

## Consultant Solicitation

Promoting Cashew Production and access of high yielding planting material in Nigeria

USDA West Africa PRO-Cashew Project

<b>Solicitation Number:</b>	#03-001/2021
<b>Issuance Date:</b>	October 27, 2021
<b>Deadline for Offers:</b>	November 10, 2021
<b>Expected Period of Performance</b>	December 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022
<b>Description:</b>	Technical Lead for promoting cashew production and access to high yielding planting material in Nigeria
<b>For:</b>	West Africa PRO-Cashew Project
<b>Funded By:</b>	USDA FCC-641-2019/006-00
<b>Implemented By:</b>	CNFA
<b>Submit Proposals to:</b>	<a href="mailto:procurement@cnfa-procashew.org">procurement@cnfa-procashew.org</a>
<b>Email Subject</b>	Production and access to high yielding planting material in Nigeria

### Section 1: Offer Instructions

- 1. Introduction:** PRO-Cashew is a USDA program implemented by CNFA in West Africa. The project aims to boost the competitiveness of West African producers by improving efficiency and quality in production and trade and by working to develop more coherent regional trade and investment policies.

PRO-Cashew seeks the services of a consultant to lead research on cashew production and access to high-yielding planting material in Nigeria. This activity would require the consultant to work and coordinate with other stakeholders, namely the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN), the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the National Cashew Association of Nigeria, commercial and smallholder farmers, and the National Cashew Committee.

The consultant will make frequent local trips to different producing ecologies of Nigeria, namely—Enugu, Kogi, Kwara, Oyo, Ogun, and Benue, etc. In addition to the above, the consultant will develop the research plan, conduct desk research, and coordinate qualitative and quantitative data collection while working with a team of researchers, enumerators, students, and extension officers. At the end of the desk research, the consultant will submit an inception report highlighting the findings of the desk research on 1) the mother tree selection process in collaboration with CRIN, 2) the establishment of scion gardens in selected locations of the project in Nigeria, 3) assistance in developing policies and regulations that improve the cashew production and access to high yielding material, and 4) a workplan for a period covering the activities of the assignment. **Section 2** provides full details of the required Scope of Work.

Applicants are expected to comply with the instructions, terms, and conditions described in this solicitation. CNFA will only receive applications from Independent Consultants who meet the criteria of this solicitation; firms are not eligible to apply for this solicitation. Failure to adhere to instructions described in this solicitation may lead to disqualification of an offer. **Please reference the solicitation number in all responses.**

- 2. Application Deadline and Protocol:** Applications must be received no later than 5:00 pm, GMT, November 10, 2021. All application must be submitted by email to [procurement@cnfa-procashew.org](mailto:procurement@cnfa-procashew.org). Applications received after the specified time and date will be considered late. The cover page of this solicitation summarizes the important dates of the solicitation process. Offerors must strictly follow the provided deadlines to be considered for award.

3. **Cost Proposal:** The rate must be presented in U.S. Dollars (USD). Quotations must remain valid for not less than sixty (60) days. The applicants shall bear all costs associated with preparing and submitting the quotations up to the final award of the contract. CNFA will not be responsible or liable for those costs, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the procurement process. Failure to submit proposed payment terms may lead to disqualification of an offer from consideration. Offerors are requested to provide offers on official letterhead in accordance with the format provided in Annex 1.
4. **Taxes and VAT:** All prices must be presented exclusive of any taxes, duties, and VAT. The selected offeror is responsible for all taxes in accordance with the applicable law.
5. **Evaluation:** The award will be made to a responsible applicant whose offer meet the solicitation instructions, eligibility requirements and is determined via a trade-off analysis to be the best value based on the application of the below evaluation criteria. Best value determination will consider both technical and financial proposals, i.e., the best approach and anticipated results combined with a reasonable cost. Proposed costs must reflect and match the degree of sophistication of the technical approach. The number of points below indicates the relative importance of each criterion:
  - **Technical Criteria – 60%**
    - Complete application as listed in Annex 1 and Annex 2 10%
    - Previous experience in mother tree selection research including experiences, knowledge, and involvement in similar activities – 30%
    - Presentation/sample work developed by the candidate – 20%
  - **Financial Criteria- 30%**
    - Reasonable cost proposal—the proposed budget will be assessed on the degree to which the budget reflects the actual requirements of the technical proposal. The costs included in the budget should accurately represent the work effort described in the technical proposal – 30%
  - **Management, Personnel, and Resources- 10%**
    - An advanced University Degree, preferably a PHD in Economics, Development Studies, Agriculture, International Relations, Business Administration or any relevant discipline;
    - Proven track record in the development of cashew nut cultivation research and production experience, business support strategies, and implementation;
    - Extensive hands-on experience in research and production of cashew nuts and tree crops in general, strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation processes;
    - Demonstrated knowledge of strategic research and production management at the international level;
    - Experience in designing and delivering capacity-building programs to research in tree crops and cashes nut production in particular.

