



Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) Project

Draft Terms of Reference

for

Management firm for Enterprise Development through Business Plan Competition

November 2024

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Government of the Republic of Uganda was allocated grant funds (the “Grant”) from the World Bank, which are administered by the International Development Association (IDA) (the “Bank”), towards the implementation of the Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) Project. The Project Development Objective is to *increase access to enterprise development services that enable women entrepreneurs to grow their businesses in targeted locations, including host and refugee communities*. The **Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD)** is the lead implementing Agency for this project.

The project has 4 components (Table 1) comprising an integrated program of customized services that empower women entrepreneurs to grow and transition their enterprises from micro to small and from small to medium, as well as improve their productivity.

Table 1: GROW Project Components

S/N	COMPONENTS
1	Component 1. Support for Women’s Empowerment and Enterprise Development Services
	1A. Support for the Creation and Strengthening of Women’s Platforms, Community Mobilization, and Mindset Change
	1B. Support for Core Business Development for Micro and Small Enterprises
	1C. Support for Trade- and Sector-Specific Skills
	1D. Women's Entrepreneurship Work Placement/Apprenticeship Program
2	Component 2. Access to Finance for Women Entrepreneurs
	2A. Grant Support for Micro Enterprises through Business Plan Competition
	2B. Facilitating Access to Credit for Enterprise Growth
	2C. Sustainable Loan Products and processes for Women Entrepreneurs
3	Component 3: Enabling Infrastructure and Facilities for Women's Enterprise Growth and Transition
	3A. Multipurpose Service and Production Facilities to Boost Women's Enterprise Productivity
	3B. Enabling Access to Gender-Inclusive Workplace Infrastructure
4	Component 4. Program Management, Evidence Generation, and Policy Innovation
	4A. Project Management Support for High-Quality Implementation at MGLSD
	4B. Project Management Support for High-Quality Implementation at PSFU
	4C. Policy Innovation and Evidence Generation

These Terms of Reference will cover activities under subcomponent (2A) - 2A. Grant Support for Micro and Small Enterprises through Business Plan Competition. It will provide business expansion grants for high-impact businesses that focus on high-yielding jobs. Business expansion grants will also be given to women who want to expand into male-dominated sectors such as technology or construction, venture into social enterprises, or scale-up innovations. The grant support, which will be through business competitions, has the following objectives:

- a) Provide access to finance to micro and small women-owned entrepreneurs who want to expand their businesses.
- b) Support creativity and innovation among women entrepreneurs to transition into male-dominated enterprises.

The implementation of this subcomponent will be done by the MGLSD with technical support from the Grants Management Firm. It is in this context that the MGLSD will engage a Grants Management Firm.

Approximately 3,000 enterprises, including at least 150 from refugee-hosting districts, are expected to benefit from this intervention. The target beneficiaries include women entrepreneurs who are managing micro and small businesses.

1.1 Purpose and Specific Objectives of the Assignment

The Grants Management Firm will be responsible for providing comprehensive grant management services to support the implementation of the business competition and grants sub-component of the GROW project. The firm will play a crucial role in ensuring the effective and efficient processing of grant awards, maintaining transparency, and facilitating the growth of women-owned enterprises. Additionally, the firm will be responsible for developing a portfolio monitoring tool to digitally showcase program progress and leveraging technology to offer remote business development services.

2.0 THE SPECIFIC TASKS OF THE GRANTS MANAGEMENT FIRM

- a) *Design and implement business competitions:* Develop a framework for designing and launching business competitions aligned with the objectives of the grants program. Ensure the competitions adhere to established guidelines and procedures, promoting fairness and transparency in the selection process. The firm must be deliberate in targeting refugee women, women in hard-to-reach areas, such as islands and historically underserved regions.
- *Support the design and implementation of clear communication on the subcomponent activities:* Develop a communications and information dissemination plan, to be approved by the MGLSD, for this subcomponent. Ensure that the communication around this subcomponent is accessible and comprehensible to women entrepreneurs including refugees.

