

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

June 2023



## Design and implementation of a livelihoods initiative

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### Introduction

The Freedom Fund (<https://freedomfund.org/>) identifies and invests in the most effective frontline efforts to eradicate forced labour and human trafficking. We select key geographic areas – our hotspot projects – known to have high rates of exploitation, and where our interventions are most likely to have the greatest impact.

The Freedom Fund and its local partners in Nepal are presently implementing a three-year program to significantly reduce the prevalence of agricultural bonded labour in Nepal and support survivors to achieve sustainable freedom.

As part of the program, the Freedom Fund will be executing a livelihoods program among the Harawa-Charawa, communities we are currently working with, to support them in securing decent work and to sustain a future free from exploitation.

The Freedom Fund anticipates this to be a ten-month project, with work commencing in August 2023 and a final report due in June 2024.

### Eligibility

Local Nepali organisations and international entities associated with Nepal-based support in province 2 are invited to submit proposals for this work. Applicants must also have demonstrable subject matter expertise and operational experience to deliver this project.

### Proposal deadline and timeline

Proposals should be submitted via email to Deepika Allana ([dallana@freedomfund.org](mailto:dallana@freedomfund.org)) on or before **15<sup>th</sup> June 2023** (Nepali time), with subject line “Livelihoods RFP submission”. Proposals should be no more than 3 pages, plus annexes. First round interviews will be arranged with short-listed candidates between 19-21<sup>st</sup> June, with an aim to commence work in mid-July.

### Background to agricultural bonded labour in Nepal

The Nepal hotspot supports survivors and frontline NGOs to build a movement against agricultural bonded labour. Our hotspot supports the three largest survivor groups exploited by agricultural bonded labour in Nepal, representing an estimated population of over 400,000 Harawa-Charawa, Haliya and Kamaiya.

The overarching outcomes of the program are:

1. A united movement of agricultural bonded labour groups is formed and active at the national level.
2. The government changes policies to address agricultural bonded labour and provide support services for survivors.
3. Agricultural bonded labourers have greater resilience as a result of accessing government and NGO support services.

The bonded labour groups are now working together in a Joint Struggle Committee and have been directly advocating for an end to exploitative working practices with the government. The government’s declaration to free the Harawa Charawa from bonded labour in 2022 was an important win, however communities have yet to see any significant change to their situation.

There is a significant need to connect agricultural bonded labourers to decent work. Alternative employment and livelihood opportunities are primary mechanisms for community members to sustainably escape bonded labour. It is likely that this need has grown exponentially since the pandemic with even more vulnerable

people forced into exploitative working conditions.

### Background to this Livelihoods Initiative

The Freedom Fund commissioned a firm to conduct research assessing decent employment and livelihood opportunities for the 3 groups. The research showed that 90% of Harawa-Charawa and Haliya groups were engaged in agriculture and lacked access to loans for investment. The report recommended the following agricultural reforms:

- Increase productivity of agricultural activities generating higher yields and higher incomes to those engaged in this sector
- Ease access to critical complementary inputs such as capital investment, and new and improved farming knowledge
- Support sustained efforts to diversify agro-based employment sector

### Objective of the Livelihoods Initiative

Design a livelihoods intervention which aims to increase household income of Harawa-Charawa families and communities through increasing agriculture production, diversifying produce and increasing yield, by increasing access to loans for investment and improved knowledge on farming.