Best-offer proposals are requested. It is anticipated that the award will be made solely based on these original proposals. However, CNFA reserves the right to conduct any of the following:

- CNFA may conduct negotiations with and/or request clarifications from any offeror prior to award;
- While preference will be given to offerors who can address the full technical requirements of this solicitation, CNFA may issue a partial award or split the award among various suppliers, if in the best interest of the PRO-Cashew Project;
- CNFA may cancel this solicitation at any time;
- CNFA may contact a shortlist of offerors for additional screening interviews following a review of initial offers received.

Please note that if there are deficiencies regarding responsiveness to this Solicitation requirements, an offer may be deemed "non-responsive" and thereby disqualified from consideration. CNFA reserves the right to waive immaterial deficiencies at its discretion.

6. **Payment and Award:** The award will be awarded to the offeror whose quotation represents the project's best value. Award will be issued only to the entity which submits an offer in response to this solicitation. CNFA will not issue an award to different offerors, entities, or third parties other than the selected offeror(s). Any award and payment resulting from this solicitation is anticipated to be in the form of an Independent Consultant Agreement. This award is subject to the PRO-Cashew Project's terms and conditions as stipulated in Annex 3.
7. **Offer Format Instructions:** All offers must be formatted in accordance with the below requirements:
  - a) English language only
  - b) Include the offeror's name, date, solicitation number, and page numbers as a header or footer throughout the document.
  - c) The Official Offer must be in the format provided in Annex 1 (Official Offer Template)
  - d) Cover letter signed by the offeror in the format provided in Annex 2 ( Offeror Cover Letter)
  - e) CV/Resume
  - f) Provide three contacts for references from organizations/individuals for which the offeror has successfully performed similar work
  - g) At least two recent reports published or contributions from the consultant justifying experience of conducting similar research, that is, **mother tree selection, establishment of scion gardens for development cashew production projects or government agencies.**
  - h) Concept paper: The applications should be accompanied by a concept paper (minimum four pages and maximum of ten pages) summarizing their understanding of the SoW, the methods they will use, highlighting best practices, challenges, opportunities, and areas of focus for the research; and a draft plan and schedule for the realization of the study.
  - i) The Cost Proposal (i.e., budget) must be in the format provided in Annex 1.

Proposals complete with all components outlined above should be submitted to [procurement@cnfa-procashew.org](mailto:procurement@cnfa-procashew.org) by **Monday, November 10, 2021 (5:00 pm GMT)**, with the "**Production and access to high yielding planting material in Nigeria**" name in the subject line. Proposals received after this deadline may not be considered.

## Section 2: Scope of Work

### 2.1. Background

The PRO-Cashew Project is a five-year project funded by the USDA Food for Progress program and implemented by CNFA. The project is implemented in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria.

The project aims to improve the cashew sector by:

- Increasing productivity and efficiency of farmers in the cashew value chain through improving crop quality; rehabilitating and renovating orchards; strengthening the capacities of cooperatives and producer organizations, nursery systems and input suppliers.
- Boosting trade of cashew by improving harvest and post-harvest techniques, addressing gaps in data collection, analysis, and dissemination; supporting supply chain linkages between farmers and agri-food companies; and encouraging harmonized market-driven regional policies.

