
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR MSMEs IN KUNDUZ PROVINCE)

From: ARSO in partnership with ACTED

Opening Date: 27 April 2026

Introduction / Background

Afghanistan Research and Social Organization (ARSO) is a national, non-governmental and non-profit organization established in 2019 and officially registered with the Ministry of Economy of Afghanistan under registration number (4755).

ARSO provides humanitarian and development services for vulnerable communities.

Its activities are based on gender equality, social justice and community empowerment.

1. Purpose of the EOI

The purpose of this Expression of Interest (EOI) is to identify and select 10 Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Kunduz Province to benefit from targeted support under this program.

Through this call, ARSO seeks motivated entrepreneurs who are already operating a business or have one close to becoming operational, and who are interested in improving how they manage, present, and grow their products and services.

This program is designed for Afghan businesses that are open to adopting practical approaches to strengthen operations and improve customer reach.

This EOI does not aim to select “perfect” businesses; rather, it focuses on identifying committed individuals who are willing to learn, test new approaches, and actively engage throughout the program. Selected businesses will receive a combination of training, mentoring, and limited material support to enhance their performance and promote sustainable growth.

2. Program Overview (Support Package)

Selected businesses will participate in a structured support program designed to strengthen operations and improve income in a practical and realistic manner.

The program combines training, continuous support, and limited financial assistance, focusing on addressing real business challenges.

a. Training Sessions

Participants will attend practical training sessions covering key areas such as basic business management, financial literacy, marketing, and customer relations. Sessions will be interactive and based on real-life business scenarios.

b. Business Mentoring and Follow-Up

Each participant will receive regular mentoring and follow-up support, including individual guidance, check-ins, and tailored advice to help apply learned skills effectively.

c. Business Support (Cash or In-Kind)

Selected businesses may receive support of up to €2,000, either in the form of equipment, tools, materials, or other business-related inputs. In some cases, conditional cash assistance may be provided depending on the business needs.

Support will be assessed carefully and provided based on relevance and potential impact.

d) Practical Business Improvement Support

Participants will receive guidance on improving business planning, product quality, packaging, pricing, and overall presentation to better meet market demands.

3. Selection Criteria

Applications will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Business must be officially registered
- Minimum of 1 year of operational experience
- Business must be currently active in Kunduz Province
- Minimum of 4 staff members
- Clear and ongoing production or service activity
- Existing products or services are already in the market
- Demonstrate potential for growth and sustainability
- Quality and competitiveness of products/services
- Basic capacity to manage staff and operations
- Willingness to improve financial management and record-keeping
- Commitment to participate in all project activities
- Motivation to apply new skills
- Interest in expanding market reach
- Priority will be given to:
 - Women-led businesses
 - Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)
 - Returnees
 - Economically vulnerable entrepreneurs
 - Businesses in underserved communities
 - Businesses contributing to job creation or supporting vulnerable groups

4. Application Requirements

Applicants must submit a concise but complete business proposal describing their business and current situation.

The submission should include:

- Filling the application, should be signed and stamped in PDF format
- Copy of valid business license/registration
- Copy of national ID (Tazkira)
- Staff list (names, roles, employment type)
- Bank account and tax clearance details
- Business location details
- Photos of business/products (if available)
- Motivation statement (5–10 lines)

5. Selection Process

The selection process will be conducted in a transparent and fair manner:

Step 1: Call for Applications

Announcement via ACBAR and ARSO networks.

Step 2: Initial Screening

Eligibility check based on minimum requirements.

Step 3: Detailed Review

Assessment of business capacity, growth potential, and relevance.

Step 4: Shortlisting

Preparation of a shortlist based on scoring.

Step 5: Verification and Interviews

Interviews or field visits for shortlisted applicants.

Step 6: Final Selection

Selection of 10 MSMEs based on merit and vulnerability criteria.

Step 7: Notification

All applicants will be informed of the final decision.

Important Note

The selection process will be conducted fairly and transparently. Final decisions will be based on eligibility, assessment results, and alignment with program objectives.

ARSO reserves the right to verify all submitted information prior to final approval.

6. Submission Details:

Interested applicants must submit complete proposals electronically before the deadline:

Deadline: May 03, 2026, 4:00 PM (Afghanistan Time)

Email: operation@arso-ngo.org

Applicants are encouraged to submit all required documents in one complete package. Incomplete or late submissions may not be considered.

For questions or clarifications, applicants may contact the above address during working hou

