



## **STIMULATING ADAPTATION OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN ZAMBIA'S AGRICULTURE SECTOR, DURING AND POST THE COVID-19 CHALLENGE, THROUGH INNOVATIONS DRIVEN BY THE MEDIA**

### **Request for Concept Notes**

#### **BACKGROUND**

In 2018 the United Nations announced the launch of the SDG Media Compact, an initiative marking a new drive to advance awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Compact seeks to inspire media and entertainment companies around the world to leverage their resources and creative talent to advance the Goals across the world including Zambia. In line with the Zambian government policy on media development and in support of the World agenda on achieving Sustainable development, Mass media is emerging as powerful tool for development programmes whose goal is to improve rural households' access to information.

Musika is a Zambian non-profit company, supported by the Swedish Embassy in Zambia, the Norwegian Government's Norad, Irish Aid and WorldFish which stimulates private investment in the agricultural market, with a particular focus on the smallholder and emerging farmer sectors.

Musika works across the country and in all aspects of the agricultural sector, providing advisory services and business support to agribusinesses that are committed to engaging smallholder and emergent farmers in strong and mutually beneficial commercial relationships as their clients, suppliers and customers.

Musika's approach to reducing poverty and creating wealth in rural Zambia involves stimulating business relationships between the corporate sector and smallholder farmers that provide not just market opportunities but also the knowledge and confidence for men and women farmers to invest in and grow their businesses.

As Musika embarks on implementing its new strategy, it is seeking partnerships with reputable and innovative Zambian for-profit companies that share its ambitious agenda of supporting innovation and inclusive growth in the agricultural market.

Further information on Musika's work and methodology can be found at [www.musika.org.zm](http://www.musika.org.zm)

#### **INTERVENTION TITLE**

**STIMULATING ADAPTATION OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN ZAMBIA'S AGRICULTURE SECTOR, DURING AND POST THE COVID-19 CHALLENGE, THROUGH INNOVATIONS DRIVEN BY THE MEDIA**

#### **MAXIMUM VALUE**

The maximum value to any grant made in this competition is \$150,000, but the evaluation of proposed initiatives, and therefore Musika's funding capacity, will depend heavily on the potential benefits to the agricultural sector as a whole of a proposed initiative, on the tangible benefit of Musika partners, medium and small scale farmers, communities and SMEs and on the scale of the investments being made by the individual bidders themselves.

## **INTERVENTION OBJECTIVES**

From the snapshot survey conducted by Musika, there is sufficient evidence that COVID-19 outbreak is posing many challenges to all global economies and ultimately all agribusiness and the communities. Emerging economies such as Zambia are expected to be the worst hit in areas of production food system and sustained livelihood disruptions. According to recent announcement by the Minister of Finance and National planning Hon Dr. Bwalya Ngandu, Zambia's initial projected 2020 growth of 3% had been reduced to 2%. The effect of COVID-19 on the agricultural sector is yet to be felt as the disease continues spreading across hinterlands from the capital, Lusaka.

However, simply responding to this is short-sighted and a long-term management strategy in light of crisis is integral. Besides this COVID-19 outbreak, Zambian small and large agribusinesses alone have suffered from the drought of 2018/2019 season, recent gassing events and severe macro and micro economic challenges. Therefore, establishing clear and effective crisis management processes and strategies are essential to ensure stability in these trying times.

One of Musika's core objectives is to improve access to information and knowledge for smallholder and emergent farmers that present the opportunity for both inclusive economic growth and wellbeing. Accordingly, achieving the sustainable development goals by 2030 and current and future crisis will require concerted actions by all market players. By telling stories, delivering news and entertainment, media have a critical role in disseminating information more effectively to a wider audience, and propagating positive changes in behaviour. As major players in fostering the SDG discourse, the media are also key in holding market players accountable for their actions.

