USAID/Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance

Haiti Resilience Food Security Activity (RFSA): Ayiti Pi Djanm Statement of Work (SOW): Agricultural Inputs Market Assessment

Please note this SOW and its annexes may change before contract signature, based on USAID and other stakeholder input.

Purpose

CRS Haiti seeks a consultant to lead a Agricultural Inputs Market Assessment, which will serve as formative research for the Ayiti Pi Djanm project, a USAID/BHA-funded Resilience Food Security Activity. The consultant will report to the Strategic Learning Advisor (SLA) on the Ayiti Pi Djanm team. The period of performance will fall between September and December 2022.

This SOW outlines the technical approach and responsibilities associated with the study. Instructions to submit an application can be found in the "To Apply" section below.

Background

Ayiti Pi Djanm ("A Stronger Haiti") is a five-year project funded by USAID Office of Humanitarian Affairs (BHA) which will reach nearly 90,000 participants and more than 17,000 households across 11 communes in the Sud and Nord-Est departments of Haiti to improve food and nutrition security and resilience to shocks. Recognizing that families exist in a larger social environment and do not build resilience alone, the consortium led by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is partnering with communities to build resilience capacities at the household and community levels, as well as transformative capacity at structural levels. The project features an innovative market system approach that uses Title II commodities to catalyze private sector investments that will help develop locally produced foods and create new agricultural livelihood opportunities. The project will turn around five key interventions: Create mixed gender care groups to build knowledge and support for critical nutrition behaviors, organize Farmer Learning Communities focused on demo plots for local leadership on NRM and climate-smart innovation and adoption efforts, mobilize and support the creation of Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) groups to support savings and financial education, provide vouchers and multipurpose cash assistance to support the basic needs of households, local vendors, and youth entrepreneurs, pilot household dialogue intervention to promote shared decision-making, planning and communication for household members.

The overall goal of APD is to enable chronically food insecure households and communities to have improved food and nutrition security and enhanced resilience to shocks. The project

aims to reach this goal by focusing on three purposes: enhanced sustainable management of natural resources, increased consumption and utilization of safe, nutritious foods, especially by women and children, and Households attain more profitable livelihoods.

Problem Statement / Theory of Change Information Gap Summary

Access to inputs is a major barrier to improved agricultural production in Haiti (FEWS NET, 2018; Anglade, 2021). The APD team has identified the appropriate and timely use of improved inputs as a critical pathway to change for increasing income from agriculture for vulnerable households. Previous experience shows, however, that the direct transfers of inputs is not a sustainable model. It is critical to understand the functioning of the existing market system for inputs and services, from the perspective of the most vulnerable market segment, and especially in light of the current constraints on the operating context related to security outside of the capital has further restricted the flow of goods to the areas of implementation for Ayiti Pi Djanm.

Research Justification

Access to inputs is frequently cited as a barrier to improved production, but direct resource transfers are not sustainable delivery systems. Participants in Ayiti Pi Djanm's agricultural interventions will receive some incentive vouchers to de-risk the purchase of inputs and trial climate/water smart innovations on their farms. The design of the voucher system will require up to date information on the functioning of relevant inputs market systems. At the same time, it will be critical that willingness-to-pay (WTP) on the part of the farmers is taken into account to ensure that affordable and accessible inputs and services are being trialed. In order for the approach to be effective, participants must be willing to invest their own resources in improved inputs and technical services.

The effectiveness and the sustainability of the agricultural interventions depends on the improved inclusion of targeted farmers into relevant market systems. The APD team's approach to improve input and technical service utilization will depend on creating linkages between Farmer Learning Communities (FLCs) and private sector actors and finding opportunities to expand the reach of existing agrodealers and service providers within the interventions zones.

Key Research Objectives

This study has three main objectives:

1. Assess willingness to pay for inputs and services among the target population;
2. Better understand availability of high-quality? inputs in the implementation zone as well as the current constraints and bottlenecks; and
3. Identify market opportunities for expanding the reach of existing and new? actors that can facilitate access for vulnerable farmers.

