# CALL FOR PROPOSALS

## Private Sector Resilience Project (PSRP)

CFP reference number: UNOPS/FO/2026/123

CFP document issue date: Oct 27, 2026

# 1. PARTICULARS

This Call for Proposal Document is to provide guidance to prospective implementing partners on the preparation of proposals for the implementation of the Private Sector Resilience Project (PSRP) in Afghanistan.

## 1.1. Project Development Objective

The PSRP is a World Bank-financed project that aims to establish resilient market systems, generate sustainable private-sector employment and create platforms that empower vulnerable populations, including women, youth, and returnees.

The Project Development Objective (PDO) of the PSRP is to support access to finance and capabilities of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in selected value chains. Within this framework, Component 2 of the project, Value Chain Market Development, focuses on strengthening the resilience and development of carpet and agricultural value chains.

This Call for Proposals invites proposals for Value Chain Market Development for agricultural value chains. The specific details of the project and the requirements that the proposal should address are described in the sections below.

## 1.2. Background and objectives of the grant/funding

Afghanistan is navigating a profound convergence of humanitarian and economic crises. The national economy has contracted significantly, and traditional Official Development Assistance (ODA) has reached levels insufficient to address the scale of the emergency. Strict policies by the Interim Taliban Administration—notably the exclusion of women and girls from public life—combined with massive returnee inflows and regional instability, have exacerbated unemployment and strained public services.

Despite these severe shocks, the Afghan private sector has shown resilient potential, remaining one of the few viable avenues for women's economic participation. While survey data indicates slight growth in formal firm sales and employment, structural barriers—primarily restricted access to finance and electricity—limit the economy's recovery. In response, the World Bank Group has initiated a strategic "Pivot," transitioning from an aid-dependent model toward fostering a private sector-led economy capable of sustaining basic human needs and generating sustainable employment.

Within this context, the agribusiness sector has shown consistent resilience to shocks and offers tangible opportunities for improved livelihoods and job creation. High-value agriculture production including apples, grapes, pomegranates, and saffron, supports hundreds of thousands of rural households, forming the backbone of Afghanistan's non-aid economy. In particular, the dried fruits sector generates strong backward and forward linkages across value chains, connecting farmers to processors, traders, and exporters. This sector offers viable entry points for private investment over the next 3–5 years.

Against this backdrop, PSRP will support the Value Chain Market Development activities aimed at strengthening the resilience and development of the apple, grape, pomegranate, and saffron value chains.

The goal is to establish resilient market systems, generate sustainable private-sector employment, and create platforms that also target the empowerment of vulnerable populations, including women, youth, and returnees. UNOPS implements Components 2-4 of the Project. This Call for Proposals invites proposals for Value Chain Market Development activities in the agriculture sector under Component 2, described in detail below.

### 1.3. Targeted impact of the grant/funding

PSRP Component 2 focuses on strengthening the resilience and growth of high-potential, labor-intensive value chains through the provision of integrated financial and non-financial services.

The prioritization of the apple, grape, pomegranate and saffron value chains under this component is informed by climate resilience, economic, and nutrition considerations. These high-value agricultural products are relatively better able to withstand drought stress and can provide farmers with stronger returns per unit of water used, compared to other crops. In addition, apples, grapes, pomegranates and saffron are also high-value crops, with export potential. The focus on production of fruits contributes to nutrition diversification for communities affected by poor diets and food insecurity, exacerbated by droughts.

**Sub-Component 2.1 (a): Value Chain Market Development (VCMD) - Agriculture**

Objective: To provide targeted, group-level support to selected value chain groups comprising different micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) within the following high-potential, labor-intensive apple, grape, pomegranate, and saffron value

chains to enhance product and market development and competitiveness, increase value addition, as well as support creation of jobs, particularly for women.

Outcome: Anticipated outcomes include an average net sales increase of 15% and significant employment gains in the horticulture sector (apple, grape, pomegranate and saffron).

### 1.4. Scope of the grant/funding

The total grant/funding available under this Call for Proposals is USD 3,450,000. The grant/funding will support interventions across the apple, grape, pomegranate and saffron value chains. The geographical scope of this project is nation-wide.

The grant/funding is intended to support activities that contribute to product and market development, value addition and job creation within the selected agricultural value chains. The Value Chain Market Development (VCMD) uses a group-based instrument, under which a minimum of two companies must partner together to submit a proposal for PSRP support. While not all businesses in the group proposal are required to be formally registered, the group must include a lead registered company that can assume legal responsibility for the prospective engagement, through which informal businesses in the group can access VCMD resources.

The selected applicant will be responsible for implementing a range of activities to support value chain groups, including awareness and mobilization activities, technical assistance and training for the selected value chain groups, as well as the administration and implementation of matching grant support for selected value chain groups.

The applicant will also be responsible for providing continued monitoring support to value chain groups throughout the project duration, to facilitate the effective implementation and achievement of the intended results.

### 1.5. Target beneficiaries

The initiative aims to provide technical assistance to the MSMEs and value chain groups in targeted value chains, by supporting market development and access, value addition, and contributing to job creation. Under this component, matching grants will be provided to a minimum five chain groups, including at least two women-led value chain groups.

The targeted beneficiaries under the Value Chain Market Development will include:

- Value Chain Groups: In this context, a value chain group refers to a potential or already organized group of producers operating within a selected agricultural value chain. This may include producer organizations, cooperatives, associations, or other organized groups engaged in activities across the value chain, including production, aggregation, primary processing, packaging, marketing, or trading. These groups can be formal or informal or both, and may precede the project or be formed specifically to apply for matching grants provided by the project. In turn, Value Chain Groups benefit directly (in the case of value chain group members) or indirectly (through spill-over effects/positive externalities):

    - ❖ MSMEs: MSMEs engaged in activities across the selected agricultural value chains, including production, aggregation, processing, packaging, marketing, and trading, will also benefit from project interventions. Support to MSMEs may include technical assistance, and other measures aimed at strengthening their capabilities, market access, and business opportunities.

    - ❖ Households: Broader beneficiaries will include households whose members gain employment or other income-generating opportunities as a result of project interventions supporting the selected agricultural value chains.

