



**INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR BIOSALINE AGRICULTURE**

**CONSULTING SERVICES FOR INTERNATIONAL INNOVATION  
CENTER FOR ARAL SEA BASIN – PREPARATION OF AN  
INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDY**

**Request for Proposals**

Procurement Section  
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The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) is a unique, not-for-profit applied agricultural research center in the world with a focus on marginal areas where an estimated 1.7 billion people live. It identifies, tests and introduces resource-efficient, climate-smart crops and technologies that are best suited to different regions affected by salinity, water scarcity and drought. Through its work, ICBA helps to improve food security and livelihoods for some of the poorest rural communities around the world.

## I. GENERAL INFORMATION

### 1.1 Background and purpose

On 16 October 2018 H.E. President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev issued Decree Number 3975 on the establishment of the International Innovation Center for the Aral Sea Basin (IICAS) in Nukus, Uzbekistan.

The purpose of the IICAS is to improve the livelihoods of communities living in the Aral Sea Basin and beyond by focusing on a few key areas such as:

1. Identification and promotion of innovative technologies and approaches (e.g. agroforestry/afforestation; aquaculture; bioenergy; crop diversification; integrated crop/livestock; pasture improvement; drought management and climate change mitigation and adaptation);
2. Promotion and facilitation of the transfer of technologies;
3. Education and capacity development;
4. Facilitation of public-private partnerships.

The vision and mission of the IICAS are:

**Vision:** Sustainable livelihoods and ecosystems in saline environments of the Aral Sea Basin

**Mission:** To be a center of excellence for innovation in research, technology transfer and education in saline environments

In addition to the Government of Uzbekistan, represented by the Ministry of Innovative Development, the main parties to the establishment of the IICAS are the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA).

IsDB is a multilateral development financing institution located in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. It works to improve the lives by promoting social and economic development in Muslim countries and communities worldwide, delivering impact of scale. It was founded in 1973 by the Finance Ministers at the first Organisation of the Islamic Conference with the support of the King of Saudi Arabia at the time and began its activities on 20 October 1975. IsDB has 57 shareholding member states.

ICBA is an international, not-for-profit agricultural research-for-development center formed in 1999 through the visionary leadership of the Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the IsDB and support of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD).

Originally focused on the problems of salinity and using saline water for irrigated agriculture, ICBA has evolved over the years into a world-class research facility with a team of international scientists conducting applied research and development to improve agricultural productivity and sustainability in marginal environments.

IsDB and ICBA will support the Government of Uzbekistan in establishing and operationalizing the IICAS.

### 1.2 Deadlines

Deliverable	Deadline
Closing date for clarifications/meetings/visits	<b>20 July 2019</b>
Closing date for submission of proposals	<b>30 July 2019</b>

### 1.3 Submission of proposals

Submissions should be handed over in a plain sealed envelope marked "RFP" to ICBA's head office reception or shared through the ICBA Procurement Portal: <https://procurement.biosaline.org>.

#### **1.4 Proposal contents**

Proposals should include the following:

- a. Documentation of a bidder's status as a legal business entity;
- b. A technical proposal;
- c. A financial proposal;
- d. A portfolio of similar assignments;
- e. A bidder's audited financial statements for the previous three years;
- f. The detailed CVs of all staff and consultants a bidder will engage to carry out the assignment;
- g. If other/additional services are proposed, they should be identified separately.

#### **1.5 Validity of proposals**

Proposals must remain valid and open for the acceptance of ICBA for 90 days from the RFP closing date. Proposals specifying a shorter acceptance period will be considered as non-responsive proposals.

#### **1.6 Incomplete and late proposals**

Incomplete and late proposals will not be accepted. It is the bidder's responsibility to ensure that the proposal is submitted complete, on time and in accordance with the RFP terms and conditions.

#### **1.7 Inquiries**

Bidders may submit questions in writing through email to the following address and before the deadline stated above:

Contact name: Ms. Imane Boujidane  
Head of People Resources and Procurement  
and Tel.: 00971 4 336 11 00 - Ext. 201  
Email: [Procurement@biosaline.org.ae](mailto:Procurement@biosaline.org.ae)

Any prospective bidders seeking to arrange individual meetings with ICBA or any of its employees concerning this RFP during the bidding period may be excluded from the bidding process.

#### **1.8 Alteration of proposals**

Bidders may alter their proposals by written notification prior to the deadline for the submission of proposals stated in this RFP. No proposals may be altered after this deadline.

#### **1.9 Eligible bidder**

Bidders considered eligible to submit proposals are defined as follows:

- An entity that is registered as a legal business entity either in Uzbekistan or any other country of its origin and operation and can supply documentation to substantiate its status;
- Bidders must have the technical and financial capacity to perform this assignment successfully.

