

Request for Proposal for conducting Mid Term Review of Hand in Hand Afghanistan Project (*Reducing poverty and gender inequality in Sarepul Province of Afghanistan by improving household income and financial resilience for rural women through enterprise and job creation*) in Balkhab, Gosfandi and Sancharak Districts of Sarepul Province

Overview

Hand in Hand Afghanistan (HiH Af) is seeking to procure the services of a suitable consultant to conduct an Mid Term Review (MTR) of the HiH Af project named “Reducing poverty and gender inequality in Sarepul Province of Afghanistan by improving household income and financial resilience for rural women through enterprise and job creation”. The MTR will take place on 20 October – 10 November 2016 and will report by 25th of November 2016.

Brief Description of Hand in Hand Afghanistan

HiH Af is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Afghanistan, established in 2007, with the vision to alleviate poverty through job creation. HiH Af promotes economic and social empowerment of the poorest citizens to help them lift themselves out of poverty and vulnerability. HiH Af belongs to the global Hand in Hand network of NGOs¹ with a shared vision to reduce poverty through the creation of sustainable enterprises and jobs. HiH Af has adapted this approach to the unique circumstances in Afghanistan.

Theory of Change

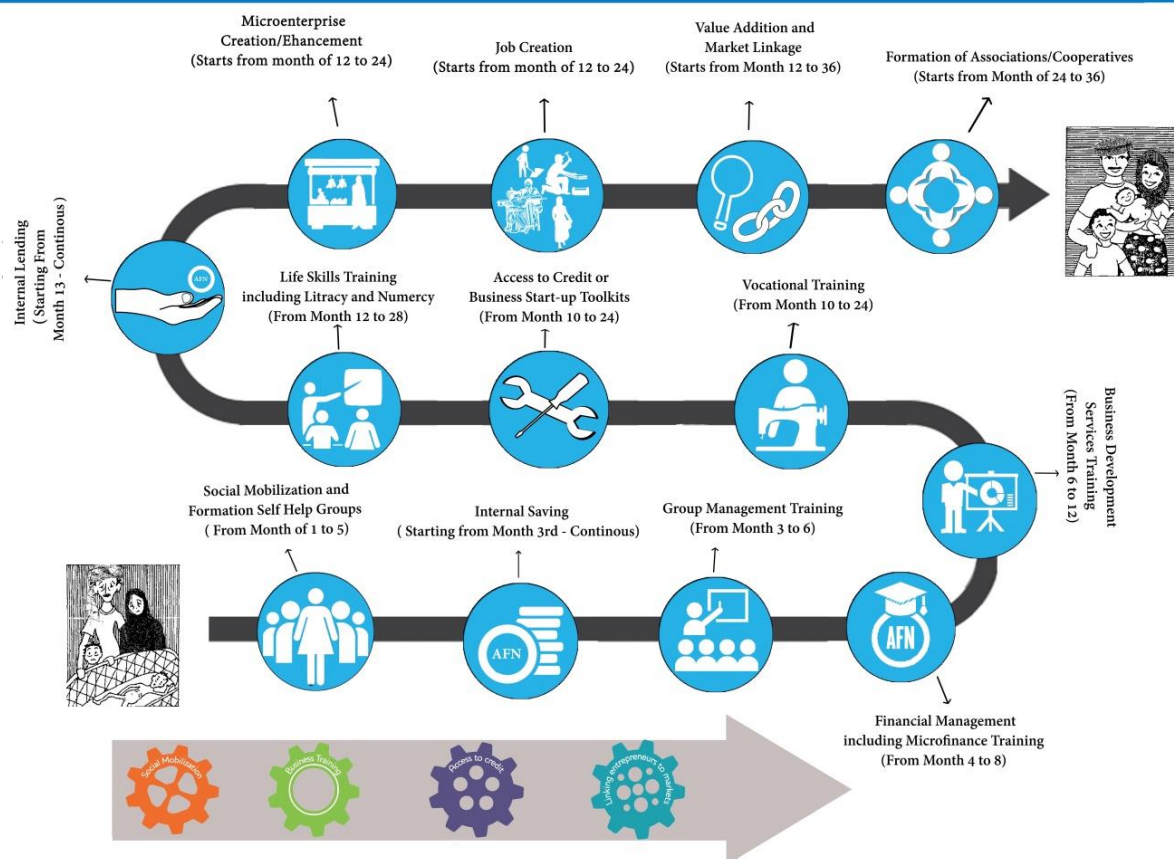
Hand in Hand’s job creation model proceeds in four stages. First, we mobilize to create community groups made up mostly by women who support each other, save together and learn together. Next, we train group members to develop small businesses that make the most of their skills and potential. As a third step, entrepreneurs are provided with the enterprise grant based essential toolkits. Finally, we help entrepreneurs scale up their businesses by connecting them to larger markets.