Research Methods

- **Research Questions.**
    - What affects farmers' willingness to pay (WTP) for improved inputs and technical services? What are the main drivers of decision-making (beyond affordability)? How does this vary by age or gender?
    - What are the main drivers and bottlenecks faced in the current market systems for inputs and technical services? How does this vary by geographic zone?
    - What are the main market/service opportunities for input markets in implementation zones? How long would it take new service providers to become profitable? What barriers might prevent women/youth from pursuing those opportunities?

- **Data Collection and Analysis Methods.**

Data collection methods will be both qualitative and quantitative. The research lead will be recruited with specific expertise in data analysis for both quantitative and qualitative data. Notes from qualitative data collected (Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews) will be translated into English or French and analyzed by the research lead with support and verification from the data collectors. For focus group discussions and qualitative interviews, there will be too many to conduct using a simple analysis in Excel. Consultants should use software for organizing responses and identifying key themes for analysis.

Quantitative data will be collected using a recognized data collection software, such as CommCare, Kobo Collect, etc. and analyzed in R, STATA, or another appropriate statistical package, proposed by the consultant.

These analysis methods have proven useful in other similar studies and been widely adopted across research teams in similar situations. Because the research questions are intertwined and several of the data collection methods address multiple research questions, synthesis will take place during the data collection and analysis phases. The research lead will specifically look for opportunities to create actionable recommendations that cut across multiple research questions.

When developing the proposed approach for this study, potential consultants are encouraged to refer to existing guides and toolkits, such as FAO and UNDP's "Toolkit for value chain analysis and market development integrating climate resilience and gender responsiveness", which will be important starting points. CRS' Value Chain Toolkit will also be an important resource for formulating conclusions and actionable programming recommendations.

- **Data Handling.**

Best practices in secure data handling will be employed for this research. FGD groups will take place in private locations and data collected will be kept confidential. Consent forms will be clearly explained and shared with all participants to ensure they do not feel pressured to participate in FGD activities. Data will be de-identified to protect the identity of participants.

Consultants may wish to create audio recordings of focus group discussions, or interviews, for later transcription or adding detail to notes. If audio recordings are created, they should be destroyed once transcription/ detailed notes are completed. Audio recordings need not be shared with CRS and participants must consent to audio recordings.

For focus group discussions, consultants may ask individual names to establish rapport with study participants, however those names should not be captured. Focus group notes should only note segment targeted (i.e., female caregivers of children aged 6-59 months in new commune etc.) and the community where they were conducted. Interviews should follow the same protocol (i.e., KII with market vendor).

After completion of data analysis and final reporting, consultants should provide transcription/ detailed notes and any script used for analysis to the Strategic Learning Advisor at CRS. Data will be stored on a secure server, and only share with other staff needed for new analysis of the data. The consultant should not retain any copies of this data, as they will not need it once this consultancy is complete.

- **Mitigating risks and handling unexpected or adverse events.**

The APD team has identified three primary risks. The three risks, and their associated mitigation strategies, are noted below. As part of their final research protocol, the selected consultants should further elaborate on their mitigation strategies and any additional risks that they could encounter.

COVID-19 - Increase in the transmission of COVID-19 and accompanying government restrictions will require the data collection team to apply safety measures to protect research participants and staff. This will include but not limited to:

- Provision of personal protective equipment (masks, sanitizers) to all research participants including respondents and staff
- Social distancing will be maintained
- Clearly communicate COVID-19 safety protocols and expectations to all research participants so that they understand what is expected of the researchers and monitor their management of the interviews
- If tentative interviewee presents potential symptoms of COVID-19, the interview will need to be re-scheduled or replaced with another interviewee; similarly, potential focus group participants presenting with symptoms will not be allowed to participate. If possible, phone interviews could also be considered for some KIIs.

Security – The security environment in Haiti has been precarious for several years and continues to deteriorate. For the purposes of the study, much of the design work, tool development and analysis can be completed remotely. The consultant should include details on measures that will be undertaken to prevent the disruption of data collection by a worsening security environment.

