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Request for Proposals (RFP)

Mid-Term Evaluation

For the Creating an Environment for Cooperative Expansion (CECE) Project

Funded by USAID’s Cooperative Development Program (CDP)

Implemented by National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA International (NCBA CLUSA)

RFP Number: 2021-01

Closing Date: May 21, 2021

Closing Time: 5:00 PM EST

1. Request for Proposals Overview

This Request for Proposals (RFP) seeks proposals from qualified consultants or firms interested in conducting a Mid-Term Evaluation for USAID’s Cooperative Development Program (CDP)-funded Creating an Environment for Cooperative Expansion (CECE) project implemented by NCBA CLUSA. This request calls for short-term technical assistance from an individual consultant, team of consultants or firm with demonstrated abilities to design and implement evaluations and research studies and collect data from multiple stakeholder types such as cooperatives, local support organizations like apex organizations, and government officials. The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to assess 1) project accomplishments in relation to goals and objectives and early signs of project effectiveness; 2) sustainability efforts; 3) document promising practices; and 4) recommended actions for mid-course correction.

2. Project Background

Project Name	Creating an Environment for Cooperative Expansion (CECE)
Project Duration	August 15, 2018 - August 14, 2023
Project Countries	Guatemala, Peru, Kenya, Tanzania, Madagascar
Donor	United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
Implementing Organization	National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA International (NCBA CLUSA)
Project Goals	Improve enabling environments, Enhance support to cooperatives, Improve business performance of cooperatives

The CDP Program is funded by USAID’s Bureau of Development, Democracy and Innovation (DDI) Local, Faith-Based and Transformative Partnerships (LFT) Hub in Washington, DC, with concurrence from each



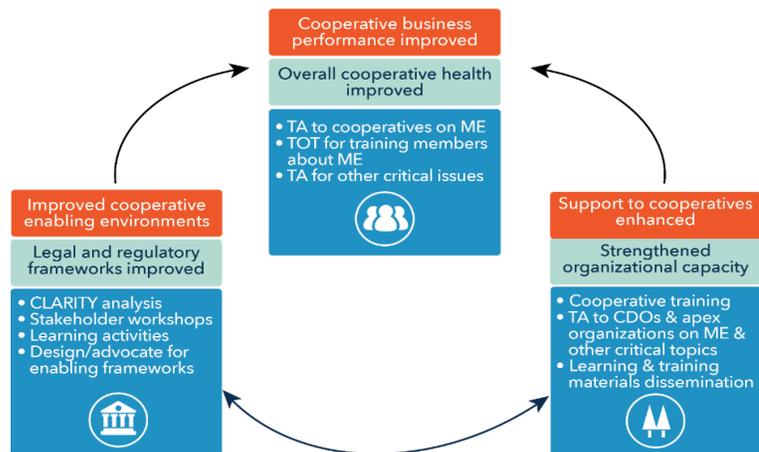
country USAID Mission. The CECE project team has staff in each country and is coordinated by a US-based management team.

The CECE project works in Guatemala, Peru, Kenya, Tanzania, and Madagascar to: 1) improve cooperative enabling environments; 2) strengthen local organizations' capacity to support cooperatives; and 3) strengthen individual cooperatives' business performance.

These goals are further elaborated into the following objectives:

1. Improved cooperative business performance
 - a) Member equity increased
 - b) Cooperative governance improved
 - c) Cooperative management improved
 - d) Market performance improved
2. Improved cooperative enabling environments
 - a) Improved access to services and resources
 - b) Legal and regulatory framework improved
3. Enhanced development community's support to cooperatives
 - a) More effective programming for cooperatives
 - b) Increased dissemination of learning
 - c) Strengthened collaboration among CDOs and the development community

To achieve these distinct yet complementary goals and objectives, CECE's activities are focused on: improving the legal and regulatory framework for cooperatives, building the capacity of local support institutions to provide quality cooperative development services, and providing targeted technical assistance to cooperatives including a focus on member equity when possible with more advanced cooperatives. CECE's illustrative activities and expected results are shown in Figure 1:



Problem Statement/Development Challenge

Cooperatives cannot thrive and benefit their members and communities without a strong business model and supportive environment. In the countries where CECE works, there is: 1) an inhibiting legal and regulatory framework, 2) lack of effective in-country cooperative development support organizations, and 3) inadequate cooperative governance and management.

