**REQUEST FOR QUOTATION**

*Please respond to camille.schwart@osce.orgcamille.schwartz@osce.org, confirming receipt of this RFQ, and providing an initial indication whether this is of interest.* ***Note that bids may only be submitted by email, to***

***tenders-at@osce.org***

***Needs Assessment Research on Digital upskilling for Women Entrepreneurs in Central Asia***

Closing date: **12:00 hours (CET), on Tuesday, 26 November 2024**

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) seeks offers from qualified bidders **to conduct comprehensive needs assessment research on digital upskilling for women entrepreneurs in Central Asia**. The needs assessment research should provide a **mapping** of the current institutional framework in Central Asia**, collect qualitative and quantitative data** from women entrepreneurs and other relevant actors in the region, and present recommendations for future capacity-building programmes (hereinafter referred to as the “Services”).

Deadline for submission of quotations: **Tuesday, 26 November 2024, 12:00 hrs CET** (Vienna Time)

Payment terms: **30 days net from activation and invoice date.**

Please specify the validity of your quotation **(30 days minimum).**

**Submission address:** [**tenders-at@osce.org**](mailto:tenders-at@osce.org)

**Please include the following minimum elements in your quotation.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Company name:** |  |
| **Authorized representative’s name and signature:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **Email:** |  |

Any Purchase Order resulting from this RFQ will be subject to the OSCE General Conditions of Contract (Services), which can be viewed at [**https://procurement.osce.org/key-procurement-documents**](https://procurement.osce.org/key-procurement-documents)Detailed “Instructions to Bidders – Request for Quotation” are also provided on the same link.

***Important:*** *Bidders that are not registered with the OSCE need to complete the Vendor Registration Form under* <https://procurement.osce.org/vendor-registration> *and submit it with their quotation.*

Any questions pertaining to this RFQ shall be addressed to Camille Schwartz, OSCE Procurement and Contracting Unit, [*camille.schwartz@osce.org*](mailto:camille.schwartz@osce.org) no later than November 19th, 2024.

**Financial Offer:**

Please complete the below **PRICE FORM**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Task** | **Qty.** | **Unit** | **Unit Price EUR** (excl. VAT) | **Total Price, EUR** (excl. VAT) |
| 1. | Needs Assessment Report (full) | 1 | Lump sum |  | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| 2 | Executive Summary of the Needs Assessment Report (with text and infographics) | 1 | Lump sum |  |  |
|  | **Total (EUR net of VAT):** | | | |  |

NB: Payment will be made in the national currency (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, or Uzbekistan) based on the exchange rate of the National Bank on the date of the invoice submission.

**List of required documents to be submitted with the offer:**

- A Financial Offer (Price Form);

**-** A Technical Proposal including:

* A detailed proposed concept of the needs assessment research and methodology to be used for the assignment, including a description of the target audience and proposal of the sample size for the interviews and focus groups;
* Timeline of the research steps, with assignment to be concluded by 31 March 2025;
* Background information about the applicant organization:
  1. Information on background (CVs), qualifications, experience and references of the staff who would be assigned to the project;
  2. Description of previous similar projects/activities relevant to this bid.

- A completed Vendor Registration form

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**1. Background**

The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) Extrabudgetary project on open data and digitalization aims at contributing to good governance and corruption prevention efforts across the OSCE region by enhancing transparency and improving integrity of national authorities, civil society organizations (CSOs), media and the private sector through the use of open data and new digital technologies.

The success of the OSCE Central Asian Women’s Entrepreneurship Programme (CAWEP), held from February to April 2024, with extremely positive feedback and results, has prompted requests to replicate similar programmes in other OSCE regions. The project team aims to develop a tailored programme for women entrepreneurs, to be rolled out in select OSCE regions to ensure sustainability. This approach will leverage the materials and experiences of CAWEP and utilize the women's entrepreneurship expertise of OSCE field operations, particularly in Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and South-Eastern Europe. Embedding the programme within existing structures will allow for continuous improvement, adaptation to local contexts, and the establishment of long-term support networks for women entrepreneurs across the OSCE region.