These strategies can be centred around the effective use of the Media by agribusinesses to reach out to its clientele as a means to navigate this crisis, now that our traditional metrics and assumptions have been rendered irrelevant. Equally, the markets can centre on expediting the process to minimise risks posed by the COVID-19 crisis by emphasising on productivity, exposure and sales: make an attempt to implement new sales initiatives, to promote new business strategies and to take on new business where possible. New marketing strategies might be necessary to support agribusinesses' new initiatives and expand their reach to customers. Further, it is important to adapt new working strategies that borders on occupational health and safety: staff and customer safety is imperative, establishing alternate ways to conduct work can provide effective short- and long-term changes in productivity at both firm and community level.

In order to meet this objective, Musika is prepared to offer technical support and early stage catalytic financial support incentives for electronic and print media entities working to support the growth of the agricultural sector. These media entities should be willing to make substantial investments towards the creation of a supportive information platform and partner with Musika private sector clients in developing and testing business models that place value on audience-led content as a 'product' and source of revenue, and can be used to lobby and influence market system changes, and provide market information and advisory services.

## **INTERVENTION BACKGROUND**

The horrific Corona virus disease (COVID19) outbreak across the World, has dominated most of the headlines in print, electronic and social media presently. The nature of coverage and broadcast of the whole epidemic by the media, has instilled fear in both governments and its citizens, because of its highly contagious nature and rapid spread, killing millions across the globe, disrupting economies and leaving a devastating impact on people's social, physiological and spiritual wellbeing. Its impact on agricultural production and productive systems cannot be over emphasised.

Amid COVID-19 pandemic, Mass media, especially print and broadcast media, can play a pivotal role as a change agent in Zambia's agricultural sector. It can assist the rural poor through providing technical information, advisory services, as well as advocacy. Research has proven that the majority rural poor in Zambia listen and actively access information through broadcast media. Experience with

the print media industry also shows media has been a force in raising the voice of the majority poor and advocating for critical issues affecting their livelihood. The quick thinking to use media to convey real-time information about the deadly COVID 19 in China has been described as a superb success story which can be replicated in other countries (Nduka U,2015) in fighting the disease. In the case of outbreak of deadly Ebola diseases in West Africa, research indicates that the wide coverage by local TV and radio stations were at least able to raise the level of awareness of common people with no access to internet, electricity or satellite in the region, on the dangers of the disease and to some extent preventive measures to avert the growing panic over the disease.

The synergies provided by both government and privately owned media broadcasting both live and recorded programmes by professional medical and public health experts on the true causes, symptoms, mode of spread and prevention and control measures of diseases are seen to be successful in reducing the number of deaths and reducing the collapsing of socio-economy and reversing food in-security in the worst affected countries (Yusuf, et al., 2015)

Therefore, supplying the public with agricultural information in an independent and objective manner is a crucial prerequisite for human economic development. But the agricultural sector has received limited coverage by the media in comparison to political issues that take majority of the editorial space. Inadequate skills capacity building or the opportunity to specialise, journalists have a hard task acting as subject matter specialists, and mediators between urban and rural communities.

When it comes to assisting the poor through information and advocacy service - the media market faces some constraints. There is: a) Lack of understanding among media gatekeepers regarding the consumer profile and information demand regarding the poor b) Lack of skill among media houses and reporters to develop relevant business/agro programs targeting the rural poor c) Lack of incentives/sponsors d) Limited access to media by the poor d) Lack of linkages between farmers/SMEs and media house/journalists e) Lack of external content providers for SME and agro related issues. Lack of collaboration between researchers and journalists so as to easily reach out to the farmers with information that will improve the agricultural sector in Zambia.

A clear understanding by the media of what life is really like in the rural areas is essential for improving conditions there especially where agriculture is concerned. Investors, traders, decision-makers - all those who operate from the urban centres but have dealings with farming communities need to be well informed. However, media coverage of this crucial sector remains generally inadequate, rarely impartial and all too often 'disconnected' from the field, and with most of the work done by various development organisations like Musika left unreported.

