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GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (CONSULTING SERVICES – FIRMS SELECTION)

Sierra Leone
Sierra Leone Skills Development Project
Loan No.: P163723

Issue date: 24th July 2023

Assignment Title: Services for Imparting Basic and Intermediate Level Digital Skills Training for Youth in Sierra Leone

Reference No.: SL-MOFED-367480--CS-CQS

The Government of Sierra Leone has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Sierra Leone Skills Development Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The labor market in Sierra Leone is characterized by relatively high participation and low unemployment, as well as high underemployment and informality. In 2014, the labor force participation rate was 65 percent with only 2.8 percent unemployment. However, the low unemployment rate, particularly in rural areas, is misleading: while 90 percent of the workforce is self-employed, the majority are concentrated in small-scale agriculture (59 percent) and over 35 percent of wage employment and 88 percent of nonagricultural self-employment is in the informal sector. The youth unemployment rate is two times higher than the average among working-age adults. While the differences in labor market outcomes by gender are small, there are substantial differences in labor market outcomes between urban and rural populations and among individuals with different levels of education.

Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a high unemployment rate and a large proportion of its population living below the poverty line. One of the main challenges facing the country is the lack of digital skills among its youth, which is a major barrier to their employment and economic opportunities. In order to address this challenge, the Government of Sierra Leone through the Sierra Leone Skills Development Project (SDP), is seeking to engage the services of a of a highly skilled and competent training service firm to provide basic and intermediate level digital skills training to youth in the country.

The SDP seeks the services of a highly skilled and competent training service firm with extensive knowledge and understanding of the Digital Skills Development Sector and experience in the development and implementation of training youth and trainers in the public and/or private sector in Sierra Leone.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT AND SCOPE OF WORK

Objective

The overall objective of this assignment is to develop Digital skills training packages for SDF graduates and other eligible youth in the selected in-demand tech skills. These include: Front-End Development, Back-End Development, Mobile-App Development, Web Design, Scripting & Automation, Ecommerce Website Development, etc.

The SDP aims to increase the employment prospects of SDF graduates by delivering basic and intermediate digital skills training for 300 youth (male and female).

The training service firm is expected to provide certification of skill attainment, along with mentorship and internship/work placement opportunities.

The specific objectives of the training services are as follows:

1. To impart basic and intermediate level digital skills training to youth in Sierra Leone, with a focus on skills that are in demand in the local job market.
2. To provide practical training that will enable the youth to acquire hands-on experience and develop the skills necessary to secure employment or start their own businesses.
3. To equip beneficiaries with the necessary soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, that are essential for success in the digital workplace.
4. To enhance the capacity of local training institutions and trainers to provide quality digital skills training to youth.

Scope of Work

The training service firm is expected to undertake the following specific tasks:

- Develop a digital skills training curriculum that is tailored to the needs of the youth and the local job market.
- Develop a beneficiary outreach strategy and selection methodology
- Provide basic and intermediate level digital skills training to the youth (3-6 months in duration), using a combination of classroom instruction and practical training.
- Provide mentoring and coaching to the youth to help them apply the digital skills they have learned in real-life situations.
- Conduct training-of-trainers sessions to enhance the capacity of local training institutions and trainers to provide quality digital skills training to youth.
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to track the progress and impact of the training program.

- Develop a detailed implementation strategy which includes market Research on digital skills, proposed training plan including training methodology, profiles of trainers, and lesson plan;
- Select trainees according to the criteria set in consultation with SDP and share the final list of the selected trainees before commencement of training;
- Conduct the training in-person and instructor-led through well-trained and certified professionals;
- Ensure assessment and certification of trainees at the end of the training program;
- Provide mentorship, career guidance and internship/work placements to the trained youth after successful training;
- Maintain a post-training database of participants in respect of their employability
- Trainer-trainee ratio in any classroom for this program cannot exceed 1:25;
- Provide quality training that will ensure maximum candidates getting employed in various sectors or become self-employed.
- Training duration shall be between 3-6 months.

Target Population

The main beneficiaries of this activity are youth that are currently not in education, employment or training, and may even include people with disabilities. Some of these of youth may not have completed secondary schooling but may have received some sort of skills training through the Sierra Leone Skills Development project.

Training Locations

The training will be carried out in four (4) regional headquarter towns of Sierra Leone (Freetown, Bo, Kenema, and Makeni).

