

Terms of Reference-Consultancy for Capacity Development of Rural SMEs on Product Design

Background

iDE is an international NGO with over 35 years of experience in designing and delivering market-based anti-poverty programs in 11 countries. We are a world leader in making markets work for the poor as well as the longest established market development specialist NGO in Bangladesh. iDE believes that markets can be a powerful force for improving smallholder prosperity by creating income and livelihood opportunities for poor rural households. iDE Bangladesh currently has eight projects in agricultural markets, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and access to finance with a focus on women's economic empowerment and climate-smart technologies.

Project Background

The Women's Economic Empowerment through Strengthening Market Systems (WEESMS) programme is a five-year (2016-2021) initiative funded by the Embassy of Sweden, to promote women's entrepreneurship and strengthen the enabling environment for women to access formal and informal productive employment opportunities. The programme is being implemented through a partnership of iDE Bangladesh and The Asia Foundation across nine districts under the Khulna and Rangpur divisions of Bangladesh. Based on in-depth market research, the project has focused on home textiles, jute diversified products and processed and packaged food sub-sectors. Through the development of a custom-graduation model with provisions for improved support services such as building market linkages, establishing gender dialogue platforms, and creating access to affordable financial products and services, the project is able to provide women entrepreneurs and women employees a pathway to success and empowerment.

About the Assignment

WEESMS is currently supporting over 400 women-led/owned and women-oriented SMEs in rural Rangpur and Khulna in over nine districts. These SMEs produce various innovative products however, they lack a keen understanding of the current market trend and consumer demands when designing such products. Due to the lack of contemporary market-oriented design development, they are not able to grow their business significantly.

WEESMS seeks to engage the services of a reputed consulting firm/consultant to conduct a scoping visit in the project regions and design a detailed work plan from the conceptualization stage to implementation to build the technical skills of these rural SMEs. The technical skills will focus on strengthening designing skills and marketing of products that will enable artisans to design marketable products based on the demand and preference of the contemporary market trend.

The following outlines and describes the key priority areas of the scoping visit and the report:

1. Assess the design needs of the rural SMEs;
2. New product development and design using locally available raw materials;
3. Understanding of market trends for the local, regional and international export markets; and
4. Branding and market readiness of the products.

Scope of Work:

The Consultant/firm's scope of work is detailed in the following phases:

Phase 1: Scoping visit in project areas

The first phase of the assignment will be to conduct a scoping visit to gauge the design needs of the rural SMEs (women entrepreneurs) in home textiles and jute and diversified products across Khulna and Rangpur. The consultant will also assess the level of skills and the level that would be required to develop the new products. This part of the assignment is envisaged as a rapid assessment to develop the action plan for the next phase.

Phase 2: Share Findings and scope of work with WEESMS

The second phase of the assignment will be to share the findings to the project team and define the scope of work on how to develop the rural SMEs. This will help chalk out the detailed action plan based on the needs of the rural SMEs visited in Phase 1.

Phase 3: Action Plan

Based on the findings from the scoping visit, in the third phase of the assignment, the consultant will work on a detail implementation plan. The detail implementation plan should focus on the following:

- build the technical capacity of SMEs on new designs, new materials, quality, etc.;
- build the capacity of SMEs on branding to differentiate and distinguish from competitors;
- explore potential local, national and international markets for the marketing of WEESMS's SME products; and
- explore co-branding partnership such as pop-up stores, exhibitions, and fairs abroad.

Key Deliverables of the Consultant/Firm

The consultant/firm will work with WEESMS in a collaborative manner to complete the assignment and contribute to the overall outcomes of the project.

