Terms of Reference

Provision of consultancy services to train last mile Energy Entrepreneurs in rural and peri-urban areas of Kenya through podcasts

Introduction

Practical Action is a change-making organization that works in unconventional ways. We bring people together in bold collaborations, using knowledge and innovation, to build futures free from poverty and help shape a world that works better for everyone. We put ingenious ideas to work so people in poverty can change their world.

We are an International Development Agency with more than 50 years’ experience in development and scaling of a range of technologies appropriate to the needs of the poor. Working throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America, Practical Action improves the lives of around one million people every year through access to energy, sustainable agriculture, water, sanitation, hygiene and waste management, and disaster risk reduction.
We are a *trusted partner* of many communities, governments, development agencies and the private sector. We are uniquely placed as a knowledge broker with a breadth of capacities which enable us to capture and share knowledge in relevant ways for our diverse audiences. We are *influential* at national level where we work, and globally and considered a “go-to” agency by those seeking to improve lives for men and women living in or vulnerable to poverty.

Our vision is a world where all people have access to the technologies that enable them to meet their basic needs and reach their potential, in a way that safeguards the planet today, and for future generations.

In pursuit of our Vision and Mission, we are committed to advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment through all our work including programmes, knowledge sharing, advocacy, external communications, and also through our own organizational development.

**Project Background**

Practical Action is currently implementing an alternative fuels’ project dubbed ‘Access to Alternative Fuels for Cooking and Productive Use in Kenya project’ in peri-urban and rural areas of Bungoma and Busia Counties.

The specific project objective of the project is to increase access to alternative fuels for cooking and productive use through market development support for alternative fuel entrepreneurs.

The key intervention area is to provide market development support for alternative fuel entrepreneurs to grow sustainable businesses and increase access of alternative fuels for households and institutions; as well as for productive use.

**Background and justification of the consultancy assignment**

The use of podcasts globally for learning and dissemination is not new, yet it has not been fully exploited as an alternative learning platform. Its use to train micro entrepreneurs is an innovative approach to stimulate pro-active learning and allow flexible access to learning material by entrepreneurs. The advancement of mobile phone technology has since made it possible for digital tools such as the podcasts to start taking their place in e-learning in the Sub-Saharan region.

Practical Action is seeking to strengthen the role that energy entrepreneurs play in the last mile distribution of energy products in rural and peri-urban areas of Kenya, through the use of podcasts. This is intended to helping them in the development of sustainable business models within the challenging business environment.

In the alternative Fuels project, the podcasts will allow for flexible access to learning materials by the entrepreneurs and therefore address the existing knowledge gaps and time constraints that the energy entrepreneurs may have. The podcasts content will be structured with considerations on ease of absorption and focusing on topics proposed by the entrepreneurs as the most pressing areas of learning need.

In regards to the above, Practical Action seeks to recruit a consultant to develop and disseminate podcasts meassages, through audio and video. The specific objective of the assignment is to develop and disseminate podcast messages fitting the learning needs of the energy entrepreneurs for knowledge advancement in business development and clean energy products.
**Scope and Deliverables of the Assignment**

The consultant will work under the guidance of the Practical Action Project Manager and the project team. The main objective of the consultancy is to develop and disseminate podcast messages fitting the learning needs of the energy entrepreneurs for knowledge advancement on a rolling basis.

The consultant shall be required to produce several podcast series in this project (on a rolling basis), which will be availed via phone and internet to the energy entrepreneurs. This will enable delivery of consistent training materials on technical queries, business techniques to all entrepreneurs in a simulation manner. The podcasts messages will focus on the following key areas of knowledge gap as identified by the entrepreneurs:

- How to establish and grow my business
- Business sustainability and diversification
- Simple business planning techniques and its importance in business
- Business financing and credit management for debtors and creditors
- Financial literacy (borrowing, lending, saving)
- How to win the support of your family members into the business
- Product pricing and business profit calculation
- How to effectively handle products distribution/distribution channels
- How to stay afloat in business during harsh economic times
- How to effectively sell my product brand in the face of multiple superior brands in the market
- How to receive optimum benefits from clean energy business
- How to handle GBV issues in our businesses
- Customer care and after sales services
- Affordable marketing strategies/product promotion
- Covid-19 sensitization (social distancing, proper wearing of mask and its sanitation)
- Bookkeeping/record keeping
- How to make quality briquettes/pellets (production process)

**Expected Consultancy deliverables**

- Preparation of an implementation strategy on how to deploy the podcasts to the list of energy entrepreneurs, including the schedule of the activities, including when each podcast will be sent to the energy entrepreneurs.
- Review the existing training curriculum and scripting of the podcast messages based on the recommended key areas.
- Production and testing of the podcast messages.
- Refining the podcast messages for broadcasting.
- Broadcasting of the pre-recorded business coaching modules on the agreed upon platforms; that can be downloaded by the entrepreneurs at their own leisure. The messages to be broadcasted on a rolling basis (preferably, bi-weekly).
- Provision of a means of verification for the disseminated podcasts and an analysis of the rate of absorption of the podcast messages.
- Submission of a comprehensive final report detailing the successes realized, the challenges experienced during dissemination and recommendations for future improvements and success.
**Timeframe of the Assignment**
This assignment is expected to be implemented in a span of 6 months running from September 2020 to February 2021.

**Terms of Engagement**
Payment for the assignment shall be done in three tranches as indicated below:
- Tranche 1 (25% of the total cost): Upon successful submission of inception report elaborating the implementation strategy
- Tranche 2 (25% of the total cost): Upon scripting, production and testing of the podcast messages
- Tranche 3 (30% of the total cost): Upon provision of means of verification on the rate of absorption for the podcast messages disseminated
- Tranche 4: (20% of the total cost): Upon submission of the final detailed report

Note that the payments will be done subject to the consulting entity meeting quality and timely delivery of stated task.

**Minimum qualifications and experience**
- Degree in education, business, communications or related field
- Past experience in enterprise development using digital technology
- Experience in podcast production, management and support services
- Vast experience in the use of podcasting in training and learning

**Application Procedure:**
Qualified and interested consultants should submit the below requirements to endevtender@practicalaction.or.ke with subject line “consultancy services to train last mile Energy Entrepreneurs” so as to reach Practical Action on or before 21st September 2020.

- A motivational letter addressing the Terms of Reference
- The individual’s profile, with relevant experience
- A concept note of how the consultancy will be implemented including methodology, approach and tools for undertaking the assignment
- A tentative budget/Financial proposal
- Three (3) references from past clients

At Practical Action, we treat all applications for employment on their merits and do not take into consideration any factors that are not relevant to the job such as disability, race, age, religion, gender, gender reassignment or sexual orientation.

We are committed to safeguarding and protecting children and vulnerable adults and as such candidates will be subject to pre-employment checks.

**The successful applicant must have the pre-existing right to both live and work in Kenya.**