

# Request for Proposal

For Market Diagnostics Consulting Firm  
RFP-WI-WEECAP-2025-04-005

Issued: April 28, 2025

Women Economic Empowerment through  
Cashew Processing Program (WEECAP)

Country: Cote d'Ivoire



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## Confidentiality Statement

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## Introduction

Winrock International invites qualified consulting firms to submit proposals to conduct a comprehensive Market Diagnostic under the Women's Economic Empowerment through Cashew Processing (WEECAP) program. This initiative aims to unlock inclusive economic opportunities for young women and men across the cashew value chain in Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and Guinea-Bissau by strengthening local processing, boosting competitiveness, and addressing gender and youth-based barriers to participation.

To inform strategic investments and programming, the Market Diagnostic will generate robust market intelligence, profile supply chain actors—particularly women- and youth-led enterprises—and apply a Social Return on Investment (SROI) lens to identify scalable business models that drive inclusive growth. The analysis will span global, regional, and domestic market trends; competitiveness and capacity assessments; and firm-level insights into demand responsiveness and inclusive employment potential.

This assignment is expected to be completed over a two-and-a-half-month period and will culminate in a detailed report with actionable recommendations aligned with WEECAP's goals of competitiveness, inclusivity, and impact.

Interested firms are encouraged to review the detailed Scope of Work and submit a proposal by May 25, 2025

## **Business Overview & Project Background**

Winrock International is a global nonprofit organization that provides sustainable solutions for an interconnected world. Working with partners in the United States and more than 55 countries, Winrock integrates deep expertise in agriculture, economic development, social science and the environment to offer scalable solutions that increase prosperity while protecting our planet.

Women Economic Empowerment through Cashew Processing Program (WEECAP) aims to support young women and men in the cashew value chain to unravel job opportunities created by increased local processing specifically by women and young women. By unlocking the barriers in each component of the value chain, for the more financially vulnerable populations of women and young women in particular, and with a focus on enhancing competitiveness, and inclusivity for young women processors, service providers and farmers, the project aims to create dignified and rewarding jobs for 330,000 young women and men while integrating efforts throughout the value chain and the broader cashew ecosystem.

## **Assessment Background and Rationale**

The WAEMU cashew industry remains largely an exporter of raw nuts, forfeiting the higher value captured through processing and marketing kernels, food ingredient derivatives, shell byproducts, and cashew apple innovations demanded by European and North American buyers. Weak market intelligence on these growing segments—and the strategic investments they require—has left processors ill-equipped to negotiate prices, diversify products, or scale operations. As a result, jobs and income that could stay in the region migrate elsewhere.

This under-exploitation is felt most acutely by women, young people, and other marginalized groups, who face steeper barriers to finance, training, technology, and formal employment. Unlocking their participation is not simply a social obligation; it is a competitiveness imperative. Evidence from comparable value chains shows that firms integrating women and youth throughout supply, processing, and sales outperform peers on productivity, quality, and resilience.

The foundational Market Diagnostic will therefore:

- Generate market intelligence to identify and quantify demand, price trends, entry requirements, and segment-specific opportunities across high-growth cashew product categories.
- Assess the competitiveness, capabilities, and market readiness of processors and supply chain actors—including youth- and women-led enterprises—to inform pipeline selection and strategic alignment with demand-side priorities.

- Analyze how market dynamics and investment behavior intersect with inclusion, using a social return on investment (SROI) lens to identify scalable business models that expand meaningful participation of young women and men.

Findings will anchor a practical roadmap that aligns capital, policy, and business development services with the segments offering the highest combined return. By embedding gender equity and youth opportunities into every metric—from ROI calculations to policy benchmarks—the diagnostic ensures that future interventions drive competitive growth and broaden economic participation in the WAEMU cashew industry.

## Submission Details

### Submission Questions and Clarifications

Inquiries/questions must be received no later than **Friday, May 9, 2025, 23:59 PM GMT** and must be submitted via e-mail to [khar.dakono@weecap.org](mailto:khar.dakono@weecap.org). Winrock will review and respond to all potential offers by **Friday, May 16, 2025**

### Submission Deadlines

Proposals must be received no later than **23:59 PM GMT** on **Sunday, May 25, 2025**. Late submissions will not be accepted. All proposals are to be submitted following the guidelines listed below. Late or incomplete submissions may not be considered. Shortlisted firms may be contacted for an interview or additional clarifications.