PRO-Cashew has led specific activities for the development of cashew production and sustainability of the value chain. These initiatives will guide and feed into the assignment implementation while highlighting the challenges and opportunities to improve cashew productivity in Nigeria.

Below are some initiatives and actions are undertaken in Nigeria under the project:

- a) In January 2021, PRO-Cashew signed an MoU with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to join their efforts in the project implementation
- b) Establishment of a National Cashew Committee to support the overall vision of the private sector in decision making for policy and regulations that enable successful delivery of value addition in the sector
- c) Identification and selection of a sub-contractor to implement Activity# 3 of the PRO-Cashew project: Inputs: Develop Agro-dealers and/or Other Input Suppliers
- d) Completion of a study on Cashew Production Landscape Analysis and Strategic Research development
- e) Developed and signed an MoU with the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) to support the promotion of cashew production and access to high-yielding planting material. This collaboration led to the identification of Mother Trees selection in the production areas in Nigeria

Moving forward, the project has developed in collaboration with the CRIN a mother trees identification and selection strategy to kick start the cashew seedlings and polyclonal seed production in selected project locations. These locations are; Kwara (Irepodun, Oyun), Kogi (Ijumu, Dekina), Ogun (Imeko-Afon, Yewa North), Ekiti (Ikole, Ilejemeje), Edo (Owan East, Etsako East), Imo (Okigwe, North, Orisu), Akwa Ibom (Ini, Ikono), and Cross Rivers (Ogoja, Obudu).

### 2.2. Overview

PRO-Cashew seeks the services of a consultant to coordinate with a team of researchers and extension officers to undertake a study on mother tree selection in Nigeria. This assignment requires desk research and field trips to selected intervention regions in Nigeria. The consultant is expected to use qualitative and quantitative research methods; thus, the information collected will be analyzed with the ultimate objective of identifying mother trees and establishing scion gardens in Nigeria. The report should also identify, analyze, and provide recommendations for the sustainability of such research activity, scion gardens' management techniques, and nursery operators' strategic mobilization and deployment. The study's overall objective is to contribute to increasing the productivity, profitability, and sustainability of cashew nut production value chains in Nigeria to improve food and nutrition security and the resilience of vulnerable households.

The final report on mother tree selection will be the basis of determining inputs, improved planting material development, and other research needs for Nigeria. The report will develop a tool kit for conducting similar research. This research is crucial to unlocking improved planting material for the Nigerian Cashew sector, coordinating with key stakeholders, and monitoring and evaluating the cashew production inputs in Nigeria. The recommendations should also provide a clear roadmap for implementing innovative approaches during and after the project.

### **2.2.1 Methodologies**

The preparatory phase of the mother tree study should be participatory, relevant stakeholders within the cashew sector should be involved. Interviews of stakeholders should be conducted, where necessary, to create the needed awareness and gain the acceptance of farmers and interested actors of the value chain.

The consultant is further required to propose the study methodology, analyze all relevant information, and train the relevant stakeholders for the study. Efforts should not be limited to obtaining research materials or benchmarking the best practices of Ghana, Tanzania, Brazil, Vietnam, India, and the cashew research exchanges in the cashew research network (REDAA); other countries should be given the opportunity to access and understand research activities. Milestones will be drawn to serve as a basis of following-up to gauge how the different stakeholders have applied learnings from this study.

The consultant will collaborate with the CRIN and the National Committees under the Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development (FMARD) direction to develop a framework for establishing and promoting a strong and sustainable cashew production and access to high yielding cashew planting material. This latest action will support the vision of the public and private sector stakeholders in structuring and developing a vibrant cashew production sector.