Journalists specialising in agriculture are extremely rare in mass media organisations. Those who do handle agricultural issues have considerable difficulty in offering clear explanations to their readers or listeners on complex subjects such as conservation farming, integrated pest management, climate change and biotechnology or in interviewing researchers and experts on these issues. The tendency to use complicated scientific terms by professionals and subject matter specialists continues to grow, seldom making the effort to express them in simple language that can be easily grasped by interviewers.

### **INTERVENTION SCOPE**

Through this challenge fund window, therefore, and as a market development project utilising the Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P) approach, Musika is able to support, catalyse and stimulate early stage investments by both the private and public Zambian media houses in testing, developing and scaling up an innovative agriculture media platform to be utilised by Musika supported partners implementing interventions along its four key thematic markets ( Agricultural Technology, Agriculture Diversification Business and Finance , Biotechnology and Environment ), including other key stake holders such as Ministry of health , Ministry of Agriculture and Research institutions . These stakeholders will assist in developing media content, provide advocacy and agronomical technology

service and use the media as a channel through which information is disseminated for the benefit of the rural poor. Further consideration to the development of alternative media forum, in the form of live phone-in radio programs, drama, TV documentaries, and road shows or on farm radio/‘reality TV’ programming with spearheaded by media houses, will be explored to promote peer-to-peer information dissemination among farmers and SMEs.

Post COVID-19 pandemic, cost sharing options with the media houses such as community radio stations would be pursued to help organize road shows/documentaries and radio programs aimed at benefiting the rural community. The intervention is being proposed to demonstrate the hypothesis that an increased and effective ‘communication system’ targeted at the smallholder market, via the local media, and coupled with associated products and services such as agronomical, extension and health products and services, and community level engagement activities will lead to not only greater visibility and sales for products and services offered by agribusinesses, but also to increased community knowledge resulting in greater productivity, income and wellbeing among the smallholder farmers. Such examples could include, but are not limited to:

1. Development of farmer/community -centric radio/television programmes and/or adverts working in collaboration with agriculture oriented private sector players and traditional leadership on content development that seek to provide e-extension information with imbedded messaging on the environmental stewardship and the COVID -19 Pandemic.
2. To develop and disseminate appropriate agricultural information to farmers through the use of the mass media in order to enhance the adoption of improved farming methods so as to increase production and productivity.
3. Electronic collection, illustrations and translations and dissemination of information
4. Designing and production of agricultural and COVID 19 pandemic teaching aids for the communities
5. Creation of more forums where the media engages with the policymakers, researchers and other key informants to discuss and share their knowledge on the agriculture industry
6. Provide a platform through which the farmers can engage with policymakers, so that their perspectives can be taken on board. the media can also profile the work of farmers and provide a platform for peer-to-peer learning so that experiences can be shared
7. Create a platform to be utilised by agribusinesses to follow through on the application of information disseminated through media platforms to help resolve specific challenges, and for farmers to provide feedback on results.
8. Design an alliance market system network – where market players form strategic alliance in a bid to promote an inclusive live market for both buyers and sellers and their associated prospective partners without succumbing to COVID 19 disruptions. This helps supply chains and retail distribution networks to catalyse joint efforts to invest in more proactive strategies and tactics that include better scenario planning and pro-active, evidence driven investments to mitigate effects of Covid-19.
9. To design and implement a platform that promotes the development of a loyal and dedicated customer base to attract the commercial interest of various market players especially the private sector during and post COVID 19

#### KEY CRITERIA

As with all of its interventions, Musika places an emphasis on the following criteria:

1. **Sustainability** – Any investment support from Musika must be seen as catalytic to the long-term development of a commercial market opportunity that will be sustained beyond the life of the ‘subsidy’. Any financial support requested from Musika must be seen as mitigating a proportion of the commercial risk of establishing the business model, not as necessary to sustain the business operation. Submissions should demonstrate that, if the initial investment is successful, there are opportunities for expansion and/or replication. Submissions that are

driven primarily by corporate social responsibility rather than commercial opportunity will be unsuccessful.