## 1.6. Activities under the grant/funding

The applicant will be responsible for implementing the following activities that should contribute to product and market development, value addition and job creation within the selected agricultural value chains:

- Awareness & Mobilization: The applicant shall conduct nationwide workshops and tailored sessions for value chain groups to enable value chain actors to understand the benefits and dynamics of joint action and collaboration. The sessions should cover relevant topics, including (a) value chain collaboration benefits; (b) issues including shared processing facilities, global certification, and export logistics; (c) intelligence about potential markets; (d) exposure to case studies and success stories from Afghanistan and the region and (e) awareness about the competitive call for proposals for matching grants. This is expected to facilitate joint actions like shared processing or export logistics among the value chain groups. The applicant shall also conduct separate sessions for women to provide targeted and tailored support to women-led value chain groups.

- Technical Assistance: Technical assistance may include support to producers on climate-smart and resource-efficient agricultural practices, such as drip irrigation, rainwater harvesting, mulching, and compost application. The applicant should also provide relevant training and advisory support to the MSMEs to strengthen their capacity and improve their participation in the selected value chains.

- Competitive Call for Proposals: The applicant shall design and implement a competitive call for proposals through which selected value chain groups can apply for matching grant support for eligible investments and activities. Matching grants are expected to finance approximately 50 percent of approved proposals, with grant amounts expected to range from USD 100,000 to USD 750,000. The detailed process to be followed for the selection of proposals is described in the draft Grants Manual which will be finalized prior to signature of the grant.

- Matching Grant Support: The matching grants provided to the selected value chain groups may include, but not limited to, support for: (1) adoption of internationally recognized certifications, including Global GAP, organic, and fair-trade labels; (2) investment in solar-powered sorting, processing, and packaging facilities; (3) establishment of shared cold storage infrastructure to reduce post-harvest losses; (4) establishment of warehousing nodes in regional trade hubs such as Dubai or Türkiye, managed collectively by Value Chain Groups (VCG); (5) export preparation facilities equipped with renewable energy and backup systems; (6) development of digital B2B platforms and traceability systems to connect Afghan producers with international buyers; (7) participation in international trade fairs, study tours, and trade missions to develop new market linkages; and (8) air freight trials to Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Türkiye, and/or India to establish viable export corridors for perishable produce. These activities are expected to contribute to market development, value addition and job creation in the selected value chains. The activities listed above are illustrative and the applicant may also support other eligible activities identified through the matching grant proposals, based on their demand and potential to contribute to the objectives of the grant/funding.

  The successful applicant will be responsible for soliciting proposals for, selecting, awarding, and administering the respective matching grants. With financial support from the matching grant, technical assistance from the successful applicant, and financing from their own sources, Value Chain Groups will then be responsible for implementing the activities they proposed in the matching grant proposal. Thus, implementing any of these activities listed above as examples - including those that may involve infrastructure works (such as: (2), (3), (4) and (5)) - will be undertaken by and the responsibility of the Value Chain Groups. not the successful applicant themselves.

- Implementation and Monitoring: The applicant shall oversee the implementation of matching grant activities and establish a system for milestone-based disbursement of grant funds, linking disbursements to the achievement and verification of agreed implementation milestones and deliverables. The applicant should also establish a continuous monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to track implementation progress, outputs and results, as well as support timely identification and resolution of implementation issues that may arise.

The applicant may also propose additional activities that are relevant to the objectives of the grant/funding and would contribute to product and market development, value addition and job creation within the selected agricultural value chains. However, the applicant should ensure that the proposed activities are designed and implemented in accordance with the PSRP Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and other applicable Project E&S instruments.

## 1.7. Grant/funding available

**Total amount of grant/funding available**

The following table indicates the total amount of grant/funding available under this Call for Proposals.

| Currency | Amount | Amount in words |
|---|---|---|
| USD | 3,450,000 | Three million four hundred and fifty thousand |

**Grant/funding amount limit per applicant**

The following table indicates the limit of grant/funding allowable per applicant under this Call for Proposals.

| Currency | Amount | Amount in words |
|---|---|---|
| USD | 3,450,000 | Three million four hundred and fifty thousand |

### 1.8. Grant/funding duration

The expected duration of the grant/funding is:

| | |
|---|---|
| Months | 30 |

### 1.9. Applicant eligibility

**Applicant category(ies)**

The following categories of applicants are eligible to apply under this Call for Proposals:

- ☐ Academic and research institutions
- ☐ Private companies
- ☐ International non-governmental organizations (INGOs)
- ☐ National non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- ☐ Non-UN intergovernmental organizations
- ☐ UN system organizations

**Applicant country of registration**

Applicants that are included or excluded under this Call for Proposals with regard to country of registration are as follows:

- Open to all countries

The successful applicant will be required to secure the necessary approvals for the implementation of project activities in Afghanistan.

**Additional conditions of ineligibility**

The applicant shall not fall under any of the conditions listed in the Instructions to Applicants, Article 1, which make the applicant ineligible for this grant/funding.

### 1.10. Content of proposal submissions

The items listed below are relevant for applicants to document their compliance with the evaluation criteria:

- **Proposal** (upload the completed narrative proposal template as a document in Grant+)
- **Annex I: Declarations** (upload as a document in Grant+)

- **Annex II: Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) self-assessment** (use the UN Partner Portal (UNPP) for civil society applicants and complete the PSEA self-assessment in Grant+ for the private sector, sub-national governments or organizations not able to register in the UNPP.)
- **Annex III: Financial proposal** (completed directly online in Grant+)
- **Annex IV: Results Framework** (upload the completed Results Framework template in Grant+)
- Annex V: Workplan
- Annex VI: Environmental and Social Risk Management Checklist for Partners (upload as a document in Grant+)
- Annex VII: Risk analysis and mitigation measures (upload as a document in Grant+)
- Annex VIII: Organizations applying as a consortium/group with sub-partners will submit:
    - A document (of maximum two pages) clarifying the consortium's/group's structure, contractual relationships, decision-making process, and communication framework with the sub-partners (upload as a document in Grant+)

Applicants must carefully read and understand the Requirements in this Call for Proposals and the Instructions to Applicants before completing the Proposal and Annexes.

