faxed proposals under any circumstances.

Ensuring successful transmission and receipt of its proposal is the sole responsibility of the Offeror. It is recommended that no e-mail exceeds 10 MB in size, inclusive of attachments.

10. Amendment of Bidding Documents

Counterpart may at its discretion, for any reason, whether at its own initiative or in response to a request for clarification by an Offeror, modify the bidding documents (proposal contents detailed in Section I) by amendment. All prospective Offerors that have received bidding documents will be notified of the amendment by e-mail and such amendments will be binding. Counterpart will also publicly publish any amendment wherever the RFP is initially published.

11. Modification of Proposals

Any Offeror has the right to withdraw, modify, or correct its proposal after it has been delivered to Counterpart, provided the request for such a withdrawal, modification, or correction is received by Counterpart at the email address given above before the proposal deadline. Counterpart may ask any Offeror for clarification of its proposal; nevertheless, no Offeror will be

permitted to alter its proposal price at its own request or make any other material modification after the proposal deadline unless the RFP has been amended or the deadline extended.

12. Criteria for Award and Evaluation

Subject to the eligibility requirements in this RFP, Counterpart will award a **fixed price contract** to the Offeror, if any, whose proposal is deemed acceptable and that offers the best value after evaluation of the following criteria, with the weights applied accordingly. Offerors' proposals should include information which will allow Counterpart to adequately assess the evaluation criteria.

Criterion	Total Possible Points
Evaluation team's previous experience in conducting evaluations	25 points
Proposed overall methodology, including sampling method	25 points
Quality of proposed data collection and entry procedures	15 points
Schedule for delivery of evaluation deliverables	5 points
Quality control methods	15 points
Cost	15 points

Shortlisted applicants may be invited for an interview with Counterpart as part of the evaluation process.

13. Counterpart's Right to Accept Any Proposal and to Reject Any or All Proposals

Counterpart will reject any proposal that is nonresponsive. Further, Counterpart reserves the right to reject the proposal of any Offeror if, in Counterpart's judgment, the Offeror is not fully qualified to provide the services, or to reject all proposals altogether.

For a proposal to be deemed acceptable, it must comply with all the terms and conditions of this RFP without material modification. In addition, the successful Offeror must be determined to be responsible and is determined via a trade-off analysis to be the best value based on application of the following evaluation criteria. A responsible offeror is one who has technical expertise, management capability, workload capacity, and financial resources to perform the work.

14. Negotiations

Best offer proposals are requested. It is anticipated that awards will be made solely on the basis of these original proposals. However, Counterpart reserves the right to conduct negotiations and/or request clarifications prior to awarding a contract.

15. Notification of Award

Before the expiration of the period of proposal validity, Counterpart will notify the successful Offeror in writing that its proposal has been accepted.

Upon the successful Offeror acknowledging receipt of the notification of award, Counterpart will promptly notify the unsuccessful Offerors their proposals were rejected.

16. Acceptance of Privacy Policy and Terms and Conditions

By submitting a quotation/proposal to Counterpart, the company or the individual consents to Counterpart's privacy policy terms and conditions (<https://www.counterpart.org/terms-and-conditions/>) and provides Counterpart permission to process the company's or individual's personal data specifically for the performance of, and purposes identified in, this solicitation document and in compliance with Counterpart's legal obligations under applicable United States and European Union laws, data protection regulations, and any other applicable legal requirements.

The company/individual may withdraw their consent at any time by contacting privacy@counterpart.org. If consent is withdrawn, Counterpart reserves the right to accept or reject the offer.

17. Ethical Business Practices

Counterpart International commits to transparency and integrity in its business processes. Counterpart International hereby requests any Offeror to (i) inform Counterpart International upon becoming aware that the integrity of Counterpart International's business has been compromised during the duration of this RFP, and (ii) report such events by notifying Counterpart International using its confidential email address: whistleblower@counterpart.org, Ethics point, which can be accessed at <http://counterpart.ethicspoint.com>. Reports can be made in multiple languages. Counterpart International will not tolerate any form of retaliation against any person who makes a report in good faith.

SECTION II: TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

1. Background

Colombia's cacao sector represents a strategic opportunity for expanding two-way agricultural trade with the United States while driving rural economic development and strengthening national SPS and production systems. Following the 2016 Peace Accord, the Government of Colombia (GoC) prioritized cacao as a legal, high-value crop capable of supporting reintegration of conflict-affected populations and reducing reliance on illicit economies. Despite this potential, the sector faces persistent constraints stagnant yields, aging plantations, limited access to improved genetic material, cadmium contamination, weak post-harvest practices, insufficient traceability, and restricted access to finance that hinder its competitiveness in premium U.S. markets.

At the same time, global cacao supply disruptions and declining production in West Africa have increased demand among U.S. specialty and commodity chocolate manufacturers for diversified, resilient, and high-quality sourcing options. Although Colombian cacao is valued for its fine-flavor characteristics, producers face barriers such as inconsistent quality, SPS compliance challenges, limited scale, and inadequate digital and financial infrastructure. Colombian processors including Grupo Nutresa/CNCH, Luker Chocolate, Cacao Hunters, and others have expressed strong interest in upgrading and co-investing across the value chain but require coordinated support to meet growing U.S. market demand.

2. Program Overview

In response to these opportunities and constraints, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA-FAS) awarded Counterpart International the *Mutual Agricultural Growth Alliance - Alianza Mutua para el Crecimiento Agrícola (AMCA)* project under the Food for Progress (FFPr) program. AMCA employs a private-sector-led approach to strengthen Colombia's cacao value chain, expand bilateral agricultural trade, and support the growth of U.S. export markets. The project focuses on four priority departments Huila, Caldas, Nariño, and Tolima selected for their strong specialty cacao potential, lower cadmium levels, established processing infrastructure, and alignment with U.S. buyer sourcing strategies.

AMCA integrates four mutually reinforcing areas of intervention:

- Trade Facilitation and Market Access – Strengthening buyer–seller relationships, improving SPS compliance, reducing trade costs, and expanding market access for U.S. exporters in the Colombian confectionery sector.
- Improved Finance and Enterprise Capacity – Expanding access to tailored financial services, blended finance, and enterprise advisory support for producers, associations, and cacao enterprises.
- Post-Harvest and Quality Upgrading – Enhancing fermentation, drying, grading, and traceability systems to meet U.S. quality and safety standards.

- SPS Management and Digital Innovation – Increasing SPS diagnostic capacity, supporting cadmium mitigation strategies, and scaling ICT-enabled extension services and digital quality assurance tools.

Together, these interventions aim to increase productivity, strengthen SPS compliance, expand market access, and catalyze private-sector investment resulting in increased exports of Colombian cacao to the United States and expanded imports of U.S. agricultural commodities into Colombia. AMCA ultimately seeks to build a more competitive, resilient, and market-oriented cacao sector that drives rural economic growth in Colombia while enhancing U.S. trade security and supply-chain reliability.

3. Results and activities

The AMCA Results Framework advances USDA Food for Progress objectives by strengthening two-way agricultural trade between the United States and Colombia and improving productivity in the Colombian cacao sector. Under Strategic Objective 2(Expanded Trade), AMCA will facilitate trade, reduce import release times, strengthen buyer–seller relationships, and improve SPS compliance to meet U.S. quality and safety requirements. The project also increases opportunities for U.S. exporters by lowering market-entry barriers and expanding commercial partnerships with Colombian processors.