- *Application clinics:* Working with the GROW District Focal Persons, plan and execute subregional level clinics for the purpose of information dissemination, application process support, collection, and uploading of applications on the digital platform. Special attention should be paid to unique challenges and constraints faced by women entrepreneurs with disabilities and those who are refugees. The clinics should be adapted to their needs.
- *Grant application and proposal management:* Manage the process of receiving and reviewing grant applications. Ensure all proposals received are well-documented, filed appropriately, and prepared for review by MGLSD. Maintain clear communication channels with potential and actual grantees, providing guidance on eligibility criteria and operational procedures.
- *Grant awards management:* Facilitate the grant award process, ensuring timely and efficient processing of awards. Prepare all necessary documentation for the project coordinator's endorsement, including appraisals, recommendations, and documentation packages. Maintain a high level of integrity in awarding grants and ensure compliance with established guidelines and procedures.
- *Sub-project monitoring and reporting:* Develop a portfolio monitoring tool to digitally track and showcase the progress of sub-projects. Regularly monitor and analyze documentation related to subcomponent 2A, assessing progress against agreed results, timelines, and budgets. Provide accurate and timely reports on the implementation of the subcomponent to support decision-making and reporting requirements.
- *Beneficiary database management:* Develop and maintain an up-to-date database of all beneficiaries participating in the grants program. Ensure accurate and comprehensive data is captured, tracking performance against the agreed-upon indicators in the grantee agreement for monitoring and evaluation purposes. Ensure grantee progress reporting on a quarterly basis. The firm's database shall be linked to the MGLSD MIS platform.
- *Financial management and reporting:* Efficiently manage the disbursement of funds to respective grantees according to the agreed tranches stipulated in respective Performance Based Agreements in a timely manner. The firm will ensure fiduciary control including but not limited to financial management and reporting, preparation of progress reports and monitoring of project budgets. The firm is expected to work closely with the Financial Management Specialist of the Project Implementation Team (PIT) at MGLSD.
- *Risk identification and mitigation:* Identify potential risks that could impact project delivery, develop risk mitigation strategies, proactively monitor risks throughout the implementation process and provide recommendations for risk reduction and management. The firm is expected to work closely with the Grants Management Specialist and Financial Management Specialist of the MGLSD PIT on risk mitigation and control.
- *Remote business development services:* Leverage technology to offer remote business development services to grantees. Explore and implement innovative solutions to provide virtual support, guidance, and training to help grantees enhance their enterprises' growth and sustainability.
- *Grievance Redress Mechanism and Gender-Based Violence Mitigation:*

The Grants Management Firm shall establish and operationalize a robust, transparent, and easily accessible Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) linked to the MGLSD's GRM to ensure that any complaints, concerns, or issues arising from the grants application process, fund disbursement, or project implementation are promptly addressed and forwarded to the appropriate MGLSD mechanism. The firm shall also develop a Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Risk Mitigation action plan tailored to the context of the project and the target beneficiaries, including refugees and Persons with Disabilities, and approved by the MGLSD. The plan shall identify potential GBV risks associated with grant implementation (e.g., power imbalances, financial control, or exploitation of women beneficiaries) and define specific measures to prevent and reduce these risks. The firm will ensure that women beneficiaries are not exposed to harm or coercion during or after the grant process. The firm shall provide mandatory GBV training to all staff, local stakeholders, and individuals involved in the project, focusing on GBV prevention, identification, safe handling of cases, ethical and survivor-centered approaches to dealing with reports of GBV and awareness of relevant referral pathways national GBV redress mechanisms.

3.0 ROLE OF MGLSD

1. **Project Oversight and Strategic Direction**

MGLSD will provide overarching guidance and oversight to ensure that all activities align with Uganda's national policies on gender equity, social inclusion, and economic empowerment. The Ministry will set the project's strategic direction, ensuring interventions are responsive to the unique needs of women entrepreneurs, including those in underserved and refugee-hosting communities.

2. **Collaboration and Coordination**

MGLSD will serve as the main coordination hub, facilitating collaboration between the Grants Management Firm, district-level focal persons, and other stakeholders. The Ministry will leverage its institutional relationships to harmonize efforts across various government agencies, ensuring a cohesive approach to empowering women entrepreneurs through the business plan competition grants.