Natural Disaster – In the case of a catastrophic weather event, such as a category 4 or 5 hurricane, the priority information needs could substantially shift. The approach of this study could require adjustment in order to account for adaptations in the approach of the overall project in affected areas and/or a shift to focus on pilot activities in unaffected areas of the country. This will require close planning with the BHA-team.

The research team will meet regularly to discuss potential unintended consequences that may occur. Research participants will be provided information on Ayiti Pi Djanm's Feedback, Complaint and Response Mechanism (FCRM) that they can use to report any problems or concerns.

Ethical Considerations

The team will follow best practices as outlined in 22 CFR 225 as well as the American Evaluation Association's Guiding Principles for Evaluators (https://www.eval.org/About/Guiding-Principles). Dependent upon participants in the study, the consultant should specify steps that will be taken to ensure informed consent, confidentiality, protection of minors, and minimization of Covid-19 transmission. The consultant should specify steps taken to safeguard data collected and data management procedures to be used in this study. There will be a data rights clause in the signed contract, and the consultant should obtain permission from CRS before sharing the final study report with any external party, including posting it to their organization's website.

Please also see the Mitigating Risks section above.

Team Composition / Team Lead Competencies

The study will be conducted through a consultation with a relevant firm or team in independent consultants with expertise relevant to this research study and data collection methods. An illustrative team could include:

A **Research Study Lead** will lead research design, tool development, validation of tools, and data analysis and report writing. The Lead will have qualitative and quantitative research experience and expertise as well as practical experience implementing complex, multisectoral programming. The Lead will be responsible for coordinating and training the research team as well as preparing and presenting the actionable findings. The lead researcher should have:

- A 5-year higher education diploma, preferably a master's or higher in agriculture, economics, or an equivalent field.
- At least 10 years of professional experience in agriculture, market systems development, or related fields, including experience as research lead in the conduct of studies and evaluations, preferably for agricultural livelihoods projects.
- Knowledge of the study methods, as demonstrated by the completion of at least three similar studies.
- Demonstrated ability to lead and supervise a multidisciplinary team

A **Markets Technical Advisor** will support the Lead in developing the protocols and tools as well as assist with interpreting collected data. The Markets Technical Advisor should have

- Bachelor's degree, + 4 years' experience in economics, business, or equivalent field
- At least 2 years of professional experience in the field of market systems development, market research, or related fields.
- Strong knowledge of the agriculture context of the RFSA implementation zones
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills

Data processing and information management specialist will ensure that collected data is processed and analyzed in compliance with the study protocol. The Data processing and information management specialist should have:

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent in social sciences, with at least 5 years of experience in mixed methods data analysis
- Have at least 5 years of professional experience in the design of data collection, management, and data cleansing methodologies for qualitative data
- Strong ability to use computer-based software analysis tools and applications for qualitative analysis such as ATLAS.ti, R (basic text mining), or other.

Field Research Assistants will be recruited during the period of data collection to supervise and support data collection. Their primary role will be ensuring data quality and coordination between the data collectors and study lead and assistant. They will be recruited based on their experience supervising data collection of similar studies.

Data Collectors or enumerators will be recruited and trained during the period of data collection to collect the primary data described above. They will be recruited based on their experience collecting qualitative and quantitative data and will be supported by Field Research Assistants.

At CRS, the Strategic Learning Advisor (SLA) will ensure the consultant fulfills the terms of the SOW and provide technical oversight. The SLA will also ensure coordination and collaboration within the Ayiti Pi Djanm team as well as with critical external stakeholders.

CRS also has a wide pool of regional and HQ technical experts, who will also be available as needed for oversight and quality reviews.

Deliverables

The deliverables for this consultancy include the following:

1. Finalized research protocol and data collection tools
2. List of prioritized inputs based on consultations with project and agriculture stakeholders
3. Weekly data collection reports
4. Transcriptions and detailed notes from KIIs and FGDs
5. Raw and analyzed databases
6. Final report to include:
    - Research questions
    - Methodology and limitations
    - Summary of key findings
    - Specific and actionable recommendations

The final report will be presented virtually and in person to the APD team and others and slides will be shared after the final presentation.

