Job Vacancy

Access to Finance Specialist, 2SCALE West Africa

Background

The program entitled “Toward Sustainable Clusters in Agribusiness through Learning in Entrepreneurship” (2SCALE) aims at improving rural livelihoods and food and nutrition security in Africa. It was created by a consortium of partners, led by the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), and comprising the Base-of-the-Pyramid Innovation Centre (BoPInc.) and the International Centre for development-oriented Research in Agriculture (ICRA). The program is supported by a grant of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (through the Directorate-General for International Cooperation, DGIS) of the Netherlands.

From 2012 to 2014, 2SCALE developed a portfolio of 53 public-private partnerships in selected high-potential sectors in nine sub-Saharan countries. From 2015 to 2017, 2SCALE will support its private partners to deepen and scale-up these partnerships. The objective is to offer significant opportunity to over 500,000 smallholder farmers to improve their livelihoods and 2,500 SMEs to improve sales and provide jobs, while sustainably supplying food to regional, national and local markets, of which 40 percent will be BoP consumers.

Access to finance offers opportunities to strengthen partnerships and improve the competitiveness of chain actors. 2SCALE will continue, and where possible intensify, its efforts to identify relevant/interested financial institutions and investors, and to bring financiers and private partners (farmers and their organizations, small and medium enterprises, lead firms) together to bridge the gap between demand and supply of financial services.

The 2SCALE technical team is composed of country teams (Cluster Advisors and Cluster Assistants – Partnership Facilitators) supported by cross-cutting thematic specialists with a regional scope (access to finance; technical innovation; local empowerment; BoP marketing; action-research in partnership development; communications; grants; monitoring & evaluation). IFDC seeks to recruit an Access to Finance Specialist to support 2SCALE interventions in West Africa.

Duties

The Access to Finance Specialist is responsible for developing and implementing strategies to significantly improve access to finance for agribusiness cluster- and value chain stakeholders in focus partnerships.

Specific duties include the following:

- Identify and document key financial constraints in agribusiness clusters and value chains in supported partnerships, and develop strategies to address them. A specific attention should be given to women in clusters and value chains.
- Support partnering financial institutions to develop new financial products, in particular to address the needs of female actors.

1 Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Uganda
• In close collaboration with other project field staff, pilot practical solutions and innovative practices, including but not limited to:
  o **agro-input and small equipment financing**, including through (input) supply chain financing, inventory credit/warehouse receipt systems and village saving & loan schemes
  o **agricultural production risk management**, e.g. indexed drought insurance products
  o **supply chain financing** (incl. digital payment and reverse factoring) that ensures timely and efficient payment of suppliers, thereby improving cash flows & incentives for farmers to engage in contract farming and other contractual arrangements
  o **income generating activities financing**, through inventory credit/warehouse receipt systems
  o **chain upgrading financing for SMEs** (input-dealers, processors, traders, etc.), including through loans from microfinance, banks and social lenders, and equities by impact investors

• Refine solutions and implement roll-out programs.
• Monitor and record financing mechanisms and amounts facilitated by 2SCALE.
• Throughout the year, document solutions, achievements, lessons learned and successes.
• Organize value chain actor assessments, through ScopelInsight scoring tools and other relevant assessment options.
• Develop and deliver training programs and technical assistance to financial institutions as well as cluster and chain actors. This includes capacity building activities for farmer organizations and entrepreneurs in developing bankable business plans and loan applications.
• Develop innovative partnerships with the private sector and professional financial service providers in particular, other IFDC projects/initiatives, other donors and funders to expand access to finance, develop appropriate financial products and to leverage resources.
• Provide “thought leadership” on how access to finance can grow and improve agribusinesses in West Africa.
• Stay informed of access to finance activities implemented by 2SCALE in East and Southern Africa. Exchange ideas and develop products and tools with the East African team.
• Write reports (monthly reports, meeting reports, etc.) and contribute to diverse documents (half-yearly portfolio reports, annual reports, work plans, partnership profiles, etc.) as needed.
• Any other assignments that the project management deems necessary for the success of the project.

**Supervision**

The Access to Finance Specialist is supervised by and reports to the Regional Agribusiness Coordinator. S/he works in close collaboration with Partnership Facilitators, other cross-cutting thematic specialists and the Regional Agribusiness Coordinator.

**Position and duty station**

The Access to Finance Specialist for 2SCALE in West Africa is a position open to African nationals, with a duty station at IFDC’s office in Accra, Ghana (or in Cotonou, Benin).

The position requires intensive travels (minimum 50% of the time) in Benin, Ghana, Mali and Nigeria, and exceptionally to other African countries.
Qualifications

- Master’s degree in finance, economics, business administration or other related field;
- At least 10 years of relevant professional experience, including in one or several of the following areas: small and medium rural enterprise finance, agricultural value chain finance, microfinance, business development services, financial institutions;
- Up-to-date knowledge of the agricultural finance environment in West Africa;
- Resourceful, innovative and ready to test new approaches;
- Result-orientation and ability to take initiatives under minimal supervision, and reach targets.
- Ability to strictly meet deadlines;
- Team player, at ease in a multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary environment;
- Excellent spoken and written English, with the ability to write quality documents. Proficiency in French would be an advantage.

Women willing and able to travel intensively are highly encouraged to apply.

Application Guidelines

Interested applicants are kindly requested to send their applications in French or English in the form of a cover letter and CV, by email to barthur@ifdc.org with copy to lbello@ifdc.org.

Position open until filled.