Telephone requests will not be honored.

Winrock International may request additional documentation after the bid deadline.

### Submission Delivery Address

The delivery address to be used for all submissions is:

**Khar Dakono**

Email: [khar.dakono@weecap.org](mailto:khar.dakono@weecap.org)

Winrock will evaluate complete vendor proposals to determine which proposal represents the best value to Winrock. This is an unsealed solicitation request. Winrock reserves the right to negotiate with the bidders with or without discussion.

### Electronic Submissions

Electronic submissions in response to this Request for Proposal will be accepted as long as they meet the following criteria:

- Proposals must be submitted electronically in PDF format.
- All documents should be compiled into a single submission package.

- The subject line of the email should be: “Proposal Submission – Market Diagnostics Consulting Firm”.

## Instructions to Bidders

- Validity of bid: 60 days starting from the submission date.
- Cost quoted must include unit price and total price in CFA/USD
- Include VAT as we are not Tax Exempt
- Payment terms and complete banking information

## Bid Documents to Include

The submission package should include the following components:

### 1. Technical Proposal

- A detailed approach and methodology for conducting the gender sensitive market diagnostic.
- A work plan outlining key activities, deliverables, and timelines.
- Team composition, including roles and responsibilities of key experts.
- Description of data collection and analysis methods, including SROI framework application.

### 2. Financial Proposal

- A detailed budget breakdown, including professional fees, travel costs, and other expenses.
- Justification of costs in relation to the proposed methodology and work plan.
- Payment terms and schedule aligned with project milestones.

### 3. Qualifications and Experience

- Evidence of relevant expertise in market analysis, value chain development, and SROI application.
- Profiles and CVs of key personnel assigned to the assignment.
- A summary of the firm’s experience in agricultural value chains, particularly in Côte d’Ivoire, Senegal, and Guinea-Bissau and experience working with women-led businesses or initiatives promoting gender equity is advantageous.

### 4. Examples of Relevant Work

- Case studies or reports demonstrating experience in market segment mapping.
- Examples of previous SROI analyses conducted for similar value chain projects.
- References from clients for similar work undertaken.

## Award

Winrock anticipates notifying successful bidder and provide agreement for signature **the week of June 2, 2025.**

- Winrock will run an open and fair competitive bidding process.
- As warranted, Winrock may increase or decrease the quantities.

## Detailed Specifications

### Scope of Work and Key Activities

#### 1. Sector Baseline Analysis

The Sector Baseline Analysis will provide a clear, data rich snapshot of WAEMU's cashew industry by quantifying demand, supply, and competitiveness across priority market segments; benchmarking processor capacity, technology, and investment gaps—disaggregated to highlight the status of young women and men; and translating these insights into social return on investment metrics that pinpoint where upgrades can generate the highest financial returns and inclusive employment.

**Market Demand Profiling:** This component will generate comprehensive market intelligence to guide WEECAP's investment and intervention strategy. It will assess demand trends across global, regional, and local markets; evaluate buyer preferences and market access requirements; and analyze pricing dynamics, cost structures, and profitability margins. The objective is to identify commercially viable cashew product segments and determine how demand-side conditions align with the readiness and capabilities of different types of processors—particularly micro and small enterprises—to access and compete in these markets.

1. Conduct a global and regional market analysis of cashew products and derivatives (including kernels, apple-based products, and by-products), identifying demand trends, competitive landscapes, consumer preferences, and supply-demand dynamics across core and niche market segments—including packaging requirements.
2. Conduct a local market analysis for Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and Guinea-Bissau, highlighting demand for products such as cashew apple juice, snacks, flour, and roasted nuts. Include a product-based assessment of opportunities in agribusiness, institutional catering, and artisanal processing.
3. Map key kernel buyers by geography, identify strategic partners across high-value export markets, and assess both domestic and international niche market opportunities for WEECAP-supported processors—including off-take buyers for sub-grade kernels (e.g., borma, broken) and alternative distribution channels linked to diversification strategies.
4. Identify the quality standards, certifications, sustainability benchmarks, and regulatory requirements that processors must meet to access specific markets, and analyze buyer requirements, procurement practices, and preferred distribution channels to support successful market entry.
5. Confirm annual production and sales volumes of raw cashew nuts and kernels in Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and Guinea-Bissau, including volume and value metrics.
6. Evaluate price trends, input cost structures, and profitability margins for major processed products in each country. Identify breakeven volumes to support value proposition development.