Period of Performance / Timeline

The below timeline is illustrative. The consultant should prepare a detailed calendar as part of their proposal that will be updated and finalized as part of the research protocol.

	Aug 22	Sept 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Recruitment of Consultant Firm						
Protocol development (detailed methodology and data collection tools)						
Research Team training						
Data collection						
Data management and analysis						
Report preparation						
Report dissemination and presentation						
Presentation of key findings to APD, USAID and/or other key stakeholers						

Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of CRS and partners include:

- Verification and validation of consultant's proposed research protocol
- Monitoring and supervision of implementation throughout the study process and provision of regular feedback if necessary
- Access to CRS CommCare license (as needed). CRS will not provide access to any other proprietary software (Excel, ATLAS.ti, NVIVO, SPSS, etc.)
- Evaluation of draft and provision of feedback to Team Lead based on following criteria:
    - Conformity of output with SOW, and the proposed research protocol
    - Concordance of analysis with evidence
    - Writing and presentation
    - Soundness of conclusions and pertinence of recommendations
    - Validation of final report following proposed revisions from CRS and BHA

Roles and Responsibilities of the consultant:

- Provision of research protocol, to include:
    - Data collection tools
    - Data collection plan, including
        - Detailed outline of sampling frame and procedure
        - Covid-19 mitigation strategy for primary data collection/ in-person enumerator training
    - Roles and responsibilities of different team members
    - Risk management strategy for changing security context and Covid restrictions
    - Logical framework or map linking general research questions to detailed research questions
    - Data analysis plan, including statistical management and data analysis strategy
    - Lead Researcher-CRS communication plan
    - Timeline/flowchart of key phases, including the deliverables
- Collecting and analyzing information in the field according to the proposed methodology
- Collaboration and communication with RFSA team during the study
- All deliverables described in the preceding section
- Consideration of feedback and recommendations from CRS and USAID throughout the study
- Finalization and submission of the final report, including the validation workshop

To Apply

Interested firms or independent consultant teams should submit Expressions of Interest noting experiences leading similar studies in the past. In addition to the EOI, applicants should submit a proposal that includes:

- Technical narrative proposal, including:
    - Methodological approach
    - Detailed information on data collection (including sampling approach) and analysis methods
    - Study team staffing overview (including estimated LOE) and CVs;
    - Informed Consent and Data Protection processes
    - Strategy for Risk Mitigation
- Detailed Financial Proposal

All application documents should be submitted in English to haiti.recruitment@crs.org by September 6th, 2022.

Annex I. References

Anglade, B.; Swisher, M.E.; Koenig, R. The Formal Agricultural Input Sector: A Missing Asset in Developing Nations? Sustainability 2021, 13, 10697. https://doi.org/10.3390/su131910697

FEWS NET Haiti Staple Food Market Fundamentals. FEWS Net, March 2018

Annex II. Key Research Questions and Proposed Methods

#	Research Question	Data Analysis Method	Research Justification / How findings will be used
1	What affects farmers' willingness to pay (WTP) for improved inputs and technical services? What are the main drivers of decision-making (beyond affordability)? How does this vary by age or gender?	Quantitative Qualitative	The FLC model for agriculture that will be piloted as part of APD will include some support to farmers to de-risk experimentation. However, for this approach to be sustainable, participants must be willing to invest their own resources in inputs and services. Additionally, it is important to ensure that we understand how different groups may value/access agricultural inputs differently and the decision-making process within the household. Findings related to decision-making will be critical for informing the livelihood considerations as part of the household dialogue intervention beginning in Year 2.
2	What are the main drivers and bottlenecks faced in the current market systems for inputs and technical services? How does this vary by geographic zone?	Qualitative	The findings from this research will provide the team with detailed information on the supply and quality of inputs in the intervention zone as well as demand and pricing information. Additionally, it will provide critical information around the bottlenecks and challenges within the targeted value chains. As noted above, the sustainability of the FLC model requires a functioning delivery

			system for agricultural inputs and services.
	What are the main market/service opportunities for key value chains in implementation zones? How long would it take new service providers to become profitable? What barriers might prevent women/youth from pursuing those opportunities?	Qualitative	This research will examine business models that are currently in use or could be used to connect communities with agricultural inputs. We will assess if other distribution models have been experimented or considered in order identify opportunities to expand the existing distribution network using a private service provision model.