Key Intermediate Results under SO2 include stronger market linkages, improved trade facilitation, enhanced SPS compliance, and reduced transaction costs, achieved through coordinated engagement with GoC agencies, U.S. companies, and Colombian value chain actors.

Under Strategic Objective 1 (Increased Productivity), AMCA addresses systemic production and post-harvest constraints by improving fermentation and drying practices, expanding extension services, promoting digital tools, and increasing access to finance. These interventions boost cacao volume, quality, and SPS compliance for U.S. markets.

Intermediate Results under SO1 include greater adoption of climate-smart and SPS-compliant practices, improved access to financial services, enhanced post-harvest efficiency, and strengthened producer organization capacity contributing to higher export competitiveness and broader economic opportunities in conflict-affected rural regions.

Table 1. Activity with Anticipated Results

Activity	Anticipated Results	Associated Indicators
Activity 1	<u>Marketing Access; Facilitate buyer-seller relationships.</u> Counterpart will support U.S. private sector to increase investment in Colombia’s cacao value chain and facilitate the use of high-quality tree nuts and other products used in the confectionary industry. This will be achieved through 1) technical and financial assistance to pre-identified American cacao industry partners, 2) the project’s American Enterprise Challenge Fund, and 3) business to business (B2B) opportunities. Counterpart will also raise awareness of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) issues among these private sector actors and provide SPS capacity building to improve trade, in conjunction with other project activities.	(FFPr 1.4.3, 2.4.3), (FFPr 1.4.4, 2.4.4), (FFPr 1.4.5, 2.4.5), (FFPr 2.1.2), (FFPr 2.1.3, 2.2.1), (FFPr 2.2.2), (FFPr 2.3.2)
Activity 2	<u>Financial Services; Facilitate access to financial Services.</u> Counterpart will support access to finance for cacao farmers and producer associations in Colombia. Cacao	(FFPr 1.2.3, 2.2.3.1, 2.3.1.1), (FFPr 1.4.4,

	<p>organizations will receive advisory services to improve their internal capacity and prepare them for financing.</p> <p>Counterpart will provide technical assistance to FINAGRO and other financial institutions, as well as award grants under the FinTech Challenge Fund with a focus on promoting digital financial solutions and addressing key issues preventing greater access to finance in Colombia's cacao sector. Under this activity, Counterpart will also crowd in additional investment by working with social impact investment and trade finance providers. The combination of technical assistance and grants is expected to generate additional financial resources that the project will leverage.</p>	2.4.4), (FFPr 1.4.5, 2.4.5), FFPr 1.4.3, 2.4.3.
Activity 3	<p><u>Capacity Building; Post-harvest handling and processing.</u> Counterpart will strengthen post-harvest practices across the Colombian cacao sector to address poor fermentation and drying practices through the development of processing facilities and capacity building interventions at new and existing processing sites. Counterpart will ensure to build upon previous and ongoing USDA investments to reduce waste and increase efficiency of its interventions. Counterpart will provide grants to producer associations and other relevant stakeholders, to assist them in achieving improved post-harvest handling and processing and implement initiatives for waste valorization. Counterpart will work with processing facilities, producers, and producer organizations to create revenue from biomass waste from cacao processing.</p> <p>Counterpart will support financing for the establishment or expansion of six community-based cacao fermentation and drying facilities. These facilities will serve as 1) specialty buying centers, 2) hands-on training hubs for primary processing and implementing food safety and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), 3) engines for circular economies using byproduct revenues, and 4) platforms to strengthen direct trade relationships with U.S. buyers</p>	(FFPr 1.2.4), (FFPr 2.1.1), (FFPr 2.1.2), (FFPr 2.1.3, 2.2.1), (FFPr 2.4.4), (FFPr 1.4.5, 2.4.5)
Activity 4	<p><u>Capacity Building; Government Institutions and value chain actors to mitigate SPS issues.</u> Counterpart will provide capacity building to the government of Colombia and value chain actors to identify, mitigate, and manage SPS risks that threaten trade, such as disease, pests, excessive fertilizer use, and heavy metal contamination. In partnership with AGROSAVIA, UC Davis, USDA ARS, and private sector partners, we will: 1) promote scientific research exchanges and collaborative SPS research; 2) support emerging government-to-government (G2G) SPS policy dialogues; 3) scale technologies developed under USDA investments, and; 4) promote harmonized GAP to mitigate SPS issues in coordination with value chain actors.</p> <p>Counterpart will facilitate G2G cooperation on Colombian and U.S. specialty crops, cacao, and tree nuts, to resolve SPS issues as they arise and to advance harmonization around science-based approaches to SPS. Counterpart will also support research and scientific coordination by creating annual scientific research exchange workplans to guide such efforts between USDA and AGROSAVIA, building upon existing and previous USDA investments. Moreover, Counterpart will establish workshops between AGROSAVIA, private sector partners, and other development projects to align approaches on SPS issues affecting cacao. Counterpart will also conduct SPS knowledge sharing workshops on an annual basis with producer associations at the department level. As part of this activity, Counterpart will issue grants to value chain actors, such as extension agents and producer organizations, to improve SPS knowledge and capacity.</p>	(FFPr 2.1.1.1), (FFPr 1.4.1, 2.4.1), (FFPr 1.4.2, 2.4.2), (FFPr 1.4.4, 2.4.4)
Activity 5	<p><u>Infrastructure; Scale innovation and digital technologies for smallholder farmers.</u> Counterpart will provide technical assistance to enhance and scale existing ICT investments and platforms that are utilized in Colombia's cacao sector. AMCA will collaborate with public and private extension actors (e.g., Luker Chocolate, Red Cacaotera, FEDECACAO) to expand the use of digital agricultural technologies by promoting the adoption of ICTs (e.g., remote sensing, precision agriculture), and AI decision support platforms to strengthen access to information and knowledge, enhance real-time decision making, optimize yield and quality, and raise SPS awareness. Through the AgTech Challenge Fund, Counterpart will provide technical and financial assistance to Colombian enterprises to scale usage of mobile-based solutions that increase the uptake of AgTech tools among farmers. Additionally, at annual national and department workshops and events Counterpart will showcase scalable AgTech solutions tailored to cacao farmers' needs.</p>	(FFPr 1.2.1), (FFPr 1.2.4), (FFPr 1.3.1), (FFPr 2.1.3, 2.2.1), (FFPr 1.4.3, 2.4.3), (FFPr 1.4.4, 2.4.4), (FFPr 1.4.5, 2.4.5)

4. Beneficiary Overview

Counterpart will use a transparent, criteria-based process aligned with USDA requirements to identify project beneficiaries. Selection will be guided by documented eligibility criteria including geographic alignment, SPS readiness, market linkage potential, production capacity, willingness to co-invest, financial readiness. Eligibility criteria will be validated through baseline assessment and publicly communicated when appropriate, in accordance with USDA guidance.