### **2.2.2. Roles and Responsibilities**

Access to high yielding planting material in Nigeria is a strategic activity for both the Nigeria Cashew Sector and Pro-Cashew project. The consultant will work with CRIN and farmers to accomplish the following activities:

#### **The Consultant**

- Work with CRIN, public/private extension officers and farmers throughout the mother tree selection study to develop the mother tree selection process/methodology, provide technical guidance in the collection of scions, grafting, establishment of scion gardens in selected locations of the project in Nigeria, assist in identifying and developing policies and regulations that improve the cashew production and access to high yielding material, and submit a workplan for a period covering the activities of the assignment. He/she will lead the mother tree selection study;
- Evaluate activities as well as progress reports and provide useful feedback to the study team
- Ensure mother tree selection and multiplication of clones are timely executed and reports meet deadline
- Organize and participate in the strategic meeting with the national committee members and the FMARD Cashew Desk
- Participate in local travels in Nigeria to ensure the study meets quality research standards
- Responsible for the overall performance of the study
- Develop a mother tree selection tool kit for West Africa.

#### **CRIN**

- Work directly with the consultant and provide the needed technical assistance or support to accomplish the study/research
- Responsible for supporting the Extension Officers
- Responsible for providing training, conducting trials, and undertaking verification exercises
- Responsible for clonal production of selected mother trees

- Responsible for rootstocks establishment

### Farmers

- Allow access to their cashew farms for the purpose of mother tree selection
- Ensure the success of the mother tree selection activity by cooperating with the research team.

### 2.3. Period of Performance

The anticipated period of performance is from **December 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022**

The period of the consultancy will be **55 days**, and where the consultant recruited is based outside Nigeria, he/she is expected to submit the required deliverables as per the estimated due date below and make at least 1 round trip in February and May or depending on the required schedule. PRO-Cashew will pay for any regional or international travel.

During the study's design and interventions in Nigeria, the consultant will work closely with CRIN, under the supervision of PRO-Cashew, in developing the study tools and meetings with the relevant stakeholders and participating in field trips.

### 2.4. Anticipated Deliverables

Deliverable #	Deliverable	Description	LOE	Estimated Due Date
1	List of recruited enumerators, questionnaire for the data collection on selected trees, a training manual on high yielding cashew trees	*Identify and recruit enumerators in Nigeria to support the data collection. *Prepare questionnaire for the data collection and training manual to train the enumerators	5	December 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2021
2	Develop protocol for the establishment of nurseries and scion orchards in 7 locations in Nigeria	Develop a detailed protocol for the establishment of nurseries and scion orchards in 7 locations.	5	January 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2022
3	Report of initial Mother tree selection	* Initial mapping of trees completed * Database of initial selection capturing farmer's name, farm geo-reference, community, age of farm, as well as relevant details. *Data analysis and report writing *Findings workshop with PRO-Cashew	5	April 29 <sup>th</sup> 2022
4	Report on the Validation of trees selected as elite tree	*Verification exercise conducted for a second mapping/identification of cashew trees. *Database developed to analyze the different trees by their yield. *Activity report highlighting next steps and recommendations for Activity 3	10	May 10 <sup>th</sup> 2022
5	Development of a 5-year cashew production and	*Engage the Cashew National Committee in the process of establishing a robust and sustainable seedling production and distribution system		May 30, 2022

	distribution framework for Nigeria	* Inception workshop for production and access to seedlings policy and regulation strategy with national cashew committee and FMARD Cashew Desk	5	
6	Clonal seedling production supervision report (50 % survival rate)	*80,000 rootstocks established for grafting activity *Work closely with CRIN to harvest scion form selected mother tree *Production of 80,000 clones of selected mother trees by grafting in the nursery *Support in the establishment of scion orchards in 7 locations (See page 5). *Support in the establishment of 2 cashews GenBank. *Develop and submit cashew mother tree selection tool kit *Activity report *Stakeholders dissemination workshop organized	15	June 30 <sup>th</sup>
7	Interpretation of results from laboratory analysis and proffering of recommendations.	*Leaf samples collection and shipping to Tanzania *DNA extraction, SNP sequencing, data generation, and analysis.	5	June 30 <sup>th</sup>
8	Final Recommendation Report and Workshop Agenda	*Consultative workshop with stakeholders to present progress to date and 5-year framework for production and distribution. *Final report on mother tree selection	5	August 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2022

## 2.5. Assignment Location:

The consultant's main workstation is home-based, with travel to Ilorin, Kogi, Oyo, Ogun, etc., in Nigeria and other selected project geographies, if needed.