The Hand in Hand enterprise creation approach is based on a philosophy of self-help and entrepreneurship – of unlocking potential. The majority of our beneficiaries are the rural poor, defined by local criteria.

¹ The network today has operations in Afghanistan, Cambodia, India, Eastern Africa and Southern Africa. Strategic support, technical assistance and fundraising are provided by Hand in Hand International in London and Hand in Hand Sweden.

Vision: HiH Af's vision is an Afghanistan free of poverty, where gender equality is its cornerstone.

Mission: HiH AF's mission is to work for economic and social empowerment of the poor by supporting the creation of enterprises and jobs, and the generation of higher incomes. Targeting the poor and marginalized communities, with a particular focus on poor women, HiH Af empowers SHGs, provides support and training, and helps them access credit, information, markets and opportunities.



Induction

Programs are destined to fail when local stakeholders are ignored. That's why we engage community leaders, influential people and sectorial departments for feedback and to spread awareness before launching any new project. Communicating cultural and regional sensitivities are considered during kick off meetings with stakeholders as well as throughout the project.

Setting up groups

First we create exclusively female and male Self-Help Groups (SHGs), who support each other, save together and learn together. For women, the SHGs provide relevant forums to build their confidence and for men to be sensitized on the importance of engaging women in productive and income generating activities. Members contribute to group savings funds at every meeting.

Business training

Once a group is stable, with its savings fund firmly in place, we train members to grow and develop small businesses with modules in basic bookkeeping, business development, marketing and more. Illiterate and innumerate members are trained using pictures and parables.

Access to productive assets and credit

In light of the microcredit challenges in Afghanistan, HiH Af has introduced enterprise start-up kits as an alternative means to help members grow their business, circumventing the credit

barrier at least in the inception phase. The enterprise start-up kits are small grant-based asset transfers, worth on average US\$80, aimed at catalysing enterprise growth. The kits provide a majority of inputs and materials required to grow the business in a selected sector, conditional upon business plans, completed vocational skills training and a complementary contribution from the individual member. The ambition is to offer kits to 100% of members. The enterprise start-up kits and vocational skills trainings are currently available in areas such as poultry, agriculture, livestock rearing, tailoring, beekeeping, embroidery, wool spinning, horticulture, carpet weaving, carpentry, tinsmith, blacksmith and motorbike/generator repairing. HiH Af continually develops toolkits to meet local member needs.

The enterprise start-up kits are expected to meet a significant portion of the credit demand. Within the selected sectors, toolkits provide start-up resources and incentives necessary for a member to grow his/her business. The kits thus offer an adapted alternative to lending, in a context where microfinance remains ambiguous.

Group savings also help finance most new businesses. But when members need more than they can borrow internally, we train them in debt management and facilitate their linkage to existing Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) wherever possible.

Links to larger markets

As a final step, we help entrepreneurs compete – and thrive – by finding larger markets, sourcing cheaper supplies and improving their branding, packaging and more. Scaling up helps entrepreneurs provide for their families and benefits entire communities.

We also organize cross fertilization visits to facilitate benchmarking and mutual learning on best practices on value addition and marketing among SHGs.

Sharing telephone directories between producer groups and suppliers/dealers (private sector) in each sector to facilitate marketing and organizing exhibitions and actively participating to the exhibitions organized by other organizations are also improving marketing of entrepreneurs' products.

