Request for Proposals (RFP)

For the development of an IFC Performance Standards-compliant Environmental and Social Management System for an East African coffee-focused SME

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# Information about the RFP

| **Summary** | South Pole Carbon Asset Management Ltd (South Pole) invites interested and eligible offerors (Offerors) to submit a proposal for the preparation of (i) a report on key ESG risks pertaining to an East African coffee SME; (ii) a gap analysis on the SME’s compliance with the Landscape Resilience Fund’s ESG Guidelines, and (iii) an Environmental and Social Management System for the SME, on the terms and conditions of this RFP. |
| --- | --- |
| **RFP Reference** | RFP-LRF GEF-2023-002 |
| **Date of Issuance** | January 22, 2024 |
| **Due Date of Questions** | January 29, 2024 |
| **Response to Questions** | February 5, 2024 |
| **Closing Date** | February 12, 2024 |
| **Estimated Decision Date** | February 19, 2024 |
| **Estimated Start Date** | March 4, 2024 |
| **RFP question and submission contact details** | [landscaperesiliencefund@southpole.com](mailto:landscaperesiliencefund@southpole.com) |

# Background

South Pole Carbon Asset Management Ltd (South Pole) is the Executing Agency for the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) funded Project # 10436, “Investment Readiness for the Landscape Resilience Fund”.

The Landscape Resilience Fund (LRF) is a foundation under Swiss law, managed by South Pole Carbon Asset Management Ltd (South Pole), that promotes climate change adaptation and sustainable development in developing countries. To achieve this, the LRF:

* Provides loans to adaptation SMEs to scale or replicate their business model
* Facilitates pre-investment capacity building for SMEs
* Takes part in the development of the landscape through multi-stakeholder platforms and local community engagement with the objective of increasing the region’s/sector’s climate resilience

The objective of the ‘Investment Readiness for the Landscape Resilience Fund’ GEF Project is to catalyse private sector investment in SMEs with climate-resilient practices, by providing pre-investment services for investment readiness to adaptation SMEs.

South Pole is providing pre-investment support to an SME (the Company) that buys, prepares (washing and drying) high-quality green bean coffee from East Africa, and exports to developed markets. The Company currently has operations in two countries and now plans to expand into Kenya.

The Company operates its own model farms, and also deploys a network of field scouts to work directly with smallholder producers, expanding farmer supply, providing farmer training and advice, and collecting impact data.

The LRF team, South Pole, and the Company agree that pre-investment support is needed to attract investor interest in the expansion. The Company needs to codify and document many of its existing good practices to better articulate its business model and impact on the ground. This also includes policies and processes for identifying, managing, and monitoring environmental, social, and governance (ESG) risks, requiring the development of an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS), which is critical for attracting professional investors, especially impact investors.

The Selected Offeror will be required to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) with South Pole, after which South Pole will share further information on the business and its expansion plans and make introductions to the Company.

# Scope of Work

## Place of Performance

All services required under this solicitation will be desk-based remote work.

## Contract and Period of Performance

To regulate the provision of the services and deliverables contemplated under this RFP, a consultancy agreement will be executed between South Pole and the Selected Offeror (Agreement). The duration of the Agreement will be agreed between the Selected Offeror and South Pole but in any case, shall be no longer than 6 months after the Agreement is fully executed. All Offerors are required to provide a Statement of Availability for all staff included in their proposal as set out in Section III.

## Scope of Work

South Pole has conducted an initial desk-based review of the Company and designed a pre-investment support work plan with eight activities that it believes need to be conducted in order for the Company to access adequate finance, according to its needs. This request for proposals focuses on two of those eight activities that relate to operational standards, ESG standards, and the establishment of a comprehensive ESMS that complies with IFC Performance Standards.

The methodology for developing each of the activities described below must be provided by the Offerors participating in this RFP and will be evaluated according to the scoring guidelines in order to select the Selected Offeror.

The description of the service activities and their main deliverables are as follows.

### Activity 1 - ESG risk analysis of the Company’s current and planned operations

The selected consultant should work with the Company to complete an analysis to identify key ESG risks associated with current and planned operations. For avoidance of doubt, this is not a formal due diligence process, but instead an identification of key risks.

* **Deliverable 1:** Report on key ESG risks in the Company's operations.

### Activity 2 - Gap analysis of compliance with the LRF’s ESG Guidelines

The consultant should then conduct a gap analysis of compliance with the LRF’s ESG Guidelines, including a roadmap to comply with LRF’s ESG Guidelines.

