

Call for Expression of Interest

For implementing a 3-year project piloting Agroforestry with Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes with cocoa farming co-operatives in the Southwest of Côte d'Ivoire

October 14, 2021

Investments in land restoration and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices are needed to avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation. However, project preparedness can be a major bottleneck for restoration and SLM investment. The Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) was established to help alleviate this bottleneck, and link projects to the LDN Fund¹ and LDN impacts. The facility is managed by IDH The Sustainable Trade Initiative. The LDN TAF can provide grants and reimbursable grants to (potential) LDN investment projects, to improve technical quality, and strengthen environmental and social impacts, so that the investment project meets the LDN Fund investment criteria. More information on the LDN TAF can be found on: <https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/landscapes/ldn-taf/>

1. Project Background

Ecookim Coop-Ca (from here on: Ecookim) is a union of cooperatives that purchases, processes and exports cocoa beans in Côte d'Ivoire. Ecookim is experiencing continued growth and currently counts with 30 member cooperatives and approx. 30,000 producers covering an area of close to 97,000 hectares of cocoa, and 1,472 producers of cashew nuts across 9,390 hectares. More information on Ecookim can be found at: <http://ecookim.com/>

To support farmers to restore degraded farmland and strengthen their resilience to climate change, Ecookim seeks to develop and pilot an agroforestry scheme with a selected number of its cooperatives and their members. LDN Fund is considering investing in Ecookim in support of this transition. The Fund's linked Technical Assistance facility, the LDN TAF, contracted consultants reNature/Progresso and Unique Forestry in 2020 to scope the feasibility of transitioning monoculture cocoa farms to agroforestry, assess the potential business case for the farmer,

¹ **The Land Degradation Neutrality Fund, co-promoted by the UNCCD, is a first-of-its-kind fund investing in profit-generating sustainable land management and land restoration projects that contribute to SDG 15.3.** The LDN Fund provides long-term debt and equity financing for sustainable land use projects that avoid, reduce or reverse land degradation. It is structured as a blended finance fund, pooling resources from both public and private investors committed to the goal of stopping land degradation. The LDN Fund is designed to offer financing solutions that are not readily available in the market, providing finance and strategic benefits in ways other investors or banks might not, e.g., longer tenors, longer grace periods, more flexible repayment schedules.

analyze the type of smallholder finance required, suggest a preliminary approach for a fit-for-purpose agroforestry system as well as external financial and technical support required. Both feasibility reports will be made available only to parties expressing an interest in this assignment and will be leveraged in the subsequent Request for Proposal (RFP).

2. Project Overview

Ecookim, Ecookim's supply chain partner and IDH seek to partner with an implementing party with local presence in Côte D'Ivoire to execute on a 3-year project piloting agroforestry and incentive schemes for farmer adoption (incl Payment for Ecosystem Services) with cocoa farming co-operatives in the Southwest of Côte d'Ivoire.

Indicatively, the project will be structured in 3 phases:

Phase 1 - Initiation: 3-6 months to start in Q12021.

- Refining and upgrading the agroforestry designs proposed in the initial feasibility study by ReNature/Progresso
- Running an in-depth, farmer-centric consultation process with 2 cooperatives expressing an interest
- Finalizing the designs, incorporating climate resilience, and considering the broader landscape approach
- Design of an incentive scheme for farmer adoption (incl PES)
- M&E baseline

Phase 2 - Implementation: 2 years from the close of Phase 1.

- Agroforestry implementation with 2 selected cooperatives
- Training of Trainers at Ecookim and cooperatives level
- Selection and expansion to 2-3 additional cooperatives

Phase 3 – Preparing for investment and Exit: last 6 months of the 3-year program.

- M&E
- Identifying and sharing lessons learned through a public learning event
- Design of the next phase, including a) ascertaining the business case for the farmer (incl incentive schemes), b) developing the scaling plan with Ecookim and its farmers, c) outlining the access to finance required for scaling, d) preparing the agroforestry component of Ecookim for investment from LDN Fund (and/or others).

