

Expertise France

Terms of Reference to recruit a consultant(s)/firm

Final evaluation and learning for the wood processing value chain
component of the Private Sector Development Programme in Tripoli,
Lebanon – May 2023

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I. General Information

Title of the assignment	Final evaluation and learning of the wood processing value chain component of the EU funded Private Sector Development Programme in Tripoli, Lebanon
Project scope	Component 2: Wood processing value chain
Country	Lebanon
Expected Duration	3 months
Expected Publication Date	22 May 2023
Expected Award	20 June 2023
Maximum Start Date	15 July 2023
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II. Context

General context

Tripoli, Lebanon, a vibrant city known for its rich history and cultural heritage, is also home to a thriving wood manufacturing value chain. The wood industry in Tripoli plays a pivotal role in the local economy, contributing significantly to employment opportunities, export revenues, and sustainable development. With a legacy that spans centuries, the city has established itself as a hub for wood craftsmanship and production, attracting both national and international attention.

The importance of the wood manufacturing value chain in Tripoli stems from its multifaceted contributions. Firstly, it serves as a vital source of livelihood for numerous individuals and families in the region. Skilled artisans and craftsmen have honed their expertise over generations, passing down their knowledge and skills to future generations. This tradition has created a network of skilled workers who are adept at various aspects of the wood manufacturing process, such as carving, joinery, and finishing. The industry's presence provides employment opportunities and income stability, fostering economic growth and reducing unemployment rates in the region.

Moreover, Tripoli's wood manufacturing value chain has a significant impact on the local economy. The production of wooden furniture, decorative items, and architectural components generates revenue through domestic sales and exports.

That said, this industry faces several challenges that hinder its growth and sustainability. Some of the current problems include:

1. **Political instability:** Lebanon has experienced political instability and economic crises in recent years, which have had a detrimental impact on various industries, including wood manufacturing. Uncertainty and frequent changes in government policies make it difficult for businesses to plan and invest for the long term.
2. **Economic downturn:** The country's struggling economy, characterized by high inflation, currency devaluation, and limited access to financing, affects the purchasing power of consumers. Reduced consumer spending leads to lower demand for wood products, impacting the industry's profitability.
3. **Infrastructure and logistics:** Inadequate infrastructure, including energy & transport.
4. **Skills gap:** While Tripoli has a long-standing tradition of skilled wood artisans, there is a growing concern about the availability of skilled labor. Younger generations are less interested in pursuing careers in wood manufacturing, leading to a shortage of skilled workers and a potential loss of traditional craftsmanship.
5. **Market competition:** The wood manufacturing industry faces stiff competition from international markets, where mass-produced and cheaper alternatives are available.

Despite these challenges, there is potential for the wood manufacturing industry in Tripoli to overcome these obstacles with strategic planning, support, and collaborations between industry stakeholders. Addressing these issues can help foster a more resilient and sustainable industry that can continue to contribute to the local economy and cultural heritage of the region.

Presentation of PSD Programme

Expertise France, the French technical cooperation agency, has been entrusted with a major Private Sector Development Programme (PSD-P) in Lebanon (15M budget) by the European Union (EU). This programme aims to increase micro, small and medium enterprises competitiveness and participation in the economy by fostering their development and integration into value chains. By doing so, it intends to contribute to Lebanon's economic development and job creation by enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of its private sector with a focus on vulnerable groups. PSD-P started early 2016 and will finish in September 2023.

The outcomes of the Programme are:

- To re-organize MSMEs¹ into stronger groups for a more efficient and cost-effective use of inputs and resources;
- To improve market positioning and market access for MSMEs in fruits and vegetables and the wood sectors;
- To facilitate access to finance for needed investments, using available funding instruments;
- To create new and inclusive employment opportunities as a result of increased productions and sales.