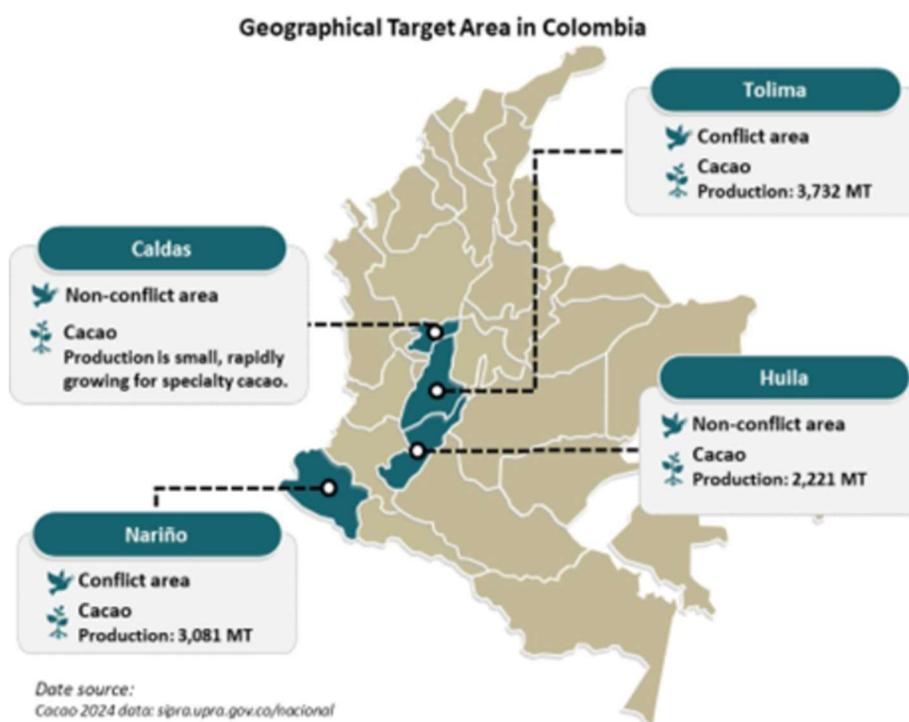
Beneficiary targeting was informed by consultations with the Government of Colombia (GoC), U.S. private-sector partners, and Colombian value chain actors, supported by public and proprietary data sources. During implementation, Counterpart will apply competitive selection mechanisms, including open calls for applications, standardized scoring matrices, conflict-of-interest safeguards, and documented selection decisions to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability. Pre-identified sub-recipients will support outreach and participation processes across the cacao value chain in line with approved project objectives.

Table 2. Beneficiary Selection

Direct Beneficiaries:	
Colombian Cacao Producers and Organizations:	A targeted subset of Colombia’s 5,000 cacao-producing families (98% cultivating 5 hectares) will receive direct support to improve SPS compliance, post-harvest quality, productivity, and access to digital extension and financial services.
U.S. and Colombian Private-Sector Partners:	Direct beneficiaries include U.S. specialty and commodity cacao companies (e.g., Mars, Guittard, Dandelion, Uncommon Cacao) and Colombian enterprises such as Grupo Nutresa/CNCH, Luker Chocolate, Gironés, Cacao Hunters, Chocolate Colombia, D’ORIGENN, and Equiori. These firms were selected based on their sourcing networks, post-harvest capacity, alignment with U.S. buyer requirements, willingness to co-invest, and presence in priority regions.
Sector Institutions and Associations:	Key stakeholders include Red Cacaotera de Colombia and FEDECACAO, which support national coordination, farmer outreach, and dissemination of good practices.
U.S. Edible Nuts and Confectionery Actors:	Beneficiaries include 18,000 U.S. nut farmers and 550 National Confectioners Association (NCA) member companies, as well as industry bodies such as the American Peanut Council, California Almond Board, and California Walnut Board.
GoC Institutions (System-Level Beneficiaries):	Government partners benefiting from SPS, research, and trade facilitation strengthening include MADR, UPRA, ADR, AGROSAVIA, ICA, MINCOMERCIO/ProColombia, DNP, APC, local governments, and UMATAs.
American Farmers, Businesses, and Consumers:	The project will support expanded market access for U.S. agricultural commodities (e.g., edible nuts), improved supply-chain reliability, reduced SPS risks, and stronger B2B linkages with Colombian processors.
Colombian Government and Value Chain Actors:	Major buyers including Grupo Nutresa/CNCH, and Luker Chocolate (collectively sourcing 80% of national cacao) along with financial institutions such as FINAGRO, will benefit from improved SPS systems, access to market information, and expanded financial products for producers and enterprises.
Colombian Cacao Farmers (Productivity and Quality Focus)	Producers will benefit from ICT-enabled extension, climate-smart and SPS-compliant practices, improved post-harvest infrastructure, and expanded access to blended finance enhancing incomes, quality consistency, and supply-chain reliability for U.S. buyers.
Indirect Beneficiaries	
Counterpart has designed an intervention that can be replicated across Colombia, generating substantial indirect benefits for cacao value chain actors. Combined with ICT-based extension and digital financial services, Counterpart has strategically pre-identified Colombian cacao value chain actors (e.g., Red Cacaotera and Luker Chocolate), who have national reach and a history of providing farm level services to replicate and scale these interventions beyond the project’s target geographic area. Counterpart estimates to reach 65,000 cacao producing families indirectly.	

5. Geographic Target Areas

Our geographic targeting was strategically guided by input from both American and Colombian private sector partners, who expressed a strong commitment to leveraging their existing investments and infrastructure such as purchasing and processing centers as well as their longstanding relationships with farming communities and key value chain actors. The selection of cacao-growing regions, in particular, was closely coordinated with partners who bring decades of experience working in areas known for low cadmium (Cd) levels. These partners have also consistently provided technical assistance to communities dedicated to cultivating high-quality specialty cacao, ensuring both environmental suitability and producer readiness.



While our interventions will be concentrated in these four departments, as mentioned above, many activities, particularly the promotion of financial products and AgTech, will have benefits for cacao producers and their families well beyond these locations. Furthermore, it is important to note that the project aims to directly benefit U.S. specialty cacao companies, U.S. farmers, U.S. consumers, the Colombian government, Colombian cacao producers, and other stakeholders in the value chain, as well as increase exports of U.S.-grown commodities such as edible nuts. We will explore commercial opportunities for U.S.-grown edible nuts with companies that process these inputs across the country.

6. Project Objectives

The AMCA project aims to strengthen two-way agricultural trade between the United States and Colombia by improving cacao quality, productivity, and SPS compliance while expanding market access for U.S. agricultural exports. Through private-sector partnerships, enhanced post-harvest practices, digital innovation, and improved trade facilitation, the project will increase export competitiveness, reduce trade barriers, and drive inclusive rural economic growth in Colombia. The project's objectives are to:

- Expand Trade in Agricultural Products Between the U.S. and Colombia.
- Increase Agricultural Productivity and Quality in the Colombian Cacao Sector.
- Strengthen Value Chain Coordination and Private-Sector Partnerships.
- Support a Secure, Market-Oriented, and Inclusive Cacao Economy.

