

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### CONSULTANCY TO PROVIDE MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING (MEL) PARTNER SERVICES ACROSS THE CONSORTIUM PARTNERS AND IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS FOR EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN AGRICULTURE STIMULATED BY COFFEE (EYE-C) PROGRAM

**1.0. aBi Development Limited Background** aBi Development Limited is an investment catalyst and an economic project management company that promotes competitive private sector-led green and inclusive agribusinesses that improve lives and secure the environment at scale.

aBi Development Limited was established by the Governments of Denmark and Uganda in 2010 with a Vision to contribute to a competitive and sustainable agriculture and agribusiness sector by catalysing agribusiness development through matching grants and Business Development Services (BDS) to agribusinesses, farmer organizations, and intermediary/intermediary organizations.

#### **2.0 Project Background**

aBi Development Limited in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation is implementing a 5year program titled- ***Empowering Young Women Entrepreneurs in Agriculture stimulated by Coffee (EYE-C)*** in a consortium with two (2) other partners (Café Africa Uganda as the skilling partner and the International Women's Coffee Alliance (IWCA) Uganda Chapter as the gender-focused social inclusion partner).

The EYE-C program intends to harness a skilling and investment drive for young women and men plus people with disability, that is aligned with the Mastercard Foundation's charitable purposes: 1) the advancement of education through practical and relevant education and skills development in the coffee sector, and 2) the relief of poverty through young women's economic participation along the various nodes of the coffee value chain, promoting enterprise growth through appropriate Business Development Services (BDS).

The EYEC program aims to reach at least 430,000 young people (16 to 35 years) and enabling 300,000 of them transition into new and sustained dignified and fulfilling work opportunities (100% young women) while strengthening business practices for young women led MSMEs to grow and scale their enterprises, thereby stimulating additional work opportunities for young women especially in the coffee growing regions of Central, Western and Eastern Uganda.

To enhance the sustainable economic participation of disadvantaged young women, the program will, in addition to coffee, promote complementary value chains, including horticulture, bananas, pulses, poultry, apiary, rabbit rearing, and other small ruminant production. Not only will these complementary enterprises contribute to broadening farm

income streams, but they will also contribute to improved food and nutrition security, which is often the responsibility of young women in households.

The program seeks to transition a total of 300,000 young women into work in the coffee sector and complementary value chains by focusing on two outcomes:

- i. Appropriate technical, agribusiness, and soft skills delivered to young women in the coffee sector and other complementary value chains.
- ii. Enhanced growth and sustainability of young women's enterprises.

These outcomes will be achieved through a set of tailored interventions focusing on 3 key areas, that is:

- Provision of appropriate technical, entrepreneurial, and other market-relevant skills to improve production, productivity, and quality of products and services in coffee and other complementary value chains,
- Support the set-up and growth of young women's enterprises, through tailored Business Development Services (BDS), market linkages, business incubation, mentorship, apprenticeship, access to digital and non-digital technologies,
- Support deepened financial inclusion through enabling access to a wide range of appropriate financing options tailored to the needs of the young women along the various value chain nodes. With their enthusiasm, energy, and skills, coupled with opportunities provided by the program, financially disadvantaged young women will be enabled to access work opportunities in the coffee sector and complementary value chains, especially in rural areas, to relieve them from poverty.

The program will, from the start, intervene at all nodes of the target value chains based on three interconnecting pillars, namely:

- i. Skilling of young women to turn them into entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector as farmers, on-farm service providers, processors, aggregators, traders, or exporters, among others, to improve their earnings and livelihoods.
- ii. Support to establishment, growth, and expansion of young women's enterprises to make them profitable (generating at least USD 1,088 annually), sustainable, and resilient to unlock additional work opportunities.
- iii. Investment in new and existing young women's agricultural MSMEs to effectively absorb and process the increased volumes of commodity produce and demand for on-farm services provision, to increase young women's incomes from such operations.

These three pillars will be supported by harnessing enabling technologies (farmer traceability platforms, digital farm input platforms, farm record management applications, improved planting materials, precision farming, soil testing, e-commerce platforms, VSLA/SACCO digitalization) to enhance operations along the coffee and other value chains. This is crucial in modernizing the target value chains, enhancing competitiveness, and ensuring that young women are well-equipped to thrive in a technology-driven agricultural sector.