**Supply Chain Profiling:** This component builds on the insights from the market profiling to deepen the understanding of firm-level dynamics in the cashew value chain. It will assess the competitiveness of differently sized processors, identify strategic pipeline partners for WEECAP support, and evaluate supply chain partnerships and service delivery models that foster inclusive market access. Special attention will be given to identifying opportunities for micro and small processors, and to assessing how service linkages with larger firms can improve market

readiness and alignment with demand-driven opportunities. This analysis will also help uncover the structural and institutional factors that constrain or enable inclusive growth for young women and men in the sector.

1. Conduct a sector-level analysis, informed by identified market segments and buyers, to evaluate the ability of processors to compete in those markets. This should include an assessment of competitive strengths and weaknesses, and relevant regulatory factors. In particular, provide recommendations on how micro and small processors can participate in these market channels, and identify the barriers currently preventing them from doing so—barriers which the WEECAP project may be positioned to address.
2. Develop a categorized list of potential entities for WEECAP partnership across five priority groups: **micro processors (>500 MT)**, **small processors (>5,000 MT)**, **medium processors (10,000-20,000 MT)**, **collectors/aggregators/service providers, and producer organizations**. This activity aims to identify high-potential partners for targeted support, inclusive value chain integration, and youth and gender-responsive investment. For each category:
  1. Analyze each entity's scale, ownership or workforce composition (with particular attention to young women and men), current capabilities, and growth constraints. This includes highlighting youth and women-led organizations in alignment with market needs and assessing their potential role in sector growth.
  2. Assess alignment with WEECAP objectives, focusing on inclusive sourcing strategies, employment potential for young women and men, and opportunities for enterprise upgrading.
  3. Justify inclusion of each recommended entity based on its potential contribution to inclusive growth, capacity for scale, and strategic position within the value chain.
3. Identify and assess innovative supply chain partnership models—such as processor–producer group alliances and horizontal linkages between large and small/micro processors—that enable differently sized firms to access and compete in identified cashew market segments. Evaluate the scalability, replicability, and effectiveness of these models in strengthening inclusive supply chain integration and competitiveness.
4. Identify and assess innovative models of service provision by larger cashew processing firms to producer groups, small and micro processors, and other supply chain providers. This can include, but not be limited to, financing instruments, extension services, forward contracting mechanisms, etc. Identify which processors offer which services.

**Market-Driven Social Return on Investment (SROI) Analysis.** This section builds directly on the evidence generated through market and supply chain actor profiling and provides more in-depth analysis linking market opportunities to social returns. It will examine how firms respond to market signals and assess the key drivers behind their investment decisions. The analysis will also inform a practical framework for ensuring young women and men can equitably participate in market opportunities by identifying both the economic incentives that drive engagement and the social barriers that hinder it—ensuring processor investments are market-driven, inclusive, and sustainability-oriented.

1. Based on the global and local market analysis of cashew products and derivatives, provide analysis to inform economic and social impact of different market segments, including employment generation and income improvements, through a market viability lens. This should consist of:



1. Identify market-driven entry points and opportunities for young women and men in emerging cashew product segments, highlighting participation pathways that align with segment-specific demand and integration potential.
2. Estimate job creation potential across segments—disaggregated by gender and age—and identify the drivers that can unlock large-scale, inclusive employment opportunities.
3. Evaluate the current number of jobs in the cashew industry in the three countries per segments (sourcing, processing, other services like transportation etc).
2. Identify and analyze the obstacles hindering the participation of young women and men in identified market segments particularly in areas such as governance, leadership, and decision-making—and link these to firm-level behavior and structural constraints revealed in market demand profiling.
3. Evaluate supply chain integration patterns and identify best practices for strengthening processor-farmer collaboration to improve efficiency and sustainability, while also examining processor business behavior, including how firms respond to market signals, what influences their investment decisions, and their approach to managing risk and integrating with supply chains.
4. List examples of success in integrating young women and men and people living with disabilities in the project area and analyze replicability in the cashew sector.

