



Inclusive jobs and education for refugees and host communities
-PROSPECTS-
Terms of Reference

TOR Title	Consultant for the Support in access to finance activities within PROSPECTS-Lebanon		
Country	Lebanon	Project Code	LBN/19/50/NLD - 107274
Duration	From	20/03/2024	to 19/11/2024
Pillar:	Employment		
Outcome:	06: Years 2-4 - Component Employment - Increased number of forcibly displaced and host community members with enhanced livelihoods and/or employment in safe/decent work		
Output:	12.01 - (OF1) Credit guarantee schemes to re-establish access to productive equipment is provided		
Activity / BL	06.02.02 - Enhanced capacities of existing MSMEs in the agricultural sector to improve working conditions and productivity		
	12.01.01 - Set up credit guarantees for productive investments		

BACKGROUND

General Background

The forced displacement crisis has increased in scale and complexity in recent years. According to UNHCR, 79.5 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide at the end of 2019. Forcibly displaced persons (FDPs), including refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) face specific vulnerabilities, including loss of assets and psychological trauma, limited rights, lack of opportunities, a protection risk as well as a risk to be out of school, and a lack of planning horizon. In addition, the communities hosting FDPs also struggle to pursue their own development efforts.

In response to the considerable challenges facing FDPs and host communities, a new partnership initiative titled: 'PROSPECTS' Partnership for improving Prospects for host communities and forcibly displaced persons, was launched by the Government of the Netherlands, that brings together the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank. Through the PROSPECTS partnership, the five partner agencies aim to leverage their comparative advantages and areas of expertise to programme complementary and interdependent interventions that address education and skills, employment and protection challenges. The partnership spans eight countries, namely Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Sudan, and Uganda and covers the period 2019-2023.

PROSPECTS in Lebanon

The PROSPECTS programme in Lebanon aims to reduce multidimensional vulnerabilities and increase social stability for refugee and host communities through a comprehensive and integrated strategy for improved resilience and self-reliance. It is doing so through the interlinked pillars of the PROSPECTS partnership, namely: Education and Learning (pillar 1), Employment with Dignity (pillar 2), and Protection and Inclusion (Pillar 3), alongside the 'New Ways of Working pillar'.



The Employment with Dignity pillar, under which this consultancy falls, addresses the pressing labour market challenges in the Lebanese context that have been exacerbated over the past few years by multiple crises. The main aim of the programme within the employment pillar is to ensure enhanced economic opportunities and decent employment for vulnerable Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees, with a focus on sectors such as agriculture and digital skills with potential for growth, job retention, and creation.

Within the framework of PROSPECTS Lebanon, ILO's focus has been on enhancing resilience of Lebanon's crisis-hit labour market and creating better livelihoods for both Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees. It is doing so by promoting the development of market-relevant skills, enhancing career guidance and employment placement services and labour market governance, strengthening social protection schemes, and promoting micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) through capacity building and access to finance within sectors of potential for decent job creation.

ASSIGNMENT BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Agriculture, including horticulture is seen as a critical sector for employment creation and poverty reduction in Lebanon; hence has been a focus sector for the ILO under the PROSPECTS programme. An estimated 20-25 percent of the country's working population is involved in agricultural-related activities on a full time or part time basis. In the poorest regions of the country (Akkar, Donnieh, Northern Beqaa and the South) agriculture-related activities account for up to 80 percent of the local economic output. Agriculture livelihoods, designated as a formal livelihood source facilitating refugees' inclusion in the job market in Lebanon, provide economic integration opportunities that improve the food security of refugees and activate rural economies. It is also one of only three sectors where Syrian refugees are legally allowed to work.

However, the agriculture sector has also been hard-hit by the combined effects of the crises. The Centre de Recherche et d'Etudes Agricole Libanais (CREAL) warned in a recent report that agricultural production is likely to collapse, and projects a production drop in agriculture of around 40 percent of Lebanon's total share in GDP due to farmers' inability to access necessary agricultural inputs.

