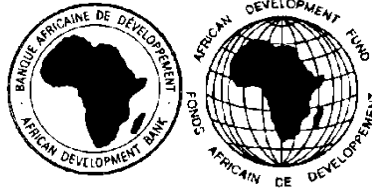




REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
National Investment Commission (NIC)
M&E Professional Building/ UN Drive
Monrovia, Liberia



Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI)
(Consultancy Services)

Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone (SAPZ) Project

CONSULTANCY SERVICE FOR “TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING FOR MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs)”

Sector: Agriculture/Industry

Financing Agreement Reference: 2100150042703

Project ID: P-LR-AA0-009

1. BACKGROUND

The Government of Liberia (GoL), through the National Investment Commission (NIC), has secured funding from the African Development Bank (AfDB) to prepare and implement the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone (SAPZ) Project within the Buchanan Special Economic Zone. This project aims to stimulate economic growth, foster sustainable agricultural development, and ultimately reduce poverty in Liberia. The project's specific objectives include reducing unemployment, decreasing reliance on imported staple foods, and establishing essential infrastructure and a favorable economic environment to attract private sector investment in agriculture and agro-industry.

The SAPZ Project aims to enhance Liberia's agro-industrial sector, thereby driving industrial and commercial growth, ensuring food security, expanding capacity-building and training programs for agro-industrialization, and promoting value addition to major crops. The SAPZ is expected to enhance the competitiveness and efficiency of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), particularly among women and youth, as well as create direct employment opportunities across various sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing, finance, logistics, and insurance. Priority crops for the project include rice, aquaculture products, cocoa, coffee, cassava, oil palm, fruits, rubber, and vegetables.

The Project development goal is to contribute to inclusive and sustainable agro-industrial development in Liberia, and in the process reduce staple food imports, create jobs, and reduce poverty.

The project development objectives are to:

- i) Create a better business environment for increased investment in the agro-industrial sector,

- ii) Create opportunities for investments at the industrial level and coordinate the integration of smallholder farms and agro-processing industry into sustained agro value chains and,
- iii) Improve capacities and skills to benefit from new agribusiness employment and value chain opportunities.

The project is structured around three related components; including:

- a) Support the development of Climate-resilient Infrastructure to attract investments into Agricultural Value addition/industrialization,
- b) Support Business Competitiveness, enable skills and climate-smart agricultural value chain development and strengthen farmer coordination and,
- c) Strengthen Institutional Capacity, Project Coordination & Management.

Objectives:

The primary objective of the consultancy is to strengthen the capacity of MSMEs that are operating in the agro-industrial space to thrive in an increasingly competitive and dynamic business environment. Specifically, the assignment aims to:

1. **Enhance Managerial and Operational Competence:** Provide MSMEs with the knowledge and tools to improve their business management practices, including financial management, human resources, and operational efficiency.
2. **Promote Digital Transformation:** Equip MSMEs with the skills to adopt and leverage digital tools, such as e-commerce, digital marketing, and automation, to enhance their competitiveness and access to broader markets.
3. **Improve Access to Finance:** Train MSMEs in financial literacy, investment readiness, and strategies for accessing various forms of financing, including bank loans, equity, and grants.
4. **Facilitate Market Access and Business Growth:** Help MSMEs develop marketing strategies, improve their branding, and access local, regional, and international markets.
5. **Incorporate Sustainability Practices:** Introduce MSMEs to sustainable business practices, including environmental management and social responsibility, to ensure long-term business viability.
6. **Enhance Business Resilience:** Train MSMEs in risk management and business continuity planning to build resilience against economic downturns, environmental shocks, and other unforeseen disruptions.

Scope of Services:

The training and capacity-building program will be developed and delivered in the following phases:

1. **Needs Assessment:**
 - Identification and mapping of MSMEs in agribusiness
 - Conduct a thorough gender-inclusive assessment of the training needs of MSMEs across the agro-industrial sectors. This will involve engaging MSME stakeholders

through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions to identify specific gaps in skills, knowledge, and resources.

- Identify key challenges facing MSMEs, such as limited access to technology, inadequate financial literacy, or insufficient understanding of market trends.

2. Curriculum Development:

- Based on the findings from the needs assessment, develop a comprehensive training curriculum tailored to address the specific needs of MSMEs. The curriculum should be modular, flexible, and applicable across different agricultural value chain areas. Key focus areas should include:
 - **Business and Financial Management:** Topics such as budgeting, accounting, financial reporting, cost control, and accessing financing.
 - **Digital Marketing and E-Commerce:** Topics such as website development, social media marketing, online sales platforms, and digital customer relationship management (CRM) tools.
 - **Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Sustainable supply chain management, energy efficiency, and strategies for reducing environmental impact.
 - **Market Access and Growth:** Branding, customer acquisition strategies, and exploring new market opportunities locally and internationally.
 - **Resilience Building:** Risk assessment, business continuity planning, and crisis management strategies.

3. Training Delivery:

- Deliver training sessions through a combination of in-person workshops and online courses to accommodate MSMEs in both urban and rural areas.
- The training should be practical and interactive, including real-life case studies, role-playing exercises, and hands-on activities.
- Engage subject matter experts, business consultants, and successful MSME owners as trainers to provide insights to participants.
- Ensure that the training is accessible to MSMEs with varying levels of business experience, literacy, and technical knowledge by using simplified language and providing materials in local languages where necessary.

4. Post-Training Support:

- After the formal training sessions, provide ongoing support to MSMEs through mentorship, coaching, and peer-to-peer learning networks.
- Create an online platform where MSMEs can access resources such as templates, toolkits, and recorded training sessions, as well as connect with mentors and fellow MSMEs.
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to track the progress of MSMEs after the training and assess the impact of the program on their business performance.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Monitor the utilization of the various platforms and networks to be established.

Monitor the quality of the coaching and mentorship provided to MSMEs.

The National Investment Commission invites eligible consulting firm (s) to indicate their interest in providing these services. Interested consulting firm (s) must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services, (i) information detailing the company's existence and areas of expertise (ii) a list of similar assignments and experience in similar conditions with evidence of past performance, (iii) list of overall permanent and temporary staff in fields related to the assignment (Business Development/ Agricultural Economist/ Development Planning Expert, Financial Management Expert, Marketing/ Communications Expert), and (iv) any other relevant information that might be useful. Qualification will be considered from one of two perspectives: a. firm's qualification/experiences and b. staff and consultants' qualifications/experiences. Consulting firms may constitute joint ventures to enhance their chances of qualification.

Eligibility criteria, the establishment of the short-list and the selection procedure shall be in accordance with the African Development Bank's "*Procurement Policy and Methodology for Bank Group Funded Operations*" (BPM), dated October 2015", which is available on the Bank's website at <http://www.afdb.org>.

Interested consulting firms may obtain further information at the address below during office hours 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM Monrovia Time.

Training and Capacity Building for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

Expressions of interest must be delivered in hardcopy or by email to the address below and clearly marked "**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING FOR MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs)**" on or before 3:00 pm Local time Monday, January 6, 2025.

All communication shall be addressed to:

Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone Project

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