

TERMS OF REFERENCE

BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANISATION INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Project Background

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is a joint agency of the United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). It is fully dedicated to supporting the internationalization of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). It has a mission to foster inclusive and sustainable growth and development through trade and international business development. ITC Headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland.

ITC is implementing the EU Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) - Tourism and Creative Industries. The project has an overall objective of increasing the competitiveness, inclusiveness, and sustainability of the Tourism sector and Creative Industries in The Gambia. It has three main specific objectives of: a) improving business environment and institutional ecosystem; b) improving investment and market access; and c) increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs in The Gambia's tourism and creative industries. These will be achieved by implementing a number of key actions, including: i) streamlining and supporting implementation of strategies and regulation for the creative industries; ii) strengthening the technical and operational capacities of business support institutions; iii) building the branding and marketing capacities of actors in the tourism and creative industries; iv) creating market linkages and investment opportunities; v) building capacities of MSMEs engaged in the tourism and creative industries with a focus on sustainable and inclusive tourism; and vi) enhancing skills of target beneficiaries, mainly youth and women in areas which promote their employment in the tourism sector and creative industries.

The project addresses a variety of challenges and constraints of the sectors, which include a) weak sector coordination and regulations, b) narrow product offering and sub-standard quality, c) limited market diversification and strong seasonality, d) skill gaps, e) climate vulnerability, and f) low sector integration and limited positive spillover effects of the sectors to the wider economy and society. The implementation of the project will enable the Gambia to diversify source markets and attract more visitors year-round, including tourists with higher purchasing power, and to boost its offering of green and inclusive products and services of the tourism and creative industries.

The EU YEP Tourism and Creative Industries is financed by the European Union (EU) for implementation over a period of 56 months. The Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MoTIE) and the Ministry of Tourism and Culture (MoTC) are the key focal point government institutions for the project.

The project focuses on youth and women as the main target beneficiaries. It also puts a special emphasis on vulnerable groups by creating quality jobs and pathways for skills development, business growth and sustainability. Micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) and public and private sector institutions, including, sector-based cooperatives and associations will be the target beneficiary groups of the project.

ITC is looking for a consultant to conduct an institutional diagnostic to assess the capacities and needs of Business Support Organizations (BSOs) in the Tourism and Creative Industries, with the aim of enhancing their effectiveness, efficiency, and visibility.

Objectives of the Institutional Assessments

Institutional assessments will be carried out using ITC's Benchmarking Methodology, a tool designed to help BSOs improve their practices and performance by comparing them with international best practice.

The overall objective of these assessments is to strengthen BSOs by identifying their strengths and weaknesses, improving their efficiency and effectiveness, and equipping them with the means to demonstrate their impact to relevant authorities.

Based on this analysis, a comprehensive report will be developed, providing a detailed evaluation of each organization's operational and managerial performance. The report will include targeted

recommendations to enhance their efficiency, improve service quality, and optimize support for start-ups and SMEs.

The assessments will also integrate a gender perspective to strengthen the development and delivery of capacity-building support for BSOs in the implementation of the YEP Tourism project. As part of this process, the gender mainstreaming practices of BSOs will be evaluated to assess their commitment extent to which gender considerations are integrated into their organizational strategies and programs. Based on the findings, tailored recommendations will be provided to strengthen gender-responsive practices within BSOs, ensuring more inclusive support for businesses in the tourism and creative sector.

Methodology

The institutional assessment process is carried out through an exhaustive analysis of quantitative and qualitative data obtained through a series of interviews with senior managers and staff of the institutions evaluated.

The assessment is conducted by a national consultant using a standardized model that evaluates four key performance areas:

1. Leadership and Strategic Direction – assessing governance, vision, and strategic planning.
2. Resources and Processes – evaluating human, financial, and operational resources, as well as internal processes.
3. Delivery of Products and Services – analysing the relevance, quality, and effectiveness of support provided to businesses.
4. Measurement and Results – examining performance tracking, impact assessment, and continuous improvement mechanisms.
5. Gender Mainstreaming– Assessing the integration of gender perspectives into programs, services, and institutional practices.
6. Partnership and Collaboration – Depth of engagement with ecosystem partners to enhance service delivery and sustainability.

The assessment process comprises a series of activities scheduled according to the following indicative guidelines:

1. Analysis of internal documents, such as annual reports, strategic plans and institutional policies, in preparation for the benchmarking mission. A list of these documents will be provided to the institutions in advance.
2. In-depth interviews with the heads of the institutions concerned, to gather qualitative information on their objectives, challenges and priorities. These interviews will typically require two days per institution, though the duration may vary depending on the organization's size and complexity.
3. Scoring via the ITC's online Benchmarking platform and drafting of the institutional analysis report by ITC experts, including recommendations for improving practices and performance.
4. Transmission of the first version of the institutional analysis report to the Director General of each institution.

At the end of the assessment process, each BSO will have a full report including an in-depth analysis of the operational and managerial performance of their own organisation with recommendations for action.

Duties and responsibilities

The consultant will work under the supervision of MSME Technical Expert and an Associate Programme Officer from the Institution and Ecosystem Section and will use ITC's Core Institutional Diagnostics assessment tool to carry out the assignment.

- Mapping of all the selected business support organisations with identification of focal person for the assessment
- Conduct institutional assessment for all the identified and approved BSOs with strong focus on integrating gender perspective

Duration of the Assignment

Two months

Deliverables:

- Submission and approval of work plan 2 days after contract signing
- Submission of BSO list (minimum of 10 and a maximum of 15) for approval to partake in the assessment 1 week after signing of contract
- Submission of Draft report 5 weeks after contract signing
- Conduct group consultation on adaptation of Andandorr program 6 weeks after contract signing
- Submission of final report 8 weeks after contract signing
- The following scope of work will be followed for enhancing the completion of the assessment:
 - Interview schedule developed and confirmed with selected institutions
 - Interviews completed and scores filled in via ITC online benchmarking platform
 - Preliminary report finalised and sent to heads of interviewed institutions for final comments
 - Finalised benchmarking report including customised recommendations for action for each institution.

Submission of Bid/Tender

The consultant quote for all the required scope of work, and the submission must include:

- Technical proposal outlining how the objectives and expected deliverables will be delivered together with the proposed methodology,
- Financial proposal covering all cost items, including overhead costs (logistics, travel, administrative costs, etc.),
- Draft work plan for the program implementation,
- Provide a reference letter or a contract of similar work undertaken recently.

Required Qualifications and Experience

The Consultant must demonstrate the following minimum requirements, qualifications, staff experience and capabilities in their technical proposal:

- The Consultant must have a Master`s degree in one of the following fields: Business Administration/Management, Economic, Development Studies, Entrepreneurship/MSME development or a related field
- Five years' experience working with BSOs and MSMEs in The Gambia
- Experience working with Women Led BSOs
- Knowledge in Gender is an added advantage

Payment schedule:

- First payment of 30% upon signing the contract and submission of the workplan
- Second payment 40% upon submission of Draft report
- Final payment of 30% upon successful completion of all outputs and submission of final reports

Submission and Deadline

To apply, please submit all quotes (technical and financial) **by 1:00pm 26th February 2025** to Suwaibou Cham scham@intracen.org and copy yusupha.keita@intracen.org and fjallow@intracen.org