The Programme is structured around 3 main components:

- Component 1: Agribusiness value chains in the Beqaa and Akkar region
- Component 2: Wood processing value chain in Tripoli
- Component 3: Access to finance

Presentation of Component 2 – Wood Processing Value Chain in Tripoli

PSD Programme ambitioned to boost the furniture manufacturing industry, as Tripoli's woodcraft industry suffered deeply from the long years of war and the emergence of low-cost imported furniture. It was necessary to tackle the following challenges to revitalize the industry:

- Incentivize carpenters to improve the quality and adapt their products to cater market trends,
- Professionalize the industry's engagement with potential clients,
- Encourage business collaborations,
- Re-build consumers' trust
- Raise awareness on Tripoli's wood craftsmanship heritage.

The objective of this component was to **upgrade the wood furniture industry in Tripoli by providing non-monetary (capacity building, legal support, communication, marketing, other) support.**

To do this a **Minjara program** was established with two main roles:

- Operate a wood manufacturing platform, located in the Rachid Karame International Fair, where carpenters can work using Minjara provided machines and tools

¹ Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

- Providing support to the industry by organizing business tours, participating in local and international events, conducting trainings etc.

The beneficiaries of this component include ~200 MSMEs and SMEs, mainly manufacturers and stakeholders across the value chain.

The program aimed to achieve three outputs:

- 1) Minjara's governance model is selected and management structure established.
- 2) Minjara products and services access local, regional and European markets through clear marketing and communication strategies.
- 3) Livelihoods and employment opportunities in the wood processing sector are strengthened.

Component 2 - Stakeholders

The **EU Delegation in Lebanon**: funds the program (the Donor)

Expertise France: contracted by the EU for the duration of the funding acts as the implementer. It selects operators to manage the daily activities of the Minjara program.

Terea (www.terea.net) was the operator of the platform from 2017 to 2020. **Since February 2021, the operator is the Rene Moawad Foundation (RMF), leading a consortium composed of 1) Academie Libanaise des Beaux Arts (ALBA), 2) Abou Jaoude and Associates Law Firm, 3) M&C Saatchi, 4) Globally Cool, a Dutch based marketing company, and 5) Lebanese Signature, an online marketing platform.**

The EU Delegation funding for the programme ends on the 30th of August 2023.

In order to sustain activities post EU funding, **The Minjara Association was created in April 2023** and will continue to support the wood value chain. **It is composed of the Association of Lebanese Industrialists, The Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Tripoli and North Lebanon and the Rene Moawad Foundation.**

Triploli Carpenters are the end beneficiaries of this program. They can be employed directly by Minjara or contracted for specific activities.

III. Objectives and scope of the assignment

Rationale

The project team wishes to undertake an outcome-focused final evaluation on the Component 2 of the PSD program (Wood processing value chain in Tripoli) and, for learning purposes, to draw lessons on the platform that will be useful for other stakeholders who intend on creating such platforms.

Objective of the assignment

The objective of the consultancy is two-fold, although both segments are intertwined and will feed into one another.

- 1) **To carry out the final evaluation of Component 2, mainly focusing on outcomes**, measuring the effectiveness and the main effects resulting from the intervention, i.e. the “Minjara” program established in Tripoli.

This **outcome evaluation** will describe and establish causal links between PSD programme interventions and the changes observed. Some process evaluation questions will also be included in order to be able to explore why some expected results have or have not been delivered. The outcome evaluation will explore who the 2nd component of PSD programme had an impact on, to what extent, in what ways and under what circumstances.

- 2) **To draw lessons on the creation of the Minjara platform** using a collective learning process (“capitalization”) in order to document and share best practices on this subject.

The lessons learned segment will explore what went well, what did not go so well, and why, according to the experiences of the Minjara program stakeholders.

As the objective suggests, the assignment will mainly support learning purposes, as the project team wishes to capture project successes, to better understand its effects on beneficiaries but also the reasons for potential difficulties or weaknesses, and to share learnings with Expertise France teams and external stakeholders.

Intended users

The evaluation and learning segments will be utilization-focused. The main users of the findings and recommendations are:

- The project team of Expertise France,
- The Minjara program stakeholders,
- The donor, European Union.

Moreover, the recipients of the learning deliverable will be Lebanese stakeholders working in the woodcraft industry but not only; some authorities and organizations in other cities have expressed interest in the creation of manufacturing platforms (wood but not only) such as Minjara, and key takeaways and learnings will hence be shared with them for duplication purposes.

