

Terms of Reference

Promoting entrepreneurship and start-up development in the agriculture and agro-food sectors in North-Lebanon, Akkar and Beqaa governorates

1. Background

In response to high levels of unemployment and increasing poverty and vulnerability levels of both Lebanese and Syrian refugee communities, the Government of the Netherlands has launched a Partnership entitled “Improved Prospects for Forcibly Displaced Persons and Host Communities” or “PROSPECTS” bringing together the ILO, UNICEF, UNHCR, WB, and IFC to jointly focus on nexuses between education, protection and employment. Implemented in eight countries, namely, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, PROSPECTS aims to help transform the way governments and other stakeholders, including the private sector, respond to forced displacement crises. In particular, the Partnership aims to:

- (1) enhance the enabling environment for the socio-economic inclusion of forcibly displaced persons (to mitigate their plight during years of exile and to best prepare them for their return);
- (2) enhance access to education and child protection for vulnerable children on the move; and
- (3) strengthen the resilience of host communities through inclusive socio-economic development that also benefits forcibly displaced persons.

Within the framework of PROSPECTS in Lebanon, the ultimate objective of ILO’s intervention is to promote access for Syrian refugees and vulnerable host communities to decent work opportunities (rights to work); and to ensure workers from both communities have safe working conditions and social protection (rights at work), in line with international labour standards.

2. Context

Under the ‘Employment with Dignity’ pillar of PROSPECTS, the ILO, in collaboration with the other partners, seeks to ensure enhanced economic opportunities and decent employment for vulnerable Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees, with a focus on sectors with potential for growth, and job retention and creation. The situation analysis has highlighted pre-existing labour market and decent work challenges in Lebanon manifested in high unemployment particularly amongst women and youth, rising informality and poor working conditions that have been exacerbated further by the influx of Syrian refugees. Moreover, the situation analysis presented a bleak picture for employment and livelihoods creation for both Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees amidst political instability and a deeply entrenched economic and financial crisis.

Against this backdrop, PROSPECTS seeks to identify sectors with some potential for growth, retention of jobs, and possibly creation of new ones. One prominent sector where the partnership will seek to work in is the agriculture/agro-food sector. Rural communities have been struggling with high unemployment levels, more recently – in the face of the current financial crisis and liquidity restrictions - increasing poverty levels, and decreasing capacity to secure their own livelihoods and be self-reliant. In particular, the North-Lebanon, Akkar and Beqaa governorates, considered remote and rural areas that rely mostly on agriculture, are marginalized and suffer from limited public sector interventions and economic development. Facing high levels of poverty and unemployment, their situation has deteriorated with the influx of Syrian refugees, and more recently with the COVID-19 related health crisis.

To address these challenges, one of the strategies of PROSEPECTS is to promote ‘Business Support and Financial Inclusion and Entrepreneurship’, and decent ‘Working Conditions’. ILO will work on supporting the establishment of microbusinesses or income-generating initiatives among Lebanese host

communities and Syrian refugees, through the provision of financial and non-financial support service in the agriculture sector and in close coordination with partners operating in this space to avoid duplications and leverage synergies.

3. Scope and Objectives

In light of the above-mentioned challenges, the ILO seeks to support vulnerable Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees in Akkar, North-Lebanon and Beqaa governorates and promote livelihoods and decent jobs through entrepreneurship and start-up development in the agriculture and agro-food sectors.

To assist in implementation, the ILO is seeking a business development service (BDS) provider with extensive experience in entrepreneurship and start-up development training and coaching targeting vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees. The selected institution will be trained on the ILO My First Business (MFB) entrepreneurship training programme to ensure the delivery of non-financial support services to vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees and support the creation of microbusinesses in agriculture and agro-food sectors. The selected institution will also be in charge of providing grants to beneficiaries for start-up and operationalization phases, which will be made available by the ILO.

A Training of Trainers' (ToT) methodology will be used to achieve the programmes' sustainability through ensuring a capable network of BDS trainers, beyond the project duration, who are able to deliver the business management programme to Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese in a cost-effective manner. The added advantage of this approach is that it creates a multiplier effect for skills transfer, ensures the development of business start-up and management training capacities and avoids market price distortion.

