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Call for offers

Donau Soja is seeking an

International expert for the development and execution of a risk assessment in the context of European food and feed supply chains.

The Donau Soja Association hereby invites organisations/individuals (hereafter: the service provider) to send in their proposal for the provision of the services described in this Call for offers. The service provider selected will fulfil an expert role in a Donau Soja project called 'Fields of Europe' aimed at creating an aligned definition for European sourcing.

Background

Donau Soja

Donau Soja is an independent, international, non-profit, multi-stakeholder organisation aiming to effectively meet protein market demand and to provide a baseline for the development of high quality soya cultivation in the Danube region (www.donausoja.org). The Organisation is seated in Vienna, Austria.

Strategic Partnership Programme

At the beginning of 2017, Donau Soja and Austrian Development Agency (ADA) started the Strategic Partnership Programme in Moldova, Ukraine, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina planned to be implemented until August 2023. The overall objective of the programme is to build sustainable, inclusive and well-functioning value chains (local, regional and international) for non-GM soya and organic soya in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine.

The programme proposes measures in nine areas (components: Production and processing, Value chain development, Awareness raising and sensitization, Certification and labelling, Business environment and policy framework, International market development, Knowledge and technology management and transfer, Project development and Technical assistance, General administration and program management) planned to be implemented by Donau Soja through numerous measures and activities. All programme activities are to be implemented according to General Contract Conditions (Allgemeine Vertragsbedingungen), guidelines and requirements described in Guidelines for Visibility, considering DS and standards in international development, with special emphasis of DECD Standard (<http://www.enterprise-development.org/dced-guidance/>).

Fields of Europe

Within the framework of the Strategic Partnership Programme, as part of continuous work on standard development, Donau Soja is supporting the development of a European Food and Feed Sourcing Standard, called Fields of Europe (<https://www.fieldsofeurope.org/>).

Fields of Europe is created to meet the demand for European products, in plant-based and animal-based supply chains, where the focus is on locally produced ingredients for food and feed. Both food and feed industries will be able to use this standard to source non-GM, European and sustainable raw materials. In this way, the Fields of Europe-standard will contribute to building sustainable, inclusive and well-functioning value chains for non-GM food and feed products. Besides contributing to the Strategic Partnership's overall objective this activity additionally strengthens the work foreseen in project component 6 (in part Market Development) and project component 7 (in part Standard Development). Considering country specific circumstances and market needs this project will extend the scope of Donau Soja Organisation's core business by developing new markets and creating leverage to support further sales for all project target countries and especially Ukraine. By linking agricultural producers and processors from SEE and CEE with buyers in EU markets the project would contribute to further increasing standards in developing countries.

Verification of compliance to Fields of Europe standard will be organized using a risk assessment and customized verification regimes which are based on the risk profile of a specific company. The risks assessment identifies the risk that the sustainability, origin and/or non-GM requirements of the Fields of Europe-standard are violated, it includes different types of risks at different levels.

The work of the expert

Objective

The objective of this assignment is the development and execution of a risk-assessment to judge the risk that a company in a specific context will be subject to violation of the requirements for non-GM, sustainability and origin as set in the Fields of Europe-standard.

Scope

Each company has a unique set of factors that determines the likelihood of violation of the requirements of the Fields of Europe-standard. That means that the purchasers in the company have the best vision on the risks linked to buying certain materials. However, to harmonize the way in which risks are weighted and thus arrive at a credible and trustworthy system, Fields of Europe creates a risk-assessment that gives guidance to the purchasers.

Three different elements are foreseen:

- 1.** The service provider will create a risk assessment to judge the risk of violation of the origin criteria (low, medium, high), the non-gmo criteria (low, medium, high) and the risk of violating the sustainability criteria (low, medium, high). This results in different risk-profiles combining the three elements. Ideally the data used to judge specific combinations of countries and crops, is publicly available and can be used again in the future to update the assessment.

The following levels of risks have to be considered in the model:

- Risks linked to a specific country in terms of:
 - Legal framework is or is not supportive of sustainable practices (e.g. respecting human rights, respecting labor rights, respecting community rights, protecting land rights, applying good agricultural practices to protecting water, soil, air, human and animal health, protecting nature and the environment).
 - Certain sustainability risks (e.g. risk of illegal pesticides, soil erosion, over-application of agrochemicals etc.) are widely present and reported by governments, scientists or NGOs.
 - There is a large chance of illegal cultivation of GM crops.
 - There is a large chance of imports of GM-crops since GMOs are produced in other countries.
 - There is a large chance of imports of crops from outside Europe that are sold as being from Europe.
 - Risks linked to a specific area in a country:
 - In certain regions along the border of the European Union or European continent risks of non-compliance with the standard criteria can be bigger.
 - In certain regions where GM-crops are allowed, the risk of contamination of non-GM can be bigger.
 - Risks linked to a specific crop / (processed) ingredient:
 - Different crops differ in labor, agrochemicals and water needs, resulting in different sustainability risks
 - Not all crops are available as GM varieties and not all varieties of GM crops are registered for cultivation in Europe resulting in different GM contamination risks
 - Ratio of domestic European production to import significantly differs for different crops, resulting in different risks of non-European origin
- 2.** Based on the minimum of nine risk profiles, the service provider and the Fields of Europe working group on risk-management will determine an adequate verification regime per profile. This can include certification, proof of origin, proof of cross-compliance checks etcetera.
- 3.** Last but not least, the service provider will create an easily understandable risk-assessment questionnaire / decision tree based on element 1 and 2 as described above. The risk assessment questionnaire is developed to support companies in identifying their risk profile (as determined under 1) and show the verification measures needed for that risk profile (as determined under 2). Individual companies probably already have implemented certain measures to mitigate specific risks (e.g. internal control system, certification etc.), so they can identify whether and if so, which additional measures are needed.

Deliverables

The service provider will be contracted to deliver the following intermediary and end products:

- A risk-assessment matrix with the minimum of nine different risk profiles for different (groups of) countries and feed and food ingredients.
- An intermediary presentation to discuss the main findings in the steering committee (first workshop).
- A brainstorm session based on a concrete proposal is organized with the working group on risk management to define the verification regime per risk profile.
- A proposal on a risk-questionnaire/decision tree.
- A final presentation to discuss the main findings with the steering committee (second workshop) and receive final feedback to be included in the final results.
- An explanation document explaining the decisions made in the methodology and stating all resources used to develop the methodology.

The requirements

The service provider shall meet the following requirements:

- Excellent record of working in different parts of Europe, including Non-EU countries
- Knowledge of agricultural practices in different parts of Europe
- Deep understanding of agricultural markets and agricultural commodity trade flows
- Experience with the execution of sustainability risk assessments in agriculture
- Knowledge of sustainability risks in agriculture and the certification/verification systems present to tackle those
- Knowledge of non-GM regulations/ frameworks and European legislation in the area of agriculture, the environment, human rights and labor conditions
- Excellent general communication, writing and presentation skills with fluency in English

In addition, the service provider is required to support high standards of social and environmental performance in the project and demonstrate gender and diversity competences.

The assignment is part-time/ short term, and the services will be provided based on a work plan mutually agreed between the service provider and Donau Soja Organization.

The service provider is expected to use his/her own office and technical equipment.

Flexibility and readiness for travel depending on operational plan, is required.

Reporting

The service provider will report directly to the Fields of Europe project leader and the Donau Soja standard and sustainability manager.

Close cooperation with Donau Soja team, project secretariat and Fields of Europe steering committee is required.

The service provider is expected to submit written reports on work conducted twice (intermediate and final report). The service provider is expected to keep records of time, cost and activities spent on the project.

Additionally, outputs (such as intermediary presentation, decision tree, final presentation etc.) can be considered as proof of expert work.

Remuneration

The service provider will work under a framework agreement.

Remuneration installments will be based on offer and agreement between Donau Soja and the service provider. The detailed remuneration plan will be defined in the framework agreement.

Payments will be done based on issued invoices.

The fees will be paid based on services provided - against accepted time recording and other agreed terms.

Travel costs and other cost can be paid directly by the contractor or by the service provider - against proof of evidence- (incl. written confirmation of contractor, invoices for transportation, tickets/boarding passes, hotel invoices, entrance tickets- participation costs for events etc.)

Selection criteria

The evaluation will be done based on following criteria:

1. Price
2. Strategic approach proposal (understanding of task, plausibility, level of detail)
3. Detailed plan for each phase of the assignment (incl. definition, objective, results, time frame)
4. Professional experience with agricultural practices in Europe (EU and non-EU countries)
5. Professional experience with risk assessment in agriculture
7. Specific experience with non-GM regulations/ frameworks and European legislation in the area of agriculture, the environment, human rights and labour conditions
8. Reputation of service provider/references
9. Fulfilment of the formal requirements defined in the ToR
10. English language skills

Documents to be provided

Tenders are to be sent by email to weihs@donausoja.org by 30.11.2020 indicating "International expert for the development and execution of a risk assessment in the context of European food and feed supply chains" in the subject, with the following documents (in English):

1. Short interpretation of the assignment
2. Description of the approach including planned activities in each phase of the assignment, results and time frame
3. Project management plan, including milestones and feedback moments
4. A curriculum vitae for each of the staff expected to be engaged in the work
5. References (at least three relevant examples of projects executed that show experience with this type of assignments)
6. Financial offer including detailed budget overview (days per activity, costs per day)