S.N.	Phase	Deliverable	Timeline
1.	Phase 1: Scoping visit in project areas	Presentation outlining scoping visit work-plan, methodology, and tools.	7 days
2.	Phase 2: Share Findings and scope of work	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scoping visit findings report and presentation (Presentation max 15 slides) 2. Detailed action plan for Phase 3 	2 days
3.	Phase 3: Detail Implementation Plan	<p>Final Assignment Report should be a maximum of 50 pages and should include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scoping visit findings 2. Detail Implementation Plan 3. Assessment questions should be included as an Annex to the report. 	6 days

Work Schedule

The assignment is expected to be completed between 15 May 2019 and 07 June 2019 which includes completion of all tasks in the assignment along with submission of the final report. Based on the political situation in Bangladesh, the period for conducting the study might change. The consultant/firm is expected to be able to accommodate these changes without additional cost. A final detailed work schedule will be determined during the kick-off meeting.

Proprietary Rights

Any document, information or data entrusted to or produced by iDE in connection with this assignment shall be strictly confidential and cannot be used by the contract employee for any other purpose without the written consent of iDE. This provision shall remain valid even after completion of this assignment. iDE-B reserves the right to terminate this agreement any time with the consultation of contract employee.

Eligibility Criteria

General experience and expertise required for consultant/firm applying:

- The lead consultant/ team leader of the firm should have a Bachelor's degree in arts, design, product or innovative development;
- A proven track record of successful product design with rural remote artisan producer groups for local, regional and international export markets including market color trends
- More than 5 years of experience dealing with the international markets in the arena of traditional contemporary artisan handmade products
- A minimum of 5 years experience in working in a community artisan based setting, specifically with crafts and income generating projects

- Ability to work with the context of the existing traditional skills and resources of the community, developing strong links to traditional and cultural aspects of the community
- Ability to develop products that will retail within the local tourist market and overseas markets
- Ensuring a strong environmental and sustainable approach to product development
- Experience in working with projects that aim to empower women / close the gender gap in the economy. Strong understanding of women’s economic empowerment principles is desirable;
- Excellent written and verbal English communication skills essential.

Budget and Payment Schedule

The total budget for this consultancy work will be no more than USD 10,000 which should cover all costs including consultants' fee that also includes all applicable tax and Vat for conducting the entire assignment until final deliverables submission. This should include remuneration, non-field based travel (visas, accommodation, transport, per diems) and any miscellaneous costs. All travel to field locations (outside of Dhaka) will be covered by the project as per iDE’s current policies external to this contract.

The payment will be made in three installments as follows:

S.N.	Deliverables	Tranche Value
1.	Upon Signing of the contract	20% of the Total Contract Value
2.	Completion of Phase 1: Scoping Visit in Project Areas	40% of the Total Contract Value
3.	Completion of Phase 2: Share findings and scope of work	
4.	Completion of Phase 3: Implementation of Action Plan	40% of the Total Contract Value
5.	Final report	

Note: Bangladesh Government VAT and tax regulation will be applied.

The following terms and conditions will apply:

- For all international consultant, the payment will be made in American dollars through wire transfer from iDE’s headquarter in Denver, USA. (account name, number, type, bank name, and branch name is required for wire transfer); and for local consultant payment would be paid locally from Bangladesh;
- As per Government of Bangladesh VAT and tax regulation; International consultants are taxed at 15% VAT (on contract amount) and 20% tax (on contract amount +VAT); national consultants are taxed at 15% VAT and 10% tax;
- In case of failure to deliver the final product in due time, iDE Bangladesh will deduct .05% of the total agreement amount for each day of delay in submitting the report beyond the closing date of the agreement;
- The selected firm will abide by other terms and conditions of iDE Bangladesh.

Interested consultants/firms are asked to submit a Concept Note and a Financial Proposal to bangladesh.procurement@ideglobal.org. Please write "**Consultancy for Capacity Development of Rural SMEs on Product Design**" in the subject line. The proposals should be submitted by **5 pm BST on Tuesday 07 May 2019**. We are only able to consider electronic submissions. Only shortlisted firms will be contacted.

Deadline: May 07, 2019 COB (5 pm BST)