

SOS/NO 1/12/25: Request for Proposal – Consultant to Undertake Complete Market Research on Livelihood Opportunities in Chombela, Chibombo District.

Closing Date: 9 /12/2025

Introduction:

SOS Children's Villages is a childcare organisation whose mission is to build families for children in need, help them shape their futures, and participate in the development of their communities. The organisation seeks to improve the lives of children who are at risk of losing parental care, or those that have already lost it. SOS Children's Villages in Zambia looks after children who have lost parental care through the Alternative Care programme, whilst those who are at risk are looked after through their guardians with support from the community-based Family Strengthening Programme.

SOS Children's Villages Zambia seeks a consultant or consulting agency to conduct a market analysis and investigate the market chains for selected livelihood options (selected goods/services/natural resource products) in Chombela community in Chibombo district. The consultant will be responsible for providing an in-depth analysis of the livelihood options and their market opportunities for the target communities. The study report will guide future interventions that enhance the livelihoods of the target beneficiaries and communities and contribute to the conservation of the natural resource base. The study will focus on identifying the sustainable market potential for selected livelihood options/products, determining strategic entry points into identified markets, and highlighting the capacity needs of local communities/beneficiaries in entrepreneurship and business management.

Proposal

Content

Instructions:

All proposals must:

Provide a brief outline of the company and services offered, including

- (i) a brief write-up on interpretation of the TORs.
- (ii) a work plan for the activity.
- (iii) Resumes or CVs of the consultant or any key personnel of the firm.
- (iv) Financial proposal (with applicable taxes and other charges clearly identified).
- (v) Valid Tax Clearance
- (vi) Certificate of incorporation
- (vii) Provide at least 3 references for similar contracts with a description of the services provided.

Submission

All proposals must be emailed to the address below with your proposal attached

Instructions:

in one or more files (PDF preferred).

Email: Procurement.NO@sos-zambia.org

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A CONSULTANT TO UNDERTAKE COMPLETE MARKET RESEARCH ON LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES IN CHOMBELA, CHIBOMBO DISTRICT.

1. Introduction

SOS Children's Villages Zambia seeks a consultant or consulting agency to conduct a market analysis and investigate the market chains for selected livelihood options (selected goods/services/natural resource products) in Chombela community in Chibombo district. The consultant will be responsible for providing an in-depth analysis of the livelihood options and their market opportunities for the target communities. The study report will guide future interventions that enhance the livelihoods of the target beneficiaries and communities and contribute to the conservation of the natural resource base. The study will focus on identifying

the sustainable market potential for selected livelihood options/products, determining strategic entry points into identified markets, and highlighting the capacity needs of local communities/beneficiaries in entrepreneurship and business management.

2. Background

Understanding the market is crucial when it comes to setting up businesses; and conducting market research has been recognized as critical in ensuring that products and services are designed to meet the needs of a specific segment. The Government of the Republic of Zambia has recognized that starting with market research in economic strengthening programmes is one of the elements of success, as with skills training, clearly outlining the market opportunity before a project begins, to ensure the market is not already saturated. Therefore, the Government through the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Child Development has set 'starting with market assessments' when implementing economic strengthening activities as one of the standards in the National Standards and Guidelines for Services and Programmes for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Zambia (2016). Economic activities should be based on market assessments, to ensure that the intended economic strengthening activity responds to existing local and global political, technical, socio-cultural, and economic situation while ensuring environmental sustainability.

The SOS Children's Village, under Family strengthening (FS), intends to implement economic strengthening activities to ensure that programme participating families (caregivers and youths) have Income Generating Activities (IGAs) to enable them to have sufficient income to meet the basic needs of their children and young people. Families in rural and peri-urban communities often face challenges related to unemployment, low income, and limited access to markets. Understanding the potential for income-generating activities (IGAs) can empower community members and enhance their livelihoods. This market research initiative aims to identify viable IGAs within Chombela community of Chibombo district, assess market demand, and provide recommendations for implementation.

3. Rationale for study

The viability of the market, coupled with specific training and provision of start-up inputs through a financing arrangement, enables several producers to continue sustainable enterprises after the initial project phase. For households to increase production and income, there must be sufficient market and business case for the livelihood, meaning generating income that is greater than the costs. The Economic Strengthening Program design should be based on sound market analysis, as it is important to identify relevant or growing markets for products and services with which to link vulnerable children, their caregivers, or their communities. Conducting market research will help provide answers to questions on demand, supply, profit margins and the suitability of a livelihood option for the target participants:

- Is there a market for the product? How big is the market?
- What is the price for production in the market? How is pricing affected by different factors such as greater competition or an increase in production?
- What is likely to happen in the future to this market? Will it grow? Will it disappear?
- Are there any market opportunities that the disabled can take advantage of?
- What is the best livelihood option that the organization can promote to its target programme participant

4. The Assignment

The market research to be conducted should bring out the three main criteria that determine the viability of a livelihood:

- I. Marketability to determine whether there is sufficient demand for the livelihood. This market research is expected to help identify marketability and provide information on competition, pricing points, demand, quality requirements, and future potential for the livelihood.
- II. Feasibility to determine whether the good or service can be produced without any harm. The market research should help examine a range of factors affecting production, including availability of land, natural inputs such as water, other inputs such as extension services, as well as skills needed to develop the livelihood. The assessment should also provide an indication of the impact on the environment and natural resources of the livelihood option, and whether there are any risks in terms of climate change on the future of production levels.
- III. Acceptability of the options in the local context, as well as practicality for the participant to successfully engage in the livelihood. Cultural sensitivity may relate to gender relations or social status that allows or prevents certain groups from carrying out certain activities such as selling goods in a market. Practical considerations involve assessing how much extra time a livelihood activity will involve and whether this places an unacceptable additional burden on women, children, or on people living with disabilities.