The expected impact of the program is as outlined below:



- **Overall impact:** Improved livelihoods and resilience of young women in Uganda through their economic participation in coffee and other agricultural value chains.
- **Young women in Work:** 300,000 work opportunities created for young women including people with disability (3% of young women). This will include both self-employment and wage-based work in the coffee and complementary value chains and enterprises attractive to young women. To meet this target, the program will need to reach at least 430,000 young women including people with disability (3% of young women), assuming an average 70% transition rate across the value chains.
- **Capacities of MSMEs:** 300 MSEs led by young women enhanced to execute strong business practices to grow and scale their enterprises, thereby stimulating additional work opportunities for young women.
- **Capacity** (technical skilling, governance, and management) of implementing partners strengthened for increased sustainability and effective delivery of the program.
- **Enhanced young women voice** and agency within the coffee sector.
- **Direct economic impact:**
  - Additional annual coffee exports of 18,000 MT, worth at least USD 50 million annually<sup>1</sup>.
  - Additional sales worth USD 10 million annually from the complementary value chains.
  - 15% increase in farm productivity where young women are engaged in enterprise diversification and coffee farm rejuvenation activities<sup>2</sup>.
  - Improved resilience of at least 150,000 young women in the coffee value chain demonstrated through income diversity, improved nutrition, and food security among their households.
- **System level Changes:** Increased meaningful participation of young women in the coffee value chain, improved access to productive resources, collaborative and intergenerational ownership of coffee farms, a shift in mindset of young people to viewing agriculture as a business, equitable access to financial services, and gender responsive Policy framework with gender lens adaptations in the coffee value chain.

To enhance program impact, learning, and accountability, aBi Development seeks the services of an experienced **MEL partner (Consultancy firm)**. This partner will support the implementation of the MEL agenda by leading data management, reporting, and capacity-building, thereby enabling implementing partners to concentrate on program delivery. This Terms of Reference outlines the expected roles and qualifications for a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Partner who will provide technical assistance across the five-year EYE-C program.

<sup>1</sup> At least 145 Kg additional yield/on farm coffee producer/year at an average Export Price USD 2.76/K

<sup>2</sup> Calculated based on the yield improvement through coffee farm diversification and rejuvenation (<https://www.ugandacoffee.go.ug/index.php/resource-center/fact-sheet>)



### 3.0 Purpose and objectives of the MEL Partner

The purpose of this Technical Assistance is to provide a comprehensive MEL consulting service to the EYE-C program throughout its 5-year implementation period. Working under the overall supervision of the EYE-C program MEL team led by the MEL lead and in close collaboration with the Program teams and Foundation's technical staff, the MEL Partner will support the monitoring of program activities to ensure alignment with approved Annual Work Plans and implementation quality by the consortium partners. This includes verifying that activities are being carried out as planned and assessing the extent to which they are delivering intended benefits. Key areas of focus will include the collaborative operationalization of the Program M&E plan, digital management information system design, program evaluation and market assessment studies, building MEL capacities of consortium partner staff and implementing partners, conducting periodic data collection for quarterly reporting, supporting learning initiatives and spaces, and to the extent possible further electronic participant profiling, data collection, analysis and offer space for team reflections in collaboration with the MEL Lead.

The detailed scope and methodology of this assignment will be co-created with the Foundation and the EYE-C consortium partners. Each year, consolidated work packages will be jointly developed, planned, budgeted, contracted, executed, and reviewed quarterly. Each work package will include activities aimed at strengthening implementing partners' and institutions' practices, policies and individual staff capacities. Annual performance will be reviewed to inform adaptive learning and continuous improvement

#### Rationale for MEL Partner

1. Continue to be a resource to the wider entrepreneurship development space during and beyond this intervention, furthering young people voice elevation into external studies beyond this EYE-C program.
2. Traditional evaluation firms become viable, all year-round businesses offering young people (data collectors, trainers, etc.) jobs, and internship opportunities. It's an opportunity to close the expertise gap in MEL for entrepreneurship and skills development programs in the country.
3. Opportunity to build a cadre of allies or young people in program designs, implementation, evaluations, and learning, among consortium partners and beyond

#### Objectives and Scope of Work

More specifically, the MEL Partner will support:

- 1) The review and update of the program Theory of Change (ToC) to effectively link the activities to the expected impact.
- 2) The Consortium partners and implementing partners design and implement sound MEL systems with well aligned and standard tools across all implementing partners of the program

- 3) Designing and delivering MEL capacity building sessions, coaching, and mentorship in monitoring, evaluation, and learning to IP staff in liaison with the consortium MEL manager or team.
- 4) Promoting consistency in data collection, tracking, collation, validation, and reporting on all measures, especially KPIs for evidence-based reporting using real-time cloud-based systems
- 5) Conducting strategic assessments to facilitate continuous learning during the implementation of the EYE-C Program to aid evidence-based adaptation of the Program
- 6) Facilitating knowledge sharing among IPs and stakeholders to inform program implementation improvements
- 7) Reviewing of MEL products, such as reports, and knowledge products such as success stories, case studies, and fact sheets.
- 8) Conducting special studies on topical issues.
- 9) Conducting data quality assessment and annual impact surveys.