The ILO MFB Training programme is a youth-specific adaptation of the ILO Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) Programme, which targets potential owners of small businesses to develop and strengthen their basic management skills. SIYB is one of the largest global business management training programmes that has led to the creation of 9 million jobs in 90 countries and the establishment of 2.65 million new businesses.

Vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees will be selected according to the below criteria:

- **Age:** Above 18 years old
- **Location:** North-Lebanon, Akkar and Beqaa
- **Nationalities:** 50% Lebanese and 50% Syrian refugees
- **Gender:** 50% women and 50% men
- **Socio-economic vulnerability:** Defined primarily economically as beneficiaries who are under the poverty level.
- **Additional signs of vulnerability** such as parents and/or spouses supported by the beneficiaries, people with special needs (physical impairment, disability...), homeless beneficiaries or in an unstable family situation (belonging to a cartel or orphanage) and/or have dependent children will be also considered.
- **Current employment situation:** unemployed or in a precarious employment situation as some beneficiaries are income providers for their households.
- **Good knowledge of Arabic** both reading and writing.
- **Social skills:** good communication skills, capacity to work in collaboration with peers, self-motivated and present lifelong learning pursuit.
- **Willingness of beneficiaries to cooperate** with other beneficiaries (Lebanese with Syrians, and Syrians with Lebanese).

4. Duties and Responsibilities of the BDS provider

In collaboration with the ILO, the selected BDS provider is expected to:

1. Develop and submit a detailed work plan for the intervention including outreach strategy, geographic spread, target beneficiaries, indicators, potential collaboration with institutions, training/coaching activities, and grant provision modality...
2. Conduct outreach to 650 beneficiaries, vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees in Beqaa, Akkar and North-Lebanon governorates, to take part of the ILO MFB entrepreneurship programme. Some beneficiaries will be identified through the following interventions that ILO has already planned: 1) Collaboration with UNICEF to provide training/coaching to graduates of the GIL Programme (Innovation Labs) in Beqaa, North-Lebanon and Akkar, and 2) Support to beneficiaries in 4 identified villages, namely Akroum, Kfar Habou, Bebnine and Syr El Donnieh for which a needs assessment has been conducted and a local partner is soon to be selected to set up social and solidarity income-generating initiatives in agriculture and agrofood in collaboration with municipalities and village committees.
3. Provide training to 650 vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees on the ILO MFB entrepreneurship development programme.
4. Organise business plan competitions to select 50 business ideas in the agriculture and agro-food sectors to benefit from coaching and seed funding. Some of the business ideas will already be identified through the two above-mentioned interventions, namely the collaboration with UNICEF and the social and solidarity income-generating initiatives. For other business ideas, a jury composed of experts will be formed to selected winners of the business plan competition. Guidelines and selection criteria of the business plan competition will be jointly set with representatives of the selected BDS provider. The ILO will prioritize the establishment of joint or individual Lebanese-owned businesses with employment opportunities to Syrian refugees in agriculture and agro-food.
5. Provide intensive coaching and regular follow-up to 50 businesses established in the agriculture and agro-food sectors. Two on-site coaching visits per month over a period of 6 months are usually recommended. Regular follow-up can also be made through phone calls or quick on-site visits.
6. Provide seed funding to 50 businesses, winners of the business plan competitions for start-up and operationalization phases. The ILO will make available USD400,000 as grants for the 50 selected businesses to be channeled through the selected BDS provider.
7. Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework including baseline and endline indicators to monitor progress and measure impact of the intervention.
8. Submit technical reports related to training and coaching activities and progress reports and tracking tools related to overall implementation progress, challenges and mitigation measures.

5. Place of Work

The intervention will cover Akkar, North-Lebanon and Beqaa governorates.



6. Deliverables, Timeframe

Expected Contract Start date: as soon as the Purchase Order is placed and countersigned by both the ILO and the supplier.