**Guidance for applicants on Annex 2: Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse implementing partner self-assessment**

Applicants are requested to complete the PSEA implementing partner (IP) self-assessment through the UN Partner Portal (UNPP) if they are eligible to register on this platform. Using the UNPP promotes consistency, accessibility, and reusability of PSEA information across the UN system, and supports smoother engagement with UN partners.

Applicants are encouraged to check whether they are already registered in UNPP and whether a PSEA assessment has been completed with another UN entity, as assessments in UNPP are generally valid for five (5) years. In this case, applicants should provide their UNPP ID number in their organization profile in Grant+. For applicants not yet registered in Grant+, complete the following steps:

- Access the UNPP dashboard.

- New IPs should use the following registration link. Applicants are encouraged to consult the UNOPS Guidance for Grantees on the United Nations Partner Portal (UNPP) for detailed instructions on registration, profile management, the PSEA self-assessment, and available support resources.
- Once registered in the UNPP, applicants should complete the PSEA implementing partner (IP) self-assessment directly in the UNPP under the PSEA module. For further guidance, refer to the UNPP PSEA User Guide for Partners, available in several languages.

If applicants are ineligible to register on the UNPP, they should complete the PSEA IP self-assessment in Grant+.

If an applicant is successful, they may be required to undergo a full PSEA capacity assessment in addition to the self-assessment listed above and may be required to complete a broader organizational capacity assessment. The capacity assessments may lead to required actions to improve capacity. Those actions would be included in an agreement with the IP, who would be expected to report on progress against those actions on a regular basis.

**Guidance for applicants on Annex II: Financial Proposal**

Applicants must complete Annex II: Financial Proposal directly within the Grant+ system. Providing an additional copy in Excel format via document upload remains optional.

Submissions involving sub-grantees require completion in Grant+ alongside an uploaded Excel document. While Grant+ consolidates these expenses under a single sub-grant line item, the Excel file must contain individual budget tabs detailing itemised expenditures for each partner entity. Should an award be made, subsequent financial reporting obligations will strictly mirror this submission structure.

### 1.11. Partial proposals

Partial proposals will not be permitted. Applicants shall submit a proposal for the total scope of the grant/funding and address all of the requirements in this Call for Proposals. Evaluation will be based on compliance with the total requirements.

### 1.12. Sub-granting[1] and contracting[2]

Sub-granting and contracting are only permitted under this Call for Proposals as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Sub-granting | Permissible |
| Contracting | Permissible |

### 1.13. Proposal currency

The proposal budget shall be prepared in the following currency(ies):

- US Dollar

### 1.14. Language of proposals

All proposals, information, documents and correspondence exchanged between UNOPS and the applicant shall be in:

- English

### 1.15. Proposal submission

The deadline for the submission of proposals is Nov 17, 2026 11:59 PM GMT+4:30 (Afghanistan Time). Proposals shall be submitted using the following method:

- Create their profile in Grant+: grantplus.unops.org;
- Create their organization profile; and
- Apply to the funding opportunity CFP ref. no.: UNOPS/FO/2026/123 within Grant+.

The application consists of:

- Entering basic information about the proposal.
- Creating the financial proposal in Grant+. Note that when the funding opportunity includes the online budget feature, applicants must submit their budget through this feature. They may also attach a file with the budget, if desired.

[1] Sub-grant is when an entity is selected by the implementing partner (IP) to implement activities on behalf of the IP and complies with the same principles as outlined in the UNOPS Operational Instruction on Grant Support.
[2] Contracting is done when an IP procures services, goods or works using the procurement procedures of the IP.

- Uploading the narrative proposal and other required documents per the Content of proposal submissions above.

Grant+ is the UNOPS grant management platform. An online information sharing session including guidance on uploading proposals into Grant+ will take place on Nov 2, 2026 11:30 AM GMT+4:30 (Afghanistan Time).

Google Meet joining info for the information session:

> PSRP CfP Agriculture Information sharing session
>
> Monday, November 2 · 11:30am – 12:30pm
>
> Time zone: Asia/Kabul
>
> Google Meet joining info
>
> Video call link: https://meet.google.com/wsf-nqvq-mjs
>
> Or dial: (US) +1 315-925-6499 PIN: 340 031 548#
>
> More phone numbers: https://tel.meet/wsf-nqvq-mjs?pin=8435994295820

User guides and how-to videos are also available on the platform by clicking on the 'Guidance' tab at the top right of the Grant+ landing page.

In case of any technical issues, applicants may contact UNOPS System Support by clicking on the '?' icon in the top-right corner of the page after registering on the platform. For questions related to the content of this Call for Proposals, please refer to Contact information.

Refer to Article 10, "Proposal Submission", of the Instructions to Applicants for details on the specific requirements for proposal submission.

### 1.16. Type of legal instrument

Depending on the type of organization submitting the proposal, the applicable legal instrument(s) are identified hereunder and are available on the UNPP:

- Grant Support Agreement
- UN2UN Transfer Agreement

### 1.17. Contact information

All correspondence, notifications and requests for clarifications in relation to this funding opportunity shall be sent to PSRP@unops.org before Nov 5, 2026 11:59 PM GMT+4:30 (Afghanistan Time).

### 1.18. Important dates and deadlines

The following tables provide the key dates and deadlines for this Call for Proposals.

| Activity | Date |
|---|---|
| **Submission of proposals** | Nov 17, 2026 11:59 PM GMT+4:30 (Afghanistan time) |
| **Request for clarification** | Nov 5, 2026 11:59 PM GMT+4:30 (Afghanistan time) |
| **Expected agreement start date** | Jan 15, 2027 |

| Activity | Date | Additional information |
|---|---|---|
| **Pre-proposal meeting** | Nov 2, 2026 11:30 AM GMT+4:30 (Afghanistan Time) | Video call link: https://meet.google.com/wsf-nqvq-mjs |

# 2. REQUIREMENTS

## 2.1. Approach and methodology

The applicants are expected to provide a comprehensive and practical description of how the proposed activities will be implemented, ensuring the methodology is technically feasible within the proposed budget and the prevailing context of Afghanistan. Rather than restating the project objectives, the proposal should set out the implementation processes, including how relevant value chain actors will be engaged, supported, and how activities will be implemented, that will help achieve the objectives within the selected agricultural value chains (apples, grapes, pomegranates and saffron).

