

BACKGROUND

In alignment with the organization's strategic vision to empower young Nigerians with dignified work opportunities, Ethnocentrique is launching the "Fashion MSME Skills and Cluster Development Programme." This pilot intervention aims to provide standardized skills to 5,000 young individuals in Abia State, Nigeria, focusing on garment, footwear, and leatherwork through a cluster apprenticeship system. The program also includes training, understudy, and internship opportunities with 1,000 Mastercraft persons (MCPs). Additionally, support will be extended to existing youth led MSMEs in the identified cluster areas, offering business development support, tools, and networks to access new markets and finance for growth.

Program Components:

- a) **Youth Apprenticeship:** 5,000 young individuals provided technical skills in garment, footwear, and leatherwork through apprenticeship-styled training. The program will also provide non-technical support to the participants, such as,
 - I. Business Soft Skills
 - II. Digital market tools and platforms to access new market opportunities.
 - III. IP and other relevant legal and trade laws to inform and protect against copyright infringements, trademarks, etc.
- b) **Mastercraft Persons (MCPs):** The program will also provide training, access to market, finance, and other relevant market opportunities for growth for 1,000 MCPs in the selected trade areas.
- c) **MSME Support:** Business development assistance, access to finance, access to new markets, and other support services for 3000 existing youth-led MSMEs in the cluster areas.

Program Objectives:

The goals and objectives of this pilot program include the following:

- a) Introduce and equip 5,000 young women and men with the skills and knowledge required to build a successful career in the fashion subsector of garment, footwear, and leatherwork.
- b) Using the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF), assess and upskill 1,000 Mastercraft professionals with standardized and market-relevant skills to ensure the apprentices are being trained on current market-relevant skill sets.
- c) Working with certified BDS providers to expand access to market linkages for the MCPs, their apprentices, and 3000 existing entrepreneurs / MSMEs operating within the clusters across Abia state.
- d) Support the MSMEs and Apprentices to utilize online distribution channels i.e. Agogo Africa, etc.
- e) Provide access to finance linkages via FCMB for the 3000 supported entrepreneurs.
- f) In close collaboration with partner legal firms and relevant industry stakeholders, initiate conversations with the Nigeria Copyright Commission, on policy enforcement and increased awareness for intellectual property rights in the fashion industry.

- g) Support the MSME Business Member Organizations to design and deploy public awareness advocacy campaigns to educate individuals and businesses about the dangers of intellectual property infringement in the fashion industry.
- h) Empower youth with skills in garment, footwear, and leatherwork.
- i) Facilitate partnerships between youth apprentices and experienced MCPs.
- j) Support MSMEs for business growth and market access.
- k) Contribute to sectorial and policy-based advocacy initiatives.

Reason for State Selection (Abia):

- a. **Aba Fashion Cluster:** Home to over 100,000 flourishing SMEs in garment, footwear, and leatherwork.
- b. **Skilled MCPs:** Abundant skilled Mastercraft persons in identified areas.
- c. **Government Support:** Strong government support for shared facilities and infrastructure.
- d. **Informal Sector Opportunities:** Thriving local economy with a large youth population seeking opportunities in the informal fashion sector.

Target Trade Areas:

- a) Garment
- b) Footwear
- c) Leatherwork

Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning Partner

We are seeking the expertise of a competent Monitoring and Evaluation (MERL) organization that will play a critical role in developing, assessing, and enhancing the impact of Ethnocentrique's Fashion MSME Skills and Cluster Development Programme. This engagement requires a partner with a proven track record in developing and executing robust MERL frameworks, as well as navigating the complexities of youth apprenticeship programs, Mastercraft persons (MCPs) training, and support initiatives for existing MSMEs. The selected organization will be instrumental in ensuring that our interventions align with program objectives, fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement, and providing valuable insights to improve the success of this pilot program in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria and for the scale up of this program targets and locations.

Our Requirements

Develop and Implement a Robust MERL Framework:

- **Develop a MERL Framework Aligned with Program Objectives:**

- Outline the key components of the MERL framework, ensuring that it is closely aligned with the program's overarching goals.
- Specify how the framework will capture both quantitative and qualitative data to assess the effectiveness of the interventions.
- **Design Data Collection Tools, Methodologies, and Indicators:**
 - Provide a detailed plan for the design of data collection tools, specifying the methodologies to be employed.
 - Define key performance indicators (KPIs) that will measure the success of youth apprenticeships, MCP training, MSME support, and advocacy initiatives.
- **Monitor Program Implementation and Assess the Impact on Beneficiaries:**
 - Describe the approach to real-time monitoring of program implementation, including regular check-ins and site visits.
 - Detail how impact assessments will be conducted to measure changes in the skills, employment status, and overall well-being of beneficiaries.
- **Evaluate the Effectiveness of Youth Apprenticeships, MCP Training, and MSME Support:**
 - Outline the criteria and methodologies for evaluating the success of youth apprenticeships, MCP training, and MSME support. Include measures for assessing the sustainability and scalability of the interventions.
- **Assess the Success of Sectorial and Policy-Based Advocacy Initiatives:**
 - Define the parameters for evaluating the impact of sectorial and policy-based advocacy initiatives such as preferential procurement policies, access to competitive finance, shared facilities provided by the private or public sector, etc.
 - Highlight how the program aims to contribute to systemic changes within the fashion industry and its potential long-term effects.
- **Provide Real-Time Data for Adaptive Management and Decision-Making:**
 - Explain how the MERL system will provide real-time data for adaptive management, allowing for quick adjustments based on emerging challenges or opportunities.
 - Describe the communication channels for disseminating timely information to key stakeholders.
- **Conduct Periodic Evaluations and Produce Comprehensive Reports:**
 - Detail the frequency and scope of periodic evaluations and outline the format and content of comprehensive reports.
 - Highlight actionable insights that can inform program improvements and strategic decision-making.