7. Baseline Study Objectives

The baseline study will establish the initial conditions against which the AMCA project's performance, outcomes, and contributions to USDA Food for Progress objectives will be measured. The specific objectives are to:

- Establish Baseline Values: Collect and validate baseline data for all USDA-mandated and project-specific indicators under Strategic Objective 2 (Expanded Trade) and Strategic Objective 1 (Increased Productivity), including trade facilitation metrics, SPS compliance measures, post-harvest capacity, productivity levels, financial access, and digital tool adoption.
- Validate the Theory of Change: Assess the logical linkages among inputs, outputs, outcomes, and assumptions to confirm that the project's design is coherent and achievable within Colombia's current market and policy context.
- Assess Current Trade, Market Access, and SPS Conditions: Analyze existing trade processes, import release times, buyer-seller relationships, SPS systems, and market-entry barriers affecting two-way agricultural trade between the U.S. and Colombia, to determine initial constraints and opportunities for increasing U.S. edible nuts exports and Colombian cacao exports to the U.S.
- Establish Baseline Productivity and Post-Harvest Capacity Levels: Assess current cacao production, yield levels, post-harvest practices (fermentation, drying, quality control), digital readiness, and extension service access in the target departments to identify gaps that AMCA interventions will address.
- Map Key Value Chain Actors and Institutional Capacities: Document the initial capacity of producers, associations, cacao enterprises, SPS authorities (ICA, AGROSAVIA, MADR), and private-sector partners (e.g., Luker Chocolate, Cacao Hunters, Mars, Guittard) to understand starting conditions and co-investment readiness and main barriers they perceive.
- Identify Financial Access Constraints and Opportunities: Assess availability, uptake, and barriers to financial services including blended finance, ventures capital, digital financial platforms, and traditional credit products, collateral funds to inform financial-sector intervention strategies.

- Validate Geographic Targeting and Beneficiary Profiles: Confirm the relevance of the selected departments (Huila, Caldas, Nariño, Tolima) and establish profiles of direct and indirect beneficiaries, ensuring alignment with trade potential, SPS conditions, cadmium risks, and private-sector sourcing strategies.
- Identify Risks, Assumptions, and Enabling Environment Factors: Assess risks related to security, institutional coordination, market volatility, SPS regulatory frameworks, climate factors, market/price, and financial barriers to inform adaptive management and risk-mitigation planning.
- Establish a Basis for Evaluating Project Effectiveness and Impact: Generate reference points that will be used during midline and endline evaluations to assess AMCA’s effectiveness in improving productivity, enhancing SPS compliance, reducing trade costs, expanding U.S. Colombia agricultural trade, and strengthening value chain competitiveness.

8. Research Questions

The baseline study will answer the following key questions within the standard evaluation framework: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is the AMCA project designed and structured to aligned to USDA/FAS and broader USG trade and development objectives, including promotion of two-way agricultural trade with the United States? • To what extent do the project’s proposed activities and intervention pathways respond to the identified needs and priorities of key stakeholder groups, including cacao producers, producer organizations, the Government of Colombia, U.S. cacao buyers, US edible nuts sellers and financial institutions? • To what extent is the project’s ToC and intervention logic aligned with current market conditions, SPS requirements, access to finance conditions, barrier to the adoption of digital solutions and buyer demand for traceable, high-quality cacao? • How well is the project designed to complement existing Government of Colombia policies, regulatory frameworks, and other donor-funded cacao sector initiatives? • What is the current level of access to U.S. markets, including existing trade volumes, trade linkages, certifications, and U.S. buyer engagement for Cacao and its derivatives, prior to project implementation? • What is the current level of access to Colombian markets, including existing trade volumes, trade links, certifications and other regulations, and the participation of Colombian buyers of edible nuts, prior to the implementation of the project? • What is the current level of knowledge among actors in the cacao value chain in Colombia and buyers in the US regarding the existing opportunities and barriers they face? • How well does the program complement existing GoC policies and initiatives and align with other donor-funded cacao programs? • What factors do cacao sellers in Colombia perceive as making the US market attractive compared to other international markets, and what barriers do they say affect it? • What opportunities exist for leveraging GoC, donor, and private sector co-investment through aligned programming, public-private partnerships, or resource mobilization strategies? • Is the project design sufficiently flexible to respond to foreseeable risks and changes in the operating environment, including policy, market, and SPS-related shifts?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are target producers, producer organizations, and SMEs prepared to engage in AMCA-supported activities related to productivity, post-harvest quality, SPS compliance, traceability, and market access? • What baseline conditions exist with respect to producer practices, post-harvest performance, quality management, access to finance and SPS compliance, and how do these conditions vary across target regions and stakeholder groups? • What level of adoption of best sanitary and phytosanitary practices exists among cacao producers, and what barriers prevent better adoption and implementation of these practices?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of use or exploitation exists for the waste elements generated in the cacao chain, in each of the regions? • What is the current level of access to financial services and digital financial tools among target producers and enterprises, and what constraints affect uptake? • What is the current level of access to FINAGRO financing resources among the target producers and companies, and what limitations affect their access? • What is the current level of Fintech financing available, and what opportunities and barriers do providers of these solutions perceive in reaching participants in the cacao value chain? • What is the current level of supply and adoption of AgTech and postharvest practices among target producers? • What existing market linkages currently exist between Colombian producers/processors and U.S. cacao buyers? • What enabling and constraining factors are likely to influence the project’s ability to achieve its intended results, based on baseline conditions and stakeholder perspectives? • To what extent do stakeholders understand their anticipated roles and responsibilities in project implementation, monitoring, and learning? • What M&E systems, data platforms, and feedback mechanisms are planned or in place at baseline to support learning and adaptive management? • What baseline conditions and indicators are in place for tracking progress toward FFPr outcomes, including market access, access to finance, binational trade volume, and income growth?
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is the project’s implementation approach and resource allocation strategy appropriate given the baseline operating context, stakeholder capacity, and market structure?? • What baseline cost structures, operational constraints, or coordination challenges may affect the efficient delivery of project activities? • How are USDA grant and leveraged investments expected to enable U.S. buyers to reliably source Colombian cacao that meets quality and compliance requirements? • How are USDA grants and leveraged investments expected to enable US sellers of edible nuts to gain a larger share of the Colombian buyer market? • How are USDA grants and leveraged investments expected to enable cacao producers to improve their post-harvest practices, make better use of cacao waste, and achieve better adoption of improved sanitary or phytosanitary practices?
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent does the project design incorporate mechanisms intended to support sustainability, such as private-sector engagement, institutional strengthening, and market-based incentives? • What baseline capacities and systems exist that may support or constrain the sustainability of services related to traceability, quality control, SPS compliance, and access to finance?
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the baseline levels of cacao exports, market participation, and SPS compliance among target actors that will serve as reference points for assessing future changes? • What external factors and market dynamics are likely to influence future outcomes related to trade, finance, and market access, as identified through baseline analysis and stakeholder consultation? • What is the current level of access to financial services and high-value markets for participating producers and enterprises? • What is the level of adoption of Fintech and Agrtech solutions by actors in the cacao value chain in the target regions?

9. Evaluation Approach and Methodologies

Independent Evaluation: Counterpart will competitively procure an independent third-party firm to conduct the baseline evaluation, consistent with the USDA FAS M&E Policy and applicable regulatory requirements (including 7 CFR Part 1599.13). The independent evaluator will be responsible for all methodological decisions, including evaluation design, sampling, data collection, analysis, and findings. Counterpart’s M&E team will provide administrative coordination and quality assurance to ensure compliance with USDA standards but will not influence evaluation methods, analysis, or conclusions, thereby safeguarding evaluation independence and credibility.