IV. Evaluation and learning questions

Evaluation and learning questions have been determined that will drive the assignment.

Evaluation questions

The key evaluation guiding questions are delineated through a series of sub-questions to guide and support analysis.

- **Has the wood processing value chain improved thanks to the program ?**
 - In what way and to what extent has the PSD Programme revitalized the woodcrafts industry in Tripoli? In terms of:
 - Jobs sustained and/or created,
 - Quantity manufactured
 - Sales (regional, national, exported)
- **How important has the Minjara brand become as a reference in the wood processing sector in Tripoli and North Lebanon ?**
- **To what extend has the programme helped to develop the overall capacity of the targeted carpenters? and in what capacity (market access, apprentices, quality etc..)**
- **What are the indications that the change(s) that PSD Programme contributed to, will sustain beyond the lifetime of the programme and in the absence of significant external funding?**
- **Assessment of the evolution in the relationship between the different stakeholders**

Learning questions

The learning segment should answer the following question: **What are the key learnings and recommendations for establishing and operating a platform such as Minjara platform?**

The aim of this learning component is to capture and document what worked well and what didn't in order for other stakeholders and organizations working in the wood processing value chain or on other similar platforms to learn from the PSD Programme and Minjara experience.

To do so, the consultants will need to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the platform, to do a retrospective review with stakeholders of what could have been done differently and what could have been improved. The recommendations provided should be clear and practical.

This analysis should reflect working on similar capacity enhancement programs in Lebanon (in or outside the wood industry) and for wood processing value chain programs anywhere in the world.

V. Approach and methodology

Guiding principles and posture of the consultants

The evaluation and learning segments will require different postures of the consultants in terms of analysis. For the evaluation, the analysis and findings will be put forward by the consultants, as the evaluation requires an objective assessment and judgment on the part of the evaluators. The learning segment however will be based on analysis by the contributors directly. It will therefore be participatory in nature, with content derived from workshops and interviews.

Nevertheless, it is expected that the data and knowledge captured through these workshops and interviews will feed both exercises, in order to avoid multiplying data collection events and tools.

The consultancy will be guided by the following principles:

- **Transparency** and **ethics**: the assignment should be carried out with integrity, responsibility, respect, including human rights and gender equality, and a “do no harm” attitude;
- **Impartiality** and **methodological rigor**: the assignment should be carried out and managed by professionals who are technically competent in project evaluation, learning, transparent about the methodologies used and the associated limitations;
- **Pluralism**: the evaluation takes into account all legitimate points of view on the programme.

Moreover, it is expected that the consultants create a climate of trust and exchange in which the contributors will feel comfortable expressing themselves on the programme, the difficulties encountered and their feelings during implementation. To do so, the consultants will have recourse to participatory and collective intelligence facilitation methods when facilitating workshops. They will create a participatory dynamic involving all stakeholders so the lessons learned are consensual and perceived as being collective.

Limitations

The monitoring system for PSD Programme has been limited, mainly due to lack of human resources, and was focused on activities. This limitation is to be taken into account for the appraisal of outcome successes, as the results that have been achieved by the project have not been consistently monitored. In the absence of a rigorously defined result framework, the consultants will consequently have to rely mainly on participatory qualitative methods to obtain information.

Methodology

The methodological approach will be outlined by the consultants in the evaluation proposal, and later refined in detail in the inception report. The consultancy team is expected to demonstrate ability to undertake the evaluation by providing details of the process including the tools, formats and methods.

As outcomes are beyond the direct managerial responsibility of the programme and are achieved by primary stakeholders, the methodology proposed should be participatory in nature and focus on the Minjara platform stakeholders. The consultants are strongly invited to propose theory-based evaluation methods to demonstrate and explain outcomes and to identify the programme’s contribution to change. Methods such as **Outcome harvesting** or **Most significant change** will be very interesting, especially in

the absence of data and solid assumptions and the causal links between outputs, outcomes and impact. For this, it will probably be necessary to take the time needed to engage stakeholders before launching the exploration and data collection.

