

International Cocoa Verification Board

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Agency: International Cocoa Verification Board (ICVB)

Funding Opportunity Title: Verification of Certification Activities in West African Cocoa Sector

Geographic Target Countries: Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana

Announcement Type: Cost-Reimbursement Contract

Funding Opportunity Number: 2008-001

Date of Announcement: February 18, 2008

Deadline for Applications: March 17, 2008, 11:59pm Eastern Time/USA

Point of Contact: Miriam Swaffer, International Cocoa Verification Board Secretariat, MSwaffer@verite.org, 001-413-253-9227 Tel, 001-413-256-8960 fax.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The International Cocoa Verification Board (ICVB) is responsible to affirm through an independent “third party” verification process: 1) the credibility of the studies and findings reported by the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana on the worst forms of child labor (WFCL), including trafficking, and adult labor practices (ALP) in the cocoa sector; and 2) remediation activities undertaken by governments and their partners to address the elimination of the WFCL and adult forced labor from the cocoa sector. The ICVB will award one or more Cost-Reimbursement Contract Agreements to an organization or organizations to verify the credibility of the studies and findings reported by the government of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana on WFCL, including trafficking, and ALP. Applications must respond to all sections as outlined within this solicitation.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Address questions relating to this RFP to: Miriam Swaffer, International Cocoa Verification Board Secretariat, MSwaffer@verite.org email; 001-413-256-8960 fax. All inquires should be placed in writing. Please ensure that the name of the agency/company, a point of contact, viable e-mail address, and telephone number are clearly indicated on your submission. Responses to questions will be posted to the following website: www.cocoaverification.net.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary1

I. Background.....3

II. Award Information.....6

III. Eligibility Requirements7

IV. Application and Submission Information.....8

V. Award Selection Criteria.....15

VI. Award Administration16

VII. Disclaimer17

I. BACKGROUND

The first media and other reports of children being trafficked and forcibly used to work under exploitive conditions in West African cocoa farms began to emerge in 2000. While there were mixed views on the level and scope of the problem, in 2001, multiple stakeholders, including Members of Congress, the cocoa industry, affected African governments, non-governmental organizations, consumer groups, U.S. government agencies, and the International Labour Organization (ILO), negotiated an all-inclusive, six-point problem-solving protocol aimed at ending the use of abusive child labor in cocoa growing by July 1, 2005. The protocol, entitled *Protocol for the Growing and Processing of Cocoa Beans and their Derivative Products in a Manner that Complies with ILO Convention 182 Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst forms of Child Labor*, is more commonly referred to as the Harkin-Engel Protocol after U.S. Senator Tom Harkin and U.S. Representative Eliot Engel. Signatories to the protocol committed to the development of a certification process that would ensure that no abusive child labor would be used in cocoa production. By the July 1, 2005 deadline, the first five steps of the protocol had been completed. The sixth point, related to the certification process, was still in a pilot phase.

On July 1, 2005, an extension of the Protocol was agreed to and a joint statement released by Senator Harkin, Representative Engel, and the cocoa industry, committed to expanding the pilot certification system to cover 50 percent of the cocoa growing areas of Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana by July 1, 2008. There are several documents that serve to clarify the scope of the certification effort now requiring verification. In the 2005 *Joint Statement from U.S. Senator Tom Harkin, Representative Eliot Engel, and the Chocolate/Cocoa Industry on Efforts to Address the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Cocoa Growing*, Senator Harkin and Representative Engel acknowledge that the, "Protocol stands as a framework for progress" (pg. 1), and that specific actions on the part of industry will include:

- "Rollout of the certification system -- including monitoring, data analysis, reporting, and activities to address the worst forms of child labor -- as aggressively as possible in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, with a goal of covering 50 percent of the two countries' cocoa-producing areas by July 2008." (pg. 2)

(The verification effort, for which we are seeking proposals, is central to achieving this goal).

- "Support for programs to improve conditions in West African cocoa farming communities, and to address the worst forms of child labor and forced labor at the community level." (pg. 2)

(This parallel goal is being achieved through other industry efforts, such as the International Cocoa Initiative, the World Cocoa Foundation, and multiple company-specific remediation projects; is not initially part of the verification effort at this time; and should not be considered or addressed as part of requested verification activities in this solicitation.)

