Near East Foundation - Lebanon

Request for Applications for Conducting a Market Assessment (Local Posting)

CONTRACT DATA

(This consultancy is pending final project approval from donor)

Period of Performance: December 4, 2023 – January 19, 2023

Location of Assignment: Beirut, Lebanon (with Travel to travel to project locations in Tripoli, Halba, Taanayel, Beirut/Mount Lebanon, Saida and relevant communities/geographical areas)

Background: For 100 years, the Near East Foundation (NEF) has worked to build more sustainable, prosperous, and inclusive communities in the Middle East, Caucasus, and Africa through education, governance, and economic development initiatives. Working through a network of country offices and local partners, NEF currently has approximately 250 staff members – almost all nationals – and programs in ten countries: Armenia, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Mali, Morocco, Palestine, Senegal, Sudan, and Syria. Its programs are organized around three themes: peacebuilding and stabilization, Climate-resilient development, and inclusive economic development.

Assignment Overview:

NEF is promoting economic empowerment among vulnerable individuals in Lebanon, including refugees and poor and marginalized women and youth. NEF achieves this by supporting the socio-economic development and enhancing protection and mental health of vulnerable refugees and local communities, working to increase the self-reliance and resilience. By providing multi-sectoral, holistic services, NEF aims to improve economic as well as psychosocial well-being using a rapid-response approach, tailored to the current circumstances, and in line with the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP). Hence, contributing to directly helping vulnerable refugees and local communities in Lebanon access rights, earn an income in a safe way, secure job and employment opportunities, and enjoy increased safety and enhanced self-reliance through durable and sustainable solutions. This is done by providing capacity building and support of market-linked skills development, development of new income-generating activities (IGAs) (refugees) and MSMEs (Lebanese), access to services to support growth of existing, high-potential IGAs and MSMEs, support of struggling businesses that face closure, supporting in employment and job creation. These efforts are intended to support self-sufficiency and protection among target beneficiaries by expanding their access to economic and social resources. Our methods maintain sensitivity to competition and protection risks, reduce the potential for tension/misunderstanding, and foster social stability between displaced and host populations. Many factors are important to the success of these economic activities, including access to markets, quality of products (quality inputs, standard production and processing skills), market demand, competitiveness and compatibility, easy availability of raw material/inputs and market trends/polarity, etc. In addition, activities and considerations related to vulnerable groups – e.g., obstacles, risks, and opportunities that are unique to men or women, youth or adults, people with disabilities, and/or other marginalizing characteristics. Thus, a robust market assessment and mapping must be conducted.

Building on the lessons of over five years of experience, NEF's 2022 – 2023 Market assessment and taking into account the dynamic economic situation in Lebanon, NEF has launched a sixth phase of this work, providing financial and non-financial services; assisting refugees and marginalized Lebanese develop life and technical skills, access social resources, and engage in IGAs, access employment to reduce their social and economic vulnerability while mainstreaming protection in all stages of the project.

This Market Assessment will provide detailed focus on analysis of the (1) **current context of the markets (overview on the Lebanese market demands, opportunities, and dynamics)**, (2) **market opportunities and detailed constraints for business expansion**, (3) **livelihood capacities, and competencies,** and (4) **key constraints that impact business survival and means for strengthening businesses' resilience in areas where NEF operates** (4) **Analyze employment trends, such as job growth, job sectors with high demand, and the unemployment rate** (5) **Examine specific industries or sectors that have the potential for job creation** in Tripoli, Halba, Taanayel, Beirut/Mount Lebanon, Saida and other relevant communities/geographical areas, **especially those in the digital sector**. Specific focus of this study will be on **Women, Youth, People with Disability and Refugee populations**.

This study will aim to provide NEF the needed analysis on how the program can adapt to current and projected market changes by providing a concept of the **new market structure in Lebanon**, it will support in identifying business/sectors that can **endure the current situation in Lebanon. This study will act as a guiding tool for NEF in current and future programming.**

A detailed analysis is needed, including concrete and practical recommendations in each of the five target regions. This will help inform the tailoring of the current project's technical assistance activities and inform future projects.