3. **Approval and Monitoring of Grants Management Firm Activities**

The Ministry will approve all critical processes led by the Grants Management Firm, including the design and implementation of the business plan competition, public awareness and communication, and other grant management procedures. MGLSD will also oversee the monitoring and evaluation of the firm's activities to ensure they meet agreed-upon targets and follow established guidelines.

4. **Policy Development and Evidence Generation**

MGLSD will use insights gathered through the project to inform and shape policies that address systemic barriers faced by women entrepreneurs. Through continuous data collection and impact assessment, the Ministry will support evidence-based policy

innovation that addresses financial, operational, and social constraints affecting women in business.

5. Capacity Building and Local Support

To enhance the sustainability of project outcomes, MGLSD will engage in capacity-building initiatives for district focal points and local leaders involved in supporting the project. This includes providing training on gender-sensitive approaches to enterprise development and fostering an enabling environment for women-led businesses to thrive in local communities.

6. Ensuring Compliance with Safeguards and Grievance Mechanisms

MGLSD will ensure that all activities comply with the project’s Gender-Based Violence (GBV) mitigation plans and that a functional Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is established. This will provide a secure and accessible channel for addressing concerns raised by project beneficiaries and will work in close coordination with the GRM of the Grants Management Firm to maintain project integrity and protect beneficiaries’ rights.

3.0 KEY OUTPUTS, DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINES

Phase	Task/Deliverable	Timeline
Phase 1: Inception	Inception Report	Year1: Month 1-2
	Reviewed and updated Grants Manual	Year 1: Month 1-2
	Draft detailed roll-out plan for the business competitions	Year 1: Months 1-2
	Design and implementation of clear communication plan and materials	Year 1: Months 1-2
	Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Risk Mitigation Plan	Year 1: Months 1-2
	Functional Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) established	Year 1: Months 1-2
	Risk Management and Mitigation action plan	Year 1: Months 1-2
Phase II: Implementation	Plan and execute subregional application clinics	Year 1: Months 2-4 Year 2: Months 4-4

Phase	Task/Deliverable	Timeline
	Grant application and proposal management	Year 1: Months 3- Year 2: Month 18
	Remote business development services	Year 1: Month 3 – Year 2: Month 18
	Grant awards management	Year 1: Months 3- Year 2:24
Phase III	Sub-project close-out monitoring and reporting	Year 2: Months 20-24
	Financial close-out report (financial audits, budget reconciliation)	Year 2: Months 20-24
	Final beneficiary reporting and data analysis	Year 2: Months 20-24
	Project close-out deliverables	Year 2: Months 20-24

4.0 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS OF THE FIRM AND KEY PERSONNEL

4.1 Firms Experience

The Grants Management Firm should possess:

- i. The grant management firm should have at least eight (8) years' experience proven track record in providing grant and /or fund management services for a portfolio of at least \$5 million.
- ii. The firm should have a proven track record in providing grant management services, preferably in donor-funded or Government programs.
- iii. Demonstrated experience of at least five (5) years in designing and implementing MSME, funding calls, business competitions, grant applications, proposal management, and grant awards management especially in providing these services for businesses owned by women and hard to reach areas.
- iv. Demonstrated expertise in fiduciary control, including but not limited to financial management and reporting, preparation of progress reports, internal control reports and audits, and monitoring project budgets.
- v. Demonstrated experience in financial asset management.
- vi. Demonstrated experience with monitoring and evaluation methodologies and tools to track program progress and assess the impact of similar programs.

- vii. Strong knowledge and experience of at least five (5) years in executing remote business development services and technology-enabled solutions to support grantees' growth and development.
- viii. Upon signing a contract with MGLSD, the firm should be in a position to submit a performance guarantee to the tune of 10% of the projected \$16 million grant facility in the form of a Bank Guarantee from a Bank of Uganda Licensed Bank.

