

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR SERVICES AS THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE RESEARCH PROVIDER 2023

INTRODUCTION

The World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA) aims to drive the private sector's engagement in the SDGs through its benchmarks, envisioning a future where companies, investors, governments, civil society and individuals can quickly and easily compare businesses and motivate a 'race to the top'. WBA is a global non-profit organisation with most colleagues based in Amsterdam and a second office in London.

This Request for Proposal (RFP) sets out a draft scope of work for research provider support required to deliver the WBA benchmarks related to the food and agriculture sector, defined as 350 keystone food and agriculture companies. The respective WBA benchmarks are the [Food and Agriculture Benchmark](#) and the [Nature Benchmark](#). The RFP is provided to enable interested parties ('you') to develop initial cost estimates and options to deliver the scope and as such should not be viewed as any form of agreement between you and the WBA.

The research provider is not expected to create or revise a methodology, but to assess companies using the [Food and Agriculture Benchmark](#)¹ and [Nature](#) methodology. The key deliverables will be 356 draft company research profiles that WBA's own core team of staff will finalise following (WBA-led) engagement with benchmarked companies.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL

We expect that your proposal will, first and foremost, include an estimate of the personnel and financial resources required to produce the expected deliverables listed herein. Furthermore, WBA anticipates that you will be able to demonstrate how you will deliver in three key areas:

- Research process and quality: interpreting large volumes of written data and scoring companies consistently against our methodology.
- Food and agriculture sector familiarity: depth of and proven knowledge regarding environmental, biodiversity, nutrition and social sustainability issues and business.
- Research intensity: being able to handle in-depth research of around 350 companies within condensed timeframes.

Moreover, WBA would like to see a staffing plan including how changes in staff will be handled throughout the project. We are interested in your approach to retaining people, supported with 2020 and 2021 (up to now) analyst retention rates.

WBA expects that proposals will detail the tasks, processes, time and costs involved, including day-rates for staff of various seniorities, costs for using any proprietary software/ databases and an eventual 'cost-per-researched-company'. Responses to this RFP should be sent to s.posa@worldbenchmarkingalliance.org by 7 October 2022. Requests for extensions and clarifications should be sent to the same address. Project kick-off is anticipated to take place in December 2022. The tendering process will be conducted in line with the WBA Procurement Policy 2018-2022.

¹ The updated methodology for WBA's Food and Agriculture Benchmark is open for public consultation until end of August 2022 and will be finalised by end of October 2022.

SCOPE OF WORK

1. 350 food and agriculture companies - The WBA 2023 Food and Agriculture Benchmark and Nature benchmark will assess the world's 350 leading food and agriculture companies against the Food and Agriculture Benchmark and Nature methodology. The list of the 350 food and agriculture companies can be seen [here](#) by filtering on "Food and agriculture" and are listed again in the attached MS Excel spreadsheet "Food and Agriculture Research 2023.xlsx" (hereafter "spreadsheet"). The [Food and Agriculture Benchmark methodology](#) and [Nature methodology](#) include the approach as well as the indicators and respective data points that define the scope of work. Figure 1 shows an example of an indicator (Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions) and the corresponding four data points a. – d. to be assessed in a met/not met format.

Figure 1: Example indicator with corresponding data points (Source: Food and Agriculture Benchmark methodology)

B1. Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions

Indicator: The company reduces its scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions in line with a 1.5°C trajectory.

Elements:

- a. The company discloses quantitative reductions for its scope 1 and 2 emissions.
- b. The company has targets⁶ to reduce its scope 1 and 2 emissions.
- c. The company's scope 1 and 2 targets are aligned with 1.5°C trajectory.
- d. The company reports progress against its scope 1 and 2 emissions targets.

A combined overview of all indicators encompassing both methodologies is provided by WBA in the spreadsheet (tab: Overview by indicator). The research provider will assess the 350 food and agriculture companies against the set of indicators as outlined in the spreadsheet. The spreadsheet shows that not all indicators are applicable to all companies.

The Food and Agriculture Benchmark and Nature methodology have eight indicators that fully overlap and therefore only need to be assessed once for the 350 companies. They are listed as one indicator and are highlighted in green (see spreadsheet – tab: Overview by indicator). Seven indicators, highlighted in yellow (see spreadsheet – tab: Overview by indicator), partially overlap. The partially overlapping indicators allow for efficiency gains (15%) in the research process as the data points are either identical (the data point needs to be assessed just once) or similar (the assessment of more than one data point can be made from the same evidence).

2. Six additional companies – Six seafood companies, not part of the 350 food and agriculture companies, shall be assessed on a sub-set of indicators and respective data points of the Food and Agriculture Benchmark methodology. The six seafood companies are included in the spreadsheet below the 350 food and agriculture companies. The spreadsheet provides an overview of the sub-set of indicators these six additional companies shall be assessed on.
3. Impact data – Impact data points shall be collected for the companies in scope. The tab "Impact data" in the spreadsheet provides an overview of the indicators (grouped into four topics). The impact indicators are not assessed in a binary met/not met format but can be quantitative or qualitative.

Table 1 provides a summary overview of the scope of work (including scope 1.-3.)