## 2. Deliverables and Timeline

The consulting firm is expected to deliver the following over a two-and-a-half-month period, aligned with the integrated scope of Market Profiling, Supply Chain Analysis, and Social Return on Investment (SROI):

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Due (Days from Contract Start)</b>
<b>Kick-off Meeting &amp; Mobilization – Confirm scope, team roles, and data access</b>	Day 1–3
<b>Inception Report – Methodology, work plan, stakeholder map, toolkits, data sources</b>	Day 10
<b>Initial Market &amp; Supply Chain Mapping – Market segments, actors, processor categories</b>	Day 25
<b>Draft Market Demand Analysis – Global/local trends, segmentation, pricing, access barriers</b>	Day 35
<b>Draft Supply Chain Profiling &amp; Pipeline Screening – Firm readiness, partnerships, services</b>	Day 42
<b>Draft SROI Analysis – Inclusive ROI, job creation estimates, barriers to youth and women’s participation</b>	Day 48
<b>Internal Review Meeting – Present interim findings and adjust data gaps</b>	Day 50
<b>Revised Integrated Draft Report (Word + PPT)</b>	Day 65
<b>Final Market Diagnostic Report – Fully formatted and finalized version for dissemination</b>	Day 75

## 3. Budget

The total budget is USD \$50,000 - \$75,000 for this proposal.

#### 4. Reporting and Coordination

The consulting firm will report to the Project Management Team and work in close coordination with relevant stakeholders, including policymakers, industry associations, financial institutions, and research bodies. Regular progress updates and validation workshops will be conducted to ensure stakeholder buy-in and relevance of findings.

The consulting firm must meet the following qualifications and experience requirements to be eligible for this competitive tender:

##### **Core Expertise and Technical Skills:**

- Advanced expertise in market analysis and value chain development, with a strong focus on agribusiness competitiveness.
- Proven ability to apply a social return on investment (SROI) framework to market analytics and decision-making and women's leadership.
- Experience conducting gender and inclusion-focused assessments within agricultural value chains.
- Strong understanding of the West African agricultural market, particularly in the cashew sector.
- Demonstrated capacity to develop evidence-based policy and investment recommendations tailored to industry stakeholders.
- Proven experience in gender and social inclusion
- Ability to make practical gender sensitive and social inclusion recommendations to project managers

##### **Industry and Regional Experience**

- At least five (5) years of experience in market diagnostics, working in cashew or agricultural value chains in Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and Guinea-Bissau or food processing sector.
- At least 3 years' professional experience in social science studies
- In-depth experience in gender analysis and social inclusion issues
- Hands-on experience engaging with processors, smallholder farmers, financial institutions, and policymakers in West Africa.
- Familiarity with innovative supply chain models that enhance processor-farmer collaboration and market competitiveness.
- Experience conducting firm-level return on investment (ROI) analysis to assess business decision-making within agricultural markets.

##### **Analytical and Communication Skills**

- Strong ability to collect, synthesize, and analyze quantitative and qualitative data for market diagnostics.
- Excellent reporting skills, with the ability to present complex market insights in a clear and actionable manner.
- Excellent communication skills to engage with diverse stakeholders, including farmers, processors, and policymakers
- Demonstrated track record of facilitating stakeholder consultations and validation workshops.

##### **Language Proficiency**

- Fluency in English and French is required, Portuguese is a plus.
- Working knowledge of Portuguese is considered an advantage, given the regional scope of the assessment.