* **Deliverable 1:** Gap analysis on the Company’s compliance with LRF’s ESG Guidelines.
* **Deliverable 2:** Roadmap on how to achieve compliance with the LRF’s ESG Guidelines for SMEs, which includes a timeline for implementing any corrective actions.

### Activity 3 - Develop an Environmental and Social Management System for the Company

Develop an ESMS for all current and planned operations of the Company, including its future expansion to Kenya, addressing the risks identified in Activity 1, and compliant with IFC Performance Standards[[1]](#footnote-0). The ESMS should include all the policies, standards, processes, and guidelines (among others) needed for the Company to operationalise the ESMS.

* **Deliverable 1:** Work plan on how the consultant will develop an ESMS that complies with IFC Performance Standards for the Company.
* **Deliverable 2:** Roadmap report on what is needed in order for the Company to implement an ESMS that complies with IFC Performance Standards, including an assessment of capacity building or technical assistance needs for its future operation. Recommendations on the implementation of the ESMS will consider the internal capacity of the company.
* **Deliverable 3[[2]](#footnote-1):** ESMS delivered with all of its elements completed, with all documents including policies, standards, processes, and guidelines, approved by the Company. The ESMS should also include a clear accountability and reporting mechanism for the Company’s management and team leaders. Recommendations on the implementation of the ESMS will consider the internal capacity of the company.

## Deliverables

Delivery deadlines will be established according to the dates included by the Selected Offeror in its proposal. All deliverables shall be submitted electronically to [landscaperesiliencefund@southpole.com](mailto:landscaperesiliencefund@southpole.com), unless otherwise agreed to.

| **Activity** | **Deliverable** |
| --- | --- |
| Activity 1 - ESG risk analysis of the Company’s current and planned operations | 1. Report on key ESG risks in the Company's operations |
| Activity 2 - Gap analysis of compliance with the LRF’s ESG Guidelines | 1. Gap analysis on the Company’s compliance with LRF’s ESG Guidelines |
| 1. Roadmap on how to achieve compliance with the LRF’s ESG Guidelines for SMEs |
| Activity 3 - Develop an Environmental and Social Management System for the Company | 1. Work plan for the development of the ESMS |
| 1. Roadmap for ESMS implementation |
| 1. ESMS with all of its elements, completed, delivered, and approved by the Company. |

## Timeline

Following the execution of the Agreement, the work will begin with a kickoff meeting where all parties, the selected consultant, the Company, and South Pole will participate. It will allow for introducing all people involved in the process, establishing the official focal points and ways of communicating with each party, how often the parties will meet, and setting clear rules for the submission, review, and approval of deliverables.

The Company’s focal point will be responsible for providing all the information needed and agreed upon in a timely manner (under 24 hours). It will also inform promptly if any information will take longer to obtain and share.

## Consultant’s capacity Requirements

Qualification required for Offerors:

* The Offeror must be a consultant in the sustainability field with at least 10 years of working experience providing environment, social, occupational health, and safety services, including ESG risk assessment and management.
* The Offeror must have a proven track record of assisting organisations in setting up their ESMS according to IFC Performance Standards.
* Priority is given to Offerors with significant experience working with smallholder farmers in the agricultural/forestry businesses, in the East African region, and the coffee sector.
* At least one member of the Offeror’s team must have a University degree in agriculture, forestry, supply chains, or a related field; an advanced degree is desirable.
* The Offeror must have no conflict of interest regarding an interest in and exposure to the Company, or any affiliate.

## Other Request for Proposals

As mentioned before, this request for proposals focuses on two of the eight support activities provided to the SME selected by the LRF. The Offeror may also participate in any of the other requests for proposals published. Specifically, RFP-LRF GEF-2023-002 relates to the Company’s business model, its processes, and a better understanding of local compliance requirements, which is well aligned with the work needed for this request. You can find all the requests for proposals in the following link:

[RFP-LRF GEF-2023-001 - Process & Compliance](https://landscaperesiliencefund.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/160124-RFP-LRF-GEF-2023-001-Process-Compliance-.docx)

[RFP-LRF GEF-2023-003 - Development of an Impact Framework & Model Farm](https://landscaperesiliencefund.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/160124-RFP-LRF-GEF-2023-003-Development-of-an-Impact-Framework-Model-Farm.docx)

# IV. Submission Instructions

## Submission of Questions

All questions or clarifications regarding this RFP must be in writing and submitted to [landscaperesiliencefund@southpole.com](mailto:landscaperesiliencefund@southpole.com) no later than January 29, 2024. Questions and requests for clarification, and the responses thereto, will be circulated to all RFP recipients who have indicated an interest in this RFP.