The assessment methodology should include desk analysis and collection of primary data through focus group discussions, business surveys, key informant interviews, and market observations, as detailed in the present Terms of Reference (ToR), NEF's Market Assessment guidelines (*Annexed*) and sample template (*Annexed*). It will also involve review and analysis of relevant policies and dynamics that affect access to economic opportunities, including government policies, access to financial services, access to markets, and transport.

<u>**Audience and Use**</u>: The key audiences of the study are the Near East Foundation, the donor, and the local Community Based Organizations in the project areas. The study will strengthen NEF's understanding of local market dynamics and micro-business opportunities and struggles as well as risks, it will support targeting/planning of project activities and strengthening participants' understanding of the current local market dynamics, opportunities, challenges and risks. Information from the assessment report (or results) will also be shared with potential funding sources and may be shared with other stakeholders such as local decision makers and public policy makers within and outside of Lebanon.

<u>**Research Objectives**</u>: The assessment has several key objectives, which apply to current and potential geographic areas. Across each objectives, NEF is seeking an evaluation of market demand and

opportunities for work and self-employment outside those traditionally offered by livelihoods programming (e.g., bookkeeping, cosmetic services, food preparation).

- Analyze and describe **local markets**, including current goods, services and employment in demand in the local market, focusing on the business sectors that are in demand in each area

- Identify, describe and assess **livelihood opportunities** related to these local markets, including promising business niches, **potential employment and self-employment opportunities** for refugees and vulnerable community members, noting how these opportunities differ for each demographic, including people with disabilities

- Identify, describe and assess **business profiles and sectors** related to these local markets, including **struggling businesses** in need of Business Development Support (BDS) to survive for refugees and vulnerable community members, noting how these differ for each demographic.

- Analyze the challenges faced in the **current crisis** including **adaptation measures, gaps and different sectors or business modalities** that can adapt/operate during crises. Looking into the type of assistance needed for business success

- Identify, describe and assess **livelihood capacities and competencies** among target groups, including **skills, resources and specific constraints** around income earning opportunities for people with disability, women and youth.

- Analyze how **livelihood opportunities** differ between the refugee and local community, including how they related to **business creation and business expansion**; identify opportunities and provide recommendations for entering into new market niches and for avoiding market saturation by project-supported entrepreneurs.

- Identify market dynamics with a focus on **innovative partnerships** (including partnership with the private sector) in addition to innovative, impactful **delivery methods** (e.g., in time of disruption, but also to reach scale, improve inclusivity of programs).

- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of **local employment trends**, including **job growth patterns**, **high-demand job sectors**, and the current **unemployment rate**. This analysis will provide insights into the dynamics of the labor market, guiding strategies for job creation, **especially those in the digital sector**.

- Evaluate specific industries and sectors within the region to identify their **potential for job creation, especially those in the digital sector** . This assessment will encompass market research, economic outlook, and alignment with regional strengths, informing recommendations for fostering employment opportunities in these sectors.

- *With the unreliable access to energy that is crippling small businesses and jeopardizing their ability to survive let alone to earn a profit, innovate, and remain competitive in an increasingly challenging environment* this study will also aim to assess (1) eco-efficient business adaptation strategies and (2) green business opportunities in local markets. NEF will identify potential solutions to energy and water shortages that are relevant to existing businesses (e.g., alternative energy applications, energy and water efficient equipment and production strategies), to identify related business opportunities, and to adapt training materials.

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Research Methodology: The methodology and research tools to be employed during the assessment include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Desk Analysis**

The consultant will review recent (last 5 years) documents related to the following: (1) existing market assessments in the target areas; (2) market regulatory and price control policies, laws and mechanisms (including those that restrict refugee livelihoods), (3) relevant documents on market trends, where available, especially for Tripoli and surrounding villages, and (4) other relevant documents, resources, and data sources.

- **Market Mapping and Value Chain**

The consultant will provide a general map of potential local and regional markets in terms of type, size and volume of market, supply chain, women- and youth-led businesses/trades, main access barriers, key trade organizations, and security arrangements, especially for women and youth.

- **Interviews with Key Informants and Focus Groups**

The consultant will interview key informants in the areas where NEF operates in Tripoli, Halba, Taanayel, Beirut/Mount Lebanon, Saida and other relevant communities/geographical areas; these will include mainly women, people with disability, and youth beneficiaries of NEF's current programs, aspiring entrepreneurs, membership bodies (e.g. chamber of commerce, syndicates), suppliers, wholesalers, producers, farmers, vendors, consumers, financial institutions, and other relevant market and policy actors. The consultant also will conduct at least one focus group discussion in each project village involving individuals who are members of the targeted demographic for project beneficiaries: Lebanese and refugee women and youth.