4.2 Qualifications of Key Experts

S/N	Position	Qualification	Working Experience
1	Grants Management Expert/Team Leader	Master of Business Administration (MBA), Economics, Finance, Statistics, or equivalent from a recognized University.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Eight (8) years' experience in accounting/finance and grants management. ii. Excellent skills in data analysis, training, and mentorship. iii. Proven skills in project management, documentation, monitoring and evaluation, and budget management. iv. Experience managing MSME business financing and growth initiatives. v. Excellent networking and relationship building to effectively collaborate with the private sector. vi. Excellent communication and presentation skills. vii. Data analysis, budget review, and report review for women-owned businesses. viii. Developing manuals and tools for grant design and staff supervision, development, and mentoring. ix. Excellent computer skills, including but not limited to database management, MS Word, Excel, Project and PowerPoint. x. Must have proven integrity and versatility.
2	Financial Management Specialist	a) Minimum qualification of a Master's Degree in Commerce or Business Administration or Financial Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. At least eight (8) years of practical experience in accounting and operational procedures ii. Excellent knowledge of relevant accounting computer packages

		<p>(Accounting Option) and related disciplines.</p> <p>b) Professional Accounting qualification such as ACCA or CPA is a must.</p>	
3	Auditor	<p>a) Bachelor's degree in Accounting, Finance, Business Administration, or a related field.</p> <p>b) Professional certification such as Certified Public Accountant (CPA), Certified Internal Auditor (CIA), or Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) is required.</p> <p>c) Strong knowledge of financial management, accounting principles, and internal auditing standards.</p> <p>d) Proficiency in using financial management software and Microsoft</p>	<p>i. At least 5-7 years of professional auditing experience in accounting and finance, with a focus on grant management, project auditing, or financial oversight for donor-funded initiatives.</p> <p>ii. Experience working in the development sector, particularly with grants management for donor-funded projects, preferably in areas such as private sector development, business development, or entrepreneurial initiatives.</p> <p>iii. Experience in auditing social enterprises or organizations supporting marginalized communities, such as refugees, women-owned businesses, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), is an added advantage.</p> <p>iv. Proven experience conducting financial reviews and audits of projects involving multiple stakeholders, complex funding mechanisms, and diverse geographical locations.</p> <p>v. Demonstrated experience working with government institutions, international organizations, and private sector entities on grants or project auditing.</p> <p>vi. Experience preparing audit reports, presenting findings to management, and providing recommendations for financial and operational improvements.</p> <p>vii. Strong background in ensuring compliance with financial regulations, internal policies, and donor requirements, as well as in implementing corrective actions based on audit findings.</p>

		<p>Office Suite (Excel, Word, and PowerPoint).</p> <p>e) Understanding of grant management procedures and compliance with donor regulations and financial reporting.</p> <p>f) Familiarity with risk management and mitigation strategies.</p> <p>g) Excellent analytical, problem-solving, and communication skills.</p> <p>h) Strong ethical standards and integrity in financial practices.</p>	<p>viii. Experience in identifying financial risks and implementing effective mitigation strategies in the context of grant disbursement and project implementation.</p>
3	Management Information Systems (MIS) Specialist.	<p>a) A Master's degree in Computer Science, development, Information Systems and Technology, or a related field with a concentration in Management Information Systems.</p> <p>b) Advanced training in M&E or project planning and management will be an added advantage.</p>	<p>a) At least eight (8) years of practical experience in accounting and maintaining project MIS.</p> <p>b) Strong Information Technology background for system development and management</p> <p>c) Strong analytical skills in commonly used packages such as Excel, Access, and Stata.</p> <p>d) Working knowledge of various computer operating systems and interfaces, and highly knowledgeable about systems integration best practices.</p> <p>e) Demonstrated experience and ability to manage large projects or national systems and datasets.</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f) Detailed knowledge of content and data management techniques. g) Excellent verbal and written communication skills. h) Organized with attention to detail. i) Ability to communicate complex technology concepts with non-technical staff.
4	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist (M&E)	c) A Master's degree in Statistics, M&E or Economics or a related field.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Knowledge and experience in designing M&E systems and conducting evaluations. ii. At least five (5) years of experience in monitoring and evaluation and results-based management. iii. Experience providing technical advice at the design stage of programmes/projects, setting up a framework with defined indicators at the design stage to facilitate evaluation at later stages. iv. Timely preparation of sound analytical documents with well-reviewed and sound positions on areas evaluated, assessing the impact and effectiveness of the project v. Ability to conduct data analysis using various methods. vi. Understanding and knowledge of basic computer applications such as MS Word, Excel, and database management. vii. Experience working within development agencies, preferably in the government system.
	Environment and Social Safe Guards Expert	a) Master's degree in Environmental Science, Environmental Engineering, Social Sciences, Natural Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. At least 5-7 years of professional experience in environmental and social safeguards management, preferably in donor-funded programs or development projects. ii. Experience working in the development sector, private sector, or public sector focusing on social and environmental