The creation of the multi-stakeholder International Cocoa Verification Board (ICVB), and the verifier consultant(s) that it selects, are central to achieving these goals by the July 2008 deadline. However, it should be noted that the “certification system” to be established will consist of the activities outlined in the Joint Statement, namely the “monitoring, data analysis, reporting, and activities to address the worst forms of child labor,” and is not a certification label attesting to specific product attributes.

Since the Protocol signing in 2001 and the Joint Statement in July 2005, there have been numerous meetings and conferences in which progress towards the protocol objectives has been discussed. Potential verifiers are not required to have familiarity with, or direct knowledge of, these activities in order to successfully verify the robustness of the certification effort. We recommend that all interested parties refer to the core documents (see www.cocoaverification.net, which includes the original 2001 Harkin – Engel Protocol and the 2005 extension) for guidance as they provide the architecture for the entire certification effort.

The cornerstone of successful Protocol implementation, and future improvements in conditions in West Africa, is the rigor and transparency of the verification process and the credibility and quality of those selected to do the verification. While this is true for any process, it is especially true in this instance because of the unusual arrangement that conferred the task of surveying farms to the governments themselves. While government involvement may be unusual when compared with other survey efforts, there is no better partner for ensuring sustainable improvements on such a broad scale in the lives of cocoa farmers and their children in their respective home countries.

As the Protocol itself acknowledges when it quotes the International Labor Organization’s Convention 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor, “child labor is to a great extent caused by poverty and that the long term solution lies in sustained economic growth leading to social progress, in particular poverty alleviation and universal education.” The sector-wide Government-backed Surveys are an integral part of finding national solutions to these twin drivers of the WFCL: poverty and lack of education.

About the International Cocoa Verification Board (ICVB)

The International Cocoa Verification Board was formed as an unincorporated organization by Verité in December 2007.¹ This multi-stakeholder body includes nine representatives from NGOs, academia, trade unions, and industry. The nine Board Members include: Alice Koiho Kipre, Afrique Secours et Assistance (Cote d’Ivoire); Amouan Assouan Acquah, Special Counselor to the Prime Minister, Côte d’Ivoire; Andrews Addoquaye Tagoe, General Agricultural Workers’ Union (Ghana); Anthony Fofie, Ghana Cocoa Board; Diane Mull, International Initiative on Exploitive Child Labor/Child Labor Coalition; Isabelle Adam, European Cocoa Association; Jeff Morgan, Mars, Inc.; John Trew, CARE International; and Stephen Ayidiya, University of Ghana – Legon.

The mission of the ICVB is to affirm through an independent “third party” verification process:

¹ Plans are pending to formalize the ICVB’s legal status as an organization separate from Verité.

- The credibility of the studies and findings reported by the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana on the worst forms of child labor, including trafficking, and adult labor practices in the cocoa sector; and
- Remediation activities undertaken by governments and their partners to address the elimination of the WFCL and adult forced labor from the cocoa sector.

About ICVB Secretariat Verité

At the first ICVB board meeting, held in January 2008, the ICVB agreed to have Verité serve as the Secretariat for the ICVB. The Secretariat does not sit on the ICVB and does not possess decision-making authority, but serves to carry out the administrative and management functions for the board and provides technical support where appropriate.

Verité is a US-based nonprofit and award-winning pioneer in social auditing, training, and research. The organization has over a decade of experience working with governments, Fortune 500 corporations (and their local suppliers) through its global network of NGO partners. Verité works in over 60 countries to empower companies, factories, NGOs, governments, and workers to create sustainable workplace practices in factories and on farms. For more information on Verité, go to <http://www.verite.org>.

Objectives

As part of its functions, the International Cocoa Verification Board (ICVB) is to recruit consultative third party organization(s) to carry out the verification exercise in the two countries and to report their findings. The work of the ICVB and the results of the work contracted under this RFP are specifically targeted to implementing a process that will certify that, within a country's cocoa sector, efforts are in place to:

1. measure and report on the worst forms of child labor and adult forced labor practices; and
2. help those who may be in a child labor or forced labor situation.