## Technical Proposal

The technical proposal in response to this RFP must address how the Offeror intends to carry out the statement of work, separated by deliverable. It should also contain a clear understanding of the work to be undertaken and the responsibilities of all parties involved. Please note that technical proposals will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria outlined in Section V. Offerors shall provide all documentation in English. The technical proposal should be in font size 10, Lexend, single spacing. Proposals should not exceed ten (10) pages. Please note that technical and cost applications should be separate files.

1. **Proposal Cover Sheet:** The first page of the proposal must use the Proposal Cover sheet as per Annex 1. This section does not count against the page limit above.
2. **Capability Statement:** Provide a short description of the Offeror’s capabilities that qualify it to be chosen to conduct the scope of work. This should be one (1) page. In an annex to the technical proposal, you should provide a copy of registration or incorporation in the public registry, or an equivalent document from the government office where the Offeror is registered, a copy of company tax registration, or an equivalent document, a copy of a tax clearance certificate (not older than 3 months) or an equivalent document, confirmation of the Offeror’s beneficial ownership, confirmation of registered address of Offeror, and copy of trade licence, or equivalent document (if available).
3. **Technical Approach:** The technical approach should state clearly the Offeror’s understanding of the requirements in Section III as well as the proposed approach to accomplish the contract objectives and achieve results. Offerors should keep in mind the geography of the place of performance and any travel that may be required to accomplish the work. Clarity, completeness, and directness are imperative. Elaborate formats are not desirable. This section should be two (2) pages.
4. **Management and Staffing Plan:** Please describe how the proposed staff will work collaboratively to achieve the offeror’s proposed technical approach to the scope of work. The Offeror should include a management and staffing plan including both key and non-key personnel for activities along with details on the roles and responsibilities of the staff. CVs for key personnel may be included in an annex to the technical proposal and will not count against the page limit. This section should be one (1) page.
5. **Statement of Availability:** Provide a written statement that the proposed named staff listed in the Management and Staffing Plan is/are available to carry out the services relating to this RFP for the period initially envisaged in Section III. This section does not count against the page limit above.
6. **Detailed Work Plan:** Describe the key activities you will undertake under this contract. At a minimum, you must include a description of the activity, expected outputs, and estimated completion date. This section should be three (3) pages.
7. **Past Performance:** Describe the Offeror’s previous experience within the technical area for projects of the same or similar scope and size. Offerors must include details demonstrating their experience and technical ability, including those of proposed consortium members, in implementing the technical approach/methodology and the detailed work plan. This section should be two (2) pages.
8. **References:** Offeror shall list at least two major contracts the company has held over the past three (3) years for the same or similar work. This section should be one (1) page. Provide the following information for each contract:
   1. Customer's name, address, and telephone numbers of customer's lead contact and technical personnel;
   2. Date of the contract, place(s) of performance, and delivery dates or period of performance;
   3. Contract size and dollar value;
   4. Brief description of the work, including responsibilities;
   5. Comparability to the work required under this solicitation;
   6. A brief discussion of any technical problems and their resolutions;
   7. Brief discussion of any terminations (partial or complete) and the type (convenience or default) as well as any show cause notices or cure notices (provide explanatory details).

South Pole may require additional, more detailed technical information prior to confirming the selection of the Selected Offeror and/or issuing the Agreement.

## Cost Proposal

Cost proposals will be evaluated separately from technical proposals. The cost proposal shall include a detailed budget that reflects clearly the costs necessary to implement the proposed contract and must include all taxes that are required to provide the services requested. Costs should be represented in USD. The anticipated award will be an all-inclusive fixed-price contract. No profit, fees, taxes, or additional costs can be added after the award. The cost proposal must be valid for at least 90 days.