Evaluation Standards: All baseline evaluation activities will apply the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact potential. A true experimental impact evaluation (e.g., randomized control trial) is not feasible due to the complexity of the cacao value chain, the presence of parallel interventions, and market-level spillover effects. Consistent with the USDA FAS M&E Policy, the baseline evaluation will employ a non-experimental design, incorporating a comparison group where feasible to support contribution analysis and strengthen interpretation of results. The baseline will establish reference conditions and comparative benchmarks but will not seek to estimate causal impacts attributable solely to the project.

Alignment with FFPr Results Framework: Baseline questions and data points will align directly with:

- Strategic Objective 1: Increased Agricultural Productivity
- Strategic Objective 2: Expanded Trade of Agricultural Products
- Associated Intermediate Results (IRs) and indicator requirements.

The **AMCA** baseline study will use a rigorous mixed -methods methodology to establish benchmark values for all USDA Food Progress indicators and validate key assumptions in the project's theory of change. The approach integrates statistically representative quantitative surveys with targeted qualitative inquiry to capture both measurable conditions and the systemic, behavioral, and institutional factors influencing cacao value chains in Colombia. The methodology aligns with USDA-FAS FFPr evaluation standards and OECD-DAC evaluation criteria.

Mixed-Methods Evaluation Design: The baseline will integrate quantitative and qualitative components to capture production systems, market dynamics, SPS practices, financial access, digital capabilities, and trade conditions across the Colombian cacao sector.

Quantitative Data Collection: Surveys modules will be conducted with 1) cacao producers in Colombia and 2) other private sector actors involved in post-harvest processing, value - addition (e.g., roasting), and trade. Data will be disaggregated by sex, age, and geographic region, and include at minimum the following variables:

- Socio-demographics (e.g., sex, age, education level)
- Production characteristics (e.g., average number of trees per hectare area, yield per hectare, and total cultivated area)
- Farming practice (e.g., adoption of agronomic and post-harvest techniques).
- Access to finance, extension services, and market linkages.

Sampling will use a proportionate stratified random design by department and value chain to ensure generalizability and allow for valid comparisons over time and between treatment and control groups.

Qualitative Data Collection: To collect qualitative data, we will conduct key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and direct observations field observations through site visits. We will use different approaches with specific target groups. For example, we

will conduct FGDs with Colombian producer organizations and KIIs with American private sector enterprise, government representatives, subrecipients, and other stakeholders. Particular attention will be given to the analysis of post-harvest techniques and observed changes as a result of activities proposed under Activity 3 and 4.

10. Evaluation Design Process

The evaluation design for the AMCA project follows a structured, multi-step process that ensures methodological rigor, independence, and alignment with USDA FFPr and OECD-DAC standards. The independent evaluator will conduct an inception phase to:

- Review the project’s Theory of Change, results framework, and MEL plan.
- Refine evaluation questions and indicators.
- Confirm sampling methodology and data collection instruments; and
- Define quality assurance, ethical compliance, and reporting protocols.

11. Sample Size

A purposive (non-probabilistic) sampling approach will be applied for qualitative data collection, targeting diverse stakeholder groups with exposure to project activities (e.g., former organizations, SME’s, financial institutions, U.S. buyers, US sellers). The focus will be on capturing learning, behavior change, and systems-level dynamics across the project’s five activity stream (e.g., post-harvest, SPS, digital, Finance, market access).

Table 2: Summary of Evaluation Tools and Sample for Baseline, Midterm and Endline Assessments

Tool	Respondent	Proposed Sample	Purpose of tool	Sampling Approach
Quantitative Tools				
Producer Survey (Cacao)	Farmers (treatment + control)	1,000 total (600 treatment; 400 control)	Measure production practices, yields, SPS compliance, finance access, digital tool adoption, market linkage	Proportionate stratified random sampling by department & value chain
Access-to-Finance Survey	Loan/trade finance beneficiaries (farmers, SMEs, enterprises)	100	Assess financial access (short and long term), credit use, repayment behavior, and effects on productivity & trade readiness	Purposive sampling of finance beneficiaries
SME/Enterprise Survey	Colombian SMEs, post-harvest processors, value chain actors; American buyers/importer	20 Colombian SMEs + 5 U.S. buyers	Measure processing upgrades, quality control capacity, business practices, certification challenges, improved price for quality and market integration	Purposive sampling

American Farmer & Trade Association Survey	U.S. nut farmers; NCA/APC/Almond Board/Walnut Board	30 U.S. farmers + trade associations	Assess export readiness, trade barriers, demand signals, and opportunities for market expansion	Purposive sampling
Qualitative Tools				
KIIs	GoC (national/departmental/municipal), U.S. private sector, trade associations, financial institutions, subrecipients	17–20 total •7 national GoC •7 subnational GoC •2 U.S. private sector, trade associations •3 financial institutions	Analyze policy environment, SPS systems, trade facilitation bottlenecks, institutional capacity, and private-sector perspectives	Purposive/key informant sampling
FGDs	Producer groups, associations, women/youth farmers, value chain actors	8–10 FGDs (6–8 participants each)	Explore behavioral drivers, extension gaps, SPS awareness, post-harvest practices, and program relevance	Stratified purposive sampling across 4 departments
Direct Observations	Farms and post-harvest facilities	30 site observations	Validate technology adoption, observe SPS practices, review fermentation/drying processes	Structured observation checklist

12. Sampling Design

Quantitative Sampling: A proportionate stratified random sample of 1,000 farmers (600 treatment, 400 control) will be drawn from an estimated population of 8,000 cacao and producers across four departments. Stratification will occur by 1) Department: Huila, Tolima, Nariño, Caldas; 2) Value Chain: Cacao; 3) Treatment Status: Treatment vs. Control- This design ensures statistical representativeness, supports quasi-experimental comparisons, and aligns with USDA evaluation requirements.

Qualitative Sampling: A purposive sampling strategy will be used to capture diverse perspectives from:

- Government agencies (national, departmental, municipal)
- Colombian and U.S. private sector actors
- Financial institutions and MFIs
- Producer associations
- SMEs and processors
- Women and youth farmers

This approach ensures representation across the project’s five major intervention streams (trade, finance, post-harvest, SPS, digital/ICT).

13. Data Quality and Ethical Considerations

- Use of electronic data collection (tablets, GPS tagging, automated logic checks).
- Enumerator training in ethics, interviewing techniques, and gender-sensitive facilitation.
- Secure storage of digital data with restricted access.
- Continuous quality monitoring by Counterpart's MEL team.
- Triangulation across methods to enhance credibility and reliability.
- All KIIs and FGDs will be audio-recorded (with informed consent), transcribed, and analyzed using thematic content analysis in software.
- Qualitative findings will be triangulated with quantitative and secondary data to enhance validity and provide a holistic understanding of market and institutional dynamics.

14. Document and Statistical Review

Review of project documentation (Cooperative Agreement, Workplan, PMP, MEL Plan, and Budget), national policy frameworks, trade statistics, and secondary datasets from government and industry sources to triangulate evidence.

15. Data Entry, Cleaning, and Analysis

The evaluator is responsible for entering into all data collected under this evaluation. This includes double-entry of all survey data. Survey data must be entered into Excel files. Supervisor(s) will conduct thorough data checks and submit to Counterpart for a final, clean dataset. The evaluation firm will also prepare and deliver a codebook to accompany the final dataset. Survey data analysis will be carried out using appropriate statistical packages such as R or STATA. Analysis will include means of comparisons by gender, grade, and department, along with tests of statistical significance.