Priorities

The ICVB seeks to establish a quality, evidence-based verification process, including a timeline of activities, which is of the highest ethical standards in the field of social research. The findings from the verification process will be used to strengthen certification efforts and, in the future, will be used to strengthen remediation activities. The ICVB expects the verification of findings to be conducted in a manner that is transparent and sustainable. Additionally, the ICVB respects the willingness of the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana to actively participate and work with the ICVB throughout the verification process. The ICVB expects that throughout this process, the governments will be afforded the utmost respect and activities will be conducted in such a manner that is constructive and works toward building capacity while serving the best interest of children and laborers in the cocoa sector. Governments, in turn, will provide verifiers with ready access to the survey results, data, questionnaires, and the like, that they need in order

to conduct the verification. Priority will be given to those applicants who most effectively demonstrate their capability to meet these priorities.

Additional background information on the ICVB, Harkin-Engel Protocol, Joint Statement, and copies of the Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana studies are provided for your review and can soon be found via the ICVB website at www.cocoaverification.net. (This site is still under construction and potential applicants are encouraged to write to Alexa Roscoe at ARoscoe@verite.org requesting additional information or reference documents in the interim.)

II. AWARD INFORMATION

Type of Award Instrument: Cost-reimbursement contract

Initial Award Period: The ICVB anticipates the initial period of performance to consist of a base period (not to exceed six months) from April to September 2008. The start date of activities will be negotiated upon awarding of the Contract Agreement.

Award Amount: No specified contract award amount has been set. The budget will be evaluated on the basis of its reasonableness with respect to activities proposed during the initial award period and in comparison with costs for conducting similar activities in the targeted geographic areas. Pre-award costs are not reimbursable.

Optional Award Periods: At the discretion of the ICVB and based on the quality of the performance of the contractor during the initial award period, the contractor may be eligible for up to two additional verification assignments without competition. Subsequent assignments under the contract may extend beyond a six-month period.

Release and Waiver of Liability: In consideration for the administrative and operational fees paid to any contractor, the contractor must agree to assume all risks and to release in advance and hold harmless and discharge the International Cocoa Verification Board, its members, and representative groups, as well as the Secretariat (Verité) from any liability and to waive all rights with respect to any and all claims for damages for death, personal injury, or property damage, including but not limited to medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, attorney fees, and court costs, which the contractor(s) may have, or which may accrue to any person involved in the administrative or operational aspects of the contractor(s) as a result of their performance of their services pursuant to the applicable Contract Agreement, even though this liability may arise through no fault of the verifiers or the person in question, or from the negligence or carelessness on the part of the person or entities being released.

Note to Applicants: Selection of an organization as a potential Contract Agreement recipient does not constitute approval of the Contract Agreement application as submitted. Before the actual Contract Agreement is awarded, the ICVB may enter into negotiations about such items as program components, implementation plans, funding level, and administrative systems in place to support the Contract Agreement implementation. If the negotiations do not result in an acceptable submission, the ICVB reserves the right to terminate the negotiations and decline to fund the application. In addition, the ICVB reserves the right to further negotiate program

components after award. Neither the ICVB nor Verité will have any responsibility to any submitting organization prior to the signing of a definitive Contract Agreement.

III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Applicants

Any international, educational, not-for-profit, or commercial organization(s); universities and/or other research institutions; private development and research agencies; or community-based or public international organization(s) capable of successfully developing and implementing verification activities as described herein in the respective countries of Côte d'Ivoire and/or Ghana is eligible to apply. Applications from government or quasi-government agencies will not be considered. An applicant must demonstrate a country presence, independently or through a relationship with another organization(s) with country presence.

No organization or individuals with previous involvement with the certification studies conducted by the respective governments is eligible to apply or work under this contract award. Any potential for conflict of interest must be presented and is subject to disqualification from the competitive process. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest that is later determined to exist will result in permanent exclusion from any future awards from the ICVB and possible termination of any then existing Contract Agreement.

If two or more applicants, who do not constitute a single legal entity (hereinafter referred to as "Associations"), join in applying for the award, each member of the Association (hereinafter referred to as an "Associate") must be individually eligible for award. All references to "the Applicant" refer to Associations, as well as individual applicants. All Associates must sign, and agree to be bound jointly and severally by, the awarded Contract Agreement, and all must designate one Associate as the "Lead." Any such Association must submit to the ICVB, as an attachment to the application, an Association agreement, reflecting an appropriate joint venture, partnership, or other contractual agreement and outlining the deliverables, activities, and corresponding timeline for which each Associate will be responsible. Copies of such agreements will not count toward the page limit.