1. **Proposal Cover Sheet:** The first page of the proposal must use the Proposal Cover sheet as per Annex 1. This section does not count against the page limit above.
2. **Summary Budget:** The Offeror should present a summary budget for each deliverable.
3. **Detailed Budget:** For the detailed budget, the offeror should fill out the Cost Proposal Template as per Annex 2 for each deliverable, and include a breakdown of line items that they believe are realistic and reasonable for the work in accordance with the technical requirements outlined in Section III. Offerors must provide a detailed budget showing major line items, e.g. salaries, fringe benefits, travel costs, other direct costs, indirect rates, etc., as well as individual line items, e.g. salaries or rates for individuals, rent, utilities, insurance, etc. Offerors must show unit prices, quantities, and total price. The offeror should clearly identify indirect rates (including fringe rates), the base to which each indirect rate is applied, and the cost base.
4. **Budget Notes:** The Budget Notes should thoroughly explain the estimating methodology used to calculate the budget and any assumptions that may be made by the Offeror over and above the ones stated in this RFP that had a material effect on the resulting proposed cost. Offerors must clearly explain the basis of costs, meaning why and how Offerors are costing out certain figures for items or services, to establish the reasonableness of costs. The notes should include a clear and thorough explanation for each budgeted line item, reflecting the rationale for the quantity required. If a proposed benefit (e.g., local fringe) is an all-inclusive rate, notes must specify what benefits are included in the proposed rates.
5. **Supporting Documentation:** Additional supporting budget documentation (as necessary), including travel quotations, historical cost information, profit/fee policy, etc. to substantiate all proposed costs.

South Pole may require additional, more detailed budget information prior to confirming the selection of the Selected Offeror and/or issuing the Agreement.

## Certifications

Offerors responding to this RFP must include the following disclosures and certifications as part of the proposal submission in an annex to the cost proposal.

1. Disclose any close, familial, or financial relationships with the Company, South Pole or project staff. For example, if an offeror’s cousin is employed by the project, the Offeror must state this.
2. Disclose any family or financial relationship with other Offerors submitting proposals. For example, if the Offeror’s father owns a company that is submitting another proposal, the offeror must state this.
3. Certify that the prices in the offer have been arrived at independently, without any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other Offeror or competitor for the purpose of restricting competition.
4. Certify that all information in the proposal and all supporting documentation are authentic, complete, and accurate in all respects.
5. Certify that no applicable laws and regulations pertaining to anti-bribery and corruption were contravened in the preparation and submission of the proposal.
6. Certify that the Offeror has no conflict of interest.

## Submission of Proposals

The deadline for submission of proposals is February 12, 2024. Submissions must be forwarded in electronic format only (either PDF or Microsoft Word and Excel) to [landscaperesiliencefund@southpole.com](mailto:landscaperesiliencefund@southpole.com). Offeror’s proposals should not contain any unnecessary promotional material or elaborate presentation formats (black and white is preferred). Offerors must not submit zipped files. Those pages requiring original manual signatures should be scanned and sent in PDF format as an email attachment. The technical proposal and cost proposal must be kept separate from each other. Please reference the RFP Name in the email subject line. Offerors are responsible for ensuring that their offers are received in accordance with the instructions stated herein. Late offers may be considered at the discretion of South Pole. South Pole cannot guarantee that late offers will be considered.

# V. Evaluation Criteria

## Review Process

South Pole’s and the LRF’s technical reviewers will evaluate the technical proposals based on the Evaluation Criteria outlined in this Section. All technical reviewers will be free of any conflict of interest.

## Evaluation Criteria

The award will be decided based on the criteria set forth below, as demonstrated in the Offeror’s proposal. Only proposals conforming to the RFP requirements will be considered. This RFP will use the tradeoff process to determine the best value. That means that each proposal will be evaluated and scored against the evaluation criteria and expectations below, which are stated in the table below. Cost proposals are not assigned points, but for overall evaluation purposes of this RFP, technical evaluation factors other than cost, when combined, are considered more important than cost factors. If technical scores are determined to be equal or nearly equal, cost will become the determining factor.

| **Evaluation Criteria** | **Score** |
| --- | --- |
| Technical Approach, Management & Staffing Plan, Detailed Work Plan | 40 |
| Past Performances & References | 15 |
| Specific experience in setting up ESMS according to IFC Performance Standards | 25 |
| Specific experience working with smallholder farmers in the agricultural/forestry businesses, in the East African region, and the coffee production space. | 20 |
| **Total available points** | 100 |