CECE's following activities seek to address the problem statement:



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I. Improving the Cooperative environment

At the national level, CECE's country work plans for improving the cooperative enabling environment are designed with key partners, including government officials leading cooperative reform. We analyze each country's legal and regulatory environment, using tools developed through the [Cooperative Law and Regulation Initiative \(CLARITY\)](#); share findings through stakeholder workshops, working groups and publications; and co-create action plans with stakeholders and project partners. The CLARITY results provide an evidence-based framework for governments and other stewards of cooperative law. These stakeholders may choose to host broader workshops to validate findings and share results to guide needed revisions. Cooperative learning events (CLE), either separately or as part of the stakeholder workshops, can provide trainings on critical elements of cooperative success.

NCBA CLUSA has completed cooperative law analyses using CLARITY tools and organized consultation and dissemination workshops in all five core countries. Follow up actions are different in each country based on stakeholder interest and needs.

II. Strengthening local cooperative development networks

CECE strengthens local cooperative support organizations and networks so they can provide ongoing technical assistance to cooperatives, facilitate cooperative-to-cooperative linkages, and promote the cooperative business model. Support from strong institutions can attract investment in cooperative development, and cooperatives inspire higher confidence from businesses interested in sourcing from low- and middle-income countries if supported by quality service providers. We connect local partners with the network of institutions and organizations already working on cooperative development, including apex organizations, consulting firms, financial institutions, training organizations, and colleges and universities. CECE develops work plans in partnership with local organizations to meet their needs in cooperative development, including legal and regulatory reform, member equity, and to support cooperatives in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. CECE staff serve as facilitators, supporting these networks to provide quality services to cooperatives and serving as resource.

CECE also connects with other donors and projects working with cooperatives and producer organizations. The goal is to build the capacity of cooperative development partners who can support ongoing cooperative development needs.

III. Improve cooperative business performance

To improve cooperative business performance, CECE works with approximately 60 agricultural cooperatives in a variety of value chains and savings and credit cooperatives (SACCOs) to strengthen their capacity through coaching, training, and peer-to-peer learning exchanges. This coaching and training is provided by project staff and local partners. We have conducted organizational assessments using ScopeInsight and NCBA CLUSA assessment tools and other qualitative assessment instruments that informed coaching plans and targeted technical assistance.

3. Purpose and Scope of the Mid-Term Evaluation

The purpose of this Mid-Term Evaluation is to provide an internal review of progress in relation to project goals and objectives. The evaluation will also explore promising practices and lessons learned and provide recommendations to NCBA CLUSA, USAID and other project partners. The evaluation will be guided by the following general evaluation questions:



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Goal 1: Improved cooperative business performance

- How can the change in business performance of cooperatives be described in terms of member equity, governance, management, market performance?
 - What is the extent of the change?
 - What are the changes?
 - What changes are most impactful?
 - Who are most impacted?
- Is the project on track for achieving targets across various indicators (classification of indicators into exceeding, meeting, and not meeting targets)?
 - Which indicators need target re-adjustments?
 - What external and internal factors beside COVID impacted (positively or negatively) the achievement of targets?
 - What is the extent of negative impact of COVID in achieving targets?
- What are the promising practices and lessons learned?

Goal 2: Improved cooperative enabling environment.

- What are the notable changes in terms of access to resources and services; and regulatory and legal environment?
- Who are the change pioneers?
- What are the promising practices and lessons learned?

Goals 3: Enhanced development community's support to cooperatives

- How can the change be described in terms of learning dissemination, cooperative programming, and collaboration between and among CDOs and development community?
- How can change be described in terms of capacity of local support institutions to implement cooperative development services?
- Who are the change pioneers?
- What are the promising practices and lessons learned?