### Requirements for applicants

- Expertise in the agriculture sector and knowledge of the markets in the Terai region of Nepal
- Ability to design a training course that is responsive to the community needs, including on agriculture techniques, crop sharing, animal husbandry, and writing business plans, likely be delivered weekly through the Freedom Fund's existing community groups
- Work with Freedom Fund's 4 local NGO partners in the Terai to develop a selection process for participants among the 227 community groups with over 3,000 members. Finalised participants or groups would be anywhere from 30-100 total, depending on the size of the seed money grants.
- Ability to design a process to review business plans and a mechanism to distribute seed money to individuals through the Freedom Fund groups
- Ability to design a process to monitor the use of the funds to reduce risk of financial irregularity/misuse of funds
- Design a monitoring process to understand impact of the program (inc. training/seed money distribution) and share learnings

### Proposal Questions

In addition to providing a brief description of the design/methodology that meets the above-stated objective, the proposal should answer the following questions:

1. How would your design take advantage of **existing networks** and relevant stakeholders, and what role could they play?
2. What type of **training** would best suit the needs of this program within the timeframe available?
3. What would be the **mechanics of transferring seed money** to 30-100 individuals and groups (that are not registered)?
4. What current **schemes** exist that could complement or be incorporated into the program design, to benefit the Harawa-Charawa community, who are landless workers?
5. What are the anticipated **challenges and obstacles** to program that offers seed money and to the overall livelihoods program design and how would the design mitigate the any risks?
6. How would the design **mitigate the risks** associated with this type of livelihood program?
7. What is the optimal way to **measure outcomes**, given the short 10-month project period and the agriculture seasons (I.e.- how will you monitor and measure outcomes/impact)?

### Project deliverables and timeline

The tentative schedule of main deliverables is as follows. As part of the contracting process, the timeline below will be further reviewed and refined.

July 2023: Successful candidate contracted. Proposed program design submitted.

August 2023: Program design finalized.

September – December 2023: Trainings complete. Seed money distributed. Monitoring mechanisms in place.

January- May 2024: Monitoring and evaluation.

June 2024: Final report submitted.

## Budget

The Freedom Fund has budgeted approximately USD 50,000 for this project (not including the approximate \$200,000 to be provided to communities as seed money). Budgets will be reviewed with respect to the strength of the proposal in meeting the project objectives in a cost-effective manner. We do not simply prioritize the lowest budget.

As part of the Budget Annex, please prepare a brief budget in USD with the following breakdown:

- Personnel cost
- Other direct costs (such as training costs (including printing, travel, translation), travel and accommodation, meetings, etc.)
- Overheads
- VAT and other taxes, if applicable

## Proposal format

Interested parties should prepare a proposal of **no more than 3 pages** which briefly explains design/methodology ideas and responds to the “Proposal Questions” above, plus annexes. Proposals should contain the following Annexes:

Annex A: Table with team structure, role of each key team member, and time commitment in % of each key team member. Short biography of team lead and other key team members, outlining relevant subject matter expertise and prior experience leading similar research projects. CV of the team lead should be included in this annex.

Annex B: One-page explanation of relevant experience with livelihood projects that include seed money investments

Annex C: High-level work plan and timeline for key project phases and deliverables. Timeline should take into account planting seasons, keeping in mind how to measure outcomes.

Annex D: Proposed budget in USD.

The proposal must be written in English and sent electronically in Microsoft Office or PDF format.

## Criteria for evaluating proposals

In evaluating proposals, the Freedom Fund will use the criteria below. Offers will be rejected if any illegal or corrupt practices have taken place in connection with the award.

### Contextual knowledge/experience – 35%

- Experience executing livelihood programs with a seed money component that involves transferring seed money.
- Knowledge of issues relating to agricultural bonded labour and situations of marginalized ethnic groups in Nepal.
- Knowledge of the economic, social & political environment in Nepal, especially in provinces 2.
- Language capacity of team (Nepali and Maitihili)

### Team and organisational structure/capacity/efficiencies- 50%

- Ability to design all aspects of the program, including managing mechanics of money transfers, accountability mechanisms, and monitoring framework
- Team ability and proven experience in rolling out large-scale livelihood programs of similar budgets
- Ability to deliver quality outputs, deliver at scale and within the desired timeline, without delays
- Existing presence in Nepal and team staffing levels, which allows for quick uptake and roll-out of the work

### Budget – 15%

- Consideration of all potential expenses