		<p>Management, Environmental Policy, or a related field.</p> <p>b) Certification in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or Environmental and Social Management (ESM) from a recognized body is highly preferred</p> <p>c) Training in Social Safeguards, Social Impact Assessments (SIAs), or Social Risk Management</p> <p>d) Strong understanding of environmental and social safeguard policies, frameworks, and standards, including those outlined by multilateral development institutions (e.g., World Bank, African Development Bank, and UN agencies)</p>	<p>impacts of projects, including social enterprises, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and infrastructure-related projects.</p> <p>iii. Experience with projects targeting marginalized communities (e.g., refugees, women entrepreneurs, Persons with Disabilities) or operating in complex social settings (e.g., post-conflict areas) is a strong asset.</p> <p>iv. Proven experience in developing and implementing Environmental and Social Management Frameworks (ESMF), Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMP), and Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA).</p> <p>v. Experience conducting stakeholder consultations, facilitating grievance redress mechanisms, and addressing gender and social inclusion issues.</p> <p>vi. Demonstrated experience in implementing mitigation measures related to environmental sustainability, climate adaptation, and social safeguards compliance.</p> <p>vii. Expertise in monitoring compliance with environmental and social safeguards during project implementation, ensuring adherence to established frameworks, and preparing compliance reports.</p> <p>viii. Experience in conducting due diligence and compliance audits for social and environmental safeguards, as well as recommending corrective actions.</p> <p>ix. Experience identifying environmental and social risks, particularly for vulnerable populations, and developing effective mitigation strategies.</p> <p>x. Proven ability to manage complex safeguard challenges, such as land</p>
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		<p>e) Proficiency in conducting environmental and social risk assessments, developing mitigation strategies, and ensuring compliance with environmental and social management plans (ESMP).</p> <p>f) Knowledge of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) risk mitigation, inclusion of marginalized groups, and strategies for social accountability.</p> <p>g) Familiarity with national and local environmental regulations, labor laws, and social development guidelines.</p> <p>h) Strong analytical and reporting skills to compile detailed assessments and reports.</p>	<p>acquisition, community resettlement, or addressing environmental degradation concerns.</p> <p>xi. Strong background in community engagement, including conducting consultations with affected communities, vulnerable groups, and local authorities.</p> <p>xii. Experience working with government institutions, international organizations, and civil society in the areas of environmental protection and social welfare.</p> <p>xiii. Familiarity with the environmental and social safeguard policies of development finance institutions (e.g., World Bank Environmental and Social Framework, IFC Performance Standards).</p> <p>xiv. Experience in using digital tools or platforms for monitoring and reporting on environmental and social indicators.</p> <p>xv. Willingness to travel to project sites for field assessments, monitoring visits, and stakeholder consultations as required.</p> <p>xvi. Ability to work effectively in diverse and multidisciplinary teams and to provide training and capacity building on safeguards to project staff and local partners.</p>
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		i) Excellent interpersonal and communication skills for stakeholder engagement.	
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5.0 WORKING AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Grants Management firm will work closely with the Project Coordinator and be directly supported by the Grants Specialist in MGLSD.

6.0 DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The assignment will be carried out within a period of 2 years. The duration may be adjusted depending on the project life that will be remaining at the point of completing the procurement process.

7.0 NOTICES

Client's contact details for reporting purposes are indicated below:

Permanent Secretary
Attn: Project Coordinator,
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