



OXUS

AFGHANISTAN

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

Country:	Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Assignment Title:	Women Entrepreneurship
Duration of Assignment:	3 months (90 days)
Implementing Agency:	OXUS Afghanistan
Contract Type:	Lump Sum
Reference No:	OXUS/AFP/S-01
Issuance Date:	May 28, 2020
Closing Date:	June 11, 2020

Background

Oxus Afghanistan is registered as a Corporation under Afghan Law and was founded in 2007 by Oxus, a Paris based network of microfinance institutions. Oxus-Afghanistan aims to empower youth and women through financial services particularly in areas of education and employment generation. Since its inception, Oxus-Afghanistan has been supported by grants and concessional loans from the MicroFinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan (MISFA) and by an equity investment from Oxus Holding, which is its main shareholder.

Women contributes about 48% of the Oxus's total borrowers. Majority of these clients run micro businesses in traditional sectors at a very limited scale and insufficient capacity to grow mainly because most of these businesses are home based and women have weak market linkages. The traditional loans and savings offered to these businesses are either out of their reach in terms of capacity to repay and/or the requirements are too stringent for them to comply with. The existing product suit somehow is unable to fill in the support gap that women owned businesses need in order to grow and expand. The women-owned businesses in Afghanistan is becoming a formal sector especially with the advent of Afghan Women Chamber of Commerce in 2002, where women businesses are registered with the Afghan Chamber of Commerce and in return gets the services such as business development, market linkages, networking and other that facilitate them to graduate their businesses to the next level.

Therefore, Oxus Afghanistan feels the need to introduce a women specific product that can support 48% of its cliental to graduate their business to MSMEs and offer formal financial solutions for other women-owned MSMEs in formal and informal sectors. The assignment will assist Oxus

in identifying untapped women-owned businesses already operative and also those aspire to be with the availability of financial services catering to their specific needs. The availability of Women Entrepreneurship Financing product will ultimately enable women to pursue economic activity at a scale that can support them and their families with additional source of income through access to finance.

OBJECTIVE:

The purpose of this assignment is to facilitate OXUS for the development and provision of sustainable Women Entrepreneurship Financing product compliant to market needs in order to support women economic empowerment and support them to avail business opportunities within the country. From the assignment, Oxus intends to achieve the following objectives:

- a. Conduct in-depth market demand assessment for women specific financial products (loans and savings) in Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif with recommendations for nation-wide expansion.
- b. Product Development Manual with comprehensive retailing procedures and pilot procedures for Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif.
- c. Train the key staff on women specific products roll-out at Kabul and Mazar.

SCOPE OF THE SERVICES:

Part 1: Market Demand Study

1. The consultancy firm will carry out an in-depth market demand assessment from women in the select cities (Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif) to identify the following (but not limited to):
 - a. Socio-demography of women working in Afghanistan with or without financial access and are employed in a company, own a business or are target of vulnerable employment. Also assess how far the family supports the idea of women-owned businesses.
 - b. Identify sectors-type and scale (micro, small or medium) in which women entrepreneurs are engaged and identify their specific business needs, financing requirements with respect to loans and savings and any other supplementary services that they require. Support this with primary data collected through quantitative and qualitative means-survey and focus group discussions.
 - c. Study the existing financing available to women by formal and informal channels in Afghanistan to address financing needs for women entrepreneurs. Also, take into account desk review of the international best practices.
 - d. Identify possibilities, associated risk, and financial viability of offering Group Financing (loans and savings) for women as small entrepreneurial groups.
 - e. Identify the key challenges faced by women entrepreneurs for starting a business and getting financial access from any formal and informal channel.
2. The consultancy firm will assess the existing market situation of women financial services to identify (but not limited to)
 - a. What are the forms of formal financing facility available specifically for women? And what are the lessons learned from these existing experiences for women-owned businesses or women specific financial needs?

- b. What are the gaps in provided/available financial services (both formal and informal) and how the client demands relating these gaps are not fulfilled?
- c. Suggestions to increase the share of women clientele in OXUS' current portfolio & improve product suite to appeal to wide range of women population.

Part 2: Product Development Manual

Based on the findings of the Market Demand Assessment, the consultancy firm will develop the Women Specific loan and savings product. The consultancy firm will produce Product Development Manual to include following (but not limited to) aspects of the products:

- a. Product features
- b. Pricing considerations
- c. Policy amendments (if required suggest)
- d. Risk appetite
- e. Product performance projections (3 years)
- f. Cost benefit analysis to know financial viability of the product
- g. Retailing procedures
- h. Complementary services-client financial education and other
- i. Pilot process

Part 3: Staff Training on Product Manual and Retailing Procedures

The consultant will impart in-person training to key staff of the select branches and head office on the product manual, pilot process and retailing procedures. The training is expected to last for 2 days to approx. 20-25 staff. The training methodology adopted has to be interactive, technically advanced with real life examples and scenarios for the participants to better understand the product, educate them on clients' financial needs and train them to support clients with their business setup.

REPORTING:

The assignment duration is for 90 working days. At the end of the assignment the consultancy firm will submit the following to OXUS assigned authority:

- a. A comprehensive report on the Market Demand Assessment of Women Entrepreneurship Financing. The report must give inference of the primary data collected and is able to identify the extent of women-owned business financing needs, type of financing most in demand, level of their business set-up understanding, gaps in the market and recommendations to fill the gaps.
- b. Product Development Manual as define in the Part 2 of the Scope of Work of this TOR.
- c. Presentation to the Senior. Management on Market Demand Assessment, Product Development Manual and Training guide/outline prepared for staff.
- d. Impart women specific Product retail procedure training to the staff of Kabul, Mazar branches in 2 sessions and submit all the training materials including handouts, presentation and training guide prepared for the purpose.

OXUS-AF 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 qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services (brochures, description of similar assignments, experience in region, availability of appropriate skills among staff, organizational structure copies of legal registration certificate, etc). In order to evaluate your expression of interest, the information provided must specifically address the short-listing criteria shown below. Failure to provide information sufficient to determine your qualifications and experience to perform the Services will result in loss of consideration.

Short listing Criteria:

To qualify for the assignment, the consulting firm must itself and its assigned consultant/s must possess following:

- a. At least 7 years of experience of conducting Market Assessment studies for financial institutions, government authorities, social development sector or civil society institutions..
- b. Demonstrated product development experience for financial institutions is a necessary requirement.
- c. Experience of conducting similar trainings in the past.
- d. Knowledge of national financial sector, regulations, economic environment, and experience in work with conflict inflicted communities will be added advantage.

Foreign firms may associate with local partners in the form of a joint venture of a sub-consultancy, enhancing their qualification and undertaking the field research.

A firm will be selected through Selection Based on the Consultants' Qualifications (CQS) method in accordance with the procurement guidelines for Selection and Employment of Consultants under the World Bank procedure.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, by mail, or by e-mail) *by June 11, 2020 at 12:00 Hours*. (Kabul Local Time).

Further information in respect to this REOI can be obtained at the address below by email or in person during office hours *[08:00-13:00 Hours]*.

Abdul Rahman Amin, Deputy CFO

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