The proposal should respond to the requirements set out below for Value Chain Market Development. In addition, the proposal must also include an Implementation Plan and a Monitoring Plan, that meet the requirements specified in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 of this document, respectively.

The proposal should address the following requirements:

- Value Chain Analysis: The proposal should clearly analyse the main constraints affecting the performance of the selected value chains, and the opportunities for value addition of the agricultural products (apples, grapes, pomegranate, saffron). These opportunities may include, but should not be limited to, improvements in quality, packaging, storage, branding, or other measures that can increase the value and competitiveness of the products. This should include an assessment of the current and projected demand prospects for the products. The analysis should further cover the expected benefits of addressing these constraints through the proposed interventions, including (i) improvements in productivity, revenues, market access and product innovation of the value chain actors, (ii) increases in employment, labor force skills and incomes within the VCG, as relevant to the selected value chains.
- Group Formation and Engagement Approach: The proposal should clearly describe the approach for identifying and organizing value chain actors within the selected agricultural value chains into groups. This should also include an outreach and engagement strategy for identifying the eligible value chain actors, as well as mechanisms for promoting coordination

and collaboration among them. Value chain groups need to include at least one and be led by a company with legal registration.

    - The proposal should detail how selected value chain actors will be supported in moving from ad-hoc practices towards more systematic coordinated, joint actions. These coordinated actions may include arrangements among the value chain actors to undertake shared production, purchasing of inputs, aggregation and marketing, among others.

- Selection of Value Chain Groups to be Provided Matching Grants: The proposal should detail how proposals for matching grants will be solicited from the value chain groups, how they will be evaluated, and how proposals to be supported will be selected. The proposal should describe how eligible value chain groups will be informed about the matching grant opportunity and the process for screening and evaluating the value chain groups against clearly defined eligibility and assessment criteria. The proposed assessment criteria may include, but should not be limited to, the group's organizational and implementation capacity, knowledge and technical expertise relevant to the selected value chain, and prior experience in undertaking activities within the value chain. The proposal should also set out the criteria that value chain groups will be directed to consider and apply in designing the interventions they seek financing for.
- Management and Administration of Matching Grants: The proposal should provide a comprehensive framework for managing, accounting for and supervising the matching grant resources. The framework should explain how grant resources will be allocated, how grant and co-financing resources will be recorded, and how compliance with agreed financial requirements will be overseen. The proposal should also explain how the grants will be administered to ensure participating value chain actors and groups within the selected value chains receive the intended benefits.
    - The proposed financial management arrangements must be designed to handle matching grants ranging from USD 100,000 to USD 750,000, which are expected to finance approximately 50 percent of the total eligible investment costs. The proposal should also describe the arrangements for recording and reporting financial transactions, verifying co-financing contributions, monitoring the expenditure against approved budgets, and ensuring accountability for the use of matching grants.
    - The proposal must explicitly describe the administrative process through which the grant-funded investments will be assessed, approved, implemented, and monitored. It should also include the

framework establishing mutually agreed-upon milestones, independent verification of achievement of agreed milestones, authorization of disbursements, and corrective mechanisms to be applied in cases of implementation delays.

- The proposal should clearly describe how matching grant resources and beneficiary co-financing contributions will be budgeted and monitored to ensure that both sources of funding are accounted for transparently and used for their intended purposes. It should explicitly identify the ineligible expenditures under the matching grant, including but not limited to taxes and fines, routine operating costs (e.g., rent, salaries, and raw material stockpiling), and debt repayment. The proposal should also clarify the requirements for beneficiary co-financing, and explicitly state that in-kind contributions will not be accepted. It is also encouraged that the beneficiaries identify and budget for technologies and specialized capacity building and BDS support wherever required, including selected key TA/BDS support to be accessed in the market, where the applicant can support the beneficiary to build market skills in assessing and using these services, and incorporate this explicitly in the proposed co-financing contribution of the beneficiary.

- Technical Assistance: The proposal should describe how and what kind of technical assistance will be provided to businesses from the targeted value chains that are engaged as part of the project. This includes technical assistance activities to be carried out as part of the outreach and engagement, as well as during the implementation of matching grants. The proposal should explain how the technical assistance needs will be identified and how the support provided will be tailored to the specific needs and capacities of the businesses in the targeted value chains. This includes measures to overcome aversion of businesses from the targeted value chains to utilizing technical assistance/business development services, and the applicant's approach to providing technical assistance/business development services – whether it will be provided by the applicant in-house or encouraged to be included in the costed proposal for matching grant funding by value chain groups. Linked to this, the proposal should also describe the methods and frequency of delivering the technical assistance.
- Climate-Smart Agriculture Practices: The proposal should present how the applicant would impart climate-smart and resource-efficient agriculture practices that would be relevant to the selected agricultural value chains.

The proposal should explain how the proposed practices will support sustainable increases in agricultural productivity, strengthen resilience to climate-related risks, and contribute to food security. These proposed practices may include, but should not be limited to, drip irrigation, rainwater harvesting, mulching to reduce soil moisture loss, compost application to improve water retention and pest management.

- Sustainability of Commercial Benefits: The proposal must explain how the proposed intervention will support improved commercial sustainability (for instance, increased revenue, improved market access) in the selected value chains beyond the grant period. This should include potential opportunities for continued revenue growth and market expansion for the selected products, as well as arrangements that allow value chain actors to maintain the investments and capacities developed through the intervention, even after project completion.
- Women's Participation and Economic Inclusion: The proposal must articulate clear pathways through which women will directly benefit from the interventions in the selected value chains. The proposal should also specify how the benefits to women will be monitored and measured, and must include arrangements to support women-led value chain groups to receive matching grant support.

## 2.2. Implementation Plan requirements

The proposal must present a comprehensive Implementation Plan describing how the proposed activities will be delivered from project inception through completion. The Implementation Plan should describe a practical, logically sequenced approach to implement the proposed activities within the proposed timeframe and in line with the project objectives, while taking into account the operating conditions of the selected agricultural value chains. The operating conditions may include, as relevant, the seasonality and production cycles of the value chains, market dynamics, availability of inputs and services, and the capacities of key value chain actors. The Implementation Plan should demonstrate how these conditions have been considered in determining the timing, sequencing, and delivery of the proposed activities.