Budget

The budget for the training services will be determined based on the proposed work plan and the qualifications of the training services firm.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND DELIVERABLES

#	Task	Estimated Duration (Weeks)	Details
1	Inception Report	2 weeks after contract signing	Submission of an acceptable Inception Report including market research for the proposed digital

			skills, proposed training plan including training methodology, approach. , and monitoring and evaluation approach.
2	A digital skills training curriculum that is tailored to the needs of the youth and the local job market.	3 weeks after submission of Inception Report	This should include the lesson plans and the assessment and certification mechanism
3	Training materials and manuals that are appropriate for the target audience.	3 weeks after submission of Inception Report	Selection of representative samples from each of the groups described. Appropriate sampling techniques and weights must be provided
3	Monthly progress report	3 months (one for each month)	Separate questionnaire for each of the groups. To be developed in English and administered in English or in local languages
	Training-of-Trainers Manual	2 weeks after training completion	A training-of-trainers manual that can be used by local training institutions and trainers.
4	Course completion report	2 weeks after training completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Trainee selection process as per agreed upon criteria; ii. List of trainees selected for the batch; iii. Pictorial evidence of the training and mentoring sessions; iv. Attendance sheets; v. Final assessment results and details of mentorship sessions; vi. Lessons learned and recommendations.
5	Database of trained individuals with respect to their employability	2 weeks after submission of training report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Name of Trainee ii. Name of Employer iii. Trainee's Telephone iv. Trainee's Email v. Trainee's Emergency Contact vi. Job Title vii. Nature of Employment
6	Final Completion report of the activities conducted during	2 weeks after submission of database	A final report that summarizes the results and impact of the training program and provides recommendations for future interventions.

the contracting period including results achieved on all the indicators mentioned below		
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Key Performance Indicators

The impact and outcome of the assignment shall be determined keeping in consideration the following KPIs.

- a) At least 75% of the total target beneficiaries successfully complete (75% attendance and passing the final assessment for their respective digital skills) the training in the employable digital skills.
- b) To ensure that the following number of trainees successfully complete their training in their respective digital skills:

Digital Skill	Minimum number of Trainees
Web Development	40
Graphics Design	50
E-Commerce/ Digital Marketing	50
Cloud Computing	40
Front-End Development/Back-End Development,	40
Scripting & Automation	40
Mobile-App Development	40
	300

- c) At least 65% of the trained youth start generating income through formal or self-employment within 3 months after completing training;
- d) At least 30% of the trainees shall be female.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The selected training service provider will work in collaboration with SDFS/MTHE. The project team will coordinate and provide contacts of relevant grantee institutions and other stakeholders involved for consultations. The firm should use their own facilities and equipment for the assignment. Other logistical costs (local transport, communication, lodging, etc. must be included as part of the financial proposal of the training service provider).

Responsibilities of the SDP

The SDP will:

- i. Monitor the training process;
- ii. Make suggestions on technical aspects and issues;
- iii. Make suggestions on the selection of trainees; and

- iv. Suggest way out in unforeseeable condition experienced by the training service provider

DURATION OF THE WORK

The assignment is to span approximately 180 effective calendar days, exactly 6 (six) months all in-country. The assignment should start by 1st September 2023, and implementation should be completed no later than 29th February 2024.

DUTY STATION

The staff of the training service provider will be based in Sierra Leone and spread in the regional headquarter towns.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The training service provider is expected to be a renowned entity or a consortium of firms with extensive experience in digital skills development. The training service provider may be an international institution or a local institution (registered business entity in Sierra Leone). The training service provider should have the following qualifications:

1. Demonstrated experience in providing digital skills training to youth in developing countries and experience in Sub-Saharan Africa is preferred.
2. Demonstrated experience creating positive employment outcomes by linking program participants to work opportunities (e.g. facilitating internships, apprenticeships, connecting beneficiaries with employment opportunities, utilization of online work platforms etc).
3. The firm should have experience working with specific target audiences (e.g., understanding of challenges and accommodations for youth with disabilities, demonstrating experience designing and implementing digital skills training programs that are inclusive of women and girls).
4. The firm must have formal partnerships/certification with International Digital Technology Companies such as Orange, Microsoft, Google, CISCO, Samsung.
5. Experience in developing digital skills training curricula and materials that are tailored to the needs of the target audience and the local job market.
6. Experience in providing training-of-trainers sessions to enhance the capacity of local training institutions and trainers.
7. A team of trainers and experts with experience in the relevant fields, such as digital literacy, digital marketing, and coding.
8. Knowledge of the local context and culture in Sierra Leone and partnerships with local NGOs and local training institutions would be preferred.

9. **Capacity Building:** The proposal should demonstrate a commitment to enhancing the capacity of local training institutions and trainers to provide quality digital skills training to youth. The proposal should include a plan for providing training-of-trainers sessions to enhance the skills and knowledge of local trainers.
10. **Sustainability:** The proposal should include a plan for ensuring the sustainability of the training program beyond the duration of the consultancy services. The proposal should demonstrate how the training program will be institutionalized and integrated into existing programs and services.
11. **Budget:** The proposed budget should be reasonable, realistic, and commensurate with the proposed work plan and activities. The budget should also be clearly itemized and justified, and should demonstrate good value for money.
12. **Timeliness:** The proposal should demonstrate a clear understanding of the timeline for the project, and provide a realistic and achievable work plan that takes into account the local context and potential challenges.

Experience and Qualifications of Key Experts

I. Team Leader/Manager (1 person)

Education:

- Master's degree in degree in Skills Development, Education Management, Development Studies, Economics, International Relations, ICT Project Management or Equivalent.