5. Objectives of the Market Research/Analyses

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- 5.1. In consultation with local communities, select priority livelihood options (also considering natural resource products) for analysis
- 5.2. Identify profitable, sustainable opportunities to sell goods or services and for improved efficiency, pricing, market access, etc.
- 5.3. Conduct market and value chain analysis of selected goods and services to determine sustainable market potential, opportunities for value addition and the necessary policies and systems to support such enterprises.

- 5.4. Highlight strategic entry points and undertakings for enhanced community participation in the market from the natural products trade.
- 5.5. Identify capacity gaps of local communities in sustainable harvesting, utilization and marketing of natural resource goods and services.
- 5.6. Provide recommendations for enabling the optimum utilization of the products.

6. Activities

- 6.1. Conduct preliminary community consultation at the inception level to identify the products for analysis through participatory approaches
- 6.2. Develop brief inception report detailing key questions and approach for agreed products
- 6.3. Research and identify potential local, domestic and export market opportunities for natural products from the region and determine ways in which to best penetrate the selected markets. This should include:
 - a. Mapping and description of key markets including composition, key players, characteristics, distribution and sales channels (e.g. local markets) and potential points of opportunity or barriers to entry and growth
 - b. Description and analysis of current market positioning including product gaps, supply and demand considerations (i.e. values and volumes, quality standards), expected size, trends and values for each
 - c. Identification of opportunities for value addition, supply chain and distribution synergies and gender-specific development opportunities
 - d. Any other considerations as considered by the consultant and SOS-Family Strengthening team.
- 6.4. Develop a list of livelihoods following the three steps process
- 6.5. Conduct detailed strategy assessment of key markets including.
 - a. SWOT or similar analysis of identified products/livelihood options, and market opportunities
 - b. Any relevant success stories and case studies to highlight approaches from other products/region
 - c. Key partnership opportunities, business development and training needs and opportunities
 - d. Policy issues (e.g. levies) and supporting information requirements
 - e. Discussion of financial and credit considerations (e.g. revolving funds from cooperatives).

7. Expected Outputs

- I. Inception report outlining approach and plans for the consultancy (including community consultation processes).
- II. A market and value chain analysis of selected goods and services (inclusive of natural resource goods) available including:
 - a. Description of key markets, including market composition maps and key players
 - b. SWOT analysis for key markets
 - c. Strategic recommendations and action plan for the Family strengthening and local partners.

It is expected that from the Market research, a final list of right livelihoods options will be provided after a careful screening process that reduces a long list of options to a final short list of livelihoods. The three steps process should be followed in developing the list of livelihood options:

- I. **Create a long list:** All livelihood options possible, now and in the future should be listed and this includes products that may be a by-product or additional service needed in a value chain, for example, organic fertilizer (a by-product of keeping livestock). This list should be checked for any known risks, such as negative impact on women or children (for instance forcing them into labor) or environmental destruction, so that they can be eliminated. In short, the long list should break down each livelihood by product or service; identify complementary products or inputs; identify services (sorting, cleaning, transport); and remove high-risk options for vulnerable groups such as women, children, and people living with disabilities.
- II. **Assess a short list:** The short list of livelihoods options may contain 15 – 30 options, which look possible, and need to be evaluated for their profitability and viability. The listed options should be examined for viability including:
 - a. Marketability: Is there sufficient demand for each product?
 - b. Market saturation: What effect does an increase in supply of the product or service have on demand and price?
 - c. Market access: Where are the buyers for the product or service? Can programme participants/beneficiaries access these buyers?
 - d. Feasibility: Can the vulnerable households in extreme poverty produce the good or service where they live on a regular and on-going basis, and without destroying natural resources?
 - e. Acceptability: How acceptable is the option in the context? Does it sufficiently change social norms that are at the root cause of poverty, disempowerment and inequality?
 - f. Risk: What are the risks affecting this livelihood? How do these risks affect production and selling or marketing this product or service?

- III. **Generate the final list of livelihood options:** It is expected that every option in the short list will be evaluated for its business potential. Based on the market, production, and risk information, the expected should be calculated:
- a. Profit: How long will it take the livelihood to generate a profit for each household? How much profit can the household expect for the first 18 months of this livelihood? Note that the profit is gross income (or sales) minus expenses (costs).
 - b. Return on Investment: How long will it take the livelihood to begin generating an income? Is this soon enough for the household to generate the income it needs to cover its expenses. (Recommended timeframe is 3-6 months).
 - c. Other costs and resource requirements: What are the costs involved in providing this livelihood package and do they fall within the programme budget? What other resources, such as space or input, are needed?

8. Duration and Timeline

The entire work shall be expected to be completed in 25 days from the signing of the contract. This period includes fieldwork and reporting. Should the prospective consultant not be available on the start date indicated above, he/she may also propose an alternative start for the study in written. Family Strengthening team and the local partners in the communities will be available to assist in the field whenever needed.

9. Consultant Qualifications and Experience

The consultant will be an enterprise expert with at least a master's degree in the relevant fields such as Entrepreneurship, Enterprise Development, Business Administration, and Economics with over 10 years progressive working experience with proven skills in conducting elaborate market studies and business planning.