The Implementation Plan should address the following requirements:

**Implementation Schedule and Key Milestones:** The proposal should present a clear implementation schedule showing the timing and sequencing of the main stages through which implementation will progress. It should identify key milestones to mark completion of important activities, as well as expected deliverables to be produced

through the proposed activities. It should demonstrate how the proposed approach would ensure effective delivery of project outputs across the selected value chains.

**Responsibilities and Resource Deployment:** The proposal should outline the roles and responsibilities of key personnel clearly. The proposal should include four key personnel: Project Manager/Team Leader, Horticulture Specialist (Agronomy), Marketing Specialist and Value Chain Group Specialist. The Project Manager/Team Leader will be responsible for overall project management, coordination, implementation oversight, and achievement of project results. The Horticulture Specialist (Agronomy) will provide technical assistance on horticultural production, specifically agronomic practices for crop management, and productivity and quality improvements. The Marketing Specialist will support the development and implementation of market-oriented strategies, strengthen market linkages, and facilitate access to buyers and markets. The Value Chain Group Specialist will strengthen value chain groups, and support their financial record keeping and business development. The mobilization and deployment of additional experts, both key and non-key, necessary to implement the proposed activities in the selected value chains, should also be explained clearly.

**Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination:** The proposal should describe the clear implementation arrangements to coordinate with UNOPS, value chain actors supported by the project and other relevant stakeholders including relevant authorities, as appropriate, to support the effective implementation and decision-making, in accordance with the Project SEP. Applicants should also propose a communication strategy, specifying the channels of communication and the frequency of communication, that would be used to coordinate and maintain regular flow of information among the important and relevant stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle and in alignment with the SEP.

**Risk Identification and Mitigation:** The proposal should explain the approach for identifying the implementation risks that could hinder the achievement of the intended project results in the selected agricultural value chains. These may include risks affecting the coordination among value chain actors, access to inputs and markets, or timely delivery of activities, subsequently affecting the project implementation. It should also describe practical mitigation measures to manage the identified risks and maintain continuity of proposed interventions. Furthermore, the proposal should consider requirements of the project to monitor and report on specific political economy risks as part of quarterly reporting.

**Supervision and Quality Control:** The proposal must explicitly describe the supervision, and quality control arrangements that would be used to ensure that the proposed activities remain aligned with agreed standards, work plans, and contractual requirements. The applicants should propose processes to monitor implementation

progress, identify and correct any performance-related issues, and verify the quality and completion of project outputs. The proposed approach should be supported by clear operational measures, such as the frequency of data collection, quality assurance checks, and formal procedures for verifying physical outputs delivered within the selected agricultural value chains. The applicant is responsible for the quality and accuracy of all data behind the agreed upon indicators, including records generated at individual enterprise level such as attendance sheets, contracts and payslips. Where an individual enterprise collects the underlying data, the applicant verifies it is complete and reliable before it is reported.

**Consistency with the Monitoring Plan**: The proposal should present and ensure internal consistency between the Implementation Plan and the Implementing Partner Monitoring Plan (the Results Framework). The applicants should ensure that the Monitoring Plan is aligned and consistent with the activities, sequencing, responsibilities and timelines set out in the Implementation Plan, to support the tracking of project progress and results.

**Compliance with E&S risk management requirements**: The proposal should describe the key processes that will be applied to ensure compliance with the Project E&S instruments.

## 2.3. Implementing Partner Results Framework Requirements

**Application phase.** The applicant shall complete the Results Framework in the provided template, setting out how progress and performance of the proposed activity will be tracked throughout implementation. The Results Framework contains indicators taken from the Project Appraisal Document (PAD), marked "mandatory," together with a menu of activity-specific indicators. The activity-specific indicators are not part of the PAD; they complement the mandatory indicators at a more granular, activity level. Applicants are expected to select up to five of the Tier 2 indicators in addition to the Tier 1 indicators. Lastly, under Tier 3, applicants are free to add additional custom indicators in case certain aspects aren't yet covered by the existing indicators; in this case, these custom indicators also need to include data collection methodology including means of verification, data collection frequency, person/entity responsible and targets.

The indicators and their definitions are fixed and must not be changed. For each indicator, mandatory and activity-specific, the applicant enters details on how the indicator will be measured, including means of verification, the frequency of data collection and the person responsible for data collection, as well as targets.

**Evaluation phase.** The Results Framework of each applicant is assessed based on whether the proposed collection and verification approach is feasible, and whether the

proposed targets are realistic, reasonably explained, and in line with overall project-level targets, with due consideration of the assumptions provided by the applicant in the respective column in the results framework template.

**Monitoring during the start-up phase.** The Results Framework filled by applicants as part of their application will be used as the basis for finalizing the Results Framework during the inception phase with UNOPS, including confirming details on targets, data collection methodology, frequency and record-keeping systems before delivery begins. This also includes determining beneficiary counting (direct/indirect beneficiaries and overlap between indicators) and how to count unique beneficiaries.

Conducting a baseline survey for indicators that require baseline data collection is the responsibility of the applicant; the specific approach and timeline will be discussed during the inception phase. Applicants are therefore expected to budget costs for baseline and endline data collection into their budget proposals as part of this application.

**Monitoring during implementation.** Reporting is expected to be quarterly against the agreed Results Framework. Each report shows progress for the period and cumulative progress against targets, with figures disaggregated as specified and agreed. The implementing partner is not expected to submit raw beneficiary records and personal data but keeps, or ensures that the individual enterprises keep, the source records behind every reported figure (for example attendance sheets, filled survey sheets, raw data) and makes them available to UNOPS on request. Reported data is subject to independent verification by the project's Third-Party Monitoring Agency.

Once agreed, the Results Framework is the basis for monitoring for the duration of the grant, and indicators and targets are changed only with the written agreement of UNOPS. The implementing partner supports project-level monitoring, including field monitoring visits, reviews and any evaluations or studies commissioned by UNOPS or the World Bank, and provides data and access as required.