Professional Experience:

- At least 10 years of professional experience in the higher education sector and in consulting programmes in the digital skills development sector in Sub-Saharan Africa in a management position.
- 5 years' experience in the design, development, and implementation of Digital Skills Enhancement Programmes OR 5 reference projects in the field of Digital Skills Enhancement with at least two (2) reference projects implemented in Sub-Saharan Africa in the last 3 years.
- Demonstrate ability to effectively build and strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders, including government, civil society, local community, private sector and development partners
- Experience in coordination and upkeep of training/assessment records and exams process;
- Ability to work effectively with MS Office

Language Requirements:

- Proficiency in written and spoken English is a must;

- Knowledge and ability to communicate in Krio and any of the other local Sierra Leone dialects is an advantage.
- Knowledge in maintaining safety standards and safe working practices in accordance with industry standards in respect of both trainers and trainees.

Other Competencies:

- Excellent interpersonal and networking skills, including the ability to liaise effectively at senior levels;
- Ability to communicate and function effectively in an international, multicultural environment;
- Ability to work effectively in a team.

II. Digital Skills Expert (4 person)

Education:

- All experts must have a postgraduate degree in Education, ICT, Engineering, Economics, Management or related field

Professional Experience:

- At least 5 years of relevant professional experience, focused on digital skills development.
- Demonstrable significant experience of designing, delivering and managing the development of group and individual digital literacy skills for modern IT systems.
- Ability to work effectively with MS Office

Language Requirements:

- Proficiency in written and spoken English;
- Knowledge and ability to communicate in Krio and any of the other local Sierra Leone dialects is an advantage.

Other Competencies:

- Excellent interpersonal and networking skills, including the ability to liaise effectively at senior levels;
- Experience of delivering training sessions both in-person and online(if necessary), demonstrating excellent written, verbal and presentation skills and the ability to present complex information effectively
- Excellent relationship building skills and aptitude for working collaboratively.
- Ability to communicate and function effectively in an international, multicultural environment;
- Ability to work effectively in a team;

Non-Key Expert

Teaching Assistants: The training service provider may appoint teaching assistants to help in hands-on training.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF THE CONSULTANCY FIRM

The Firm will be selected under the Consultant Qualification Selection (CQS) method as indicated in the World Bank Procurement regulation November 2020. The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank’s “Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers” November 2020 (“Procurement Regulations”), setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflict of interest. as per paragraph 3.17 of the Procurement Regulations.

The agreed criteria for evaluation and scores are as follows:

Criteria	Maximum Scores Allocated
FIRM QUALIFICATION 30	
Should have the required team composition (Team Leader/ and Statistician) - The proposal should provide a detailed profile of the team of trainers and experts who will be responsible for providing the digital skills training. The team should have experience and expertise in the relevant fields, such as digital literacy, digital marketing, and coding. Must meet qualification mentioned above.	30
FIRM EXPERIENCE 70	
Demonstrated experience in providing digital skills training to youth in developing countries and experience in Sub-Saharan Africa is preferred.	15
Demonstrated experience creating positive employment outcomes by linking program participants to work opportunities (e.g., facilitating internships, apprenticeships, connecting beneficiaries with employment opportunities, utilization of online work platforms etc).	15
The firm should have experience working with specific target audiences (e.g., understanding of challenges and accommodations for youth with disabilities, demonstrating experience designing and implementing digital skills training programs that are inclusive of women and girls).	15
The firm must have formal partnerships/certification with International Digital Technology Companies such as Orange, Microsoft, Google, CISCO, Samsung AND also	10

Experience in developing digital skills training curricula and materials that are tailored to the needs of the target audience and the local job market	
Experience in providing training-of-trainers sessions to enhance the capacity of local training institutions and trainers AND also A team of trainers and experts with experience in the relevant fields, such as digital literacy, digital marketing, and coding	10
Knowledge of the local context and culture in Sierra Leone and partnerships with local NGOs and local training institutions would be preferred	5
TOTAL SCORES	100

Only shortlisted firms will be contacted

LANGUAGE OF ASSIGNMENT

All reports and official communication of the assignment shall be in English.

REPORTING COMMUNICATION & COORDINATION

The training service firm will report to the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education in Sierra Leone and provide regular progress reports throughout the duration of the project. The firm will work closely with the Skills Development Fund Secretariat.

The Project now invites eligible consulting firms (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required relevant qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Consultant Qualification Selection (CQS) method set out in the Procurement Regulations November 2020.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours 0900 to 1700 hours.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person)

Project Management Unit

The Project Fiduciary Management Unit

13 Howe Street

Freetown

Attn: Head of Procurement / Procurement Management Specialist

Tel: +232 78 509884, +23276 416427 and +232 78 585818

OR

by e-mail to : info@sdf.gov.sl

When submitting, please indicate *clearly in the sealed envelope* or *email subject* heading ‘**EOI FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICE FOR IMPARTING BASIC AND INTERMEDIATE LEVEL DIGITAL SKILLS TRAINING FOR YOUTH IN SIERRA LEONE**’. **SUBMISSION WILL BE ACCEPTED** for this assignment by **7th August 2023**.