If any entity identified in the application as an Associate does not sign the Contract Agreement, the Lead must provide, within 30 days of award, either a written subcontract agreement with such entity, acceptable to the ICVB in its sole discretion, or an explanation as to why that entity will not be participating in the Contract Agreement. The ICVB reserves the right to re-evaluate the award of the Contract Agreement in light of any such change in an entity's status, and may terminate the award if the ICVB deems appropriate.

For the purposes of this proposal and the Contract Agreement award, the Lead will be: 1) the primary point of contact with the ICVB and/or the ICVB Secretariat Verité to receive and respond to all inquiries, communications, and orders during the contracted activity period; 2) the only entity with authority to receive payment directly from the ICVB and/or the ICVB Secretariat Verité; 3) responsible for submitting to the ICVB all deliverables, including all technical and financial reports related to the award, regardless of which Associate performed the

work; 4) the sole entity to request or agree to a revision or amendment of the award or related documents; and 5) responsible for working with the ICVB and/or the ICVB Secretariat Verité to close out the award activity or its extension. Each Associate is ultimately responsible to the ICVB for overall performance under the applicable Contract Agreement, regardless of any assignment of specific tasks, but Associates may agree, among themselves only, to apportion the liability for such performance. Each Associate must comply with all applicable standards and regulations that govern their activities, and is individually subject to audit.

Cost Sharing or Matching Funds

Applicants are not required to share costs or provide matching funds. Applicants are restricted from using funding from other donors or private contributions to cost support this activity.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Application Content: Applicants must follow the solicitation instructions, fulfill the conditions and requirements contained herein, and supply all information requested. Making false statements within the application to the ICVB will disqualify the applicant from consideration. The application will meet the following requirements:

- Title page should include the following information:
 - Lead Organization Name
 - Name of Associates and/or Other Local Partners
 - Contact Information
 - Funds Requested
 - Proposed Period of Performance.
- Two-page abstract summarizing the applicant profile information, organizational capabilities, experience, proposed approach/methodology, deliverables, timeline, and funds requested;
- A table of contents listing the application sections and page numbers;
- A project narrative that includes:
 - Understanding of the Issues Surrounding This Verification Activity;
 - Project Implementation Plan, that includes:
 - A logical framework matrix
 - A work plan that is tied to the logical framework matrix, identifying major project activities, deadlines for completing the activities, and person(s) or institutions(s) responsible for completing activities;
 - Organizational Capability / Experience;
 - Staff Qualifications; and
 - Budget Narrative and Budget Forms.
- Proposals must be submitted in English in an MS Word document;
- Budget figures must be expressed in U.S. dollars;
- Project narratives may not exceed 50 single-sided (8.5" x 11"), double-spaced pages, using a 10-12 point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins;
- The appendix has a specific page limit that must be adhered to; and
- Each application must include the required sections listed below.

Title page, abstract, table of contents, logical framework matrix and work plan are not included in the project narrative 50-page and 1-inch margin limits.

Application Submission Dates, Times, and Email Address: Proposals must be submitted electronically and received by the ICVB Secretariat, Verité, on or before March 17, 2008, 11:59 p.m. eastern time/ USA. The ICVB will rely on the date and time stamp that is placed on incoming e-mails as registered via the Internet. Due to size of documents, applicants may want to consider placing all application-related documents into one or two zipped files before attaching and transmitting the e-mail to Verité. Please submit e-mail with attachments (i.e., application, appendices, and any other application-related documents), to: Miriam Swaffer, International Cocoa Verification Board Secretariat, MSwaffer@verite.org.

Section 1 - Required Standard Forms

For consistency among applicants, each application must include the forms provided for use with this RFP. The forms, and instructions for completion, can be found on-line at the ICVB website: www.cocoaverification.net or by writing and requesting forms from Alexa Roscoe at Verité at ARoscoe@verite.org.

Section 2 - Abstract:

The abstract is limited to two (2) pages. It should provide a summary of the applicant's capabilities, experience, approach to conducting verification activities, timeline of deliverables, and expected cost. No confidential information should be included.