It is expected that the consultants produce, retrospectively and in collaboration with the project team, the Theory of change or **Outcome model** for Component 2 in order to formalise the intentions of the programme and map the causal logic of the intervention being evaluated. This model should include a description of what PSD Programme contributed to in its own right, what it contributes with partners, what partners may do independently and what non-partners might do. It should also display contributions to outcomes and even impact. This outcome model will enable Expertise France to capture both the codified and tacit knowledge of partners and stakeholders about how an outcome is intended to be achieved, and to identify the intended target group of the intervention at the outcome level and the expected changes that the intervention contributes to².

It might also be interesting to identify a non-probabilistic sample of stakeholders who took part in the programme in order to constitute case studies or obtain testimonies to illustrate the progress towards outcomes and the lessons learned from the experience.

Consultancy phases

The evaluation and learning process will be undertaken in four phases:

- 1) Inception and documentation
- 2) Data collection and analysis
- 3) Report
- 4) Restitution

During the second phase, a meeting with Expertise France will take place to present preliminary findings following the data collection activities. A workshop with evaluation users will be considered to discuss evaluation findings and elaborate the recommendations.

² Outcome-level evaluation, A companion guide to the handbook on planning monitoring and evaluating for development results for programme units and evaluators, UNDP, December 2011

VI. Deliverables and organization

Expected deliverables

Each segment will require separate deliverables:

Deliverable	Indications on the content	Indicative # pages	Delivery date
Inception report	This report can deal with both segments, but should provide clarifications on the methodology and tools to be used for both. It should include an evaluation matrix for the evaluation segment, and an updated workplan.	15 pages max	1 August 2023
Evaluation report (draft and final)	The report will provide a detailed narrative of Component 2 of the programme, as well as of the stakeholders involved. It will then describe the outcomes reached, whether intended or not, and illustrate this with testimonies from stakeholders.	30 pages	First draft: 20 September 2023 Final: 15 October 2023
Lessons learned leaflet	The format and length of this leaflet will be precised during the inception phase, but it is expected for this leaflet to be comprehensive while being concise, with clarity of language, user-friendly and adapted to an external public. Illustrations and citations will be used to enhance key messages and take-aways.	To be determined	First draft: 20 September 2023 Final: 15 October 2023
Overall summary	Summary of findings and key take-aways.	2 to 4 pages	15 October 2023

Workplan

Expertise France would like for the consultancy to begin as soon as possible, the project ending in October. The proposed provisional workplan is as follows:

Activities / steps	Date
Inception meeting	Mid-July
Data collection	End of July-August
Presentation of preliminary results	Mid-September
Restitution meeting	October

The candidates will provide a detailed workplan in their technical offer. This workplan will be discussed and validated during the inception meeting.

VII. Consultants profile / team composition

The assignment shall be implemented by an independent contractor and may consist of a team of experts/specialists, which is led by the leader of the consultant team. The consultant team is expected to demonstrate the following experience and qualifications:

- Significant experience in conducting impact or outcome evaluations or assessment studies,
- Significant experience designing and leading evaluations and/or reviews based on outcome harvesting or most significant change, including a demonstrable understanding of qualitative and participatory approaches,
- Excellent knowledge and proficiency of the differences between evaluation and learning (capitalization) processes,
- Strong experience and communication skills to facilitate interviews with a range of stakeholders, and to facilitate workshops using participatory techniques,
- Demonstrable experience of producing high-quality, credible reports in English,
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English,
- Sound knowledge of the Middle East, highly desirable knowledge of Lebanese context,
- Demonstrated ability to deliver quality results within strict deadlines,

VIII. Bidding process

Consultants are required to send their proposal by the 15th of June 2023 to antoine.bitar@expertisefrance.fr Subject: Minjara TOR Bidding

The proposal must include:

- CV of the consultant(s) that will work on the project
- List of relevant experiences as a company or individuals
- Proposed methodology and number of work days expected
- Price (in Euros) Payable by bank transfer from France. The price must be final and include all fees (like transports to Beirut or Tripoli)

Only shortlisted consultants will be contacted for an interview.

Budget

The maximum budget for this project is 39,500 Euros