The evaluation firm will identify and recruit local enumerators for data collection who should have at least a bachelor's degree and experience conducting applied research, surveys, and evaluations. Given the nature of the research, Counterpart has a strong preference for both female and male enumerators. During the data collection training, supervisors will be identified. The evaluation firm will be responsible for developing a data collection manual for review by Counterpart prior to training. The firm will also be responsible for printing all data collection instruments for training, incorporating (and translating) any revisions to instruments following the training and pilots, and printing all instruments for data collection

16. Timeframe

The baseline study should take eighteen (18) weeks to complete and begin on/about May 6, 2026 (estimated contract signature date). Applicants should provide their proposed timeframe for completing the Baseline Study activities listed below and propose staffing and budget consistent with the requirements of this Terms of Reference

Table 3. Deliverables Timeline

Baseline Study Activity	Responsibility	Estimated LOE	Estimated Dates
Review of relevant documents to prepare for Inception Meeting	Service Provider	One week	TBD
Inception meeting with Counterpart to discuss protocol, methodology, sampling, tools, and timeline	Service Provider and Counterpart	Three days	TBD
Develop an inception report and data collection tools (questionnaires for quantitative data, FGD/interview guidelines, for all levels of data collection)	Service Provider	One week	TBD
Inception Report and baseline study tools due to Counterpart	Service Provider	One week	TBD
<i>Counterpart reviews Inception Report and tools and provides feedback, comments, and recommendations to the Service Provider</i>	Counterpart	One week	TBD
Prepare for field work	Service Provider	Two weeks	TBD
Data entry, cleaning, analysis, and report writing	Service Provider	One week	TBD
Draft Baseline report is submitted to Counterpart	Service Provider	One week	TBD
Presentation of evaluation findings to Counterpart	Service Provider	Three days	TBD
<i>Counterpart reviews draft final report and provide service provider with comments and suggestions for revisions for final report</i>	Counterpart	One week	TBD
Finalize report based on Counterpart's feedback and prepare all deliverables	Service Provider	One week	TBD
All Final Deliverables Due (Final Baseline report, clean data, and PPT presentation)	Service Provider	Two weeks	TBD
An informal virtual presentation of the evaluation, for USDA stakeholders and the PVO.	Service Provider		TBD
Update Final Report based on USDA Feedback	Service Provider	Deliverable	TBD
A 2–3-page stand-alone brief describing the evaluation design, key findings and other relevant considerations.	Service Provider	One week	TBD
A personally identifiable information (PII) removed version of the finalized report following the "USDA Guidance for Reviewing Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in Project Evaluations" and "Evaluation Public Disclosure Statement".	Service Provider		TBD

17. Key Deliverable Requirements

The evaluation team will be expected to submit key deliverables in line with the expectations and requirements outlined below for the Baseline Evaluations workplan.

Table 4. Baseline Evaluation Workplan Requirements

Deliverable	Description
Inception meeting notes and updated baseline study implementation timeline	The report must include inception meeting notes, including main conclusions, as well as an updated version of the baseline study implementation timeline, identifying any deviations from the timeline included with the selected offeror's proposal.
Inception Report and baseline study Tools	<p>The Inception Report should describe the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the project based on project documents and literature review • Finalized methodology including detailed sampling plan and field procedures • Quality control measures • Communication protocol • Finalized timeline • Draft data collection tools • Expected length 12-20 pages (excluding annexes)
Draft Outline	<p>Draft detailed outline that provides a breakdown of how the results and findings will be reported. Report should include at least following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgements • List of Acronyms and abbreviations • Table of Contents • Executive Summary • Background of Project and Baseline Study • Methodology, Implementation, and Study Limitations • Results and Findings • Recommendations • Annex: Table of program indicators with updated annual and life of project target values • Annex: Results Frameworks • Annex: Scope of Work for the Baseline Study • Annex: Inception Report for the Baseline Study • Annex: Survey Instruments: Questionnaire(s), Survey(s), Interview Protocol(s), Focus Group Discussion Protocol(s) • Expected length 3-5 pages
Draft Baseline Study Report	<p>The report should be submitted in English addressing all the evaluation objectives and questions listed in the scope of work. The report should not include any personal identifying information of those involved in the study.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected narrative length 30-50 pages (excluding annexes)
Final Version of Baseline Study	<p>Electronic copy of the final evaluation report should be submitted in English in both Microsoft Word and PDF version. The report should not include any personal identifying information of those involved in the study.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected narrative length 30-50 pages (excluding annexes)
Final Data Collection Tools	Electronic copies of all clean and final English-version of data collection tools
Final Cleaned Data	<p>Clean and final English versions of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative data sets in approved format (Excel, Stata, SPSS) • Qualitative transcripts, field and interview notes, complete list of key informant interviews and FGDs in Microsoft-Word document • Codebook
Power Point Presentation on Findings	<p>Presentation should include an abbreviated list of evaluation findings that can be presented to relevant internal and external stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected 15-20 slides
Annexes	<p>Include the following as annexes, at a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed Gantt Chart (Excel format preferred) • Data Collection Tools • Terms of Reference • Bibliography

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table of indicator data (including targets and actuals) • Results Framework (if not included in body of text) • Data collection instruments • Questionnaires • Interview guides • Observation protocols • Sampling tools • Terms of Reference/Statement of Work for the evaluation • Conflict of Interest form(s) • Key elements of statistical results (required for impact evaluations) <p>Project Background Documents (including results framework, theory of change, critical assumptions, etc.)</p> <p>A 2–3-page stand-alone brief describing the evaluation design, key findings and other relevant considerations. It will serve to inform any interested stakeholders of the evaluation and should be written in language easy to understand by non-evaluators and with appropriate graphics and tables.</p> <p>An informal virtual presentation of the evaluation, for USDA stakeholders and the PVO. [This gives USDA stakeholders a chance to ask questions and understand the evaluation better. Participants may include Post and/or IFAD directors or staff.]</p> <p>A personally identifiable information (PII) removed version of the finalized report following the "USDA Guidance for Reviewing Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in Project Evaluations" and "Evaluation Public Disclosure Statement".</p>
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18. Relationships and Responsibilities

The successful organization chosen to conduct this Baseline Study will be financially and legally independent of Counterpart and its partners to ensure evaluation of validity.

The service provider will perform the tasks described in this Terms of Reference with support from AMCA staff members, assigned by the Chief of Party, to provide relevant documents and information and to support locating participants and stakeholders. The service provider will communicate with the AMCA Monitoring & Evaluation Manager and Counterpart’s Associate Director for Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning at headquarters, and keep them informed of their progress. Counterpart staff and AMCA stakeholders will provide feedback on the inception report, data collection tools, and draft report.