Rising prices for agricultural inputs and the breakdown of previously existing informal credit mechanisms have left farmers struggling to finance inputs and keep agricultural production going, threatening the jobs of both farmers and Syrian workers. In its efforts to address those challenges, ILO is working on increasing productivity and improving conditions for farmers and agriculture workers.

As such, end of 2020, PROSPECTS forged an implementation agreement with an implementing partner to provide financial and non-financial business development support and assist vulnerable groups in the creation of microbusinesses specifically in the agricultural and agri-food sectors namely in Beqaa, Hermal and Akkar North governorates. A total of 691 Lebanese and Syrians graduated from the "My First Business/MFB" tool developed by ILO, while 58 Start-ups & 8 SSE (66 business ideas) were coached and provided with access to seed-funding (in the form of grants) that helped them establish their businesses following a competitive business pitching process. Additionally, some of these businesses were supported with access to market opportunities including digital marketing, supplier visits and mentoring to enhance their business viability.

Beyond grants for the most vulnerable farmers and agri-businesses to purchase basic inputs (fertilizers, seeds, etc.) and subsidies to purchase greenhouses, farmers and Agri processors need more sustainable financial support if they are to make investments that would increase their productivity and income.

In parallel, access to credit has diminished to the minimum following Lebanon's financial crisis, and farmers and agricultural workers were equally affected especially that all banks stopped lending, while few financial institutions remained in operation providing limited credit amounts for their old customers.



Against this backdrop, ILO PROSPECTS decided to work on enhancing access to finance/credit for farmers and agriculture workers while reviving the role that the microfinance sector can play in contributing to the growth of the agriculture sector, and the economy as a whole. As such, a credit scheme was designed in collaboration with an MFI in early 2023 targeting farmers and agriculture workers in the North, Akkar, Beqaa, and Baalbeck - Hermel, with the objective of facilitating access to credit for farmers and agriculture workers in the mentioned areas. The medium- to long-term objective is to support the national microfinance sector and institutions post crisis so they can sustainably continue to support the agriculture sector and the Lebanese economy in general.

The designed credit scheme has provided loan product/s that respond to a wide range of needs of farmers and agribusinesses in the sector, while enhancing their business and financial management capacity. As of end of Dec 2023, a total of 1016 farmers and agri-food workers graduated from courses on “Improving your agriculture business” and financial education trainings, while 220 loans were disbursed in the value of 800K USD. The purpose is to help them enhance their productivity as described above and meet their current and emerging needs to enable them to sustain their production and agribusiness or expand it; as such provide opportunities for retention of existing jobs and creation of new ones. A market analysis was conducted earlier which guided the product profile further.

Following these interventions and as PROSPECTS kicks off its Phase II, it is important to reflect on its Phase I results and conduct monitoring visits to assess the viability of established or expanded businesses through access to finance initiatives. This will help in understanding the impact and sustainability of these interventions, which will feed into the design of Phase II interventions. As such, this TOR is seeking a consultant to support the ongoing monitoring for these clients through conducting field visits and review the main outputs achieved from the trainings and access to finance.

Objective of the TOR

The immediate objective of this consultancy is to conduct a thorough review of the above-mentioned activities with ILO’s Implementing Partners conduct field monitoring visits and fill in needed forms, and report on the compiled data following its analysis.

SCOPE OF WORK AND METHODOLOGY

Based on the above, ILO is seeking a local consultant who will be working with the Financial Inclusion and Entrepreneurship Officer in coordination with the implementing partners to undertake the following tasks, which will require a total of **100 Workdays** as follows:

- Carry out a desktop review of the different activities under two implementation agreements with ILO partners within the financial inclusion and entrepreneurship components, meet with ILO team and partners to understand expected outputs and the theory of change **(3 Workdays)**
- Prepare a monitoring visit plan and monitoring forms/questionnaire to be used to review/assess each component. This should be discussed and approved by PROSPECTS team **(2 Workdays)**
- Conduct field monitoring visits for at least 300 clients who benefited from access to finance interventions (loans and grants in the past and ongoing), meet with clients and fill in monitoring and/or assessment forms. Close coordination will take place with M&E officer in ILO ROAS office and M&E team of PROSPECTS. The associated costs and logistics of these missions shall be borne by the consultant and should be factored into the financial offer. Visits to and questionnaire with the Syrian refugees should ask specific questions related to the challenges they face in starting and registering a business in Lebanon. **(70 Workdays)**
- Conduct field visits to on-going trainings on improve your agri-business and financial education to monitor implementation and assess the learning experience of participants. The associated costs and logistics of these missions shall be borne by the consultant and should be factored into the financial offer **(5 Workdays)**
- Initiate a database and fill in regularly the outcome of the monitoring/assessment forms **(13 Workdays)**



- Provide bi-monthly reports (4 reports) on the above monitoring visits and two final analysis reports for both components detailing the effectiveness and impact of the various interventions on the productivity, income, sustainability of the businesses and on job retain and creation (**7 workdays**).

DELIVERABLES

Below are the main expected outputs/deliverables of this assignment:

1. A monitoring visit plan including a schedule for 70 field visits along with 2 monitoring/assessment/questionnaire forms to be used to review/assess each component.
2. At least 70 field monitoring visits for 300 clients who benefited from access to finance interventions (loans and grants in the past and ongoing).
3. 300 monitoring and/or assessment forms filled in and entered on the newly designed database.
4. 10 field visits to on-going trainings on improve your agri-business and financial education.
5. Four bi-monthly reports on the above monitoring visits and two final analysis reports for both components detailing the effectiveness and impact of the various interventions on the productivity, income, sustainability of the businesses and on job retain and creation.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND APPLICATION PROCESS

To be considered as an eligible candidate, the consultant should have the following qualifications:

- A university degree in relevant field of study (finance, Accounting, business management, economics)
- Previous working experience of minimum 10 years in the financial sector with focus on MSME financing within microfinance sector in Lebanon. Experience in grant distribution for MSMEs is a strong plus.
- A deep understanding of MSMEs in the Lebanese context in general, and in the agricultural sector in specific.
- Experience in managing quantitative and qualitative primary data collection with good analytics, M&E experience, and report writing skills.
- Experience working with international organizations / bilateral donors / technical agencies shall be an advantage.
- Working knowledge of Lebanese territories in Beqaa and North governorates
- Proven experience in working with Arabic language is a must.

SUPERVISION AND LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

The consultant will perform his/her assignment under the supervision of entrepreneurship and financial Inclusion officer Ms. Fadia Jradi at jradi@ilo.org and the overall guidance of Prospects Regional Chief Technical advisor for Arab States. Close coordination will take place with Regional M&E officer in ILO ROAS office and M&E team of the PROSPECTS programme.

TIME FRAME AND ESTIMATED BUDGET

The above tasks and deliverables shall be finalized within 100 working days over 8 months period. Estimated budget will depend on the rate of the consultant in addition to other costs associated with field monitoring visits. All assignment's deliverables are expected to be delivered to the satisfaction of the ILO.



PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Payments will be dispersed based on the receipt of quality deliverables and estimated working days, as per the below schedule:

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Instalment</i>
Upon the delivery of deliverables (1&2) in addition to conducting 15 field visits and filling at least 60 Monitoring/assessment forms (2 months after the start of contract)	25%
Upon conducting 30 field visits and filling in 120 Monitoring/assessment forms and entering 180 forms on the data base and submission of 2 monthly reports (4 months after the start of contract)	25%
Upon conducting 35 field visits and filling in 120 Monitoring/assessment forms and entering them on the data base and submission of 3 monthly reports (6 months after the start of contract)	25%
Upon submission of two final analysis report for both components with the two implementing partners (8 months after the start of contract)	25%
TOTAL	100%