To this end, within this project, the OCEEA seeks to engage a Contractor to conduct comprehensive needs assessment research on digital upskilling for women entrepreneurs in Central Asia. The needs assessment research should provide a mapping of the current institutional framework in Central Asia, collect qualitative and quantitative data from women entrepreneurs and other relevant actors in the region, and present recommendations for future capacity-building programmes. These recommendations will serve as the basis for upscaling future OSCE Women’s Entrepreneurship Programmes, envisaged in the open data and digitalization project, and will focus on fostering sustainable and effective digital upskilling initiatives tailored to the specific needs of women entrepreneurs in Central Asia.

**2. Tasks and Responsibilities**

Tasks and responsibilities of the Contractor shall include the following:

* **Conduct a comprehensive assessment of digitalization trends** across the five countries in Central Asia, including national strategies, government action plans, and existing commitments related to digital transformation and support to women entrepreneurs. If feasible, this overview should include also Mongolia.
* **Map out the institutional framework**, identifying key stakeholders such as government agencies, women’s entrepreneurship associations, and tech organizations. The focus will be on understanding how digitalization is integrated across these groups.
* **Identify and analyze both institutional and civil society initiatives that support women entrepreneurs in the digital sector.** This will include a review of ongoing projects by local women's associations, tech groups, and other relevant civil society organizations.
* **Map current national and international aid efforts** and other international donors in the region that focus on women’s economic empowerment and digital skills development, including funding schemes for women entrepreneurs in Central Asia.
* **Conduct interviews with key institutional and civil society actors**, including government representatives, women entrepreneurs, activists, and leaders of women’s associations, especially those with a focus on technology to collect qualitative and quantitative data for the research.
* **Develop recommendations for future capacity-building programs** and how to best upscale the OSCE Women Entrepreneurship Programmes based on the research findings. These recommendations should focus on fostering sustainable and effective digital upskilling initiatives tailored to the specific needs of women entrepreneurs in Central Asia.
* **Coordinate and collaborate** with the OSCE project team and relevant stakeholders, as necessary.

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**3. Expected Output/Deliverables and Timelines**

The Contractor shall:

Propose a mixed-methods methodology for the needs assessment, consisting of at least three stages:

* Desk Research: Conduct a comprehensive mapping and assessment of digitalization trends in Central Asia, the institutional framework, existing national and regional initiatives, as well as national and international support in the areas of women’s entrepreneurship and digital upskilling (minimum of 30 pages).
* Qualitative Assessment: Design and prepare relevant qualitative questions, then organize and conduct at least five focus groups to administer the questions—one for each Central Asian country (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan)—and carry out at least 25 one-on-one follow-up interviews (using semi-structured interview questions) with key stakeholders. These stakeholders should include national and international representatives, as well as leaders of women’s and business associations, with attention to regional representation.
* Quantitative Assessment: Develop and administer a quantitative questionnaire/survey to at least 100 women entrepreneurs and at least 20 relevant governmental, institutional, and civil society actors on digital upskilling for women entrepreneurs in each Central Asian country, collecting and analyzing their responses. This quantitative survey will serve to validate the initial qualitative findings and enable broader generalization and regional disaggregation.

Deliver a comprehensive needs-assessment report on digital upskilling for women entrepreneurs in Central Asia. The report should include the following, with a particular emphasis on the recommendations:

* + Digitalization Trends: A detailed assessment of digitalization trends across five countries, covering national strategies, government action plans, and existing commitments related to digital transformation. This section should also include an overview of digitalization efforts in Mongolia (if available).
  + Institutional Framework: A mapping of the institutional framework, identifying key stakeholders such as government agencies, women’s entrepreneurship associations, and tech organizations, with a focus on how digitalization is integrated within these groups.
  + Existing Initiatives: An analysis of institutional and civil society initiatives that support women entrepreneurs in the digital sector, including a review of ongoing projects by local women’s associations, tech groups, and other relevant civil society organizations.
  + National and International Assistance: A mapping of current national and international aid efforts in the region that focus on women’s economic empowerment and digital skills development.
  + Interviews with Stakeholders: Outcomes of interviews with key institutional and civil society actors, including government representatives, women entrepreneurs, activists, and leaders of women’s associations, with a particular focus on technology and digitalization as per the methodology described above.
  + Recommendations: Recommendations for future capacity-building programmes, including potential structures and rollout plans for regional initiatives and digital tools that could support women’s entrepreneurship. These recommendations should focus on fostering sustainable and effective digital upskilling initiatives tailored to the specific needs of women entrepreneurs in Central Asia, with suggestions on how the OSCE could effectively implement and deliver these programmes in the future.