Counterpart’s Associate Director for Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning, based in Counterpart’s headquarter office and Chief of Party, will give the final approval on all evaluation deliverables, and will work closely with the AMCA team to ensure the deliverables are reviewed and shared among relevant staff and stakeholders

19. Logistics

The baseline study will require travel throughout Bogota and to the targeted program areas in Nariño and Tolima, and the non-conflict departments of Huila and Caldas. All resources (e.g., transport, hotel reservations, enumerators, etc.) should be arranged by the service provider and included in the proposed budget

20. Payment Schedule

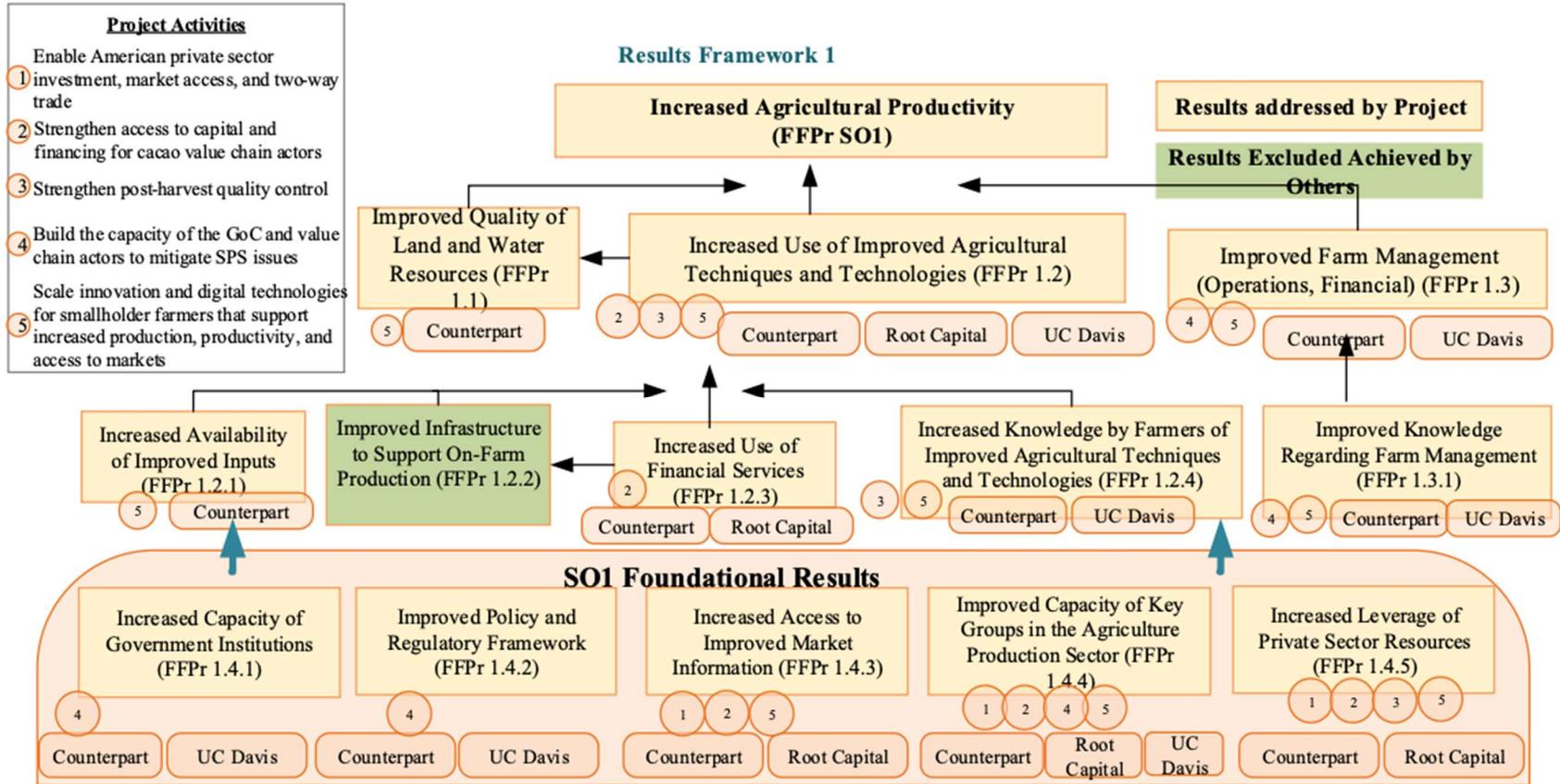
In addition to the detailed budget, the Excel file shall include, on a separate tab, the table below with the offeror's proposed payment amounts based on the Deliverables. The payment schedule will be finalized in negotiations.

Payment Schedule

Deliverable	Payment Amount (in USD)	Submission deadline
1. Inception meeting notes and updated baseline study implementation timeline		
2. Inception Report and baseline study tools		
3. Draft Outline		
4. Draft Baseline report		
5. Final Deliverables: Final baseline report, clean data, and PPT presentation on findings		
6. Updated Baseline Study Report Incorporating USDA feedback plus Annexes		

