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USAID Diaspora Invest Project

RFA-2023-05

Public Call for Expression of Interest for Diaspora Development and Export Opportunities Assistance

Issuance Date: April 7, 2023

Closing Date: October 16, 2023

Applications shall be reviewed on a rolling basis every two weeks starting on October 16, 2023. This Public Call will expire by the indicated closing date or the implementation of all planned diaspora expert assistance interventions, whichever is earlier. This Public Call can be terminated at any time by the decision of the USAID Diaspora Invest Project or the USAID Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this ***Public Call for Expression of Interest for Diaspora Development Mentoring and Export Opportunities Assistance*** is to solicit applications for the provision of diaspora-expert assistance (DEA) to qualified, legally registered micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The DEA will support the objective of the USAID Diaspora Invest Project (DI) to foster diaspora engagement in local communities, catalyze diaspora investment, and stimulate economic and social development in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The USAID Diaspora Invest Project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and is being implemented by Financial Markets International, Inc. (FMI). The DI began in October 2022 with the goal of fostering local communities' engagement with the diaspora, catalyzing diaspora investment and knowledge transfer, and stimulating economic and social development in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The DI aims to create opportunities for the BiH diaspora and its citizens, attract and facilitate diaspora investment and knowledge transfer into local communities, provide financial and technical support to incoming diaspora investors, transfer knowledge from the diaspora back into the country, and expand access to finance for diaspora-related MSMEs. This solicitation is seeking applications/technical assistance requests from eligible MSMEs that present creative technical approaches and methodologies for supporting the DI's objective.

Subject to the availability of funds and resources, the DI intends to provide technical assistance to applicants that will advance the DI's objectives and generate results in support of those objectives.

2. Background, DI Objectives, Expected Results, and Indicators

DEA provision will commence once the successful applicants have been selected and DEA agreements negotiated and finalized.



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The DI will provide DEA that will suit applying MSME's specific circumstances with the aim to strengthen performance and overcome weaknesses in specific areas of business processes or operations. The DEA will be needs and/or demand-driven and will be designed around the specific requirements of each company. The applicants may apply for provision of diaspora expert assistance in the areas including but not limited to (note that different application form is used for two types of assistance):

Diaspora-expert assistance for preparation of export of goods and services

- Identifying potential export markets and customers: This includes researching and analyzing market trends, supply and value chains, organizing B2B connections, identifying target customers and their needs, and identifying the best channels to reach them.
- Building relationships with potential export partners: This includes supporting networking with export agents, distributors, and other partners who can help connect your company with potential export customers.
- Recommendation for compliance and documentation: This includes assisting with the preparation of export standards, certification(s) and documentation, documentation, as well as ensuring that your company is in compliance with all relevant export regulations.
- Facilitating communication and coordination: This includes coordinating communication between your company and export partners, as well as providing translation services if necessary.
- Providing ongoing support: This includes providing support and assistance to export partners, to resolve any issues that may arise during negotiation and export process.

Application: <https://bit.ly/export-assistance-DEA-2023>

Diaspora-expert assistance through knowledge sharing development support:

- Business intelligence and investment facilitation: Provide support in identifying and analyzing market opportunities, developing business development plans, and connecting with potential investors.
- Legal and regulatory support: Provide information and support on the legal, regulatory, taxation and policy environment in host-countries, as well as on the availability of public services and facilities.
- Sector and industry analysis: Provide analysis and information on specific sectors and industries, including trends, challenges, and opportunities.
- Partner and service provider selection: Help companies identify and evaluate potential partners and service providers, including suppliers, distributors, and agents.
- Supply chain and operations support: Assist companies in developing and improving their supply chains, logistics, procurement, transportation, and distribution, as well as identifying and implementing best practices and technologies to improve efficiency, reduce and optimize costs.

Application: <https://bit.ly/knowledge-sharing-DEA-2023>

All activities within the Diaspora-Expert Assistance (DEA) will be tailored to the availability and schedule of the diaspora-experts, as well as the needs and capabilities of the participating micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

We understand that the time and resources of the MSMEs are valuable, and we strive to ensure that any technical assistance provided through the DEA will be beneficial for the company and not disrupt their



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day-to-day operations. This will include carefully coordinating the timing of the diaspora-experts' visits to Bosnia and Herzegovina and working with the MSMEs to ensure that their participation in the program is convenient and manageable. We are committed to providing quality technical assistance that is tailored to the unique needs of each participating MSME and respects their time and resources.

3. Eligibility

This Public Call is open to the following SMEs:

Eligibility requirement	Description of eligibility requirement	Means of verification
1. Legal incorporation	This Public Call is open to micro, small, and medium-sized companies (SMEs) registered in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Businesses that are not yet legally registered may also participate in the application process represented by their founder(s), provided they become legally incorporated before advancing to the conclusion of the technical assistance agreement.	Certificate of registration
2. Company size	For the purposes of this Public Call, MSMEs are defined by their staff headcount and either turnover or balance sheet size where: (i) micro enterprises have less than 10 staff and less than or equal to EUR 2 million in turnover or balance sheet total, (ii) small enterprises have between 10 and 49 employees and less than or equal to EUR 10 million in turnover or balance sheet total, and (iii) medium sized enterprises which have between 50 and 249 employees and EUR 50 million in turnover or balance sheet total.	Financial statements, including the balance sheet and income statement for the previous year, if available

Ineligible organizations include:

- Entities that have misused USAID assistance and/or funds in the past;
- Organizations that advocate, promote or espouse anti-democratic policies or illegal activities;
- Not-for-profit organizations, government institutions (national, regional or local);
- Agricultural associations or cooperatives, inclusive of individual or collective farms;
- Employees, contractors, or family members of any participating sponsors (USAID, FMI, etc.);
- Entities listed in Parties Excluded from USA Federal Procurement or Non-procurement Programs.