2. **Ownership** – Any successful grantee remains the full and sole ‘owner’ of its investment. Musika is very clear that its partner companies design, develop and execute their own business strategies and manage all risks associated with their investment. Musika is not in any way contracting companies to deliver services on its behalf.
  3. **Co-investment** – Related to the above two points, Musika wishes to see its support bringing down a portion of the initial risk for a company making its own investment in developing the market and as such is interested in the ‘cost share’ ratio between the company and Musika. In any successful submission, Musika will base its own limits for financial support on the value of the company’s own investment.
  4. **Scale and/or Demonstration** – Musika will place a priority on supporting investments that involve or can potentially involve large numbers of agribusinesses to create scale. However, Musika is also interested in supporting pilot projects that test innovations that, if proven successful, have a direct trajectory to scale.
  5. **Added Value** – Catalyst for change: Traditionally, the use of the media has been about communicating research messages when there are success stories in particular. But the media should have the potential to be more of an agent of change themselves, being the voice of policymakers, the voice of farmers, the voice of researchers and market players. Secondly the media can also provide a platform through which the farmers can engage with policymakers, so that their perspectives can be taken on board. Thirdly the media can also profile the work of farmers so that lessons and experiences can be shared.
1. **Innovation** – The development of new business models and technologies that can benefit the smallholder market is strongly encouraged, as is the innovative use of any financial support requested. Thinking away from being a public relations tool of development organisations, of the Ministry of Agriculture or of the farmers' organisations but to be able to proactively tell impactful stories through testimonials, apply investigative and developing journalistic skills and use those skills to bring information to the wider public so as to influence change.
  2. **Collaboration** – Strategic alliances between media firms ( i.e TV, Radio and print ) in the mass communication industry is encouraged as it will be the key fundamental criterion for shortlisting
  3. **Traceability** – For its own purposes and also for ensuring on-going improvements in agricultural supply chain traceability and management, Musika requires that its media partners are able to track the number of farmers and agribusinesses that they engage. Musika therefore request bidders to outline their intended measurement processes.

#### **ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE COSTS FOR FINANCIAL GRANT SUPPORT**

Musika’s granting procedures permit it to cost share certain budget lines and to consider other budget lines as eligible cost share on behalf of the investment it is supporting. A basic, non-exhaustive breakdown is outlined in the table below:

Budget Item	Eligible for cost sharing by Musika AND eligible to be pledged as a cost share contribution by the bidder	Not eligible for Musika funding BUT eligible to be pledged as a ‘cost share’ contribution by the bidder	Not eligible for Musika funding NOR eligible to be pledged as a ‘cost share’ contribution by the bidder
Short term technical assistance	✓		

Assets and infrastructure required for direct use in initiating the investment	✓		
Training of farmers and other supply chain actors, promotional activities	✓		
Marketing, promotional exercises, short term discounting exercises to bring down costs/risks of farmers investing in a new technology/service/market opportunity	✓		
Salaries and other costs associated with directly involved technical and operational staff		✓	
Costs associated with the running of vehicles, motorbikes, storage, etc. directly related to the investment		✓	
The purchase of land			✓
Working capital costs (e.g. procurement of commodity, value of inventory, etc.)			✓
Overhead/management costs			✓

NB: Any assets bought by Musika for use in supported interventions are offered to successful bidders on a 'no-cost loan' basis for the duration of the support period, with ownership retained by Musika.

### **FORMAT AND SCOPE OF CONCEPT NOTE**

Media firms registered as public and private Zambian legal entities interested in working with Musika on this intervention are requested to develop a concept note (not more than 5 pages). Submissions from consortiums of media firms are welcome and in such cases, in the format below 'company' would necessarily imply 'companies'.