Expected Contract End date: 31/05/2021

The Supplier is expected to fulfil the required tasks and execute the deliverables in the timeframe given below:

Deliverables	Indicative Deadline
Updated work plan for the intervention including outreach strategy, geographic spread, target beneficiaries, indicators, potential collaborations with institutions, training/coaching activities	One week after contract signature
List of recruited beneficiaries once outreach is finalized	Once outreach is finalized
Training/coaching workshop reports	Upon completion of workshops
List of selected beneficiaries, winners of the business plan competitions and related business plans	Upon finalization of business plan competitions
Progress report on overall implementation half way through the project including challenges and mitigation measures	5 months after contract signature
Final report	End of contract

All payments will be processed upon submission and approval the deliverables by the ILO.

7. Administrative Arrangements

All activities within the scope of this Terms of Reference will be carried out under the overall supervision of the SME Technical Officer of the ILO Regional Office for Arab States in Beirut.

Deliverables shall be submitted in line with the requirements explained in this TOR within the deadlines. The deliverables are subject to the approval of the ILO.

The Supplier is responsible for informing the SME Technical Officer of the ILO Regional Office for Arab States in Beirut in advance in case of any unforeseen delays or changes.

8. Application requirements

8.1. Required Capacity of the BDS provider: (70% of total evaluation)

- ✓ Experience in BDS support targeting vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees (20%)
- ✓ Local expertise in working with vulnerable communities including Lebanese and Syrian refugees in rural areas in Lebanon; (20%)

- ✓ A pool of trainers/coaches with strong experience in entrepreneurship and start-up development training and coaching (20%)
- ✓ Senior team leader with minimum 10 years of professional experience including experience in the entrepreneurship development; (15%)
- ✓ Knowledge and experience in the agriculture and agro-food sectors; (15%)
- ✓ Knowledge of ILO mandate and work related to entrepreneurship development in Lebanon and (10%)

8.2. Documents to be submitted in the proposal

Interested organizations must submit the following documents/information to demonstrate their qualifications: A proposal demonstrating their capacity to:

1. Technical Proposal in line with the structure detailed below (section 9)
2. CVs of adequately experienced team leader and trainers/coaches – the ILO will interview suggested trainers and select the most qualified ones to be part of the MFB training and project implementation. If in any case, there is an unforeseen situation that a trainer/coach is replaced during implementation, the BDS provider should propose an alternative with equivalent qualification or above and inform the ILO in advance for approval.
3. Financial Proposal – as outlined below (section 10)
4. Three (3) references for similar past works undertaken by the bidder. Detailed contact information including the name, the title, and email and telephone numbers of people that can be contacted.

9. Technical Proposal

The technical proposal is expected to be submitted by the bidders in the following structure:

1. Company profile demonstrating required capacity in 8.1 and local presence in Lebanon, summarizing past experience and works undertaken in providing support to vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees on entrepreneurship and start-up development in the agriculture/agro-food sectors.
2. Detailed description of relevant past works and assignments related to entrepreneurship and start-up development to vulnerable communities in Lebanon.
3. Summary of the proposed methodology to support vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees on entrepreneurship and start-up development in agriculture and agro food in Akkar, North-Lebanon and Beqaa.
4. Detailed work plan with a timetable related to the different activities
5. CVs of senior team leader and trainers/coaches demonstrating their capacity to conduct the assignment
6. Foreseen challenges during the implementation of the project and mitigation methods.



10. Financial proposal (30% of total evaluation)

The bidders shall complete the financial proposal using an excel sheet and submit both the Excel version and the Pdf version. The financial proposal shall demonstrate:

- Activity costs
- Staffing costs (project managers, admin/finance assistant, experts...)
- Overhead costs and other costs associated with managing the project (including travel, printing, equipment...)
- Logistics costs (workshop venue, catering...)

The financial proposal will be evaluated based on price reasonableness and overall cost.

11. Application

The technical and financial proposals will be reviewed according to the criteria indicated under sections 8.1 and 10 and **should be submitted by email to Mr. Rayann Koudaih, SME Technical Officer, ILO ROAS Office (koudaih@ilo.org) by 24 July 2020**. Both financial and technical proposals should be valid for 90 days.