

Sierra Leone Financial Inclusion Project

(IDA Project No.: P166601)

Consulting Services: Hire a local consultant to facilitate implementation of component 2b (rural connectivity) of the project and work with Apex Bank and the private sector committee

SL-MOFED-98272-CS-INDV

(Date of Issue: 12th March, 2019)

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

BACKGROUND

Access to finance in rural areas is particularly low with only 14.4 percent of rural residents having accounts at a brick and mortar institution or a mobile money provider, compared to 19.8 percent nationally. Microfinance institutions are a particularly important branch based financial service providers in these areas. Without connectivity to the payments system, MFIs cannot receive or process ACH payments nor can they be connected and benefit from the investment in the retail payment switch, and thus they will remain isolated institutions in which consumers cannot process transactions between different institutions. For example, a member of a FSA cannot currently access their funds at another FSA, or at a MFI, CB, or commercial bank. Consequently, MFI members (almost 190,000 across all four types of MFIs) remain dependent on cash transactions since they cannot process transactions between other financial institutions.

In this context, the World Bank has approved a loan of USD 12 million for Sierra Leone to implement the Sierra Leone Financial Inclusion Project. The project development objective (PDO) “to increase the interoperability of digital payments and access to financial services.” The Project is an Investment Project Financing (IPF) and comprised of three components. Component 1 – Ensuring interoperability of digital payments; finances the hardware, software, and consulting services required to successfully implement a switch. Component 2 – Ensuring the viability of the payments system through increasing usage thereof by financing access points for the switch, including Point of Sale (POS) terminals, mobile wallets, and government payments. The component has a special emphasis on increasing access in areas of the country with particularly low levels of financial inclusion, and in particular, rural areas. The component also supports other barriers to the usage of the payments system, including legal and regulatory barriers and financial awareness. Component 3 – Project Implementation Support; finances a project coordinator and oversight mechanisms for the project to ensure private sector stakeholder involvement.

Under sub-component 2b, “Supporting rural connectivity and Linkages to the Payments System,” the Government of Sierra Leone intends to provide support to rural financial service providers to connect to the country’s payment systems infrastructure. This includes digital financial service providers (DFS) as well as MFIs. Activities proposed include supporting Apex Bank, which is responsible for the 17 community banks and 59 FSAs, via needed hardware/software and consulting services to facilitate connectivity to the retail payments switch for the Community Banks and FSAs. It will also directly support FSAs and community banks in utilizing the retail payments switch, including via training on how to effectively utilize core banking applications (CBAs). Support in connecting other rural

financial service providers to connect to the payments system will also be provided (including the 2 deposit taking MFIs, 12 credit only MFIs and digital financial service providers). To better understand the connectivity needs of rural financial service providers, this sub-component will initially finance assessments thereto.

To support implementation of this sub-component, the project will finance a consultant to serve as "Payment Systems Rural Connectivity Manager."

2. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The main objective of the assignment is to engage the services of a Consultant to provide technical and coordination support to the implementation and management of activities under sub-component 2b of the Financial Inclusion Project to ensure timely delivery and successful implementation. The specific objectives of the assignment are as follows:

- Support the FSDP of the Bank of Sierra Leone (BSL) and the Project Coordinator to manage and implement sub-component 2b activities
- Support includes unlocking any bottlenecks that may be encountered in implementation of sub-component activities and liaising with relevant institutions, including public and private sector stakeholders.
- Ensure that activities under sub-component 2b are effectively monitored and evaluated, and support the preparation of corresponding reports with the expected quality and on a timely basis;
- Help in ensuring that Consultants engaged under sub-component 2b effectively execute their responsibilities and provide the required deliverables with the expected quality and on a timely basis; and

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of services to be provided by the Payment Systems Rural Connectivity Manager include the following:

- i. **Facilitate project implementation through leading the implementation of sub-component 2b.** The Payment Systems Rural Connectivity Manager, in coordination with the Project Coordinator and Senior Manager of the FSDP, will ensure the timely implementation of all activities financed under sub-component 2b. In doing so, the Payment Systems Rural Connectivity Manager is expected to provide operational and technical support to the Project Coordinator to accomplish these tasks.
- ii. **Support the preparation of the Annual Work Plans (AWPs), Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs) and Annual Progress Reports (APRs).** The Payment Systems Rural Connectivity Manager will support the Project Coordinator in the timely preparation of draft AWP and associated budgets, QPRs, APRs, and concept notes as may be required;
- iii. **Liaise with relevant project stakeholders:** In consultation with the Project Coordinator and the Senior Manager of the FSDP, the Payment Systems Rural Connectivity Manager will engage in regular consultations with selected project stakeholders via email, oral communication, phone, letter, and others means of communication, in relation to the implementation of sub-component 2b; The consultant will support the Project coordinator to provide regular feedback and

contribute to the preparation of any relevant reporting documents to project stakeholders such as the Project Steering Committee and the Private Sector Committee.