**Geographic scope:** The assignment shall be limited to three geographical regions in Uganda, namely Eastern, Central, and Western Uganda.

**Programmatic /content and the stakeholders Scope:** Stakeholders in the coffee sector and complementary value chains, where young women can be transitioned into work.

#### 4.0 Roles and Responsibilities of the MEL Partner

Working under the direct supervision of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Lead in the Program Implementation Unit, in close collaboration with the respective Program Teams and Foundation's technical teams, the MEL partner will:

- i) Work with the program MEL team to provide MEL technical guidance to consortium partners for evidence-based mobilization, implementation, and reporting. This will involve co-creation of MEL systems to integrate or set up a new electronic system.
- ii) Develop training manuals and Build capacities of implementing partner employees in MEL and reporting, via skilling, tools/systems deployment, data capture, analysis, interpretation and sharing. Align and standardise tools across all implementing partners.
- iii) Build and maintain an up to-date participant and business databases, with consent forms, and undertake regular Data Quality Assessments (DQAs), verification and validation in compliance with the Uganda Data Act.
- iv) Ensure EYE-C program is implemented, monitored, and reported in compliance with the Foundation shared measures and consortium needs with full involvement of all stakeholders.
- v) Work with the Research and Knowledge Manager to drive or co-create a learning agenda and integrating it into regular process monitoring, day to day conversations,



quarterly and annual reporting, as well as being part of the integrated/stakeholder monitoring and learning visits to the consortium interventions.

- vi) Work with the EYE-C MEL team to ensure young people's voices are part of all MEL activities and collaborated in all program activities, decision making, and learning events at program and national level. Inclusion of young people with special needs, and refugees is of paramount interest.
- vii) Conduct periodic surveys (tracer studies and learning case studies and success stories) and promote evidence-based learning and program responsiveness in collaboration with consortium partners.
- viii) Work with the program MEL team to review and update the Theory of Change for the EYE-C program.
- ix) Work with the MEL team and the Baseline consultant to finalise the baseline study and use of its findings to review and update the program targets

**Note:** Midterm and Endline evaluations are not part of this assignment as a way of maintaining independence and integrity of determining the efficiency and effectiveness of the program.

## 5.0 Deployment, Budget and Reporting

The MEL partner budget for activities and human resource is part of the overall EYE-C program budget over the program period. Reporting by the MEL partner will be to the consortium lead and will be contractual

## 6.0 Roles and Responsibilities of aBi Development and consortium partners

The deployed MEL partner will work in close collaboration with the program and MEL teams, while delivering day-to-day support to the implementing partners. Our work will include but not limited to:

- a) Maintain regular coordination and engagement with all relevant stakeholders.
- b) Provide orientation and onboarding of the MEL partner in collaboration with the lead partner of the Consortium.
- c) Undertake quality assurance of the services, and deliverables on an on-going basis.
- d) Conduct integrated field monitoring visits on the MEL services being provided.
- e) Participate in periodic learning sessions or engagements at partner level to jointly review the progress, caseload data, MEL plans and related issues pertaining to this service.

## 7.0. Outputs and Deliverables

The deliverables of the MEL Partner will be defined on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature of the request from the EYE-C MEL unit to the MEL Agency, as will be defined in the activity-specific Terms of Reference (ToRs), which will be issued by the unit within the framework contract. In general, the deliverables will include, but not be limited to:



- (1) Technical and financial proposals as a response to this call and the activity-specific request for proposals.
- (2) Inception reports detailing the methodology and tools to use for delivery of the case-by-case assignments, to be reviewed and approved by aBi and consortium partners.
- (3) A clear Implementation plan approved by aBi and consortium partners as shall be required by the activity-specific ToRs.
- (4) Weekly meetings between the MEL Partner's team and the aBi Contract Manager to review progress during the times when the MEL Partner has an ongoing EYE-C Program assignment as defined by activity-specific ToRs.
- (5) Draft reports reviewed by aBi and consortium partners as required by the activity-specific ToRs.
- (6) Presentation made to aBi, the consortium partners, the Mastercard Foundation, young women, and other stakeholders in the coffee sub-sector about the study findings and how to integrate them into the program as required by the activity-specific ToRs.
- (7) Raw and cleaned datasets, code book, and the data analysis code as required by the activity-specific ToRs
- (8) Final reports, both in soft and hard copies, approved by aBi and consortium partners upon satisfactory incorporation of provided feedback as required by the activity-specific ToRs.

