

Request for Proposal

Request for Proposal for Providing of Technical Assistance on ISO-22000 Certification Process.

Announcement Date: July 05, 2023

Contracting Organization: Hand in Hand Afghanistan Organization (HIHAO)

Closing date: July 25, 2023

Guidance/Explanatory session: July 13, 2023 at 10:00 am

Organizational Background:

Hand in Hand International (HiHI) is part of the Hand in Hand network, a group of organizations stretching from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe that since 2003, has helped create or improve some 4 million jobs – 90 percent of them for women. HiHI supports network partners in implementing its programs through donor reporting, capacity building, technical assistance, strategic guidance, and oversight.

Hand in Hand Afghanistan Organization (HIHAO) has been registered as a national NGO with the Ministry of Economy in Afghanistan since 2006. Headquartered in Mazar-i-Sharif and Provincial Office in Herat, Baghlan and Kunduz. It has developed a strong presence across Afghanistan, offering an integrated solution to socio-economically empowering marginalized communities, especially women and youth, with gender and climate resilience mainstreamed throughout its programs. Since its inception. It has operated across 13 provinces in Afghanistan. With over 200 staff, Hand in Hand Afghanistan has an extensive track record of successfully delivering large-scale projects funded by the EU, GIZ, DFID, Sida, Danida, USAID and European foundations, amongst others.

Conflictfood is a social start-up founded in Berlin that brings traditional agricultural products to the international market through fair and direct trade with small-scale farmers in conflict-stricken countries. In May 2016, Conflictfood introduced its first product, saffron from Afghanistan.

Background to the Project:

“Organic growth: taking Afghanistan’s certified saffron value chain to scale” is five years (July 2021-July 2026), project aims to scale a certified and climate-resilient saffron value chain that will contribute to improved incomes and job creation in Herat province, Afghanistan. This project will be implemented in Herat and will work through saffron companies (2 EU organic and 5 ISO) Hand in Hand and its commercial partner Conflictfood will train and mentor Afghan farmers and companies to produce and process both ISO and certified-EU saffron. As a result, 3200 jobs in the saffron value chain will be created or improved and farmers and saffron companies will receive a 30% (ISO certification) or 50% (EU certification) income uplift depending on which certification they pursue. The project partners have a shared vision to support some of the most vulnerable women and families in the world. Hand in Hand will combine its strength and expertise in economic empowerment, training and stakeholder engagement with Conflictfood’s commitment to traceability and ability to catalyze demand in the European market.

This project seeks to establish and scale a high-value sub-segment of the Afghan saffron market. Afghanistan can most successfully compete with larger saffron exporting markets by focusing on high-value, premium market segments. Introducing ISO 22000 for Afghan saffron will unlock untapped demand in countries those importing Afghan saffron, allowing Afghan saffron farmers to achieve a significant price premium for the export-grade crop. ISO 22000 certification will also catalyze demand from other exporters.

By achieving ISO-22000 certification, will enable five private companies along with their contract farmers to produce ISO-22000 certified saffron, and linking farmers to an established international exporter, this project will significantly increase incomes while supporting new jobs in the saffron value chain. At the same time, it will accelerate Conflictfood's long-term growth plans, growing sales volumes, and the profitability of its saffron business.

Purpose of the assignment:

Hand in Hand Afghanistan is seeking a consultancy firm or individual consultant to provide a full package of technical assistance on how to produce ISO-certified saffron, especially ISO-22000. The full package technical assistance will cover documentation, capacity building (ToTs) as well as conducting a pre-auditing of selected companies. The tentative timeline for this assignment is planned to be for 3 months (August - October 2023). In the first phase, the consultancy firm or individual consultant will develop the documentation package for the ISO-22000 saffron value chain, from farm to fork including but not limited to different standard operation procedures (SOPs), ISO-22000 manuals for saffron, Hazard analysis (biological, chemical and physical), critical control point, corrective action, monitoring, verification, record keeping, food safety policy, HACCP plan, SoPs (for example product release SoP, customers complaint procedure, pest control SoP, employee medical questionnaire, transportation SoP etc.), map for processing centre as per ISO standards, list of essential materials used in the construction of processing centre as per ISO standard, list of tools and equipment used in ISO processing centre. and complete audit checklist etc. During this phase of document development, the selected consultancy firm or individual consultant will develop a detailed cost-benefit analysis of ISO certified saffron in comparison to non-certified saffron production.

In the follow-up, the second phase, the consultancy firm or individual consultant will provide training of trainers (ToT) for 50 staff of HIHAO, Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL), Afghanistan National Saffron Growers Union (ANSGU), local key experts in two sessions (25 per session). The ToT training should cover the entire package of the ISO-22000 certified saffron value chain (production, processing, food safety, marketing, export and end consumers, etc.) The ToT package should have comprised class lectures, presentations, group discussions, practical, and field trips. The consultancy firm or individual consultant will do pre-audit of ISO-22000 of the five selected saffron companies to identify the major and minor non-conformities (NCs) and provide the feedback how to correct those NCs so the companies will get ready for actual audit.

The key objectives of the assignment are:

- The full package of documents needed for the entire value chain of ISO-22000-certified saffron has been developed and handed over to the HIHAO.
- The training for trainers (ToT) for 50 people of the entire value chain of ISO-22000 certified saffron has been conducted and the entire package of ISO-22000 including but not limited to documents, checklists, presentations, and training manual has been developed and handed over to HIHAO.