The concept note should follow the following format and order, and include all key components. Submissions that exceed space limits and/or miss critical components will be penalised

<b>1. Company profile (no more than half a page)</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The name of the company involved and a short profile demonstrating relevance to this intervention and competency in implementing the proposed initiative</li> <li>b. Name, position/title of the contact person</li> <li>c. Contact numbers and email address</li> <li>d. Brief company governance structure</li> <li>e. Zambian company registration number and T-PIN number</li> </ul>
<b>2. Outline of proposed investment (no more than four pages in total, including addressing each component)</b>	<b>a) The business case</b> for the initiative - i.e. what it is and why it is important to the company that it makes the investment, how it fits within the existing business, why it is important to engage the smallholder market and how it will become commercially sustainable
	<b>b) The geographical area</b> covered by the proposed initiative and rationale for the choice.
	<b>c) An outline of the innovation</b> within the proposed initiative, i.e. what elements does it incorporate that are not present in the market currently and how this initiative can 'move the market' forwards
	<b>d) The 'added value'</b> that the initiative brings to farmers participating in the market opportunity beyond simply a 'buy' or 'sell' transaction
	<b>e) The estimated number of farmers</b> that could participate and benefit from the improved market access offered by the initiative
	<b>f) The measurement plan</b> the company will deploy to capture the number of agribusiness involved

		<b>g) An outline of any partnership opportunities</b> for collaboration with other media players in the market					
		<b>h) The proposed timeline for the key activities and investments</b>					
		<b>i) Any opportunities for increased direct/indirect employment</b> as a result of the investment					
<b>3) Simple budget</b> in the format below, which should be divided into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>f. Total cost</li> <li>g. Company's own contribution</li> <li>h. Funds requested and purpose for those funds</li> <li>i. Brief explanatory notes to each requested budget line</li> </ul>							
Budget (fill in budget lines where applicable)		Units	Value	Total	Musika	Company (indicative)	Explanatory Notes
Human Resources							
Assets and Demonstration Units							
Training							
Promotions and Awareness							
Innovation Support							
Other							
				<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>Sub-Total</b>	
				<b>Grand Total</b>			

## **EVALUATION**

Concept notes will be evaluated on the above points and more generally in terms of the capacity of the companies submitting proposals to both successfully implement the proposed initiatives and to provide a **'return on investment'** for Musika's support in terms of long term and widespread benefit to the agricultural market as a whole.

Points will be gained by:

- Offering innovative agriculture market forum
- Offering a cost-efficient model based on content monetisation
- Financial leverage to cost share with Musika at incubation stage and that demo sustainability pathway beyond Musika support

## **SELECTION PROCESS**

1. Musika will acknowledge receipt of all submissions
2. Musika's Grants Committee will evaluate all submissions based on the criteria outlined above.
3. Musika will contact bidding companies with successful concept notes, which will then be invited to a meeting at Musika to understand the requirements of Musika, undertake a very basic due diligence process and to work with Musika's technical team to develop a more

detailed strategy and financial support package. Musika does not commit to contact the unsuccessful applicants. Note that this stage does not imply any guarantee of future support.

4. Musika's technical team will present any proposals that pass Stage 3. to the Musika Grants Committee for final review
5. If proposals pass Stage 4., the companies submitting those proposals will be subject to a due diligence exercise with the rigour and detail dependent on the value of the budget requested.

Note: Musika reserves the right to reject all or any proposals, or to award support without further discussion or negotiations if it is considered in the best interests of Musika's objectives.

#### **CLARIFICATION AND SUBMISSION**

Interested companies may seek clarification or any other information at the email address [grants@musika.org.zm](mailto:grants@musika.org.zm)

The concept notes are acceptable in electronic Pdf copy only and should be submitted by e-mail to [grants@musika.org.zm](mailto:grants@musika.org.zm) only as a **single Pdf document**, not copied to any Musika addresses, **by 17.00 Friday, June 26th, 2020.**

Faxed responses and physical copies will be rejected, as will late responses.