

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Provision of Executive Entrepreneurship Training in IT Sector

A. Background:

The Aga Khan Foundation, Afghanistan (AKF-A) is an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a group of international, private, non-denominational development agencies working to improve living conditions and opportunities for people in some of the poorest parts of the developing world. The Network's organizations have individual mandates that range from the fields of health and education to architecture, rural development and promotion of private-sector enterprise and institutions that seek to empower communities and individuals, usually in disadvantaged circumstances, to improve living conditions and opportunities. University of Central Asia is a sister-concern of AKF (Afg) supporting higher education programs in Central Asia.

The University of Central Asia offers an internationally recognized standard of higher education in Central Asia. UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) provides a range of high-quality technical and professional education opportunities across the Central Asian region and Afghanistan with the aim of supporting employment and economic growth.

The UCA's SPCE will develop and offer new short-cycle Executive Entrepreneurship program focusing on IT Sector, which will create international synergies that will have most potential for growth, promote increased exports, enhance revenue streams, and job creation. Specifically, this training for advanced IT entrepreneurs will focus on establishing business linkages, formal partnerships, and development of joint ventures, with the view to facilitate export promotion, foreign investments, and access to new markets for SMEs in the region. It must educate IT executives on how to create international synergies, enhance revenue streams, and support job creation in the region.

Under this initiative, UCA's SPCE will directly support Aga Khan Foundation's Accelerate Prosperity (AP) through the provision and execution of the Executive Entrepreneurship training. The training is expected to increase the competency & capability of the managers/executives currently in the IT Sector, working either at regional or national levels so they are able to grow their business and bring about valuable and positive change in those they lead, increasing motivation and morale of their teams, while enhancing their performance and becoming role models that inspire mentorship to develop others in similar roles/business.

The outcome desired is to enhance Business to Business (B2B) linkages between countries (Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan), involving Accelerate Prosperity (AP) Investees and SPCE supported enterprises. It is expected that the training will encourage growth in area of promotion of IT Sector between neighboring countries, promotion of exchange experience of running successful IT Sector services / business across Central/South Asia and extension of value chain networks.

To achieve the aim, the training programme will need to cover: (i) how to establish joint ventures and business partnerships; (ii) how to access wider markets beyond the traditional base; (iii) understanding import/export regulations and tax regimes; (iv) and, how to develop business models for sustainable growth and export-oriented production and services. These would be inclusive of:

- Cross-marketing of products between the countries/regions, utilizing digital technologies for marketing campaigns.
- Enhancing the digital knowledge and landscape (Digital Marketing /Website/ etc.).
- Educating the participants on the inter-cultural IT Sector landscapes.
- Research and identify revenue generating products and services across the Central Asia and the region.

To achieve the above, SPCE UCA seeks to engage a consulting firm who can deliver the below scope of works and deliverables in IT sector based on training needs assessment, in close consultation with SPCE/UCA and AP.

B. Scope of work and expected outputs / deliverables

Selected Consulting firm would:

1. Carry out assessment of the IT Sector in the target areas that provides the below data:
 - (a) Current state of IT industry development objectives, targets and status as well as gaps;
 - (b) IT Sector activities across borders, and long-term IT Sector business growth, & current link to major trading partners in select markets;
 - (c) Available regional networking and IT Sector events organized for SME owners and senior managers;
 - (d) Executive training already offered within region to build competency and skills of future IT Leaders;
 - (e) Number of SMEs in the IT Sector that this programme should target, who have the pre-requisite knowledge to build on the desired competences.
2. Carry out stakeholder analysis to identify roles and responsibilities of key leadership players and Institutions in the IT sector.
3. Carry out gap analysis to identify Skills & Competencies required for an IT SME/Leader and map out the issues and identify the priorities in line with the objectives of this project. This should include consultations and meeting and key informant interviews with the relevant stakeholders (APs offices in Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and AKF offices respectively as required).
4. Produce a comprehensive training needs assessment report based on the above, with recommendations for:
 - a. Key topics and competencies to be covered.
 - b. Content availability – on-demand, on-line or custom development.
 - c. Identify resource requirements to deliver the program.
 - d. Define schedule/length of each course;
 - e. Evaluation process for the participants;
 - f. post-training evaluations and impact assessment of the overall program;
 - g. Provide estimate cost of each course & overall program costs.