#### **1.10 Costs for preparing proposals**

Under no circumstances ICBA will be liable for any costs incurred in connection with the preparation and submission of proposals even if ICBA decides to reject all the proposals or cancel the bid.

#### **1.11 Clarification**

During the evaluation process, ICBA may request additional information and samples from bidders if it is necessary for further clarifications with regard to the submitted proposal.

### 1.12 Evaluation of proposals

The evaluation of bids will be based on the key criteria below:

Criteria	Weighting	Means of verification/proof
Proven experience of a bidder in similar assignments.	40%	Official/approved documents to prove relevant experience and expertise
Cost and quality of the proposed services. This does not mean the cheapest bid will be selected if that might compromise on the quality of the proposed services. ICBA will assess the overall proposal.	40%	A comprehensive economic/financial appraisal of the proposed interventions/services
Interactions during the bidding process and quality of proposals. Note that ICBA will not be placing a strong emphasis on how a proposal document looks, but will focus on its contents and how it meets the specified requirements, as well as the personal interaction of the bidder with the ICBA panel.	20%	Overall quality of the proposal based on: 1) Quality of proposed services; 2) Economic viability (VfM); 3) Well identified targets and timelines.

### 1.13 Amendments

During the proposal submission period, if ICBA decides to modify/change any requirement/s of the RFP, the modification/s shall be released through the issuance of an amendment to the RFP. Any amendment will be issued in writing and will be sent to all bidders.

### 1.14 Confidentiality

The entire evaluation procedure is confidential, and all proposals are for official use only and may not be communicated either to the bidders or to any party other than ICBA.

### 1.15 Bid cancellation

ICBA has the right at any stage of the bidding process to cancel the whole bid without the need to give a justified reason to any of the bidders. Bidders will be notified in writing of the cancellation.

### 1.16 Discussion and negotiation

ICBA may initiate discussions should clarification or negotiation be necessary. Bidders should be prepared to provide qualified personnel to discuss technical and contractual aspects of the proposal.

### 1.17 Award letter and contract

ICBA reserves the option of contracting out only a portion of the specified assignment scope or of not awarding a contract to any bidder. Final approval to enter into a contract, the contract form and the scope of services to be provided pursuant to the contract rests with ICBA. A contract may be awarded to more than one bidder based on the quality of the proposals and ICBA's needs. Please note that an award letter is not a contract and can be withdrawn at ICBA's sole discretion. The bidder's failure to accept the award at the time of receiving notification will give ICBA the right to award the tender to the next bidder.

### 1.18 Bidder responsibility

It is the responsibility of each bidder before submitting a proposal:

- To examine thoroughly the proposal documents;
- To consider federal and local laws and regulations that may affect costs, progress, performance or provision of the services;
- To promptly notify the Procurement Section of all conflicts, errors, ambiguities, or discrepancies in or between the proposal documents and any other related documents.

#### **1.19 Governing law and language**

This tender is subject to and shall be construed according to the applicable laws and regulations of the United Arab Emirates. The proposals and related documents and all notices pursuant to the provisions thereof shall be in English and Russian.

## **II. SCOPE OF WORK**

ICBA would like to engage the services of a consulting firm with a thorough knowledge of institutional analysis, development processes and governance. The firm should have at least 10 years of relevant experience with international development organizations with a focus on strategic planning, fundraising and extensive knowledge of institutional monitoring and evaluation and have successfully executed at least three similar consulting assignments of a combined value of no less than USD 600,000. Below is the scope of work and the preferred composition and profiles of experts required:

### **2.1 Scope of work**

#### **2.1.1 Activity:**

- Review organizational documents, including the presidential decree, the statute, the memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Innovative Development and ICBA and other related documents for the IICAS, as well as the founding documents of ICBA and other similar organizations such as the CGIAR centers engaged in agricultural research and development;
- Conduct consultations with the relevant staff of the Ministry of Innovative Development (the line ministry under whose umbrella the IICAS will function), IICAS, ICBA, IsDB, any other international organizations and ministries/departments of Uzbekistan as deemed necessary to identify current and future priorities and challenges, including funding and seek individual recommendations to overcome the challenges;
- Conduct an inception workshop with all relevant stakeholders;
- Prepare an inception report in English and Russian which will include, among other things, a clear work plan and methodology, and will provide technical and analytical sections based on the information collected.

**2.1.1 Deliverable:** An inception report in English and Russian will be produced after 1.5 months from commencement of the assignment.