## 2.4. Environmental & Social Requirements

Applicants shall integrate environmental and social (E&S) risk management into the design and implementation of all activities proposed under this CfP, in accordance with the World Bank ESF and the applicable PSRP E&S instruments, including the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF, including Labor Management Procedures), Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), SEA/SH Action Plan and Security Management Plan (SMP), as well as any activity-specific E&S requirements communicated by UNOPS.

Applicants shall describe the approach, systems and arrangements they will use to identify, assess, manage, monitor and report E&S risks associated with the proposed activities. This shall include, as applicable, arrangements for managing E&S risks associated with beneficiaries, value chain groups, sub-grantees, contractors, subcontractors and other downstream parties.

All proposed activities, including activities involving matching grants, sub-grants or other downstream arrangements, shall be subject to E&S screening in accordance with the ESMF. The screening will identify potential E&S risks and impacts, determine the applicable Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs), establish the appropriate risk classification and identify the E&S measures and instruments required before implementation. Applicants shall not assign an E&S risk classification to their proposed activities; the applicable risk classification and E&S requirements will be determined through the Project's E&S screening process.

Activities presenting E&S risks that are ineligible under the ESMF or cannot be adequately mitigated will not be eligible for financing. No activity, including any activity financed through a matching grant or sub-grant, shall commence before the required E&S screening and clearance have been completed.

Applicants shall demonstrate adequate technical, managerial and human-resource capacity to manage the applicable E&S requirements and shall identify the personnel responsible for day-to-day E&S management. Where capacity gaps are identified, the selected Implementing Partner (applicant) shall cooperate with UNOPS in implementing required capacity-strengthening measures.

**Note:** To aid the applicants in preparing their proposals, a checklist of key E&S requirements is provided in Annex V. This does not replace the full set of activity-specific E&S instruments, which may have to be prepared and implemented by the successful applicant as part of their grant.

Where matching grants, sub-grants or other downstream financing arrangements are proposed, applicants shall describe how E&S requirements will be integrated into the identification, selection, appraisal, approval, agreement, monitoring and reporting of beneficiaries and sub-grantees. Applicable E&S requirements shall be incorporated into relevant grant agreements, sub-grant agreements, contracts or other contractual arrangements and shall be binding on the relevant recipient. Where contractors or subcontractors are engaged, the applicant shall ensure that applicable E&S requirements are incorporated into their contractual arrangements and implemented throughout the activity.

Depending on the nature and risks of the proposed activities, the applicant shall demonstrate how it will address, as applicable:

- Labor and working conditions, including compliance with the Labor Management Procedures (LMP), prohibition of child and forced labor, worker grievance mechanisms and appropriate Codes of Conduct;
- Occupational health and safety (OHS) and community health and safety;
- SEA/SH prevention and response, including Codes of Conduct, awareness and training, and confidential and survivor-centered reporting and referral arrangements;
- Environmental management, including resource efficiency, pollution prevention, waste management and, where relevant, biodiversity measures;
- Stakeholder engagement and grievance management, including accessible and inclusive engagement and measures to enable participation by women and vulnerable or underserved groups;
- Security risk management, including compliance with the SMP and activity- or location-specific security requirements; and
- E&S incident notification, reporting, monitoring and corrective action in accordance with UNOPS and Project requirements.

For the Value Chain Market Development – Agriculture activities, particular attention shall be given, as applicable, to labor and working conditions, OHS, community health and safety, environmental management, resource efficiency, pollution prevention, waste management, stakeholder engagement, inclusion, SEA/SH prevention and response, and security risk management. Where matching grants finance physical investments or other activities that may generate E&S risks, the proposed activity shall undergo E&S screening before approval and implementation. The screening will determine the applicable E&S requirements, risk classification and any activity-specific E&S instruments or management measures required.

The Implementing Partner (applicant) shall maintain appropriate E&S records and provide UNOPS with the information and access necessary to monitor compliance. The Implementing Partner (applicant) shall promptly notify UNOPS of serious E&S incidents, accidents or other significant E&S issues and shall cooperate with investigation, corrective action and follow-up. E&S performance may also be subject to independent or third-party monitoring.

Applicants shall complete Annex V: Environmental and Social Risk Management Checklist for Implementing Partners and shall describe in their proposal how the applicable E&S requirements will be integrated into implementation. The final E&S requirements applicable to each selected activity will be confirmed through the E&S

screening process and incorporated into the relevant grant agreement, sub-grant agreement, contract or other applicable contractual arrangement.

## 2.5. Budget requirements

**Budget Structure & Currency:**

Budgets must be submitted in USD, broken down by cost category and major activity, adhere to the ceiling per sub-component (indicated in Section 1.3). Applicants must provide sufficient justification for all cost assumptions and demonstrate a strong value-for-money approach.

**Multi-Partner Submissions:**

Consortium & Sub-Partner Submissions: Submissions that incorporate sub-grantees must be finalized within Grant+ and accompanied by a detailed Excel workbook. The attached spreadsheet must feature itemized budget schedules for every partner organization.

**Minimum Budget Components:**

i. **Direct Costs:** An estimate of all expenses required for and directly traceable to the grant activities, broken down by expense subcategory, expense line item, and quarter.
ii. **Budget Notes/Justifications:** A description of all underlying assumptions or justifications for the estimates provided.

**Cost Allocation & Ratios:**

iii. **Support Cost Ratio:** The ratio of operations/program support costs to activity/programmatic costs should be 15:85. Total operations/program support costs (including indirect costs) must not exceed 15% of the total proposed budget.
iv. **Indirect Costs:** May include up to 6% of direct costs. For sub-grants, indirect costs must be calculated and presented separately at the bottom of the budget table.

**Cost Eligibility:**

Expenses are eligible only if incurred for the purpose of the grant within the agreement duration (including amendments). Costs related to proposal preparation, grant

negotiation, and related travel are non-reimbursable and cannot be charged as direct costs.

Per Article II, Section 7 of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, UNOPS is exempt from direct taxes (except public utility charges) and customs duties for official imports/exports. All proposals must be submitted net/excluding all direct taxes, duties, and other taxes.

