

Request for Proposals: Research on Labor Conditions in the Dominican Republic's Cocoa Sector

March 2024

Project Background

Verité is an award-winning non-profit organization that illuminates and addresses serious human rights and labor rights violations in factories, farms, and other workplaces around the world. We serve private-sector and public-sector clients by building their internal understanding of the labor rights problems they face in their supply chains and operations, and their skills to solve those problems.

Verité is seeking to hire a contractor with extensive research, research tool development, and worker interview experience within agricultural supply chains in Latin America and/or the Caribbean as part of a research project on labor conditions in the Dominican Republic's cocoa sector. The research project has a focus on forced labor and child labor. The research study will include supplementary desk research, development of a research plan and tools, expert interviews, farmer and worker interviews, and a final research report. The research will be carried out during the 2024 peak production season in the Dominican Republic, which begins in April and goes through June and the final report will be due by July 10, 2024.

This Request for Proposals will inform a Verité proposal. The selected contractor will be notified of their selection, but this is not a guarantee that funding will be secured by Verité. A funding decision is expected by May 2024.

Scope of Work

The contractor will be responsible for the following tasks:

- 1) Developing a research plan, which will include the methodology for the study and timeline for conducting the fieldwork in the North-East region.
- 2) Supplementary desk research on the Dominican Republic's cocoa sector and labor dynamics localized to key cocoa-producing states to inform field research. Research topics include but are not limited to:
 - a. Farm worker typologies, farm worker recruitment and hiring practices, farm working conditions, farm worker income, farmer production costs and income.
 - b. For migrant workers: migrant workers' places of origin, means of recruitment, and conditions of work.
- 3) Finalization of research plan, including an outline of the timeline for the work, and identification of where research will be conducted.
- 4) Development of research tools tailored to the Dominican Republic's cocoa sector, including:
 - Farmer and worker interview questionnaires

- Expert interview guides/questionnaires
- 5) Expert interviews
 - 5-10 interviews with civil society, academic, private sector, and/or government experts (in-person or remote).
 - 6) Farmer and worker interviews in two key cocoa-producing states
 - Researcher should aim to conduct a total of approximately 40-50 interviews. The majority of interviews should be with workers directly, whenever possible, as the focus of the research is understanding their experiences. Farmers/landowners can also be included among the interviewees, to understand their perspective of hiring and engaging labor.

There will be four deliverables associated with this study:

- 1) The draft research plan (including timeline) and tools should be submitted no later than May 5, 2024.
- 2) The final research plan and tools, and timeline for the Dominican Republic field research should be submitted no later than May 15, 2024.
- 3) The draft research summary of findings report should be submitted no later than June 27, 2024.
- 4) The final report should be submitted by July 10, 2024.

All deliverables must be approved by Verité.

Evaluation Criteria

The research contractor must have the following technical and professional background:

- At least five (5) years of experience in conducting research on labor issues within agricultural supply chains, and particularly cocoa supply chains, in Latin America and/or the Caribbean.
- Experience conducting interviews with a variety of rightsholders and stakeholders in agricultural supply chains, including vulnerable workers.
- Experience with developing tools and materials for rightsholders and stakeholder engagement in agricultural supply chains.
- Professional or native fluency in English is required. Proficiency in Spanish is required, or in lieu of proficiency, the consultant should submit a clear plan for translation and explanation of how research quality will not be compromised.

The research contractor must also include in their proposal their availability to conduct fieldwork in the Dominican Republic. In your proposal, please also clearly outline your availability for developing this study as well as the number of worker and expert interviews you can conduct. The project is anticipating at least 5-10 expert interviews and 40-50 worker and supplemental farmer/farm owner interviews in the country.

Contractors will be evaluated based on their cost proposal, relevant background on labor issues in agricultural supply chains and the cocoa sector, their professional experience, their language proficiency, and their educational qualifications.

Deliverables and Timeline

The Contractor is expected to produce a final report no later than July 10, 2024.

Please see the schedule of all four deliverables as follows:

#	Deliverable	Due Date
1	Draft Research plan and tools, and timeline for the Dominican Republic field research	May 5, 2024
2	Final Research plan and tools, and timeline for the Dominican Republic field research	May 15, 2024
3	Draft research summary of key findings report on the field research, including number of worker and expert interviews	June 27, 2024
4	Final 10-page research report in English containing findings from desk and field research, incorporating changes based on feedback from Verité	July 10, 2024

Instructions for Proposal Submission

To submit a proposal for consideration, please send the following documents, along with any questions or clarifications you may need, to Justine May, Program Manager, at jmay@verite.org, with a copy to Adriana Isaza Geary, Program Manager, at aisaza@verite.org, no later than April 1, 2024 at 11:59pm EST:

- Detailed proposal for the research approach, including methodology and timeline.
- Summary of organization's required qualifications, experience, and expertise or individual CV or resume in the case of individual contractors.
- Cost proposal, including rate per day and estimated number of days needed for this work, and any travel or additional expenses. All expenses should be detailed. All cost amounts should be in United States Dollars.
- Sample research report illustrating similar work completed.