The project will build on existing networks and experiences and is envisioned to be further strengthened by IDH PPI Landscape program² in the same region.

The implementation partner will be working closely with the IDH team in Côte d'Ivoire as well as the IDH LDN TAF team on drawing lessons learned from the pilot and in supporting investment readiness.

3. Partner Qualifications

The Partner should have the following qualifications:

- Local presence in Côte d'Ivoire with a solid team on the ground, including agronomic, economic and access to finance expertise.
- Prior agroforestry implementation experience, preferably in the region.
- Significant experience in designing projects with farmer-centric, market-driven approaches and implementing TA with farmer cooperatives.
- Experience with Payment for Ecosystem Services schemes is a big plus.
- 3 years of prior financials.

4. Submitting the Expression of Interest

Interested parties are invited to first submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) **by October 28th, 2021**, via email to bol@idhtrade.org. Questions for clarification can be addressed to Evgenia Sokolova, sokolova@idhtrade.org.

Submission should include the following:

- Name, title, email and telephone of the key contact.
- Brief description of prior experience and current capacity to implement an agroforestry transition, including:
 - Agroforestry projects implemented – type, roles, geographies, any preliminary results.
 - Key staff proposed for the project and their backgrounds (including CVs), expected roles & responsibilities.
 - Experience with incentive schemes for agroforestry adoption by the farmers (incl Payment for Ecosystem Services).
 - Organization's participation in related industry initiatives.

² <https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/approach/production-protection/#:~:text=How%20PPI%20approach%20works,and%20creating%20linkages%20to%20market>

Next steps and the final Request for Proposal (RFP):

- The agroforestry feasibility reports by reNature/Progresso and Unique will be shared with parties responding to this EOI, and their comments sought for the shaping of the final Request for Proposal.
- The LDN TAF project team may invite parties responding to this EOI to an in-person meeting in Abidjan in November, and/or over the phone to discuss comments on the feasibility report, experience in the field and partnership potential.
- Final RFP is expected to be published before 31st December 2021 with project implementation likely to start in Q1/Q2 2022.

5. Disclaimer

IDH reserves the right to update, change, extend, postpone, withdraw, or suspend the call for EOI, RFP or any decision with regard to the selection or contract award. IDH is not obliged in this tender procedure to make a contract award decision or to conclude a contract with a participant. IDH reserves the right to suspend or annul the EOI and/or RFP procedure at any moment in time. Participants cannot claim compensation from IDH, any affiliated persons or entities, in any way, in case any of the afore-mentioned situations occur. By handing in an Expression of Interest, participants accept all terms and reservations made in this Call for EOI, and subsequent information and documentation in this procedure.

6. Confidentiality

The documents provided by or on behalf of IDH must be handled with confidentiality. The participant will also impose a duty of confidentiality on any parties that it engages. Any breach of the duty of confidentiality by the participant or its engaged third parties will give IDH grounds for exclusion of the participant, without requiring any prior written or verbal warning. All information, documents and other requested or provided data submitted by the participant will be handled with due care and confidentiality by IDH. The provided information will after evaluation by IDH be filed as confidential. The provided information will not be returned to the participant.

About IDH Sustainable Trade Initiative

IDH, The Sustainable Trade Initiative, convenes companies, governments, financiers and others in public-private partnerships. Together we drive the design, co-funding and prototyping of new economically viable business models to delink tropical commodity production from deforestation and create shared value for all stakeholders. IDH has a network of over 400 companies, CSOs, financial institutions, producer organizations and governments. IDH works in 12 agricultural sectors and 12 landscapes in over 40 countries to achieve scalable impact on the Sustainable

Development Goals. IDH's approaches are designed to drive sustainability from niche to norm in mainstream markets. IDH focuses on creating positive impact on deforestation, living incomes and living wages, working conditions, toxic loading and gender.

For IDH's work in Côte D'Ivoire, pls visit

<https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/landscapes/cavally-cote-divoire/>