The mid-term evaluation will assess project activities within the five project countries using an appropriate mix of document review, data collection, virtual interviews, and possibly virtual focus groups. A baseline survey was conducted in October 2019 and provides baseline indicator measurements for CECE's outcome indicators. Access to CECE's baseline assessment report and corresponding data collection tools will be made available to the selected evaluator.

The selected evaluator will collaborate with NCBA CLUSA staff and take the lead in developing an appropriate methodology and corresponding data collection tools (including sample sizes) for conducting the evaluation. The evaluator will produce a draft evaluation design for NCBA CLUSA and USAID's review, and should integrate feedback as appropriate. Next, the evaluator will lead coordinating enumeration and data collection during implementation, data cleaning, qualitative data coding and analysis, as well as developing an evaluation report. The evaluator will submit the evaluation report to NCBA CLUSA for review and approval and will integrate all feedback as appropriate. Finally, the evaluator must handover all raw primary datasets in a machine-readable format such as MS excel or CSV for NCBA CLUSA's records.



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4. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The selected evaluator will collaborate with NCBA CLUSA staff to refine and prioritize evaluation questions, and then develop and document an appropriate approach and methodology for the evaluation that offers relevant answers to the evaluation's objectives and key questions. The methodology could include but not be limited to: document review; key stakeholder interviews, focus groups, survey questionnaires, expert consultations, case studies, and direct observations. The evaluator will develop and pilot test appropriate field data collection methods and tools, consulting the baseline survey questionnaire to ensure comparability. The evaluator will be responsible for revising the data collection tools based on learning from pilot testing. Given the COVID-19 situation, travel for the evaluator is not currently being considered so data collection will be done virtually by the evaluator and with support from CECE in-country teams.

The evaluator will review relevant records and data from NCBA CLUSA's field activities. The evaluator may consult other documentation from NCBA CLUSA's Headquarters Office. The evaluator will work with the project's field teams to collect data to represent a wide area of implementation. The evaluation will also take gender and youth disaggregation into consideration when choosing participants to sample. Select cooperatives as well as their records and activities will also be available for observation. The evaluator will identify any data gaps for further investigation.

The evaluation methodology will be approved by NCBA CLUSA prior to commencing the data collection phase of the evaluation. The evaluator will liaise closely with relevant NCBA CLUSA staff during the development of the evaluation methodology and implementation.

The selected evaluator will implement the following activities:

A. Undertake a literature review of relevant documents from country reports, national policies and regulations, special studies carried out by other agencies in addition to reviewing and analyzing project reports, indicators data, and targets.

B. Develop evaluation design using a mixed methods approach utilizing both quantitative surveys and qualitative techniques e.g., FGD and KII

- a. Develop country appropriate sampling method for qualitative and quantitative surveys.
- b. Develop and pilot test survey questionnaires, FGD guide and KII interview schedules.
- c. Develop analysis strategies for quantitative and qualitative data.

C. Develop field plan

- d. Data enumerator training guide
- e. Data collection team structure and reporting line
- f. Data quality assessment protocol
- g. Data collection schedule

D. Collect and analyze data and prepare report

- h. Train data enumerators and field supervisors on data collection methods, ethics, tools, and their roles
- i. Assure data quality, validity, reliability, and integrity.
- j. Conduct appropriate analyses.

E. Prepare evaluation report clearly articulating findings, conclusions, and recommendations



Table 1: Illustrative Evaluation Methods

Actor/Partner	Selection Method	Data Collection Method
Cooperatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quantitative Data ▪ Use cooperative listing as a sample frame ▪ Determine the sample size utilizing appropriate sample size estimation formula. ▪ Apply stratified random sampling methods to select participants from each country. ▪ Qualitative Data ▪ Use of availability and snow-ball sampling method to select focus group participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document reviews ▪ Case Studies ▪ Structured survey to capture quantitative data with cooperative leaders and members ▪ Focus group discussions and Key Informant Interviews to capture qualitative information.
Government officials and institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Purposeful and availability sampling method 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document reviews ▪ Key informant interviews
Local Cooperative Support Organizations (cooperative apexes, unions, etc, local implementation partners, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quantitative data ▪ Census instead of sample as the number is manageable. ▪ Qualitative data ▪ Availability and snow-ball sampling method to select focus group participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Focus group discussions and Key Informant Interviews to capture qualitative information