Data Management and Reporting:

- **Establish a Secure and Efficient Data Management System:**
 - Describe the proposed data management system, emphasizing its security features and efficiency.

- Highlight how data integrity and privacy will be maintained throughout the entire data lifecycle.
- **Regularly Update an Online Dashboard for Real-Time Tracking:**
 - Provide detailed analysis about the development and maintenance of an online dashboard for real-time tracking.
 - Specify the information to be displayed on the dashboard and how it will be accessible to relevant stakeholders.
- **Provide Detailed Monthly, Quarterly, and Annual Reports:**
 - Define the structure and contents of monthly, quarterly, and annual reports.
 - Include a timeline for report submissions and specify the level of detail required to ensure a comprehensive understanding of program progress and impact.
- **Include Success Stories, Challenges, and Recommendations:**
 - Ensure the inclusion of qualitative data by highlighting success stories, challenges encountered, and recommendations for improvement. This will provide a holistic view of the program's impact and contribute to adaptive learning.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- **Collaborate with Program Implementers for Seamless Data Collection:**
 - Implement a collaboration strategy and communication channel with other program partners/vendors and the implementation team to ensure smooth data collection. There must be a cooperative approach and information sharing between the MERL team, other program partners, financiers, and the program implementation team.
- **Engage with Beneficiaries, MCPs, and MSMEs for Feedback:**
 - Outline plans for engaging directly with beneficiaries, MCPs, and MSMEs to gather feedback on their experiences. Include mechanisms for collecting input and suggestions that can contribute to program improvements.

Research and Learning:

- Employ action research for continuous program assessment and adaptation.
- Analyse quantitative and qualitative data to measure program impacts and challenges for quick adaptation and iterations.
- Share research findings effectively to foster knowledge exchange among stakeholders.
- Implement workshops or training sessions aimed at enhancing the MERL skills of program staff, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

Budget and Timeline:

- a. **Provide a Detailed Budget for MERL Services:**

- Present a comprehensive budget that covers all aspects of MERL services, including personnel, technology, travel, and any other relevant expenses. Ensure transparency in cost breakdowns and demonstrate cost-effectiveness.

b. Timelines:

- Outline a detailed timeline that spans the entire duration of the MERL process, from the planning phase to the submission of final reports. Include milestones, key deliverables, and checkpoints to ensure adherence to the proposed schedule.

Qualifications and Expertise:

- Proven experience of at least 5 years in successfully implementing and managing MERL services, preferably in youth empowerment, skill and gender development programs.
- Expertise in designing comprehensive MERL frameworks aligned with program objectives, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection methodologies.
- Sector-specific knowledge, particularly in the fashion industry, youth employment, and skill development in Nigeria, with emphasis on the garment, footwear, and leatherwork sectors.
- Technological proficiency, including the ability to utilize technology for data management, reporting, and establishment of secure online dashboards.
- Stakeholder engagement skills, demonstrating the ability to collaborate with program implementers, beneficiaries, Mastercraft persons (MCPs), and existing MSMEs for seamless data collection and feedback mechanisms.
- Comprehensive reporting capabilities, with a track record of producing detailed reports that encompass success stories, challenges, and strategic recommendations.
- Adaptive management approach, utilizing real-time data to inform decision-making and conducting periodic evaluations for continuous improvement.
- Strong communication skills, both written and verbal, with the ability to convey complex MERL findings in a clear and accessible manner.
- Adherence to ethical standards and best practices in MERL, ensuring data privacy, confidentiality, and compliance with relevant regulations.
- Commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion in the evaluation process.
- Proficiency in English is required; knowledge of local languages prevalent in Abia State would be an advantage.
- Submission of a detailed and transparent budget that demonstrates cost-effectiveness while meeting the outlined MERL requirements.

Submission and Deadline:

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is issued to evaluate service providers that will be able to meet the required services as detailed in the scope of work. The deadline for submission is the 25th of November 2024. Kindly ensure that all requested document (detailed proposal, work plan, company profile, budget breakdown, and team profile) are provided.

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Description	Weighted Points
Organizational Experience and Capacity	Relevant experience in Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning Impact assessments for Youth and MSME Focused Interventions.	20
Team Experience	Expertise of the team in executing all aspects of the project scope (key personnel resumes).	15
Program Understanding	Demonstrated understanding of the Fashion MSME Skills and Cluster Development Program goals.	20
Methodology and Work Plan	Clear methodology and approach, detailed work plan with schedule and milestones.	20
Budget and Cost	Cost-effective budget with a detailed financial proposal.	20
Conflict of Interest	Confirmation of no conflict of interest.	5
Total		100

Please note, proposals should also be a maximum of 35 pages excluding the detailed budget proposal and breakdown.

Contact Information:

For further inquiries and submissions, kindly contact
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