Section 3 – Understanding of the Issues Surrounding Verification of Cocoa in Côte d'Ivoire and/or Ghana:

Applicants will be rated based on their recognition and understanding of issues and challenges related to achieving the verification objectives, devising a strategy that anticipates these, and proposing a sound plan. Some issues and/or challenges include, but are not limited to: (a) the target countries of Cote d'Ivoire and/or Ghana; (b) cocoa and the rural agricultural nature of the communities within which it is grown; (c) limited infrastructure and long distances between sites; (d) varying cultures and multiple languages spoken; (e) effectively interviewing children that may be currently engaged in a worst form of child labor and/or adults in forced labor situations in remote communities; (f) low literacy levels of respondents; and (g) political sensitivities related to working with sovereign foreign government entities. The applicant must demonstrate their recognition and understanding of these and other possible challenges that will be faced when conducting verification activities in the targeted country(ies).

Section 4 – Project Implementation Plan:

The applicant should specify the methodology and approach to be undertaken by the applicant and local partners to complete the verification activities as outlined below:

1. Document and examine the methodology used for the studies by the respective government agencies in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana and ascertain the validity and reliability of the findings reported in the studies. This review will include, but is not be limited to:
 - a. Determining if clearly defined research objectives and anticipated outcomes (focusing on the worst forms of child labor and adult labor practices) guided the research process, including the development of instruments for data collection.
 - b. Examining the appropriateness and effectiveness of the research technique used (face-to-face interviews, self-administered survey, focus group discussions, telephone interviews, child-centered interview methods, participatory interview methods, or a combination of one or more of these), and the basis for selection of the technique.
 - c. Assessing the validity and reliability of the instruments (questionnaires, interview guides, focus group discussion, and/or other group or individuals interview guides) used for the studies, with particular attention on the language of instruments, and on issues of translations of instruments into the languages of respondents.
 - d. Assessing the sensitivity of the data collection process with regard to targeted respondents (such as children, victims of trafficking, and children and adults in forced labor).
 - e. Assessing the techniques used for selecting the sample(s) for each country study [including controlling for sampling procedure (census, eligibility, etc.), identifying target respondents for the studies, sampling design and procedure, sample size, sample geographic areas, etc.].
 - f. Assessing the data collection procedures used (such as recruitment of fieldworkers, training of field staff, and trial field testing of instruments),
 - g. Assessing the fieldwork exercise, including duration, seasons data was collected, monitoring of data collection process, and establishing quality control mechanisms, including follow-up procedures, to ensure verifiable data results.
 - h. Assessing the quality of data handling, processing, and cleaning for accuracy.
 - i. Assessing the data analysis processes and determine if:
 - i. results, conclusions, and recommendations were in line with and/or address the objectives of the studies;
 - ii. appropriate statistical techniques were applied in analyzing the data and whether the results are accurately presented in a manner that provides the most useful information possible, i.e., testing alternative tabulations and factor/regression models; and
 - iii. the data management system design offers an evidence-based and user-friendly data management system where results can be presented and easily analyzed (i.e., using SPSS or similar program).

2. Conduct studies of the sub-sample respondent groups covered in the studies to verify whether the results and the conclusions in the study reports are in line with the objectives of the studies as set out by the two governments and their development partners.

3. Present the results of the verification exercise in a report for each country. Each report should include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Description of methodology for conducting verification activities.
 - b. Findings with respect to the issues outlined in # 1 above.

- c. Results of the sub-sample study conducted.
 - d. Summary of strengths found in the studies.
 - e. Summary of gaps, errors, omissions, inaccuracies and/or serious shortfalls, and suggestions for modifications, improvements, and/or technical assistance that can serve to strengthen future studies and the certification process.
 - f. Additional remarks and comments that are appropriate for advancing the verification process.
4. Make recommendations for acceptance or rejection of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study reports, with detailed explanation and documentation as follows:
- Accept: Without modification.
 - Conditional Acceptance: Acceptance conditional on modifications specified in the verification report.
 - Reject: Recommendation for improvements of the research process for future studies.
 - Conditional Rejection: Rejection of part or whole of the report, findings, conclusions, or recommendations, as may be required.

The report should include an executive summary of no more than 8-10 pages, table of contents, and appendices. The report is expected to be no more than 80-100 pages in length, and include a summary chart that summarizes key findings that led to the final recommendation of acceptance or rejection of the government studies. The report will be submitted both electronically and in a camera-ready format for printing. Printing of the report will be handled by the ICVB Secretariat.

The report will be made public and widely distributed. The report will serve to inform the international community on the progress of efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor and adult forced labor in the cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. The report for Côte d'Ivoire, once completed, will require formal translation into French.

