

Terms of Reference

Enabling Social and Solidarity Initiatives in Agriculture and Agro-food in North-Lebanon and Akkar

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 and Akkar 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.

Amid the crisis, Lebanese communities have started social and solidarity initiatives in agriculture and other sectors to support each other as a means for basic survival. Several Lebanese individuals and groups, living in and outside Lebanon, have offered support to the poorest and most vulnerable through

different means such as social media platforms, fundraising campaigns, and charity offices. In that sense, Lebanese communities have been considered as natural incubators of social initiatives and models that could help entire communities.

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 and North-Lebanon governorates and promote livelihoods and decent jobs through social and solidarity income-generating initiatives among active actors in the agriculture and agro-food sectors. Based on a need-assessment recently conducted in both governorates, the ILO has identified four villages, namely, Kfar Habou, Akroum, Bebnine, and Syr el Donniah to support vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees through social and solidarity initiatives. The selection of these villages was based on a number of parameters including supportive local governance, potential for social collaboration, resource availability and accessibility, local economic opportunity, opportunities in agriculture and agro food, and openness to innovation.

To assist in the implementation of this intervention, the ILO is seeking a local institution (consultancy firm, NGO...) with experience in promoting local economic development among vulnerable Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees in Akkar and North-Lebanon, specifically supporting social and solidarity income-generating initiatives in the agriculture and agro-food sectors.

In each of the four above-mentioned villages, the local institution will assist the ILO in the identification of entry-points such as municipalities, local economic/social development committees and local agricultural associations, and collaborate with them to promote social and solidarity income-generating initiatives. Building on the needs assessment results, the local institution is expected to identify and support in each village the following: social and economic priorities and needs; challenges and opportunities specific to agriculture/agro-food; active actors willing to engage collaboratively in social and solidarity income-generating projects in the targeted sectors, and a governance structure that ensures proper implementation of these initiatives and their sustainability.

The ILO will make available a network of trainers and coaches to provide capacity building to identified actors in the agriculture and agro-food sectors on entrepreneurship development to help launch social and solidarity income-generating initiatives or businesses. The ILO will also make available seed funding to provide financial support to these initiatives.

4. Duties and Responsibilities of the local institution

Based on the needs assessment results, the selected local institution is expected to:

1. Organise meetings with mayors and municipality councils to introduce the project, secure buy-in and assess expected contribution and potential collaboration.
2. Collaborate with existing local village committees and revive them whenever relevant.
3. Identify and assess main socio-economic priorities and needs, specifically the ones related to the agriculture and agro-food sectors in each of the villages.
4. Identify active actors among Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees in agriculture/agro-food willing to engage collaboratively in social and solidarity income-generating initiatives.

5. Create a working group/steering committee in each village including municipality council members and main actors in agriculture/agro-food to oversee, monitor social and solidarity initiatives and ensure their sustainability.
6. Conduct workshops including local actors in each village to develop proposals for social and solidarity income-generating initiatives in agriculture/agro-food and validate these proposals with municipalities and main sectoral actors.
7. Provide coaching sessions, with relevant experts, to working groups/steering committees to strengthen project ideas and develop implementation plans.
8. Evaluate with ILO and partners (entrepreneurship trainers, agricultural experts, microfinance institution...) proposed social and solidarity projects and select the most economically and socially viable ones.
9. Accompany the working groups/steering committees during the financing and capacity building process through coaching sessions to ensure proper communication and implementation of projects.

5. Place of Work

The intervention will cover Akkar and North-Lebanon. Four villages, namely Kfar Habou, Akroum, Syr el Donniyeh, and Bebnine have been selected.

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
Socio-economic brief of each village (building on the needs assessment results)	One month after contract signature
Mapping of agricultural (and agro-food) opportunities and challenges in each village	One month after contract signature
Meeting reports with municipalities, local committees and main agricultural actors to be involved in the intervention	One month after contract signature
Bi-monthly reports to monitor progress and identify challenges	Every two months throughout the contract
List of active actors to be involved in the local working groups/steering committees	2 months after signature

Workshop technical reports including list of proposed social and solidarity initiatives, actors to be engaged and recommendations	At the end of each workshop
Coaching reports outlining progress of each committee and recommendations	At the end of each coaching session
Progress report half way through implementation	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 local institution: (70% of total evaluation)

- ✓ Experience in engaging with and supporting local municipalities and committees for local economic development (20%)
- ✓ Local expertise in working with vulnerable communities including Lebanese and Syrian refugees in rural areas in Lebanon for a minimum of 7 years; (20%)
- ✓ Experience with developing and implementing social and solidarity economy tools and methodologies (20%)
- ✓ Senior team leader with minimum 10 years of professional experience including experience in the area of economic and social 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 consultants - If in any case, there is an unforeseen situation that a person is replaced, the supplier should propose an alternative with equivalent qualification or above and inform the ILO in advance.
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 local communities in rural areas and specifically to agriculture/agro-food sectors
2. Detailed description of relevant past works and assignments related to supporting social and solidarity initiatives in Lebanon
3. Summary of the proposed methodology to support the establishment of social and solidarity initiatives in agriculture and agro food in selected villages
4. Detailed work plan with a timetable related to the different activities
5. CVs of senior team leader and consultants 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...) will be covered by the ILO

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 20 July 2020.** Both financial and technical proposals should be valid for 90 days.