

# PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY AND DRIVING GROWTH THROUGH A MSME DIGITAL REVOLUTION IN BELIZE PROJECT (BL-T1152)

## Consultancy Services for the Development of Communication Strategy

### Terms Of Reference

#### 1. BACKGROUND

1.1. On January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) signed a Technical Cooperation Agreement formally naming the BCCI as the Executing Agency (EA) for the private sector focused project entitled: *Promoting Sustainability and Driving Growth Through a MSME Digital Revolution in Belize*. This project aims to propel the digitisation of MSMEs in Belize to foster a business environment that encourages business continuity within and beyond the context of the post-pandemic business climate.

The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise sector (MSME) accounts for the majority of private enterprises in the Caribbean and contributes more than 50% to Gross Domestic Product and employment. This sector contributes significantly to female employment, poverty reduction and social stability. Despite their enormous contribution to the economy, microenterprises and small businesses face significant challenges with competitiveness, including inefficiency, human capital with limited skills, low innovation capability, and problems with access to financing.

Belize has the smallest economy in Central America, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$1.4 billion, with up to 40% of the economy dependent on the tourism industry. In Belize, the private sector and specifically the MSME sub-sector, contributes significantly to output and employment, as approximately 93% of businesses in Belize are MSMEs and were reported to generate at least 70% of private-sector employment and incomes. However, there is concern that the sector has not been able to realize its full potential and failure rate in some sectors could be as high as 80% of new entrants. MSMEs continue to suffer from a number of weaknesses, which limit their ability to take full advantage of economic opportunities in the local, regional and extra-regional markets. The areas of constraints are normally identified as poor policy and regulatory environment, limited access to finance, market access and competitiveness, and the availability of quality business support services.

1.2. This project aims to propel the digitisation of MSMEs in Belize to foster a business environment that encourages business continuity within and beyond the context of the post-pandemic business climate. In the wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Belize experienced a sharp decline in economic activity, which resulted in an increase in unemployment; because of this, MSMEs have been operating at minimum capacity and with strained resources. The pandemic further exacerbated the long-standing limitations that have hindered Belizean MSMEs from advancing business innovation like our counterparts in Latin America and the Caribbean. Evidence has demonstrated that digital technology drives innovation and improves business performance, increasing sales, productivity, and employment.

This project will carry out strategic interventions and activities to provide a gateway for MSMEs to realise numerous advantages to their businesses. Firstly, this project will seek to improve the quality of ecosystem support to businesses to accomplish digital transformation. Secondly, the project will support businesses for digital readiness by raising awareness among stakeholders on the significance of digitisation through the design and rollout of a comprehensive communication campaign and provide access to finance to drive and facilitate their digital transformation. Thirdly, the project will provide a program of resources (training, workshops, business formalisation through the BCCI Verify tool, financial product matchmaking, and a virtual tool to guide the loan acquisition process) to aid MSMEs

in enhancing their ability to meet the requirements to attain financial resources needed to secure investment. These activities will aid in the digital transformation of MSMEs while bridging the digital age gaps of Belizean MSMEs and contributing to a lasting paradigm shift toward business innovation in Belize.

- 1.3. This project seeks to impact over 250 MSMEs and startups in Belize that are currently experiencing limited capacity for business management and innovation, high levels of business informality, and inadequate support options available. Most of the businesses that would benefit from the project will be micro and small enterprises with 5-9 employees, as well as medium enterprises with up to 99 employees.
- 1.4. The project execution period is 30 months with 36 months for disbursement which gives the project a three-year timeline. The total value of the project is US \$638,000.00, of which the IDB/MIF's funding is 55% or US\$ 350,000.00 and counterpart funding is 45% or US\$ 288,000.00. The project will consist of the following three components:
  - (b) **Component 1** Improving the quality of the ecosystem support to businesses - The objective of this component is to increase the capacity of business advisors through train-the-trainer workshops and certification programs to ensure standardisation in the quality and standards of services rendered.
  - (c) **Component 2** Support to Businesses for Digital Readiness - The objective of this component is to develop tools and support the implementation of these tools in businesses to strengthen their digital and business capabilities and guide their efforts while providing them with access to financing to drive and facilitate their digital transformation.
  - (d) **Component 3** Pilot access to financing for digitisation - The objective of this component is to provide support towards the formalisation of start-ups and MSMEs, which will enable these small and micro businesses to be able to properly seek financial resources to invest in the digitisation process.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTANCY

- 2.1. The Belize Chamber of Commerce & Industry seeks to find an experienced and competent individual consultant who possesses a well-documented track record in developing effective communication strategies. Under Component 2, Support to Businesses for Digital Readiness, the project seeks to implement a robust communication strategy as the framework for the implementation and rollout of the communication plan. It will be crucial to promote adequate engagement through different communication mediums to reach a wide range of actors, particularly micro and small enterprises, start-ups, vulnerable populations, and women-led enterprises throughout the country.
  - (b) The primary objective of the assignment is to develop a communication strategy for building awareness and sensitising the private sector to digital transformation in business and the advantages of adaptation.
  - (c) The secondary objective of this assignment is to create community awareness and understanding throughout Belize about the *Promoting Sustainability and Driving Growth Through a MSME Digital Revolution in Belize* Project and its activities, with specific attention to the target beneficiaries of the project (micro and small enterprises, start-ups, vulnerable populations, and women-led enterprises).
  - (d) The final objective of this assignment is to design tools and strategies that can be used to effectively transmit information to the beneficiaries in a tiered-specific/targeted outreach approach that consultants and the EA can utilise.

### 3. SCOPE OF SERVICES

3.1. The consultant will be required to undertake the following tasks:

- (b) In collaboration with the BCCI, develop a communication strategy and outreach plan for the project to provide the Private Sector and project beneficiaries with a sound knowledge of digital transformation, the concept of innovation and the advantages of integrating digital strategy into their business operations.
- (c) Develop a sub-set of graphical material to promote project activities that will allow stakeholders to better understand the project. The prospective consultant will provide or subcontract the necessary service providers, such as a graphic designer, videographer, or illustrator, to produce quality communication materials.
- (d) Promote the project's activities through media readily used by MSMEs in Belize to gather a wide range of interest in various sectors, with particular attention to female-led and women-owned SMEs.
- (e) Support the BCCI in disseminating information on capacity-building exercises and related webinars to be held during the implementation of the project.
- (f) Participate in the capacity building events webinar organised by the BCCI and Consultant.
- (g) Deliver a Final Report on the activities undertaken during the assignment and on implementing the Communication Strategy.

### 4. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

4.1. The consultant is expected to have experience in the following areas:

- (a) At least five (5) years of experience in communications, marketing, advertising, social media management and public relations services.
- (b) Proven track record of working in communication in Belize with preferred experience in business digitisation awareness raising and public relations strategic initiatives.
- (c) Prior work experience with projects funded by international development agencies/partners, with preference given to experience working on topics related to digital transformation.
- (d) Knowledge of different stakeholders throughout Belize, especially vulnerable populations, female-led and women-owned businesses, is highly valued.
- (e) Knowledge of social networks, management of social media, digital communication, storytelling and other mainstream media used throughout the country.
- (f) Candidates will be evaluated on their qualifications and experience based on a detailed technical proposal, including the approach, plan, and methodology proposed for the assignment.

4.2 During the Technical and Financial Proposal stage, the Consultant must indicate how they plan to accomplish the technical requirements and whether they plan to subcontract experts to fill gaps.

### 5. DELIVERABLES

5.1 The prospective Consultant will deliver the following:

- (a) An inception report of how it will undertake the scope of work listed above two (2) weeks after executing the contract.
- (b) A draft Communication Strategy and Outreach Plan will be submitted to the BCCI for review and feedback four (4) weeks after executing the contract.
- (c) A final Communication Strategy and Outreach Plan incorporating comments from the BCCI and the IDB Lab Communications Specialist must be submitted eight (8) weeks after executing the contract.
- (d) A Final Report on the execution of the strategy and engagement activities of the project is to be

submitted twelve (12) weeks after executing the contract.

## 6. DURATION AND LOCATION

6.1 The duration of the assignment will be twelve (12) weeks.

6.2 The assignment will be based in Belize.

## 7. SUBMISSION

Deadline: Submission must be received by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 4:30 pm. Consultants are requested to include in their application package the following:

- Cover letter.
- Technical Proposal with a proposed work plan, including a proposed timeline.
- Financial Proposal with a detailed budget of costs (including the cost of consultancy fee and cost-reimbursable item(s)).
- CV and two (2) current reference letters.
- Evidence of similar previous works done in capacity building and instructional design.

**Note:** Please comply with any of the above requirements to avoid the proposal being rejected. If one of the above items is unavailable, kindly draw this to the attention of the BCCI.

Submissions should be sent to the email address that appears below:

- **Email:** [bccipc@belize.org](mailto:bccipc@belize.org)
- **Email Subject:** “Communications Consultant”

For further information, contact the Project Coordinator, Ms Genesia Tucker, at the above-listed email or telephone number **223-5330**