5. Proposed strategy for future verification activities.

The ICVB seeks to establish a quality, evidence-based verification process, including a timeline of activities, which is of the highest ethical standards in the field of social research. The findings from the verification process will be used to strengthen certification efforts and, in the future, will be used to strengthen remediation activities. The ICVB expects the verification of findings to be conducted in a manner that is transparent and sustainable. The first round of verification activities will serve as a benchmark for future verification work to be performed. Following the completion of the first round of verification activities and based on the findings, the applicant will submit a proposed detailed strategy report to the ICVB for its consideration that describes how the verification efforts can be improved and how remediation activities can be brought into the verification process. This will require the applicant to incorporate this into its verification activities during the initial period of review. The applicant should provide a description of the methodology of how the strategy will be developed and what will be presented within the future verification strategy report.

The ICVB respects the willingness of the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana to actively participate and work with the ICVB throughout the verification process. The ICVB expects that throughout this process, the governments will be afforded the utmost respect and activities will be conducted in such a manner that is constructive and working toward building capacity while serving the best interest of children and laborers in the cocoa sector.

Finally, this section must include a time-task plan that clearly identifies the objectives, major activities to be performed and accomplished, deliverables, and staff assigned.

Section 5 - Organizational Capability:

Applications should include a clear description of the applicant, its Associates, and/or local partner's including an Organigram of the project structure. A detailed description of previous experience conducting research, data, and other program evaluation; social accountability auditing; verification assignments; or other projects requiring performance of similar verification activities that has been previously performed is required. This could be presented in the form of a chart providing information relevant to this solicitation, including:

1. The organization and/or donor for whom the work was performed;
2. A contact person in that organization with his/her current phone number;
3. The dollar value of the grant, contract, or Cooperative Agreement for the project;
4. A brief summary of work performed that is related to those required under this solicitation;
5. The time frame and professional effort involved in the project; and
6. A brief summary of accomplishments.

This information on previous grants, Cooperative Agreements, and contracts held by the applicant must be provided in the appendices and will not count toward the maximum page requirement. The ICVB reserves the right to contact the organizations listed and use the information provided in evaluating applications.

The narrative should include a description detailing the experience and background of the Lead organization in Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, and/or in the West Africa region. If the Lead organization does not have country presence and will be working with Associates and/or local partners, a clear description must be provided regarding the Associates and/or local partner's capacity and experience in the skills required to perform the tasks under this solicitation, language capabilities, and knowledge of cocoa and the geographic areas of study.

The technical skills and capabilities sought include but are not limited to:

1. Prior experience and knowledge of similar or related verification/certification processes and/or assignments.

2. Knowledge and experience in social research, specifically surrounding marginalized populations such as those at-risk or engaged in WFCL, adult forced labor, and/or victims of trafficking.
3. Capacity for working and conducting research in the local languages spoken in the cocoa growing areas in Côte d'Ivoire and/or Ghana.
4. Cultural sensitivity for working and conducting research in the rural, agricultural cocoa growing communities in Côte d'Ivoire and/or Ghana.
5. Familiarity with the cocoa sector or other similar agricultural sectors.
6. Prior experience working in the targeted geographic area/s in Côte d'Ivoire and/or Ghana.
7. Be of irreproachable ethical quality and independence.

Documentation of the applicant's (and partners) legal status should be included within the appendices.

Section 6 – Qualifications of Key Staff:

A summary paragraph describing the qualifications, skills, and experience of the proposed project director, primary investigator(s), and other key staff to ensure that project activities are accomplished with quality and in a timely manner should be provided.

Resumes – a resume, not to exceed two (2) pages, must be included for all proposed key staff positions, such as the Project Director, primary investigator(s), senior/technical managers, field coordinators, and technical consultants for the Lead organization, Associates, and/or local partnering organization.

If an individual for the senior level positions has not been identified, the applicant must submit a one-page position description, identifying the qualifications and skills required for that position, in lieu of a resume. If not a current employee of the Lead organization, Associate, or local partnering organization, a letter certifying availability to start performing duties within 15 days of contract award is required.

Section 7 - Budget:

The ICVB anticipates awarding cost-reimbursement contract(s) to successful applicant(s). Awards will be made to one or more qualified consultants pursuant to a definitive Contract Agreement. Preference will be given to a “general contractor model” working with various entities on the ground in the targeted geographic areas. However, this preference does not preclude using one general contractor to conduct verifying activities in each respective country or from local entities responding to this RFP.