The Contractor shall deliver the following by 31 March 2025:

* + Needs Assessment Report (full)
  + Executive Summary of the Needs Assessment Report (text and infographics)

**4. Technical Proposal**

The technical proposal should include the proposed scope methodology, approach and resource plan, including:

* A detailed proposed concept of the needs assessment research and methodology to be used for the assignment, including a description of the target audience and proposal of the sample size for the interviews and focus groups;
* Timeline of the research steps, with assignment to be concluded by 31 March 2025;
* Background information about the applicant organization:
  1. Information on background (CVs), qualifications, experience and references of the staff who would be assigned to the project;
  2. Description of previous similar projects/activities relevant to this bid.

**5. Evaluation criteria**

**Bidder Qualification: Mandatory requirements**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | The bidder shall have minimum of 3 years demonstrable experience in the related field and an outstanding track record of working on complex multidisciplinary research projects, as well as good reference checks and proven capacity to deliver outputs as described in this Terms of Reference. |
| 2 | The bidder shall provide at least three references demonstrating experience in organizing interviews and focus groups and designing questionnaires to collect quantitative and qualitative data. |
| 3 | The bidder’s proposed Team Leader shall have at least five years of experience in complex qualitative and quantitative research projects. (CV’s of Team Leader and any potential team members, as well as their references have to be attached to the application); |
| 4 | The bidder shall be an organization or a company registered in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan), independent from any political party, influence group or public institution, and shall not take instructions from, or communicate the results of the study to any party, influence group or public institution without receiving written consent from the OSCE; |

**NOTE: Only offers meeting the mandatory requirements will be considered.**

**The offers meeting the mandatory requirements, will undergo a quality and cost selection, where the technical offer will be accounting for 70% of the scoring and the price offer for 30% of the scoring.**

Applicants will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

*Relevant Experience (50 out of 100 points)*

a.      Evaluate the company's relevant experience in working on complex multidisciplinary research projects, including the organization of interviews and focus groups and preparation of questionnaires to collected quantitative and qualitative data and years of total working experience. Consider the number of similar projects they have successfully completed, their experience working with international organizations and/or governmental bodies (particularly in the OSCE area) and their track record in delivering high-quality outputs.

*Clarity and assessed suitability of the proposed methodology for the assignment (20 out of 100 points)*

b. Evaluate the company's formal quality of the proposal. Assess the clarity and suitability of the proposed methodology for the assignment, particularly with regards to the timeline, proposed methods for conducting the research, population sample size and interviewee profile.

*Team Composition and Expertise (30 out of 100 points)*

c.     Review the qualifications and expertise of the company's suggested team leader and team members who will be directly involved in the project. Evaluate their educational background, relevant experience in complex projects*, including working with women entrepreneurs in Central Asia.*

**The offer with the highest overall score will be selected, provided that this score amounts to a minimum of 70% of the maximum score.**

**6. Acceptance of Services**

The Services will be deemed satisfactorily provided upon the formal acceptance of the agreed deliverables by the OSCE.

During the implementation of the Services, the OSCE will conduct continuous Quality Assurance activities to ensure that deliverables comply with the requirements. The OSCE and the Contractor will exchange on a regular basis throughout the assignment, so as to avoid any communication gap in expectations.

Upon reviewing each deliverable, the OSCE will either formally accept the deliverable, or raise documented concerns within 10 calendar days. Such concerns shall be addressed by the Contractor at no additional cost to the OSCE, within a period not exceeding 10 calendar days.

**7. Liaison Arrangements**

OCEEA staff assigned to the review will facilitate the following:

* Co-ordination of needs assessment research and guidance on the target audience for the interviews, focus groups and quantitative research;
* Feedback and comments on the draft assessment research and deliverables throughout the assignment

**Please send your quotation by email only to** [**tenders-at@osce.org**](mailto:tenders-at@osce.org) **no later than 12:00 hours (CET), on Tuesday, 26 November 2024.**