- iv. **Coordinate with project consultants:** The project will employ a number of consultants to help facilitate project implementation. To ensure that consultants are effectively communicating and are working with and delivering deliverables to BSL, the Payment Systems Rural Connectivity Manager will help manage the consultants of sub-component 2b and their work program. The Payment Systems Rural Connectivity Manager will also help coordinate the sub-component's consultants hiring through leading the development of their Terms of Reference with the respective project stakeholders;
- v. **Manage the environmental and social risks in relation to activities as part of sub-component 2b.** Payment Systems Rural Connectivity Manager will need to work closely with other stakeholders to manage any environmental and social risks arising from implementation of sub-component 2b activities.
- vi. **Support monitoring and evaluation, including reports:** The Payment Systems Rural Connectivity Manager will support the Project Coordinator to produce all Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) reports, along with other reports required by BSL. The Payment Systems Rural Connectivity Manager will support the Project Coordinator with the collection of information from respective financial stakeholders, primarily BSL, to produce reports;
- vii. **Site visits and meetings:** The Payment Systems Rural Connectivity Manager will provide the required technical and coordinating support to the Senior Manager of the FSDP and the Project Coordinator towards coordinating and organizing all site visits and meetings inside and outside of BSL related to the Project, such as for project supervision, implementation, procurement, and stakeholder dialogue, among others;
- viii. **Other Project Administration:** The Payment Systems Rural Connectivity Manager will help manage the administration of the project through various activities not previously listed, and including, but not limited to, the development of TORs, review project management expenses, project implementation planning, reviewing the quality of consultants' deliverables, and attend any project meetings as deemed relevant, among others deemed necessary by the BSL.

4. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The Payment Systems Rural Connectivity Manager position will require significant interaction with project and broader financial sector stakeholders. In the case of this project, project stakeholders refer to:

- BSL senior management
- BSL FSDP
- BSL implementing units and departments
- Project consultants
- Other project implementing partners
- Private Sector Committee
- Steering Committee

- MoF's PFMU
- Government
- World Bank
- Private and public sector
- Others as deemed necessary by BSL

5. DURATION, LOCATION AND NATURE OF APPOINTMENT

The duration of the consultancy is for one (1) year and is full-time with the opportunity to renew the contract for an additional year based on the consultant's performance, project needs, and client demand. The Payment Systems Rural Connectivity Manager will be based in the Bank of Sierra Leone, FSDP and work under the FSDP Senior Manager and the Project Coordinator.

6. QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE

The Payment Systems Rural Connectivity Manager will be recruited on a competitive basis and in accordance with the World Bank procurement guidelines. The Payment Systems Rural Connectivity Manager should possess the following qualification and experience:

- A minimum of a Master's Degree in Business Administration, Finance, Economics, or equivalent;
- At least five years of experience in project management;
- At least five years of experience in the financial sector;
- Strong technical experience in financial inclusion, with particular regards to rural areas, regulatory reform, and electronic payment systems;
- Work experience with the World Bank, NGO's, INGO'S, donor-funded projects, and other relevant institutions will be an added advantage;
- Fluency in both oral and written English language;
- Good oral and written communication skills in substantive and technical areas;
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, commitment to team work and to work across disciplines; and
- Excellent writing, editing, and analytical skills and capability of working independently.

7. SUPPORT FROM THE BANK OF SIERRA LEONE

BSL will provide office space (if needed) for the work of the Consultant and will also be given access to the facilities of the FSDP of the BSL. BSL will assist the consultant in her/his consultations with relevant agencies and will ensure that the Consultant has access to all information as may be legally allowed for the performance of her/his services. BSL will assign the Senior Manager of the FSDP to oversee the overall performance of the consultancy and represent BSL to the Consultant on all matters relating to the project and shall accordingly advise the Client. The consultant will therefore directly report to the Senior Manager, but will regularly interact with all levels of BSL management, as needed.

Selection Criteria

The short listing criteria are:

1. Individual Consultant's experience relevant to the Assignment
2. Competency/Qualification of the Individual Consultant relevant to the Assignment

This REoI will lead to the preparation of Short list of Consultants

Consultants will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's *Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers* (July 2016, Revised November 2017)

Mode of Application

All applications in writing should be accompanied by up-to-date Curriculum Vitae and supporting documents (Note: do not send originals) with the names and addresses of three referees, one of which should be the last or current employer and addressed to:

Team Lead

**Project Fiduciary Management Unit (PFMU)
Ministry of Finance
Africanus House, 1st Floor
13A Howe Street
Freetown, Sierra Leone**

Or

By E-mail: application should be sent as an attachment (including all supporting documents) to: pfm2018@gmail.com

Please clearly indicate on the envelope (in the case of hard copy application) or in the email subject heading and attachment (in the case of electronic applications) the post for which application is made.

QUALIFIED WOMEN ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO APPLY.

Closing Date:

The Closing Date and time for receipt of applications is **27th March 2019, at 4:00 pm GMT.**

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

Signed _____

Dated _____



11/3/2019