5. Addressing Limitations

Due to the complexity of the different project components, locations of the project, and COVID-19 travel restrictions, the MTE will be conducted using a hybrid approach with an external evaluator and CECE field team support for data collection. Opportunities for errors and bias exist. The evaluator is expected to be aware of such complexity and note this in a limitations section of the evaluation inception report and final evaluation report. The evaluator will develop strategies to minimize possibilities of errors or bias. The evaluator will develop quality control systems, including developing detailed data collection guides and overseeing field data collection.

This evaluation will heavily rely on secondary data reported in semi-annual and annual reports. The quality of this performance data will affect the accuracy of projected trends. The evaluator should check the validity and reliability of performance data before analyzing it and note any limitations to NCBA CLUSA.

Primary data collected from partners/clients may reflect the opinions of the most dominant groups without capturing the perceptions of less vocal groups. The evaluator should take this into account and ensure to the extent possible that all parties freely express their views.

6. Expected Deliverables

Deliverables under this assignment will include the following:

1. Draft and final Inception Report to provide a plan for fieldwork with a description and schedule for all activities. It will also include all tools to be used for data collection, including surveys and questionnaires.



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- a. Development of an adequate sampling design and sample size calculations;
- b. A thorough discussion of the methodology including: strengths and weaknesses, participatory approaches used to involve key stakeholders, justification and description of any statistical analysis undertaken, and software used. The discussion of any random sampling used should include details on how the random respondents were identified and invited to participate.
- c. Key questions related specifically to the programmatic technical areas of focus.
- d. Limitations
- e. Quality Assurance Plan
- f. Work plan and detailed outline of the evaluation with key questions, major tasks, responsible parties, outputs, and specific schedules prior to initiation of the evaluation. The work plan will be approved by NCBA CLUSA prior to implementation;
- g. Data Collection and Analysis Tools: Survey instruments, data collection instruments, and completed questionnaires;
- h. Data analysis plan detailing anticipated coding methods, statistical techniques for quantitative data, and proposed software for qualitative data coding;
2. Qualitative and quantitative data codebook;
3. Cleaned quantitative and qualitative datasheets in a machine readable format;
4. List of participants from interviews including name, organization, and occupation, and place of residence;
5. Raw and cleaned notes and transcripts from interviews;
6. Draft Evaluation Report (Including performance indicators Annex)
7. Electronic copy of the Final Mid-Term Evaluation report. The report will contain the following sections (draft and final versions);
 - a. Executive Summary;
 - b. An introduction containing the objectives of the Terms of Reference (ToR) and a brief description of the program;
 - c. Background of physical, geographic, cooperative agricultural, and socio-economic conditions surrounding the project;
 - d. Evaluation methodology;
 - e. Data limitations;
 - f. Findings by summary and by project locations (including narrative, charts, and tables);
 - g. Conclusions
 - h. Responses to Objectives with reference to survey data and analysis;
 - i. Table of responses to Key Questions with references to supporting survey data and analysis;
 - j. Lessons Learned;
 - k. Recommendations;
 - l. Annexes:
 - o Evaluation ToR
 - o Composition of the team
 - o List of key informants, focus group participants
 - o References
 - o Indicator Performance Tracking Tables (IPTT)
 - o Survey tools
 - o List of acronyms
8. A presentation of the evaluation results and an electronic version of the final PowerPoint presentation based on the Evaluation report;



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9. Some specific impact quotes from the various stakeholders from interviews and focus group discussions. Quotes should contain identifying details about the speaker i.e. youth or women cooperative members, government officials, local partner staff, etc.