#### **2.1.2 Activity:**

- Conduct a thorough assessment and analysis of the needs of all key stakeholders, including communities in the Aral Sea region;
- Conduct a thorough assessment and analysis of best practices/experiences in management, research and other activities, fundraising and sustainability at research institutions in other countries with the mandates and goals similar to the IICAS's;
- Carry out an evaluation of the capacity of IICAS staff, identify gaps in knowledge and expertise, develop a proposal for immediate and long-term capacity development, and conduct thematic training for IICAS staff;
- Develop a draft five-year strategic plan, including a fundraising strategy and a one-year business plan; a detailed institutional framework, financial and HR policies and procedures, including talent acquisition and retention, staff training and development, accounting and financial reporting, and other organizational policies and procedures that comply with accepted international standards;

- Conduct an in-depth analysis and evaluation of how the IICAS can best address the challenges and problems facing the communities in the Aral Sea region; address other problems in line with its international status and meet its strategic objectives.

**2.1.2 Deliverable:** An interim report in English and Russian including the findings and results of the activities above. The interim report may also include recommendations, if any, on improvements and changes to the IICAS's areas of focus and work.

**2.1.3 Activity:**

- Prepare a draft final report in English and Russian based on the previous analyses, assessments, findings, discussions and feedback;
- Conduct a consultation workshop to solicit feedback on the draft final report from all main stakeholders and incorporate all relevant feedback.

**2.1.3 Deliverable:** A draft final report in English and Russian including but not limited to all previous analyses, assessments and findings, a detailed institutional framework for the IICAS, including an ideal organizational structure (an organigram, functions and their descriptions, staffing options etc.), a strategic management action plan for immediate and long-term operation and sustainability, a fundraising strategy, and a preliminary conceptual design of the IICAS facilities.

**2.1.4 Activity:**

- Incorporate all comments and feedback collected from different stakeholders into a final report;
- Present the final report to the main stakeholders at a final review workshop.

**2.1.4 Deliverable:** A final report in English and Russian incorporating all comments of different stakeholders and the feedback from the consultation workshop. The final report will include, among other things, a five-year strategic plan, including a fundraising strategy and a one-year business plan; a detailed institutional framework for the IICAS, including financial and HR policies (including criteria for pay etc.) and procedures, including talent acquisition and retention, staff training and development, accounting and financial reporting, and other organizational policies and procedures that comply with accepted international standards.

## **2.2 Knowledge transfer**

During and after the implementation, the vendor shall provide to ICBA all materials produced as part of the assignment in English and Russian.

## **2.3 Bidder - minimum requirements**

The bidder should describe their experience, including the names, addresses, contact persons, and telephone numbers of at least three clients, preferably including clients similar to ICBA. Experience should include the following categories:

- Institutional analysis, development processes and governance;
- At least 10 years of relevant experience with international development organizations with a focus on strategic planning, fundraising and extensive knowledge of institutional monitoring and evaluation;
- At least three similar consulting assignments of a combined value of no less than 600,000 USD.

Below is the preferred composition and profiles of the experts required:

### **1. Institutional Specialist/Legal Expert (Team Leader):**

- A master's degree in Business Administration, Organizational Development or a related field;
- Good understanding of the international research and development sector and the global Sustainable Development Agenda;
- Solid knowledge of institutional building, M&E and experience in business administration and institutional capacity development;
- At least 15 years of relevant experience.

## **2. Agricultural and Food Security Expert:**

- A master's degree in a field related to agriculture, natural resources management, rural development, agricultural economics or international development;
- Solid experience in the agricultural sector or a related field;
- Good understanding of agricultural and food security challenges in salt-affected regions;
- At least five years of relevant experience.

## **3. Environmental Expert:**

- A master's degree in Environmental Sciences, Engineering or a related field;
- Good understanding of environmental issues in salt-affected regions, particularly the Aral Sea Region;
- Solid knowledge of environmental sustainability issues and experience in developing environmental sustainability strategies;
- At least five years of relevant experience.

## **4. Human Resources Expert:**

- A master's degree in Human Resources Management or a related field;
- Solid experience in human resources management and development of human resources policies and procedures;
- At least ten years of relevant experience.

## **5. Financial Expert:**

- A master's degree in Finance or a related field;
- Solid experience in financial management policies and procedures of international research institutions (e.g. CGIAR centers) and development agencies;
- At least ten years of relevant experience.

## **6. Fundraising Expert:**

- A master's degree in Finance, Business Administration or a related field;
- Good understanding of fundraising for research and development organizations;
- Solid experience in development of fundraising strategies;
- At least ten years of relevant experience.

The experts listed above should form the core team who will conduct this assignment. However, the vendor can propose and hire additional staff as they deem necessary for the purposes of the assignment. The CVs and any other relevant documents of the experts to be engaged in the assignment must be included in the proposals.

### **2.4 Contractor performance**

The vendor must meet the highest standards in the services provided to ICBA.

### **2.5 Pricing**

The financial proposal should be in USD. Any other/additional services beyond the scope of the assignment should be priced separately.