Brief description of the programme

In April 2015, HiH Af received support from the Department for International Development (DFID) to implement a project called “*Reducing poverty and gender inequality in Sarepul Province of Afghanistan by improving household income and financial resilience for rural women through enterprise and job creation*”. The project is also co-funded by Hand in Hand International. The project aims to strengthen the socio-economic rights of 9,500 poor rural women and men in three districts of Sarepul Province of Afghanistan and economically empower them to create 13,300 jobs, with a particular focus on women. The project has a duration of 3 years and will be completed by March 2018.

Mid Term Review (MTR)

General

The MTR will provide an independent review of the progress and performance of the programme as of September 2016 (mid project) and of the results obtained so far, compared with the targets and expectations in the Grant Proposal and those set out in the logical frame and work plan.

The purpose of the MTR is to assess whether the project's ToC still holds, have any assumptions changed? Does the context remain the same and is the need still there? Is your project therefore still on track to meet its goals? If not then what needs to be changed?

Specific

Specifically, the MTR will report on the following:

1. The activities and indicators, their outputs compared against work plan and logical framework.
2. An analysis of the issues affecting implementation with reference to:
 - a. The appropriateness of the HiH model to meeting locally articulated needs
 - b. HiH Af's planning and execution of the activity plan,
 - c. The assumptions set out in the logical framework,
 - d. The expected and actual behaviour of other actors
 - e. Any other relevant contextual material
3. Any changes, positive or negative, in the broader environment regarding migration and the position of women that can be attributed to the project intervention.

Deliverables

1. An MTR Plan at the inception stage.
2. A presentation of draft findings to both the HiH Af and the HIH International teams for discussion and feedback.
3. A Mid Term Review Report of no more than 30 pages.
4. An Executive Summary of no more than 4 pages.
5. Presentation of the MTR Report to HiH Af/HiH International

Documents and presentations will all be in English.

Tender document

It is anticipated that the MTR would be carried out by a consultancy firm. The lead consultant is asked to tender a proposal document of no more than 4 pages in English by 1600 hours Kabul time on 12 October 2016 electronically to khekmati@handinhand.org.af with copy to arahimnasry@handinhand.org.af.

The proposal should include the following:

1. The broad **approach**
2. A short outline **methodology** for the MTR. This would be expected to include:
 - a. Review of HiH Af internal procedures, work plans and reports
 - b. Interviews with key HIH International staff in London via skype or phone
 - c. Interviews with key HiH AF staff in both Kabul and Mazar, including field staff
 - d. Interviews with key external stakeholders in Afghanistan (district authorities, Representatives of Provincial Economy and Rural and Rehabilitation Depts and maybe others)
 - e. Interviews with intended beneficiaries in Balkhab, Gosfandi and Sanchara districts and visits to activity locations.
3. A proposed **process and timeframe** for the MTR setting out the phases of the MTR, the number of consultants and the number of days.
4. The anticipated **challenges and dependencies** affecting the implementation of the MTR and how these should be addressed both by the consultants, by HIH International and by HiH Af.
5. A summary of the **skills and experience** of the proposed lead consultant and the consultant(s) together with her/his CV showing relevant previous assignments and clients.
6. A **fee quote** for the lead consultant and an estimate for the costs of other consultant(s).

Consultant skills and experience

HiH Af is looking for a consultant with skills and experience as follows:

1. Demonstrable experience of producing high-quality credible Mid Term Review and/or Evaluations, supported by familiarity with appropriate methodologies.
2. Experience of enterprise development programmes
3. Experience of working in insecure environments
4. Excellent knowledge of the Afghan context
5. Excellent analytical and people skills
6. Excellent writing and verbal communication skills

MTR Process and Timeframe

HiH Af has the following indicative timeframe for the MTR process:

- Tender bids deadline: 12 October 2016
- Review applications and appoint the Consultant: 20 October 2016
- Desk review of project documents by the Consultant, refine methodology, agree timeframe and finalize MTR plan: 27 October 2016
- MTR timeframe for field visits: 30 October- 03 November 2016
- Presentation of draft findings to HiH Af and HiH Int. 10 November 2016
- Hand in Hand feedback to the draft report: 15 November 2016
- Deadline for receipt of MTR final Report: 25 November 2016