SECTION III: ANNEXES

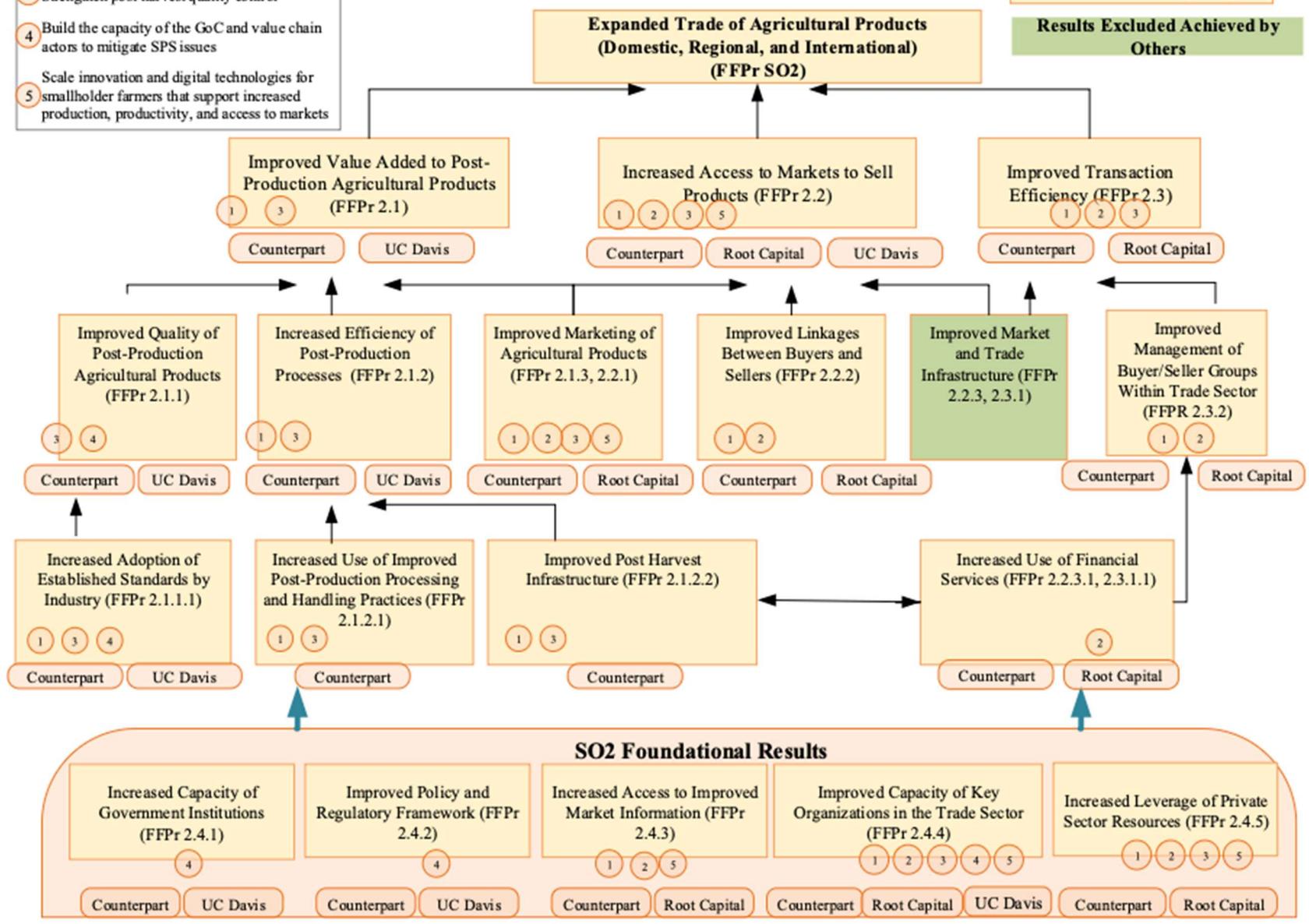
1. Results Frameworks



- Project Activities**
- 1 Enable American private sector investment, market access, and two-way trade
 - 2 Strengthen access to capital and financing for cacao value chain actors
 - 3 Strengthen post-harvest quality control
 - 4 Build the capacity of the GoC and value chain actors to mitigate SPS issues
 - 5 Scale innovation and digital technologies for smallholder farmers that support increased production, productivity, and access to markets

Results Framework 2

Results addressed by Project
Results Excluded Achieved by Others



2. Key Indicators to be Measured

Indicators requiring establishment of baseline and review of annual targets:

Indicator Number	Result #	Indicator Name
FFPr #1	FFPr SO1	Yield of targeted agricultural commodities among program participants with USDA assistance
FFPr #3	FFPr 1.2/ 1.3	Number of hectares under improved management practices or technologies with USDA assistance
FFPr #4	FFPr 1.2/ 1.3	Number of individuals in the agriculture system who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USDA assistance
FFPr #11	FFPr 1.4.1 /2.4.1	Number of host government or community derived risk management plans formally proposed, adopted, implemented or institutionalized with USDA assistance
FFPr #18	FFPr SO1 and SO2	Value of annual sales of farms and firms receiving USDA assistance
FFPr #19	FFPr SO1 and SO2	Volume of commodities sold by farms and firms receiving USDA assistance
FFPr #25	Custom	Number of U.S. businesses reporting increased market access to fulfill American consumer demand as a result of USDA-assistance
FFPr #26	Custom	Number of U.S. companies and trade associations representing American farmers with increased access to the Colombian domestic market
FFPr #27	Custom	Value of American farmer exports to the Colombian domestic chocolate and confectionary market as a result of USDA assistance.

Indicators requiring review of annual targets:

Indicator Number	Result #	Indicator Name
FFPr #5	FFPr 1.2.3 /2.2.3.1 /2.3.1.1	Number of individuals accessing agriculture related financing as a result of USDA assistance
FFPr #7	FFPr 1.2.3 /2.2.3.1 /2.3.1.1	Number of loans disbursed as a result of USDA assistance
FFPr #8	FFPr 1.2.3 /2.2.3.1 /2.3.1.1	Value of agriculture-related financing accessed as a result of USDA assistance
FFPr #9	FFPr 1.2.4	Number of technologies, practices, and approaches under various phases of research, development, and uptake as a result of USDA assistance
FFPr #12	FFPr 1.4.4 /2.4.4	Number of organizations with increased performance improvement with USDA assistance
FFPr #13	FFPr 1.4.5 /2.4.5	Number of public-private partnerships formed as a result of USDA assistance
FFPr #14	FFPr 1.4.5/2.4.5 and 2.2	Value of new USG commitments and new public and private sector investment leveraged by USDA to support food security and nutrition
FFPr #17	FFPr 2.4.2 and 2.1.1.1	Number of policies, regulations and/or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance
FFPr #20	FFPr SO1 and SO2	Number of jobs attributed to USDA assistance
FFPr #21	FFPr SO1 and SO2	Number of individuals who have received short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training as a result of USDA assistance

FFPr #22	FFPr SO1 and SO2	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs
FFPr #23	FFPr SO1 and SO2	Number of individuals benefiting indirectly from USDA-funded interventions
FFPr #28	FFPr SO1 and SO2	Value of Cacao exported to U.S.markets as a result of USDA assistance.
FFPr #29	FFPr SO1 and SO2	Volume of Cacao exported to US markets as a result of USDA assistance.

3. Offer Cover Letter

The following cover letter must be placed on letterhead and completed/signed/stamped by a representative authorized to sign on behalf of the Offeror:

To: [enter project name]
[enter address of Counterpart's office]

Reference: RFP no. [enter RFP#]

To Whom It May Concern:

We, the undersigned, hereby provide the attached offer to perform all work required to complete the activities and requirements as described in the above-referenced RFP. Please find our offer attached.

We hereby acknowledge and agree to all terms, conditions, special provisions, and instructions included in the above-referenced RFP. We further certify that the below-named firm—as well as the firm’s principal officers and all commodities and services offered in response to this RFP—are eligible to participate in this procurement under the terms of this solicitation and under USDA regulations.

Furthermore, we hereby certify that, to the best of our knowledge and belief:

- We have no close, familial, or financial relationships with any Counterpart or [enter project name] project staff members;
- We have no close, familial, or financial relationships with any other offerors submitting proposals in response to the above-referenced RFP; and
- The prices in our offer have been arrived at independently, without any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other offeror or competitor for the purpose of restricting competition.

We hereby certify that the enclosed representations, certifications, and other statements are accurate, current, and complete.

Authorized Signature: _____

Name and Title of Signatory: _____

Date: _____

Company Name: _____

Company Address: _____

Company Telephone and Website: _____

Company Registration or Taxpayer ID Number: _____

Does the company have an active bank account (Yes/No)? _____

Official name associated with bank account (for payment): _____

4. *Offer Checklist*

To assist offerors in preparation of proposals, the following checklist summarizes the documentation to include in an offer in response to this RFP. Please use this exact same order when assembling the proposal.

- Cover letter**, signed by an authorized representative of the offeror (see Annex 3 for template)

Technical Proposal

- Tech 1. Corporate Capabilities and experience (Maximum 3 pages)
 - Minimum Past Experience Requirements Table
- Tech 2. Proposed Methodology and evaluation Structure (Maximum 10 pages)
- Tech 3. Baseline Study Team Composition and Structure (Maximum 8 pages)
 - Proposed personnel CVs (Please include the proposed Team Leader's CV on top of all CVs.
- Tech 4. Gantt Chart
- Tech 5. Subcontracting arrangements (if applicable)

Cost Proposal

- Excel file including two Tabs:
 - Tab 1: Detailed cost breakdown per line-item
 - Tab. 2: Payment Schedule
 - Budget narrative in Word
-
- Three professional references** that speak to the offeror's experience in conducting mixed-methods evaluations in agriculture value chains, or rural development, within the last five to ten (5 to 10) years in Colombia.