## Terms and Conditions

Each Bid must conform to the following requirements

1. Must agree to the general provisions outlined in Attachment A. Any variations must be requested in the proposal submission and agreed to before a contract is issued.
2. Winrock International will not consider advance payment.
3. A vendor may withdraw or change a bid before the deadline to receive bids if written notice of the withdrawal or change is received by Winrock for submission of bids. Any changes may be made only by substitution of another bid.
4. Proposals received after the time specified in the request for bid will not be considered and shall be returned to the respondent.
5. Payment will not be processed until each deliverable is reviewed and accepted by the Winrock International WEECAP Review team.
6. Winrock reserves its rights to reject any services and to cancel all or any part of this procurement if vendor fails to deliver all or any part of the services described in the request for proposal. If vendor ceases to conduct its operations in the ordinary course of business or are unable to meet its obligations, Winrock may cancel this order without liability except for deliveries previously made or for services previously provided or for services received.
7. The bidder must have excellent communication skills and methods and be able to communicate very clearly at every step of development, both providing information to the Winrock team as well as requesting, understanding and closely following guidance from the Winrock team.

## Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Category	Criteria	Weight (%)	Description
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Technical Proposal	Core Expertise & Technical Skills	15%	Expertise in market analysis, value chain development, gender and social inclusion, and evidence-based policy and investment recommendations.
	Analytical & Communication Skills	20%	Ability to collect, analyze, and present data clearly; strong stakeholder engagement and facilitation of consultations and workshops.
	Language Proficiency	5%	Fluency in English and French is required; Portuguese is a plus.
	<b>Total Technical Proposal</b>	40%	
Financial Proposal	Budget Range	15%	Budget must fall between USD \$50,000 – \$75,000.
	Cost Reasonableness	15%	Alignment of cost with proposed work, value for money, and justification of expenses.
	<b>Total Financial Proposal</b>	30%	
Qualifications & Expertise	Industry & Regional Experience	10%	Experience in cashew/agricultural value chains in

			Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau; working with stakeholders and conducting ROI analysis.
	Relevant Work Experience	10%	At least 5 years in market diagnostics and 3 years in social science studies, with a focus on gender analysis and social inclusion.
	<b>Total Qualifications &amp; Expertise</b>	20%	
Examples of Relevant Work	Sample Work & References	10%	Quality and relevance of past work in similar contexts, especially in West Africa and within the agricultural sector.
	<b>Total Examples of Work</b>	10%	
Proposal	<b>Total</b>	100%	

## Certification of Independent Price Determination

(a) The offeror certifies that—

(1) The prices in this offer have been arrived at independently, without, for the purpose of restricting competition, any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other offeror, including but not limited to subsidiaries or other entities in which offeror has any ownership or other interests, or any competitor relating to (i) those prices, (ii) the intention to submit an offer, or (iii) the methods or factors used to calculate the prices offered;

(2) The prices in this offer have not been and will not be knowingly disclosed by the offeror, directly or indirectly, to any other offeror, including but not limited to subsidiaries or other entities in which offeror has any ownership or other interests, or any competitor before bid opening (in the case of a sealed bid solicitation) or contract award (in the case of a negotiated or competitive solicitation) unless otherwise required by law; and

(3) No attempt has been made or will be made by the offeror to induce any other concern or individual to submit or not to submit an offer for the purpose of restricting competition or influencing the competitive environment.

(b) Each signature on the offer is considered to be a certification by the signatory that the signatory—

(1) Is the person in the offerors organization responsible for determining the prices being offered in this bid or proposal, and that the signatory has not participated and will not participate in any action contrary to subparagraphs (a)(1) through (a)(3) above; or

(2) (i) Has been authorized, in writing, to act as agent for the principals of the offeror in certifying that those principals have not participated, and will not participate in any action contrary to subparagraphs (a)(1) through (a)(3) above; (ii) As an authorized agent, does certify that the principals of the offeror have not participated, and will not participate, in any action contrary to subparagraphs

(a)(1) through (a)(3) above; and (iii) As an agent, has not personally participated, and will not participate, in any action contrary to subparagraphs (a)(1) through

(a)(3) above.

(c) Offeror understands and agrees that –

(1) violation of this certification will result in immediate disqualification from this solicitation without recourse and may result in disqualification from future solicitations; and

(2) Discovery of any violation after award to the offeror will result in the termination of the award for default.