**The budget submitted with the proposal is the starting point, not the final version.**

# 3. EVALUATION METHOD AND CRITERIA

Proposals submitted in response to this CFP document shall be evaluated following the cumulative analysis methodology, which consists of the following steps:

**a.** Preliminary screening: This includes an assessment of whether proposals comply with the formal and eligibility criteria stated in Table 1: Formal and eligibility criteria. All proposals that pass this stage will go through a subsequent evaluation as follows.

**b.** Technical evaluation: This assesses the technical points achieved by each proposal, as per the maximum obtainable points assigned per criteria group in Table 2.1: Parts of the technical proposal evaluation. Only proposals that meet the minimum threshold indicated in Table 2: Technical criteria shall be considered substantially compliant at this stage. Evaluation of the technical proposals shall be completed prior to opening the financial proposals.

**c.** Financial evaluation: Financial proposals will only be opened for proposals that have achieved the minimum threshold in the technical evaluation. Financial proposals shall be checked for any mathematical errors in accordance with Article 15, "Minor Informalities, Errors or Omissions" in the Instructions to Applicants. The total financial proposal points achieved for each proposal are determined in accordance with Table 3: Financial criteria.

**d.** Combined analysis: This evaluation will be conducted based on a combined analysis, analyzing all of the relevant costs, risks and benefits for each proposal. The combined analysis includes the scores from both the technical evaluation, including factors such as risks, sustainability, and others, and the financial evaluation, using a predefined weighting method.

The maximum number of points that an applicant may obtain for their proposal is as follows:

- Technical proposal: 80 points
- Financial proposal: 20 points

The maximum total number of points an applicant may obtain for both the technical and financial proposals is 100. The weighting of the technical and financial proposals will be 80:20.

UNOPS may request clarification or further information in writing from applicants at any point during the evaluation process. In this case, any response from an applicant shall not modify the substance of the proposal, including both the technical and financial aspects of the proposal. UNOPS may use such information to interpret and evaluate the relevant proposal.

The evaluation of a proposal by UNOPS shall be carried out against the evaluation criteria described in the following tables.

## 3.1. Preliminary screening

**Table 1 Formal and eligibility criteria**

| Criteria evaluated on a pass/fail basis during the preliminary screening | Documents to establish compliance with the criteria |
|---|---|
| 1. The applicant is eligible as defined in Article 1, "Applicant Eligibility" in the Instructions to Applicants. | • Proposal<br>• Annex 1: Declarations<br>• Annex 2: PSEA capacity self-assessment |
| 2. The proposal is complete and includes all completed forms and other documentation requested in the Particulars, 'Content of proposal submissions'. | • All documentation requested in the Particulars, 'Content of proposal submissions' |
| 3. The applicant accepts the conditions in the template for agreement, as specified in the Particulars, 'Type of legal instrument'. | • Annex 1: Declarations |
| **4.** Applicant or the sub-contracted/sub-granted local partner is accredited to the directorate of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Ministry of Economy in Afghanistan. | • Proof of accreditation (Certification of incorporation of the applicant) |

## 3.2. Technical evaluation

**Table 2 Technical criteria**

| Criteria evaluated based on scoring during the technical evaluation | Documents to establish compliance with the criteria |
|---|---|
| The maximum number of technical points obtainable is detailed in Table 2.1: Parts of the technical proposal evaluation. To be technically compliant, applicants must obtain a minimum threshold of 56 points (70%) of the total obtainable points. | • Proposal<br>• Copy of audited financial statements<br>• Certification of incorporation of the applicant with Ministry of Economy in Afghanistan |

**Table 2.1 Parts of the technical proposal evaluation**

| Part | Obtainable points |
|---|---|
| 1. Applicant's capacity and expertise | 33 |
| 2. Proposed methodology, approach and implementation plan | 29 |
| 3. Key personnel proposed | 18 |
| **Total technical proposal points** | **80** |

**Table 2.1.1 Part 1: Applicant's capacity and expertise**

| No. | Criteria to be evaluated | Documents to establish compliance with the criteria (not exhaustive) | Obtainable points |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1.1** | The applicant has the general organizational capability to support effective implementation: management structure; financial stability and project financing capacity; management controls; and the extent to which any work would be sub-granted/ contracted. | • Copy of audited financial statements for the last 3 years<br>• Proposal | 5 |
| **1.2** | The applicant has relevant specialized knowledge and expertise in similar activities involving agricultural value chains (apple, grape, pomegranate, and saffron). This is inclusive of expertise | • Proposal | 4 |

**Table 2.1.1 Part 1: Applicant's capacity and expertise**

| No. | Criteria to be evaluated | Documents to establish compliance with the criteria (not exhaustive) | Obtainable points |
|---|---|---|---|
| | relevant to value chain group strengthening, value chain development, formulation and implementation of communication strategies, value chain studies/analysis, etc. that the applicant brings to the proposed project. | | |
| **1.3** | The applicant has experience working in Afghanistan. | • Proposal | 2 |
| **1.4** | The applicant has experience working in Fragile Conflict and Violent (FCV) countries. | • Proposal | 2 |
| **1.5** | The applicant has the capacity to undertake the current proposed activities in addition to its current workload. | • Proposal | 4 |
| **1.6** | The applicant's existing and past projects demonstrate relevant experience aligned with the proposed project activities in terms of similarity of approach and interventions implemented. | • Proposal | 5 |
| **1.7** | Lessons learned by the applicant from other projects are factored into the proposal for the implementation of the proposed project activities. | • Proposal | 3 |
| **1.8** | The applicant demonstrates experience in mobilizing local stakeholders, and communities, as well as engaging with relevant private sector actors, and other institutions necessary for successful implementation of the proposed activities in Afghanistan. | • Proposal | 3 |
| **1.9** | The applicant is a private sector entity, with a track record of completing international development projects in a timely manner. | • Proposal | 3 |

**Table 2.1.1 Part 1: Applicant's capacity and expertise**

| No. | Criteria to be evaluated | Documents to establish compliance with the criteria (not exhaustive) | Obtainable points |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1.10** | The applicant demonstrates an understanding of E&S risk management requirements. | • Proposal | 2 |
| **Total points for Part 1** | | | **33** |