4. Application / DEA Request

If MSME is eligible to receive the technical assistance support outlined above, the Application / DEA request may be submitted to the DI at any time prior to the closing date specified in this solicitation. The Public Call envisions a one-stage application process, whereby the applicant submits the Application using the templates (online-forms) for specific assistance (export agents or knowledge sharing assistance).



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Only those applicants who meet or exceed the merit review criteria outlined below will be invited to conclude the Diaspora Expert Assistance Agreement with the DI and local providers connected to the process.

Applicants should submit written Applications to USAID Diaspora Invest 2 electronically via forms: Export assistance (<https://bit.ly/export-assistance-DEA-2023>) and/or Knowledge sharing (<https://bit.ly/knowledge-sharing-DEA-2023>).

5. Evaluation, Selection and Preparatory Activities

Application Merit Review Criteria

All applications will be reviewed by an internal review panel comprised of USAID Diaspora Invest Project technical team, and recommendations may be vetted by a larger group. Applications will be evaluated against the criteria below.

- Does the organization meet the eligibility requirements?
- Does the proposed diaspora-expert assistance activity fit within USAID DI objectives described in the Public Call?
- Is the request for technical assistance commensurate with the potential impact?
- Did the organization previously receive assistance from USAID and, if so, what was the objective?
- Did the organization receive assistance from other donors or institutions within the last two years, and, if so, which and what was the objective?

More specific benchmarks for evaluating applications will use the merit review criteria in the table below.

Merit Review Category	Rating (Points)
A. Alignment of proposed intervention with USAID DI objectives	30
B. Impact on local community	30
C. Management capacity of the applicant	15
D. Cost effectiveness and leverage	15
E. Gender awareness/disability and/or social inclusion	10
Overall Rating (out of 100 points)	100

The merit review criteria are described more fully below.

- A. Alignment of proposed intervention with USAID DI objectives. The Application outlines clearly defined goals and objectives of the action that are consistent with USAID DI objectives. The planned activities are reasonably planned and reflect the analysis of the problems involved and take into account external factors and relevant stakeholders. **30 points**
- B. Impact on the local community and contribution to economic development. The planned activities will generate tangible impact at the local level, including new jobs, investment, new exports generated, as well as other possible outcomes that create economic opportunities and/or social engagement in the local communities. **30 points**



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- C. Management capacity of the applicant. Evidence of the capability to undertake and accomplish the proposed activities. The application should demonstrate the organization's effectiveness in terms of internal structure, technical capacity, and key personnel, in meeting the requirements of the activity. The evaluation will be based principally on the background, qualifications, reputation, appropriateness and skills of its key personnel; and the "track record," reputation, and achievements (including development of self-sufficient, sustainable activities) of the organization, where possible. **15 points**
- D. Cost effectiveness and leverage. The application should be appropriately/reasonably budgeted, and the estimated costs should be commensurate with the expected results and benefits of the activity. The timeframe for the intervention should be reasonable and feasible for implementation. **15 points**
- E. Gender awareness / disability and/or social inclusion. The extent to which the proposed activity expands opportunities and promotes inclusive environment for women, youth, persons with disabilities or other disadvantaged and underserved groups, or represents a strong commitment to women, youth, persons with disabilities or other disadvantaged groups as beneficiaries. **10 points**

Applications scoring more than 60 points will be selected for the provision of technical assistance by the Diaspora Invest Project.

Diaspora-expert assistance agreement

The successful applicants will have the opportunity to enter into a Diaspora-Expert Assistance Agreement (DEAA) with the USAID Diaspora Invest Project and local implementing partners. This agreement will outline the terms and conditions for the technical assistance to be provided by the DI Project to the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

It will include, but not limited to, the purpose, goals, rights and responsibilities of the parties, timetable and expected results of the technical assistance. The DEAA will also include specific types of technical assistance such as export-agents assistance and knowledge-sharing development support.

The DEAA will also include a detailed scope of work (SOW) that will guide the intervention. The SOW will include:

- Specific deliverables, milestones, and/or services and the timeline for when they will be provided.
- Reporting requirements
- Key personnel providing the services
- Program performance reports, including any monitoring and evaluation reports specific to the activities and services to be delivered.
- Conflict of Interest statement

The technical assistance under the DEA will be provided by diaspora-experts selected by the DI Project or external partners. External technical assistance providers will be selected through a competitive process from the local market or sourced from partners participating in the DI Local Ecosystem Procurement Mechanism (LEPM). In instances where the services sought are specific to only one service



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provider in the market, non-competitive "sole source" procurement of short-term technical assistance may be possible, but it must be properly justified.

6. Implementation and Administration

The implementation of the Diaspora-Expert Assistance (DEA) will begin upon the signing of the DEA Agreement with the applicant and, if necessary, the conclusion of a service agreement with the short-term technical assistance provider. The implementation will adhere to the schedule outlined in the Scope of Work (SOW). During this phase, the DI team will conduct regular monitoring, conduct on-site visits (as needed), and review all deliverables to ensure they meet the highest standards.

Upon the completion of the intervention, a final implementation report will be prepared that includes a summary of the implemented activities, the hours worked on the project by the DI staff and/or external short-term technical assistance providers, and the results achieved. The report must be approved and signed by the beneficiary of the DEA.

It is important to note that the issuance of this Public Call and any assistance with application development do not guarantee an award or commitment from the USAID Diaspora Invest Project, nor does it commit the DI to cover any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of the application. Additionally, the DI reserves the right to provide technical assistance to any or none of the applications submitted. Applicants will be notified in writing of the decision made regarding their application.