# VI. Terms and conditions

## Disclaimers

* South Pole reserves the right to modify by written notice the terms of this RFP at any time in its sole discretion. The LRF may cancel the solicitation at any time
* South Pole may reject any or all proposals received.
* Issuance of RFP does not constitute award commitment by the LRF.
* South Pole reserves the right to disqualify any application based on the Offeror's failure to follow the RFP instructions.
* South Pole will not compensate Offerors for their response to the solicitation.
* South Pole reserves the right to issue an award based on initial evaluation of applications without further discussion.
* South Pole may choose to award only part of the scope of work in the RFP or issue multiple awards of the scope of work.
* South Pole reserves the right to waive minor proposal deficiencies that can be corrected prior to award determination to promote competition.
* South Pole may contact Offerors to confirm the contact person, address, and that the proposal was submitted for this RFP.
* South Pole may contact listed past performance references without notice to the offeror. South Pole also reserves the right to contact other past performance information sources that the Offeror did not list in the proposal.
* By submitting a proposal, the Offeror confirms they understand the terms and conditions.
* Information pertaining to and obtained from the Offeror as a result of participation in this RFP is confidential. The Offeror consents to the disclosure of the documents submitted by the Offeror to the reviewers involved in the selection process. Please note that all reviewers are bound by non-disclosure agreements.

## Standard Provisions

The Offeror agrees that in connection with this RFP, they will comply with the principles of the South Pole Third-Party Code of Conduct as amended from time to time in all material respects. An up-to-date copy of the Third-Party Party Code of Conduct can be viewed at:

https://www.southpole.com/uploads/media/south-pole-third-party-code-of-conduct.pdf

# Annexes

## Annex 1: Proposal Cover Sheet

## Annex 2: Cost Proposal Template

## Annex 3: LRF’s ESG Guidelines for SMEs

## Annex 1: Proposal Cover Sheet

*Instructions: Please fill in the information requested highlighted in yellow below. This page should be the first page in your Technical Proposal Submission and in your Cost Proposal Submission.*

| RFP Title: | | The title of the activity of the RFP |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Submission Date: | | Month/Day/Year -Time AM/PM – Time Zone |
| Anticipated Performance Start Date | | Month/Day/Year |
| Offeror Contact information | Name | Insert here |
| Title | Insert here |
| Email | Insert here |
| Phone | Insert here |
| Address | Insert here |
| Type of Entity | Insert here |
| Persons authorised to negotiate for Offeror | | Insert Name, title, and contact information |
| Total Cost Proposed | | Insert total cost here |
| Total Pages submitted (include all annexes) | | Insert total pages here |
| Offeror Agreement | | |
| By signing this document, Offeror hereby certifies to the accuracy and completeness of all pricing information, technical data, delivery dates, representations and certifications included in their offer as well the acceptance of all of the terms and conditions set forth in the RFP/Solicitation. The Offeror confirms that all prices and delivery dates shall be valid for a period of ninety (90) days following the anticipated performance start date stated above, unless otherwise clearly specified by Offeror. | | |
| Signature: | | |
| Name and Title: | | |
| Date: | | |

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## Annex 2: Cost Proposal Template

The Offeror should include a breakdown of line items that they believe are realistic and reasonable for the work in accordance with the technical requirements outlined in Section II

| **1. Remuneration** | **Unit** | **Quantity** | **Unit Rate** | **Amount** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1.1 Team Leader |  | ... |  |  |
| 1.2 Expert 1 |  | ... |  |  |
| 1.3 Expert 2 |  | … |  |  |
| .. |  |  |  |  |
| Sub-total | | | |  |
| **2. Allowance, Accommodation, Complementary Travel Costs** | | | | |
| 2.1 Allowance, accommodation - Long-term staff |  | ... |  |  |
| 2.2 Allowance, accommodation - Short-term staff |  | ... |  |  |
| … |  |  |  |  |
| Sub-total | | | |  |
| **Travel & Transport Cost** | | | | |
| 3.1 Vehicle lease/rent |  | ... |  |  |
| 3.2 Other local transport (short-term, peak) |  | … |  |  |
| 3.3 Flights |  | ... |  |  |
| … |  |  |  |  |
| Sub-total | | | |  |
| **4. Reports and Documents** | | | | |
| 4.1 ... (Type of reports/documents to be stated) |  | ... |  |  |
| 4.2 ... |  | ... |  |  |
| Sub-total | | | |  |
| … | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Total | | | |  |
| Taxes | | | |  |
| Grand – Total | | | |  |

## Annex 3: LRF’s ESG Guidelines for SMEs

[To be included as a separate Annex alongside this Document.](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A_8nv8jLAIXC8BFULuLXbZ1aPZjMSyKi/view?usp=drive_link)

1. The IFC developed an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) Implementation Handbook that provides step-by-step instructions on how to develop and implement a management system. The consultant is expected to follow this guidance for this activity. <https://www.ifc.org/en/insights-reports/2015/publications-handbook-esms-general> [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. The ESMS needs to be custom-designed to the SME's needs, size, limitations, and capacity. It should not be a “one size fits all” kind of solution. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)