**Table 2.1.2 Part 2: Proposed methodology, approach and implementation plan**

| No. | Criteria to be evaluated | Documents to establish compliance with the criteria (not exhaustive) | Obtainable points |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2.1** | The proposal is substantially compliant and does not contain any material deviation(s) from the minimum requirements as stipulated in this CFP document, which indicates the applicant's understanding of these requirements. | • Proposal | 2 |
| **2.2** | The applicant's proposed approach and methodology are consistent with the objectives and targeted outcomes of the grant/funding and the objectives of the UNOPS project activities under which this grant/funding opportunity is available. | • Proposal, Section 3 | 3 |
| **2.3** | The proposed approach is considered to be technically sound to deliver the activities and achieve the proposed outputs in the targeted agricultural value chains. | • Proposal, Section 3 | 4 |
| **2.4** | The approach is feasible and appropriate given the operating environment, including access, security, climatic conditions, etc., of Afghanistan. | • Proposal, Section 3 | 3 |
| **2.5** | The activities proposed under the Implementation Plan demonstrate the applicant's capacity to plan and | • Proposal, Sections 3 and 4 | 3 |

**Table 2.1.2 Part 2: Proposed methodology, approach and implementation plan**

| No. | Criteria to be evaluated | Documents to establish compliance with the criteria (not exhaustive) | Obtainable points |
|---|---|---|---|
| | implement the project activities within the identified timelines. | | |
| **2.6** | The proposal satisfactorily demonstrates that the Environmental and Social requirements in relation to the project activities will be met, based on the relevant Project E&S instruments. | • Proposal | 2 |
| **2.7** | The proposal satisfactorily demonstrates that the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) requirements in relation to the project activities will be met. | • Proposal | 2 |
| **2.8** | The applicant's proposed sub-grantees, if identified, will undertake appropriate quantities of project activities, have demonstrated the capacity to undertake the work and are appropriately located to undertake these activities.<br><br>**If no sub-grantees are proposed, this criterion will be scored 2 points.** | • Proposal, Section 11 | 2 |
| **2.9** | The Results Framework of the proposal describes a sound approach on how the selected indicators will be monitored and measured (suggested means of verification, frequency, and data collection methodology). | • Annex 4: Results Framework | 2 |
| | The proposed targets for Tier 2 and, if selected, Tier 3 indicators are based on realistic, explicitly explained assumptions and demonstrate ambitious targets. | • Annex 4: Results Framework | 2 |
| **2.11** | The proposal demonstrates a credible approach for sustaining the benefits/capacities/systems/ partnerships, generated through the project activities, beyond the period of project funding. | • Proposal | 2 |

**Table 2.1.2 Part 2: Proposed methodology, approach and implementation plan**

| No. | Criteria to be evaluated | Documents to establish compliance with the criteria (not exhaustive) | Obtainable points |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2.12** | The proposal demonstrates appropriate and practical measures to promote the meaningful participation and inclusion of women, youth, and returnees, by effectively addressing barriers that may limit their participation from project-supported opportunities. | • Proposal | 2 |
| **Total points for Part 2** | | | **29** |

**Table 2.1.3 Part 3: Key personnel proposed**

| No. | Criteria to be evaluated | Documents to establish compliance with the criteria (not exhaustive) | Obtainable points |
|---|---|---|---|
| **3.1** | The composition and structure of the applicant's proposed team are appropriate, and the proposed management roles and other key personnel roles are suitable for implementing grant support project activities. | • Proposal, Section 6 | 6 |
| **3.2** | The applicant describes and justifies its plan for the size and composition of its team. | • Proposal, Section 6 | 4 |
| **3.3** | The qualifications and experience of the proposed key personnel meet the established requirements.<br>• Project Manager/Team Leader<br>• Horticulture Specialist (Agronomy)<br>• Marketing Specialist<br>• Value Chain Group Specialist | • Proposal, Sections 8 and 9 | 8 |
| **Total points for Part 3** | | | **18** |

## 3.3. Financial evaluation

**Table 3 Financial criteria**

| Criteria evaluated based on scoring during the financial evaluation | Documents to establish compliance with the criteria |
|---|---|
| The maximum number of financial points obtainable is detailed in Table 3.1: Parts of the financial proposal evaluation.<br>To be technically compliant, applicants must obtain a minimum threshold of 70% of the total obtainable points. | • Online Financial proposal |

**Table 3.1 Parts of the financial proposal evaluation**

| Part | Obtainable points |
|---|---|
| 1. Financial evaluation | 15 |
| 2. Lowest budget criteria | 5 |
| **Total financial proposal points** | **20** |

**Table 3.1.1 Part 1: Financial evaluation**

| No. | Criteria evaluated based on a cumulative analysis methodology during the financial evaluation | Documents to establish compliance with the criteria | Obtainable points |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1.1** | Applicant organizations comply with the maximum budgets stipulated in the Budget requirements. | • Annex 3: Financial proposal | 2 |
| **1.2** | The applicant has provided sufficient justification of budget lines and lump sums. | • Annex 3: Financial proposal | 5 |
| **1.3** | The allocation of budget among different categories is appropriate, particularly the allocation between activities and the operational budget. | • Annex 3: Financial proposal | 5 |

**Table 3.1.1 Part 1: Financial evaluation**

| No. | Criteria evaluated based on a cumulative analysis methodology during the financial evaluation | Documents to establish compliance with the criteria | Obtainable points |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1.4** | The applicant's cost estimates and the assumptions made for such estimates are reasonable. | • Annex 3: Financial proposal | 3 |
| | **Total points for Part 1** | | **15** |

**Table 3.1.2 Part 2: Lowest Budget criteria**

| No. | Criteria | Documents to establish compliance with the criteria | Obtainable points |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2.1** | Total Budget: A maximum of 5 points will be allocated to the lowest total budget. Total budgets of other substantially compliant applicants will be scored according to the following formula:<br>Points for budget amount = [lowest total budget amount] x [maximum points allocated for the total budget amount] / [Total budget amount of proposal under evaluation] | • Annex 3: Financial proposal | 5 |
| **Total points for Part 2** | | | **5** |