

Statement of Work: Rwanda venture building consultant

23 September 2021

Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute

Context and Purpose

One Acre Fund's mission is to make smallholder farmers more productive. One Acre Fund delivers a core bundle of goods and services on credit – primarily fertilizer, seed, and training – augmented by sector- and value chain-specific partnerships to help smallholders make higher-value use of their land. One Acre Fund also seeks alternative business models to the core bundle, working toward a strategy that can serve the entire market in any given country.

The Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute's (DWFI) smallholder entrepreneurship program does research on entrepreneurial communities, evaluates existing and potential business models, provides analysis to investors, mentors startups, and develops its own staff and students into entrepreneurial and leadership roles.

Smallholder farmers would benefit from an increased number and diversity of implemented business models to support their economic growth. However, challenges are: (i) a more robust private sector environment than currently exists is required in many markets; and (ii) current One Acre Fund/DWFI operations do not intentionally create and scale networks of local entrepreneurs that will provide farmer networks with new services and technologies.

DWFI and One Acre Fund seek to catalyze new ventures in Rwanda that will meet this need, and want to explore the best path forward for doing so; including charting ways to collaboratively provide resources to guide and support start-ups in solving real problems for smallholder farmers at scale. Our collective goal is for these entrepreneurs to focus on areas that increase farmer resilience (e.g., new crops) and access to markets (e.g., commercial crops). In the long-term, successful ventures could ideally be integrated into One Acre Fund's product/service pipeline or work as independent businesses with investment and external funders.

As an initial step, One Acre Fund and DWFI are recruiting a consultant to develop a joint understanding of potential opportunities and barriers for venture building that benefit One Acre Fund's farmer network in Rwanda.

Scope of work

The consultant will undertake research on One Acre Fund's stakeholders, entrepreneurial ecosystem, and how One Acre Fund's existing infrastructure and logistics network can facilitate entrepreneurial activities that support smallholder farmers. Methods to be used include lean startup methods (customer discovery interviews, definition of business models and Minimum Viable Products), qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze gaps in potentially profitable segments of the smallholder-facing ecosystem (e.g., market access, irrigation, soil health/pesticides, livestock etc.), and stakeholder mapping and visualization.

Qualifications

We are looking for a consultant with experience of lean startup methods and of business incubation. The consultant should be highly organized, able to operate independently, and comfortable with adapting and pivoting work based on the analysis of new data and insights. Ideally, the consultant would also have some experience of smallholder agriculture and international development. Preference will be given to candidates with pre-established relationships in smallholder agriculture in Rwanda.

A bachelor's degree is required, together with at least 5 years of relevant experience, including some management experience.

The consultant should have effective and cross-cultural communication abilities, with experience creating content for broad audiences. Preference will be given to candidates who can speak Kinyarwanda and/or French.

This will be a fixed-term contract with a salary commensurate with experience.

Location of work

The consultant will be based in Kigali, Rwanda, and will be embedded with One Acre Fund's team, working in their office if it is open. The consultant will coordinate closely with One Acre Fund and DWFII staff in Rwanda and report to the DWFII Director of Policy in the United States. Assuming that travel outside of Kigali is possible, the consultant will travel to locations around Rwanda. These include visits to One Acre Fund's customers, key points in the distribution network, and agrodealer network. Travel expenses will be provided.

Period of performance

We anticipate a 3-6-month initial research period, depending on the speed of initial interviews and synthesis, starting as soon as possible. This assumes that travel within Rwanda is possible.

Deliverables schedule

- Draft entrepreneurial ecosystem map (the consultant will work with contracted graphic designers and the DWFII/One Acre Fund team to finalize in subsequent months). [Month 1]
- Initial customer discovery interviews (individual reports and written synthesis; 30-50 interviews anticipated depending on travel restrictions in place), including agrodealers, distributors, One Acre Fund Rwanda leadership, and One Acre Fund farmers. [Months 1-3]
- Draft business model canvases for potential venture building ideas, including value proposition (to both the entrepreneurs and smallholder farmers), revenue model, and testable hypotheses. [Months 3-6]
- Summary report of key barriers to implementation of venture building, evaluation of key needs to move forward, and potential collaborators within and outside of One Acre Fund. [Months 3-6]
- Summary brief analyzing successes, pivots, failures, and lessons learned in the agricultural entrepreneurial landscape in Rwanda. [Months 5-6]

Application instructions

To apply, please email a resume/CV and cover letter to Ms. Lacey Bodnar, Research Project Manager at the Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute, lbodnar@nebraska.edu.

Review begins: October 18, 2021

Deadline: Open until filled