Furthermore, the consultant accompanied by a PRO-Cashew project team member will also be expected to visit selected partners and beneficiaries, cashew value chain private sector agents and firms, international organizations, as well as research centers of excellence in Africa. This visit aims to learn, share experiences, and exchange views on the cashew nuts research, production analysis, and strategic plan.

## Annex 1 Official Offer Template

Offerors are required to complete this Annex 1 to be considered for the award:

### **A. Section 1: Offeror Information**

<b>Offeror's Full Name:</b>	
<b>Current Physical Address:</b>	
<b>Phone Number:</b>	
<b>Email address:</b>	

### **B. Section 2: Qualifications and Availability**

Briefly describe how you meet or exceed the qualifications required while demonstrating your capability to perform the services outlined as part of the SOW above.

Please summarize your availability during the anticipated period of performance, specifically noting any dates on which you would be unavailable for the assignment. Describe your availability during the standard workweek (hours, days).

This offer should additionally include the following attachments to demonstrate qualifications and past performance:

- Copy of current CV/Resume
- Three contacts for references from organizations/individuals for which the offeror has successfully performed similar work
- At least two recent reports published or contributions from the consultant show experience conducting similar research support and report for development projects or government agencies.
- Concept Paper: Include a concept paper (minimum four pages and maximum of ten pages) on cashew nuts improved planting material production and dissemination strategy, summarizing their understanding of the SoW, the methods they will use, highlighting best practices, challenges, opportunities, and areas of focus to facilitate farmers access to cashew planting material; a draft plan and schedule for the realization of the assignment.



**C. Section 3: Cost Proposal**

Please provide the proposed hourly or daily rate for this assignment:

<b>A</b> <b>Hourly/Daily Rate ([enter currency])</b> <b>(Select one)</b>	<b>B</b> <b>Level of Effort (Hours/Days)</b> <b>Required to Complete</b> <b>Assignment</b>	<b>C</b> <b>Total Assignment Cost</b> <b>(A x B = C)</b>

This proposed rate is exclusively for the offeror's level of effort. Other assignment-related costs will be approved on a reimbursable basis according to CNFA's Consultant Expenses Policy, which may be shared with the offeror upon request and incorporated into the final executed award with the successful offeror. CNFA will procure and provide airfare for the selected offeror as per CNFA policy.

**Annex 2 – Offeror Cover Letter**

*The following cover letter must be placed on letterhead and completed/signed/stamped by the offeror:*

To: CNFA - PRO-Cashew Project  
 Immeuble LG, Avenue Boga Doudou, II Plateaux Vallon  
 Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire

Reference: Solicitation no. #03-001/2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I, the undersigned, hereby provide the attached offer to perform all work required to complete the activities and requirements as described in the above-referenced solicitation. Please find my offer attached.

Furthermore, I hereby certify that, to the best of our knowledge and belief:

- I have no close, familial, or financial relationships with any CNFA or PRO-Cashew project staff members;
- I have no close, familial, or financial relationships with any other offerors submitting proposals in response to the above-referenced solicitation; and
- The prices in my offer have been arrived at independently, without any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other offeror or competitor for the purpose of restricting competition.
- All information in my proposal and all supporting documentation is authentic and accurate.
- I understand and agree to CNFA's prohibitions against fraud, bribery, and kickbacks.
- I understand and agree to CNFA's prohibitions against funding or associating with individuals or organizations engaged in terrorism or trafficking in persons activities.

I hereby certify that the enclosed representations, certifications, and other statements are accurate, current, and complete.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### Annex 3 – CNFA Terms and Conditions

**1. Ethical and Business Conduct Requirements.** CNFA is committed to integrity in procurement, and only selects suppliers based on objective business criteria such as price and technical merit.

CNFA does not tolerate fraud, collusion among offerors, falsified proposals/bids, bribery, or kickbacks. Any firm or individual violating these standards will be disqualified from this procurement, barred from future procurement opportunities, and may be reported to its client.

Employees and agents of CNFA are strictly prohibited from asking for or accepting any money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, object of value or compensation from current or potential vendors or suppliers in exchange for or as a reward for business. Employees and agents engaging in this conduct are subject to termination and will be reported to its client. In addition, CNFA will inform its client of any supplier offers of money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, object of value or compensation to obtain business.

