

Q: Does NEI possess information on the number of growers by district, ward, and village? Relatedly, does NEI has specific districts in mind for each project?

A: *Yes, NEI records the region, district, and ward location and GPS coordinates of each registered farmer in our SCM system. Yes, NEI has preliminary recommendations on where to focus project activities, based on sourcing potential, but this is subject to change per the consultants' baseline research.*

Q: What information (if any) does NEI possess regarding grower profiles? Specifically regarding other crops grown, number of vines, average yields, and income?

A: *Data collected during NEI farmer registration includes total growing area, vanilla growing area, and # of vanilla vines. Network-wide KPIs (e.g., avg. yield per farmer, avg. income per farmer) are calculated at the end of each buying season, based on sales from both registered and unregistered farmers.*

Q: What is the current extent of extension support for growers, including number of growers per officer, frequency of visits, and involvement of government extension officers at the district and/or ward level?

A: *NEI Agronomists manage ward-level Farmer Champions (FCs); each FC in turn mobilizes up to 25 farmers. An Agronomist may be responsible for several hundred farmers, depending on the pop. density in their region. Agronomists provide year-round training, monitoring, and buying services for farmers. Local govt. extension officers typically do not have robust vanilla expertise, but NEI has good working relationships with local officials in all of its operating areas.*

Q: Are growers currently organized in groups for extension support or other services?

A: *Registered farmers are linked to an FC, and therefore loosely grouped by ward, but many training and buying activities still occur on a 1:1 basis between a farmer and their Agronomist or FC.*

Q: What is the preferred method of payment? And will financing come directly from NEI or AgDevCo or others?

A: *Currently, most farmers are paid in cash within 24 hours of selling vanilla to NEI. In the future, NEI does not intend to act as the sole or primary underwriter for any loans extended to farmers.*

Q: Would it be possible for NEI to share data on the following:

- a. Data already collected on farmers (per last email)
- b. Preferred locations for project activities
- c. Information on the Farmer Champions (e.g., number, location, extension methodology).

A: *NEI cannot share its farmer database prior to contracting, as it contains client PII and is one of NEI's primary information assets. Applicants can assume that NEI has robust baseline information on farmer biodata, distribution, yield potential, and historical sales. As noted in the ToRs, NEI operates in Arusha, Kagera, Kilimanjaro, Mbeya, and Morogoro; project activities will be focused in some or all of these regions. FCs are trained by Agronomists to provide registration, training, monitoring, and buying support for up to 25 individual farmers in a ward.*

Q: Do farmers deliver vanilla pods to a ward or village-level buying station or are pods collected directly from farmers? Is payment made on collection (it appears that payment is made in cash at time of collection) and are any deductions made for supply vines by NEI?

A: *Farmers deliver green pods to a ward collection center, where an Agronomist grades, weighs, and pays for the pods. NEI pays cash on purchase at the collection center. Vanilla is not an annual crop, so NEI does not make POS deductions for vines purchased in the previous planting season.*

Q: Is there any price differential for different qualities of pod?

A: *Yes, NEI pays a higher farmgate price for higher quality pods.*

Q: Does NEI have any existing relationships with banks to finance growers?

A: *Yes, NEI is currently in discussions with 2-3 potential third-party financial services providers.*