Annex III. Helpful Resources

This annex includes resources that may be helpful for implementing partners, their sub-awardees, and/or research partners who may be conducting primary or secondary research.

1. **Assessment Capacities (*Acaps*) Project Library**, available: https://www.acaps.org/library. Includes technical briefs relevant to implementing partners:
    - **Direct Observation and Key Informant Interview Techniques for primary data collection (2011):** https://www.acaps.org/sites/acaps/files/resources/files/key_informant_and_direct_observation_pocket_version.pdf and https://www.acaps.org/sites/acaps/files/resources/files/direct_observation_and_key_informant_interview_techniques_for_primary_data_collection_during_rapid_assessments_october_2011.pdf
    - **Data Cleaning (2016):** https://www.acaps.org/sites/acaps/files/resources/files/acaps_technical_brief_data_cleaning_april_2016_0.pdf

2. **The Compass & Breakthrough Action. (2015). How to Guide: How to Conduct Qualitative Formative Research**, available: https://www.thecompassforsbc.org/how-to-guides/how-conduct-qualitative-formative-research

   Summary: A how-to guide for formative research that is focused on social and behavior change (SBC) that provides step-by-step instructions on the process and key elements for executing focus group discussions (FGD) and In-depth interviews (IDI).

3. **FHI360 (2005). Qualitative Research Methods: A data collector's field guide,** available: https://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/Qualitative%20Research%20Methods%20-%20A%20Data%20Collector's%20Field%20Guide.pdf.

   Summary: A 'how to' field guide and training, particularly for data collection staff, on public health projects that provides the basics of qualitative data collection and management. The document includes five modules on: qualitative methods overview; participant observation; in-depth interviews; focus groups, and data documentation and management.

4. **USAID Developer Resources**, available: https://www.usaid.gov/developer.

   Summary: USAID webpage with links to a number of data resources of relevance to partners (e.g. the DEC, AIDData).

5. **USAID LEARN Contract and the USAID *Learning Lab* website (2014-2019).** Available: https://usaidlearninglab.org.

   Summary: Project website for the USAID *LEARN* contract that supports strategic learning and knowledge management for USAID partners and staff. The *Learning Lab* website provides substantial guidance on topics of relevance to partners engaging in the R&I process—planning for CLA, Learning Agendas, and Adaptive Management. Some key resources include:

- How to Establish a Learning Agenda: https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/establishing_a_learning_agenda_guidance_and_template_201702.pdf
- Learning Questions Checklist: https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/learning_questions_checklist_december_2018.pdf
- Pivot Log Template: https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/pivot-log-template
- Tips for Developing Good Evaluation Questions: https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/tips_for_developing_good_evaluation_questions_2016.pdf

6. **USAID (2017). Research Questions & Methodologies for Biodiversity and Development Research Agenda,** available: https://rmportal.net/biodiversityconservation-gateway/resources/projects/measuring-impact/mi-project-resources/research-questions-methodologies-bio-development-research-agenda.

   Summary: Concise, high-level technical guidance on how to develop research questions and research methods (systematic reviews, secondary data analyses, impact evaluations, and primary data collection) (6 pp).

7. **USAID (2018). WASH Formative Research Landscape Review,** available: https://www.fsnnetwork.org/sites/default/files/PRESENTATION_GREGOIRE.pdf

   Summary: Brief technical presentation on the goals of formative research as they relate to WASH within FFP programming, and ideas on how partners can develop and design an approach to WASH FR, as well as a brief comparison of methods and illustrative research questions.