**Tender information dissemination session:**

**Date: 22nd July 2019**

**Location: Mercy Corps office**

The information dissemination session was held by the consortium Director supported by the Operations Manager as well the program manager and logistics coordinator of ADRA (sub award recipient also running a similar tender) under the same program but in a different state.

The session started off with a brief about the SAFE program covering what the program is, market sectors which the program hopes to improve, the approach being used (Market Systems Development video and explanations). This was followed by an explanation of the scope of work document (Market Analysis, Statement of Opportunity, Proposed partnership activities, Responsibility of the partner/Input Company (ies), Responsibilities of Mercy Corps or ADRA, Application process, Templates (application, budget and work plan). This was done using a PowerPoint presentation attached)

The following were questions asked during and after the presentations

1. **Question**: How many training sessions are companies required to do for farmers?

**Response**: The training planned by Mercy Corps under this tender is not a big training for days. It is about providing farmers who are buying seeds the most important basic information required to produce a good harvest. This would include things like the correct seed spacing, frequency and timing of weeding, how to manage pests, when and how to harvest etc. This is not expected to take more than a few minutes. This training is expected to be given by the inputs sales agents after being trained by the seed company

1. **Question**: How many times should training materials be made?

**Response:** The training materials proposed under this tender are just posters of A3 size, divided into two sections, each section with the most important agronomic training for farmers. Two sets of posters are expected to be produced for each input sales agent and pinned at the agent’s shop.

1. **Question**: What will Mercy Corps do about the risks involved in executing this tender?

**Response:** Mercy Corps is not guaranteeing the selected against any risks. Mercy Corps will pay for the agreed portion of the cost of seeds sold to farmers and if no seeds are sold, Mercy Corps will not pay any money. However, Mercy Corps will contribute to the cost of setting up a seed retail network (agents) which is an activity that comes before seeds are sold.

1. **Question**: Is there support for the company to promote other farm inputs such as fertilizers chemicals etc?

**Response:** Mercy Corps under this tender is only supporting seed companies to sell seeds and particularly does not wish to sell chemicals because of donor regulations. Other complementary products may be marketed during the marketing time.

1. **Question**: What is the role of Mercy Corps between the company and the farmers

**Response:** Mercy Corps will introduce the selected company to existing input and output traders, issue vouchers to beneficiaries and cost share for the cost of the seeds at an agreed rate.

1. **Question**: What is the guarantee that when farmers buy at a discount rate, they will not sell the seeds for a profit rather than plant it hence the company would have lost the money invested?

**Response:** This initiative is simulating a real market and there are no hard guarantees. Mercy Corps will try as much as possible in discussions with the company to set a discount rate that tops up the amount the farmers are already willing to pay for the seeds as guided by the ongoing willingness to pay assessment. Mercy Corps will also partner with another company which buys farm produce to offer a better price which hopefully will motivate farmers to plant.

1. **Question**: Will the discount not prevent other agents from selling their seeds since the existing agents will be selling at full price?

 **Response:** Mercy Corps does not wish to flood an area with many agents since it will make the business not profitable for agents. Where agents already exist, companies are advised to take those agents as part of their seeds sales networks if the agents are not part of exclusive contacts with other companies

1. **Question**: Does Mercy Corps have already formed farmer groups?

**Response:** According to this particular strategy, Mercy Corps does not wish to form groups but has already mapped existing groups which it will share with the company that has won the tender. The company can also go to other groups to sell their seeds.

1. **Question:** Are cost for seed storage containers eligible to be charged on the program?

**Response:** Mercy Corps under this type of program will not pay for the cost of fixed assets such as containers or running costs such as generator fuel or staff salaries. If a company included part of the cost for the seed storage container, this will raise their budget and increase the chances of being outcompeted by another company.

1. According to the items required could you pls send us the following:

1/ Quantities required for each item for each areas & whole Quantities

2/ the Units kg--gram--- etc?

3/ destination

**Response:** Mercy Corps is supporting seed companies to go market their own seeds in rural areas. Mercy Corps cannot predict the quantity of seeds the farmers will buy but is committed to paying a certain percentage of the cost of the seeds procured by farmers as specified in the tender and to be included in the contract. If a company does a good marketing promotion, more farmers will buy their seeds. This means mercy Corps cannot specify the quantity of seeds in whatever units. The destination has been defined in the bid as the 4 localities. Much as Mercy Corps knows the general area, it cannot predict exactly where the farmers who will buy the seeds will come from. Adverts will be placed widely and the company will select the areas where they feed the seeds will be bought best, but out of the urban areas.