7. Audience and Intended Use

This evaluation will help measure project performance to date and the effectiveness in achieving its stated goals. Performance results, lessons learned, and the success of the supported activity are to be shared with USAID to guide project implementation for the remaining years of the activity and to inform future activity design. The intended audience for the report will include the project’s key stakeholders e.g., USAID, program participants, and local and national government. Other audiences may include individuals and groups who are not necessarily engaged in project activities but may benefit from the findings disseminated by NCBA CLUSA.

8. Evaluation Management and Coordination

The mid-term evaluation will be conducted by an individual outside NCBA CLUSA with support from the project’s field teams and additional field-based data collectors as needed. Given the COVID-19 limitations and restrictions, the NCBA CLUSA in-country teams will provide logistical support to the evaluation team including inviting stakeholders to meetings, making transport and accommodation arrangements, and recruiting enumerators (when and if needed). The M&E Team from NCBA CLUSA HQ will manage the overall quality and delivery of the Mid-Term Evaluation.

The evaluator will present methodology and findings to NCBA CLUSA. The NCBA CLUSA HQ M&E Director will review and approve the deliverables. The evaluation report will be finalized after approval from the USAID CDP. The evaluator will draw his/her own conclusions free from organizational or political pressure.

Table 2: Approximate Timelines of Events

Activity	Estimated Date of Completion
Advertising of TOR	Early April 2021
Review and selection of candidates by procurement Committee	Late May 2021
Sign agreement with selected consultant	Early June 2021
NCBA CLUSA and selected evaluator discuss evaluation	Mid-June 2021
Finalize inception report and data collection tools	Early July 2021
Pilot data collection tools in the field	Mid-July 2021
In-country data collection	Late-July 2021 – End of August 2021
Data analysis	End of August-Early October 2021
Draft report submitted to NCBA CLUSA	Mid-October 2021
In-Country feedback on report	End of October 2021
Finalize Evaluation for NCBA CLUSA	Mid-November 2021
NCBA CLUSA sends report to USAID	End of November 2021

9. Conditions of Application

Interested applicants are requested to submit the following (typed no smaller than 12-point font) in the specific order below to be considered for this award:

A. Technical Proposal

The technical proposal (not exceeding 5 pages) should reflect how the candidate will undertake all tasks described in the Terms of Reference. The applicant will provide a detailed plan of specific activities including a timetable for carrying out the assignment as well as the data collection and analysis activities. In addition, it will detail the statistical approach.



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Applicants should include a resume as Annex I and a USAID biodata 1420 form as Annex II to the technical proposal, which will not be counted towards the page limit.

B. Cost Proposal

The applicant should propose a realistic cost estimate for this assignment, including a breakdown of the budget and justification of expenses for the evaluator. The budget should include the evaluator’s daily rate, level of effort, anticipated communications costs, and other applicable costs such as software and supplies. Given COVID-19 travel restrictions, no travel is anticipated for the evaluator. Therefore, interested applicants should not include travel, transportation, per diem, lodging, visas, inoculations, etc in the budget. The maximum amount will not exceed \$60,000 USD but competitive budgets will receive a higher score.

C. Qualifications and Experience

Applicants must demonstrate experience in carrying out similar evaluation and data analysis assignments by listing awards/projects/assignments involving similar or related work in the last three years and providing three references with contact information. Applicants should have experience providing these services on USG-funded projects, preferably USAID, and have experience in the agriculture sector, ideally with cooperatives. Fluency in Spanish and/or French is required.

10. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Score
Quality of technical approach and methodology	(40 points)
Demonstrated experience and technical skills	(30 points)
Completeness and realism of proposal (including schedules,)	(10 points)
Cost realism, budget justification and effectiveness. Given it meets these standards, competitive budgets will receive a higher score.	(20 points)

11. Submission Due Date

Submissions must be in English and typed single-spaced. All pages must be numbered and include the RFP reference number and name of applicant on each page. Proposals must be emailed to NCBA CLUSA at the following address: ybrown@ncba.coop.

All submissions are due on May 21, 2021 by 5 pm Eastern Standard Time, 2021. Submissions after this date will NOT be considered.

NCBA CLUSA reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted and/or make changes to the terms of reference/geographic areas before work commences.