Offerors responding to this RFQ must include the following as part of the proposal submission:

- Disclose any close, familial, or financial relationships with CNFA or project staff. For example, if an offeror's cousin is employed by the project, the offeror must state this.
- 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.
- 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.
- Certify that all information in the proposal and all supporting documentation are authentic and accurate.
- Certify understanding and agreement to CNFA's prohibitions against fraud, bribery and kickbacks.

Please contact procurement officer at [procurement@cnfa-procashesw.org](mailto:procurement@cnfa-procashesw.org) with any questions or concerns regarding the above information or to report any potential violations. Potential violations may also be reported directly to CNFA at to [FraudHotline@cnfa.org](mailto:FraudHotline@cnfa.org) or to CNFA's Global Complaint Hotline at 202-991-0931.

**2. Terms and Conditions:** This Solicitation is subject to CNFA's standard terms and conditions. Any resultant award will be governed by these terms and conditions; a copy of the full terms and conditions is available upon request. Please note the following terms and conditions will apply:

- (a) CNFA's standard payment terms are net 30 days after receipt and acceptance of any services or deliverables. Payment will only be issued to the entity submitting the offer in response to this solicitation and identified in the resulting award; payment will not be issued to a third party.
- (b) No services may be supplied that are otherwise involving any of the following countries: Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Syria.
- (c) United States law prohibits transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. The selected offeror under any award resulting from this solicitation must ensure compliance with these laws.
- (d) United States law prohibits engaging in any activities related to Trafficking in Persons. The selected offeror under any award resulting from this solicitation must ensure compliance with these laws.

The offeror is prohibited from providing certain telecommunications equipment or services as a substantial or essential component of any system, or as a critical technology as part of any system, produced by the following covered companies, and their subsidiaries and affiliates, in

the performance of any resulting award: Huawei Technologies Company; ZTE Corporation; Hytera Communications Corporation; Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company; Dahua Technology Company; and any other company as determined by the United States Government. The offeror certifies it will not provide covered telecommunications equipment or services to CNFA in the performance of the resulting award.

**3. Disclaimers:** This is a solicitation only. Issuance of this Solicitation does not in any way obligate CNFA, the PRO-Cashew Project, or CNFA's Client to make an award or pay for costs incurred by potential offerors in the preparation and submission of an offer. In addition:

- (a) CNFA may cancel the solicitation and not award;
- (b) CNFA may reject any or all responses received;
- (c) Issuance of the Solicitation does not constitute award commitment by CNFA;
- (d) CNFA reserves the right to disqualify any offer based on offeror failure to follow the solicitation instructions;
- (e) CNFA will not compensate offerors for response to the solicitation;
- (f) CNFA reserves the right to issue award based on initial evaluation of offers without further discussion;
- (g) CNFA may negotiate with short-listed offerors for their best and final offer;
- (h) CNFA may reissue the solicitation or issue formal amendments revising the original specifications and evaluation criteria before or after receipt of proposals;
- (i) CNFA may modify the specifications without issuing a formal notice to all offerors when the revisions are immaterial to the scope of the solicitation;
- (j) CNFA may choose to award only part of the activities in the solicitation, or issue multiple awards based on multiple activities;
- (k) CNFA reserves the right to waive minor proposal deficiencies that can be corrected prior to award determination to promote competition;
- (l) In submitting a response to this solicitation, offerors understand that CNFA's Client is not a party to this solicitation and the offeror agrees that any protest hereunder must be presented – in writing with full explanations – to the PRO-Cashew project for consideration. CNFA's client will not consider protests regarding procurements carried out by implementing partners. CNFA, at its sole discretion, will make a final decision on any protest for this procurement.

**5. Eligibility:** By submitting an offer in response to this solicitation, the offeror certifies that it and its principal officers are not debarred, suspended, or otherwise considered ineligible for an award by the U.S. Government. CNFA will not award a contract to any individual that is debarred, suspended, or considered to be ineligible by the U.S. Government.