Table 1: Scope of the 2023 Benchmarks

	Total
Companies	356
Indicators	46
Impact indicators	13
Data points	78896

All research should be based upon publicly available information, primarily in English, and no engagement or contact with the companies within scope is envisaged on the part of the research provider.

PROJECT TIMELINE

WBA envisions a project period of six months, including a training period of two months throughout which WBA will provide trainings, including provision of detailed materials to ensure that your research team can deliver the requirements of the methodologies including understanding indicator topics and identification of relevant disclosures to allow the assessment to be done on a well-informed basis. The training period is currently foreseen to be December 2022- January 2023.

The training period will be followed by a four-month research period between February - May 2023 during which, you will conduct the research and draft assessment and WBA teams will be reviewing on a rolling basis. The research and draft assessments will take place in three batches to ensure a close feedback loop between your team and WBA. As such, initial assessment and secondary reviews by your team will need to be phased, with detailed timelines for each batch to be confirmed before the beginning of the project. WBA will allocate the batches in alignment with corporate reporting timelines and will provide company lists for all three batches before the project starts. Please note that the project timelines might be subject to change.

WBA will review the draft assessments and will make relevant amendments to the assessments in-house. A secondary review by your team, however, will be required in case of systemic issues/misunderstandings. Trainings and training materials, including detailed researcher guidelines, aim to maximise research quality.

Table 2: Indicative project timeline

Task/deliverable	Dec 22	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Training						
Research and draft assessment period						
Review of draft assessments (by WBA)						

DELIVERABLES

The list of deliverables is indicative and any adjustments will be made in accordance with the research provider. If your organisation can only deliver parts of the deliverables, you are encouraged to provide additional details.

1. Research and data collection – Gathering of qualitative and quantitative information disclosed by the companies and available in the public domain.
2. Draft assessments –
 - Phase 1 – starting beginning of February 2023. Assessment of first company batch (approx. 120 companies). Ready on a rolling basis for WBA to use and review in February/March 2023.
 - Phase 2 – starting in March 2023. Assessment of first company batch (approx. 120 companies). Ready on a rolling basis for WBA use and review. March/April
 - Phase 3 – starting in April 2023. Assessment of first company batch (approx. 116 companies). Ready on a rolling basis for WBA use and review in April/May.

The assessments will include:

- i. Researcher judgement in a met/not met (binary) format for each data point
 - ii. Researcher explanation/comment, i.e. excerpt of the researcher's text that was used for scoring
 - iii. Reference to information source(s) (e.g. corporate report, website etc.) the researcher's scoring decision is based on
3. Database – an exploitable database to house the research is a key deliverable. The research database should:
 - House the researcher judgement and commentary for each data point, with logging to provide tracking of entries
 - Be accessible to both your team and WBA's team during the research phase
 - Be exploitable, i.e. all the data can be downloaded into CSV / XLS format, and/or can be uploaded to WBA's Microsoft compatible, web-based scoring and analysis tool.

Additional information to be included in the proposal

Project management and quality control processes, including a project plan, weekly check-ins, monthly reports, closeout report and named senior lead/project managers. We seek a partner that has the ability to remain flexible as well as transparent as we work with tight timeframes.

SUPPORTING NOTES

1. Deadline for submission is the **7th October 2022**. Clarifications on the scope of work required may be requested within this period from s.posa@worldbenchmarkingalliance.org.
2. Contract decision is anticipated in October 2022.
3. Proposing companies should familiarise themselves with the WBA Procurement Policy which provides a framework for this RFP, in particular p.4-8, p.20-23 and noting that:
 - a. Draft general terms and conditions are included in the WBA Procurement Policy
 - b. Standalone Data Protection Agreements are not envisioned for the proposal
 - c. Proposal review template will be adapted from p.21-22
4. A fixed total cost budget is anticipated, but days, day-rates and fixed costs should be detailed in

both pound sterling and euros. Breakdowns of the time and cost for various phases of research are encouraged.

5. Research provider will need to work closely with WBA staff, so a seamless/accessible research database is preferred.
6. Conflicts of interest, particularly related to support services to the companies assessed, should be referenced in the proposal – and how to deal with them.
7. Research will be conducted primarily in English and is based on publicly available information, so any researchers will need exemplary English language skills to understand the nuances of the methodology and research.
8. Detailing examples / experience of similar work is encouraged, with particular focus on quality control and oversight.
9. Full research team does not need to be named, but lead staff backgrounds and experience should be disclosed where possible.
10. The WBA is a not-for-profit entity who receives funding from national governments and foundations in pursuit of public-good benchmarks. Please consider this during the scoping of any proposals.
11. The WBA values inclusivity and we are working to support the achievement of the SDGs. There is a preference to support organisations and workers based in Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries.
12. It is anticipated that some proposing organisations are likely to be small to medium sized enterprises without significant public policies and reporting. In addition to the requirements set out in the WBA Procurement Policy, we strongly encourage proposals to articulate how they ensure that employees and workers will receive a living wage or living income if they are participating in the project. For proposals that rely on a network of freelance or short-term contracts, we would like to see an explanation of how the researcher remuneration compares to a real living wage in the relevant countries.

END