The proposal must include the following and the stated page limits must be adhered to:

1. **Summary Budget**– the budget must identify the total amount of funding requested, in U.S. dollars, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the following budget categories, as applicable: (a) Personnel; (b) Fringe Benefits; (c) Travel; (d) Equipment; (e) Supplies; (f) Contractual; (g) Consultant Fees; (h) Other Direct Costs; (i) Total Direct Charges

[sum of (a) through (h)]; (j) Indirect Charges; and (k) Totals. **The summary budget cannot exceed one (1) page in length.**

2. **Line-Item Budget** – the line-item budget must provide sufficient information for each summary category to justify the inclusion and reasonableness of the costs presented. **The line-item budget cannot exceed three (3) pages in length, and must be articulated as follows:**
 - a. *Personnel* – Identify staffing requirements by each position title and a brief description of duties. List total salary/wages to be paid for each position, percentage of overall time, and number of days devoted to project.
 - b. *Fringe Benefits* – State benefit costs separately from salary costs and explain how benefits are computed for each category of employee. Specify the type and rate.
 - c. *Travel* – Identify staff and participant travel, including: international airfare; in-country travel; domestic travel in the U.S.; and per diem/maintenance (includes lodging, meals, and incidentals for both participant and staff travel). For purposes of budgeting, please note that rates of maximum allowance for foreign travel are available at: www.policyworks.gov. Per diem rates may not exceed the published U.S. allowance rates, which the ICVB is adhering to, but institutions do have the option of using lower per diem rates.
 - d. *Equipment* – Provide justification for any equipment purchase/rental, defined as tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of USD 1,000 or more.
 - e. *Supplies* – List items separately using unit costs (and the percentage of each unit cost being charged to the grant) for photocopying, postage, telephone/fax, printing, office supplies, and equipment not subject to item (d).
 - f. *Contractual* – For each subcontract, provide a detailed line-item breakdown explaining specific services. In the subcontract budgets, provide the same level of detail for personnel, fringe benefits, travel, supplies, equipment, and direct and indirect costs required of the primary applicant.
 - g. *Consultant Fees* – If consultants will be used in the grant, provide all costs related to their activities, including travel and per diem costs.
 - h. *Other Direct Costs* – These will vary depending on the nature of the proposed activities. Identify each cost and provide justification.
 - i. *Indirect Charges* – If your organization has an indirect cost rate agreement with a government entity, include a copy as an addendum to the budget, and indicate how the rate is applied. A description of the costs included within the indirect charges should be provided.
3. **Budget Narrative** – A budget narrative must accompany the line-item budget to sufficiently justify each identified cost. Also, a description of the cost accounting system used by the applicant and partners must be included. **The budget narrative must not exceed three (3) pages.**
4. **Most recent audit** – A copy of the applicant’s (and partners) most recent financial audit should be included within the appendices. If no financial audit has been conducted, this

should be noted, with a description of the steps to be taken by the Lead organization to safeguard the expenditures of contract award funds.

Contract agreement funds may not be encumbered/obligated by the contractor before or after the period of performance. Encumbrances/obligations outstanding as of the end of the Contract Agreement period may be liquidated (paid out) after the end of the Contract Agreement period. Such encumbrances/obligations may involve only specified commitments for which a need existed during the Contract Agreement period and that are supported by approved contracts, subcontracts, purchase orders, requisitions, invoices, bills, or other evidence of liability consistent with the applicant's purchasing procedures and incurred within the Contract Agreement period. All encumbrances/obligations incurred during the Contract Agreement period must be liquidated within 60 calendar days after the end of the Contract Agreement period, unless a longer period of time is granted by the ICVB, in its sole discretion.

V. AWARD SELECTION CRITERIA

This section identifies and describes the criteria that will be used to evaluate proposals for the ICVB verification activities covered by this RFP on the basis of 100 points.

Evaluation Criteria: Applicants should note that the following criteria: 1) serve as a standard against which all proposals will be evaluated, and 2) serve to identify the significant matters that should be addressed in all proposals. The ICVB will award grants to the applicants whose offers represent to the ICVB the best value on the basis of technical merit and quality.