- The pre-audit of the five selected companies has been done NCs were identified and feedback was given how to correct the identified NCs.

Key activities

The consultancy firm or individual consultant should develop a proposal and propose their own approach to achieving the above objectives and fully respond to the terms of reference. Below are some examples:

Phase 1 – preparation of detail and a full package of documents essential for ISO 22000-certified saffron:

The consultancy firm or individual consultant should clearly mention the timeline for the development of the full package of documents. The consultancy firm or individual consultant should clearly enlist the entire documents one by one which he/she is going to develop, for the entire ISO 22000 certified value chain including but not limited to the below as an example:

- 1) Different standard operation procedures (SOPs). The consultancy firm or individual consultant should clearly enlist those different SOPs.
- 2) A detailed essential inputs list for ISO 22000.
- 3) Hazard analysis (biological, chemical, and physical)
- 4) Monitoring system
- 5) Verification system
- 6) Internal audit system
- 7) Traceability plan
- 8) Food safety management system handbook
- 9) Record-keeping system
- 10) Food safety policy
- 11) Employee health and safety policy
- 12) HACCP plan
- 13) ISO 22000 policy manual
- 14) ISO 22000 training manual
- 15) Complete audit checklist etc. etc.

During this phase of document development, the consultancy firm or individual consultant will develop a detailed cost-benefit analysis of ISO 22000-certified saffron production against non-certified saffron production.

Phase 2 – Capacity building of master trainers through the conduction of training for trainers (ToT):

After the development of entire documents of ISO-22000 saffron the consultancy firm or individual consultant will conduct a ToT for 50 staff of the project, Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL) Herat, Afghanistan National Saffron Growers Union (ANSGU) and local potential experts. The consultancy firm or individual consultant has to develop training materials including but not limited to detailed training agenda with a time framework, presentations, training manual, etc. After the completion of ToT, the master trainers should

be fully skilled in the ISO 22000 certified saffron. The logistical support of the ToT will be provided by the HIHAO.

Phase 3 – pre-audit of the five selected companies for ISO 22000:

At the last stage, once companies had been selected; and started to produce ISO 22000 certified saffron will be pre-audit by the winning consultancy firm or individual consultant. This pre-audit may be in September or October 2023.

The logistical support such as provision of transportation to the selected companies during the pre-audit visits will be provided by the HIHAO.

Phase 4- final reporting and debriefing:

At the end of assignment, the consultant or firm will submit a final report which will be approved by the HIHI, HIHAO, and will have a debriefing session with HIHI and HIHAO.

Key Deliverables:

- 1) A detailed and a full package of documents essential for ISO 22000 certified saffron developed.
- 2) A ToT was conducted for 50 staff of HIHAO, DAIL, ANSGU, and local potential experts who trained as master trainers in two sessions (25 participants per session).
- 3) Pre-audit of the five ISO 22000 saffron companies was completed, NCs were identified, and feedback how to correct those NCs was provided and incorporated.
- 4) A detailed report was submitted to HIHAO. The final report has been submitted and approved by HIHAO and HIHI.
- 5) A debriefing session with the stakeholders like DANIDA, HIHO, HIH Int., Conflictfood, and ANSGU was delivered.

Profile of Consultant:

Hand in Hand Afghanistan requests individual consultants/firms to submit proposals responding to the Terms of Reference outlined above. We expect the consultant/firm to demonstrate excellent skills and experience according to the criteria below:

- Detailed knowledge of ISO 22000 certification processes and practices.
- Certified ISO-22000 consultant/firm will be given preference and may annexed their relevant certifies with their technical proposal.
- Experience with ISO 22000 agriculture practices, ideally in saffron or similar products.
- Previous experience providing capacity building and or Training of Trainer (ToTs) will be desirable.
- Proven experience working alongside international and national teams within civil society organizations; NGOs, academic institutions, social enterprises, etc.
- Excellent knowledge of the Afghanistan agriculture and business contexts.
- Fluency in verbal and written English, Dari, and Pashto languages.

Application Process:

Please send a detailed technical and financial proposal of no more than five pages to khekmati@handinhand.org.af & danida.pm@handinhand.org.af by 25 June 2023.

The proposal should include the following:

1. A proposed process and time frame for the areas of work outlined, setting out the phases, resources, and the number of days estimated for each one.
2. The anticipated challenges and dependencies affecting the implementation of the activities and how these should be addressed both by the consultant and by Hand in Hand Afghanistan Organization.
3. A summary of the skills and experience of the consultant together with a CV showing relevant previous assignments and clients.
4. A detailed fee quote and rationale for the consultant and an estimate for the costs of other resources. The budget should be inclusive of: the daily rate and time allocated per resource, travels, costs, and taxes.

Guidance / Explanatory Session: on July 13, 2023, at 10:00 am there will be an explanatory session at the HIHAO-Herat office and Mazar office. Interested individuals/firms are invited to participate.

Mazar Office Address: House # 109, Pule Hawaii road, Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan.

Herat Office Address: Chowk Cinema opposite Inghlab High School, Vitamix Juice building 4th floor, Herat, Afghanistan

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You may contact us by phone and WhatsApp number: +93799021609

Budget and Payment

The individual consultant or consulting firm will provide a detailed budget summary splitting the consultants' fees and expenses. The terms of payment will be negotiated with the consultant or firm upon the signature of the contract.