5. Conduct Training Need Assessment workshop and submit draft reports that should include desk review, situation report, stakeholders and gap need analysis.
6. Based on the assessment, develop comprehensive 3 cycles of training programme below in English for both online and offline delivery of the course teaching for:
 - (a) 10 days cycle 1: After completion, course participants will be able to establish/develop business networks with other IT Sector operators/businesses.
 - (b) 20 days cycle 2: After completion, course participants will be able to develop professional collaboration with their peers and create legal contracts to formalize cooperation.
 - (c) 15 days cycle 3: After completion, course participants will together be able to develop joint business plans, which can then be used as models for further replication across the region.
7. Produce a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) survey questionnaire. Such survey will be used to assess the knowledge of participants from 4 target countries before and after the 3 comprehensive training modules. Ultimately, survey results will help the instructors to evaluate effectiveness of the training modules, to make improvements, and adjust future courses.
8. Share the draft modules with key experts for their review, incorporate comments and finalize the modules.
9. It will be also required to assess the skill level of the participants/students to gear the course materials accordingly.

C. Final Deliverables and Results

- (a) Need assessment report.
- (b) Curriculum by modules;
- (c) Syllabus
- (d) Teaching and facilitator’s Manual;
- (e) Participants Learning Manual;
- (f) Course/module assessment tests/quizzes;
- (g) Reading package;
- (h) Qualified Instructors, who are capable to deliver the training.

D. REQUIREMENTS FOR EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

- A postgraduate or equivalent qualification/degree in IT, Economics, Business and Management, Entrepreneurship with particulars focus on IT Sector or as relevant.
- 5-7 years of prior work experience in the field of training, curriculum development and research especially in the regional and international context connected to the related discipline.
- Demonstrated knowledge and experience in conducting needs assessments and developing training modules/curriculum, training materials etc.
- Demonstrated experiences and skills in facilitating stakeholder/working group consultations and training.
- Relevant regional and international experience in the required field and contexts will be an added advantage.

- Excellent writing, editing and oral communication skills in English. Russian and Dari would be an advantage.

E. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

Technical Proposal of applicant must ensure to attach the following:

- i. Profile of consultant (max 2 page) explaining why they are the most suitable for the work.
- ii. Relevant Experience (max 2-3 pages).
- iii. Detailed methodology and conceptual framework with expected deliverables and timelines, days required (4-5 pages).
- iv. CVs of experts.
- v. Contact information of three references.

F. FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

The financial proposal shall specify a total lump sum amount (including a breakdown of costs for fee, travel (if any), training material, number of working days and any other cost that may be associated in developing the courses/modules. Payment will be made in installments based upon key outputs i.e., upon delivery of the services.

G. EVALUATION

UCA's SPCE emphasis in evaluation will be on the quality of the proposal, breadth and depth of services and on flexibility for serving UCA's SPCE existing as well as future needs.

Proposals will be evaluated by UCA's SPCE using the following criteria:

- Track record: Relevant subject-matter background (understanding of the IT/digital market and knowledge of opportunities and challenges especially in the Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Evidence of experience with similar assessment(s). Professional expertise in analysing data and producing high quality reports.
- Delivery Approach: Does the provider use repeatable delivery processes? (For example, is the provider's delivery methodology or framework appropriate for the scale and complexity of work involved). Use of operational delivery or project management processes for consistent and timely delivery of services.
- Key Personnel & Subject Matter Expertise: Whether provider's proposed team have the right subject matter expertise to deliver the outcomes you are seeking.
- Cost: Once the vendors expertise and capability are evaluated, the best value for money proposal will be considered.

Responsive proposals should provide straightforward, concise information that satisfies the requirements noted in the Proposal. Emphasis should be placed on conformity to UCA's SPCE instructions, requirements and completeness and clarity of content.

Language of the proposal: The bid, as well as all correspondence and documents relating to the bid shall be written in English language. Supporting documents and printed literature furnished by the bidder in another language may be provided if accompanied by an accurate translation of the relevant text in English language.

Currency of the proposal: All financial information should be provided in USD (\$).

Submitting of the proposal: The bidder expected to submit the proposal electronically (technical and financial proposal) to saltanat.kuzekeeva@ucentralasia.org with a copy to dilovar.butabekov@ucentralasia.org and with the name and address of the bidder.

Deadline for submission: the proposal must be received by UCA at the address specified above no later than – **30th November 2021.**