Expected Outputs/Deliverables of the Consultancy: Under the supervision of the Country Representative, and with support from the M&E Department, the Consultant will be required to deliver the following outputs:

- The consultant shall prepare a brief workplan. The workplan should set out the consultant's approach for conducting research activities for conducting the assessment. The assignment is expected to be completed within a minimum of 20 working days divided over a period of 1.5 months, starting the first week of December 2023.

- A brief inception report (maximum 5 pages) within 10 days from starting the assignment, which details the consultant's understanding of the work and context, methodology and includes a concrete action plan for delivering the outputs and proposed structure for the final report.

- Submission of initial findings (2 – 3 pages) report and in-person presentation by **January 5, 2024**

- A solid and well-organized **draft report** in English detailing the methodology, analysis, key findings, lessons learned and in-depth recommendations that will inform current project and future programming, submitted for review and comments to NEF by **January 12, 2024**, with the possibility of having up to 3 rounds of reviews.

- o Collected quantitative and qualitative data and analysis should be annexed.

- o At this time, the consultant will also submit a concise (1 page) but **detailed executive summary** of the market analysis and livelihoods capacity assessment, including key findings, opportunities, constraints, recommendations, and service gaps.

- o A brief presentation/discussion session prior to the final report to include initial findings and adjustments needed

- A final version of the market assessment report by **January 19, 2024**. The report will be written in English and submitted electronically in a MS – Word document. **The consultant is responsible for proofreading the final report**. The report should consist of:

  - o Executive Summary (no more than 1,500 words)

  - o Details of the assignment methodology and analysis

  - o Findings (based on the template shared)

  - o Conclusions and recommendations

  - o Lessons learnt from similar programs or initiatives

  - o Annexes

Deadlines:

- Contractual Starting Date: December 4, 2023

- Deadline for Inception Report: December 14, 2023

- Deadline for the draft report: January 12, 2024

- Deadline for the final deliverables: January 19, 2024

NEF will be responsible for:

- Provision of previous and actual project documents for contextual background;

- Provision of previous Market Assessments and External Evaluations conducted;

- Logistics and transportation for the days of field work when applicable.

- The consultant is expected to use his/her own laptop and phone

Payment Method:

The payment will be made as 40% in advance, 60% on approval of the final report. NEF will not be responsible for any further expenses incurred by the consultant during the consultancy visits and for any loss and/or damage to him/her.

Skills, experience and selection criteria:

- University degree in relevant field;

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- Proven capability and experience in conducting similar assessments;

- Should have a clear vision for how to approach the project subjects and be able to build a trust and rapport with the subjects and communities being profiled;

- Experience in the livelihoods and protection sectors in Lebanon;

- Experience in research methodology;

- Experience in qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques including conducting focus group discussion and key informant interviews;

- Ability to access to data and information sources, including contacts within relevant private sector and government entities;

- Native Arabic speaker;

- Excellent writing and communication skills in Arabic and English;

- Availability and willingness to travel to various areas in Lebanon during weekdays; and,

- Ability to work under strict and demanding timelines.

Submission requirements:

Interested applicants should submit the following in a unique PDF file (except any sample of previous evaluations which could be sent in separate files):

- Cover Letter indicating clearly how the opportunity fits in with applicant's skills and experience;

- Up-to-date Curriculum Vitae(s);

- Technical proposal (including understanding and comments on the ToRs, methodology, data collection tools, work-plan including number of days at each step, with clear timeframe for each activity under work-plan and deliverable, and if relevant, details on team composition and organization);

- Financial proposal (inclusive of VAT). **NEF will provide transportation from Beirut to field sites and return;**

- Sample of previous evaluations for similar assignments where applicant was the sole or lead evaluator and author of the work;

- Two references.

Documents should be submitted by November 21, 2023

By email to: procurementlebanon@neareast.org with a subject line, "Market Assessment Consultant".

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Submissions received after the deadline will not be taken into consideration. Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Near East Foundation by visiting the NEF website at www.neareast.org.