Each application will be evaluated by members of the Technical Committee of the ICVB and further reviewed and agreed to by the full ICVB. The evaluation criteria have been tailored to the requirements of this RFP.

- **Understanding of the Issues (10 points):** This section should demonstrate the applicant's knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding verification of studies to document and report on the WFCL and ALP in the cocoa supply chain in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, as well as relevance to the program objectives of the ICVB as described under IV. Application and Submission Information, Section 3. Understanding Issues Surrounding Verification of Cocoa in Cote d'Ivoire and/or Ghana.
- **Methodology / Approach for Verification Activities (35 points):** Applicants should describe what they propose to do and how they will do it. The proposed activities must directly support accomplishing all areas within the verification process as outlined in IV. Application and Submission Information, Section 4. Project Implementation Plan. The ICVB will be reviewing the implementation plan in terms of how well it addresses the goals and objectives of the certification process, comprehensiveness of the proposed methodology for current and future verification activities, and timeline for completion of the reports.
- **Organizational Capability / Experience (30 points):** Applicants should demonstrate their ability to develop and implement programs in the targeted geographic area(s).

Applicants must demonstrate how their resources, capabilities, and experience will enable them to achieve the stated goals and objectives within the designated timeframe. The applicant should address all areas identified within IV. Application and Submission Information, Section 5 Organizational Capability.

- **Qualifications of Key Staff (20 points):** The ICVB will consider the appropriateness of the selected project director, in view of the role and responsibility that person will play in guiding the verification process from implementation through to completion, and the qualifications of principal investigator(s) and other senior / technical managers, field coordinators, and consultants. Position descriptions submitted in lieu of the resume will be reviewed for the appropriateness of the qualifications and skills identified. Also, the ICVB will consider the ability of the applicant to ensure a timely start-up of activities following contract award. The applicant should address all areas identified within IV. Application and Submission Information, Section 6 Qualifications of Key Staff.
- **Summary and Line-Item Budgets, and Budget Narrative (10 points):** Costs will be evaluated for realism, control practices, and efficiency. The ICVB must determine that the costs paid for this award are reasonable and allocable to the proposed project activities. This will consist of a review of the budgets and narrative to determine if the overall costs are realistic for the work to be performed, if the costs reflect the applicant's understanding of the allowable cost principles established by universally accepted cost accounting standards and if the costs are consistent with the program narrative. The applicant should address all areas identified within IV. Application and Submission Information, Section 7 Budget.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Award Notices: The contract award shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the ICVB Secretariat, Verité, on behalf of the ICVB. Verité is the ICVB official Secretariat, and is delegated the authority by the ICVB to write, award, and administer contracts. The ICVB's legal status is pending and Verité will act on its behalf in the interim. The contract award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the Recipient through either mail or facsimile transmission. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing. Following notice of award, successful applicants must return a signed copy of the Contract Agreement to Verité.

Anticipated Time to Award: Applicants should expect to be notified of the status of their submitted proposal within 30 days after the submission deadline. Following this initial notification, Verité staff will provide information at the point of notification about the requirements for the contract award, which may include revisions to the activities proposed. The ICVB reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the verification process.

Applicants should be aware that there will be a short time span between contract award and expected start-up of activities. Successful applicants can expect an expedited contract award within 45 days after the ICVB approves their application.

The top applicants may be requested to attend the ICVB's April 2008 meeting to provide a one-hour verbal presentation that includes an overview of the approach to achieving the verification activities, the applicant's experience and capabilities, and qualifications of their team to perform activities. The successful applicant(s) will be provided an orientation sponsored by the ICVB in order to assist with start-up and ensure quality of the verification activities.

Applicants selected for an award must meet the following reporting and policy requirements:

- **Reporting Requirements:** Contractors are required to submit progress and financial reports following completion of major deliverables as identified throughout the project period. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the contract period. Progress reports at a minimum should be submitted via email to an address to be provided in the award.
- **Policy Requirements:** Contractors are required to agree to the following special conditions prior to a grant being awarded:
 - Certification that applicant has no pre-existing conflict of interest or will become engaged in any activities that would constitute such.

VII. DISCLAIMER

Issuance of this RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the ICVB, nor does it commit the ICVB to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the ICVB reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the ICVB has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award, except as provided under Section IV. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the ICVB.

In all events, the terms and conditions of an awarded Contract Agreement will apply following signature by the parties and this RFP will have no further application.