*The detailed methodologies for the specific assignments to the MEL Partner will be co-created with the EYE-C consortium, the foundation, and the Partner that will be selected.*

## 8.0 Understanding the ToR

Firms are invited to comment on and demonstrate understanding of the ToR, recommending any necessary amendments and should also provide indicative level of effort and cost to undertake the assignment. The technical proposal should articulate a sound methodology and approach tailored to the assignment's objectives and scope while aligning with the roles and responsibilities of the MEL partner on a consortium. A workplan, reference projects and detailed CVs of key allocated personnel should be appended. Reference project (s) should indicate key tasks performed in a similar assignment, geographical location, and contact person(s). Individual team member CVs must be no more than three pages and should contain only relevant experience to the assignment.

### TORs Amendment

aBi and the consultant may amend part of the present ToRs to have the deliverables that better adhere to the context of the coffee sub-sector and complementary value chains. The final deliverables shall reflect any amendments agreed upon. The amendments shall be signed by both parties at the beginning of the consultancy.

### Contract Period:

This is a retainer-based engagement, and the duration of the assignment will be two years, renewable upon satisfactory performance for up to five years, commencing on a date to be confirmed.

### **Payment schedule**

Quarterly payments will be made in arrears upon submission of an invoice. This will be on a retainer basis. The consultant will ensure satisfactory accountability for any funds provided for reimbursable expenses.

### **9.0 Required Qualifications and Experience of the preferred firm:**

The consultant must be **a firm** composed of a strong team that fits the required skillset for the activity, including but not limited to the team lead and co-consultants. The proposed team should be fully available till the completion of the assignment of a MEL Partner.

The firm must have the following requirements:

- a) A minimum of 10 years' experience in Program Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning. Experience in implementing development programs in Uganda/East Africa is an added advantage
- b) Legally registered evaluation or M&E consulting firm in Uganda, with offices in any part of the country, with sufficient work assignments in work force development and entrepreneurship and assignments in 3rd party MEL support in relation to the partnership at hand.
- c) The Firm must possess a valid company Data Protection License or Certificate from the National Information Technology Authority - Uganda (NITA-U)
- d) Demonstrated knowledge of and experience in monitoring and evaluating a program, including study design, developing results framework, logical frameworks or similar tools, indicator development and data analysis in multiple sectors
- e) Sufficient personnel with inclusive consideration) experienced in Theory of Change evaluation, field-based monitoring, and reporting with recognized international development agencies.
- f) Avail a dedicated and multi-disciplinary team of professionals with an experienced MEL leader to carry out the proposed assignment.
- g) Personnel with knowledge of local culture and language(s) that are spoken by the different communities, government counterparts, and implementing partners (if any) in Uganda.
- h) A highly flexible and agile team prepared to deal with contingency deployments, and ambiguity to address or pivot concerns or complaints as they arise.
- i) Willingness to learn and adapt to ways of engaging young people from within implementation districts/regions as enumerators.
- j) Demonstrated capabilities in developing and hosting ICT-based MIS systems with high integrity in engaging senior management to discuss progress against contract deliverables.

- k) Demonstrated experience of delivering consulting services to the private sector, bilateral donors, and NGOs in delivering monitoring, evaluation, data collection, analysis, and reporting activities.

**Academic qualification of the team lead:** The team lead should have an advanced university degree in gender economics, or agricultural economics, or agribusiness, or economics, or socio-economic development, or development planning, or social sciences or entrepreneurship, or any other field relevant to the assignment.

**Professional Experience of the team lead:**

- Minimum of 5 years of relevant professional job experience in MEL, including conducting baselines, feasibility, review studies for local economic development programs, Agriculture value chain development programs, strategic planning, gender analysis, impact assessment, end-line evaluations etc.) for a PhD holder or a minimum of 10 years of relevant professional job experience for a master's holder.
- At least 5 years' experience in conducting gendered agricultural sector studies, baselines, feasibility, review studies for local economic development programs, Agriculture value chain development programs, strategic planning, gender analysis, impact assessment, end-line evaluations, capacity building, among others.
- At least 5 years of experience working for programs with focus on young people.
- Experience in developing and managing robust and practical MEL systems
- Gender empowerment, Agribusiness development, or market systems development, and agricultural value chain development
- Experience in conducting research in Uganda
- Proven entrepreneurial analysis skills
- Proven experience in planning, implementing, and monitoring agribusiness development programs (and managing multiple projects)
- Proven experience in conducting baselines, market assessments and diagnostics, and value chain analyses, with proven experience in Market Systems Development.

The other team members should be subject experts with skillsets relevant to the assignment.

## 10 Technical and Financial Proposal submissions

**Technical Proposal:** Proposals must include the following, with the main proposal body not to exceed 20 pages (not including appendices):

- Understanding of the overall purpose and objectives of the assignment.
- Proposed methodology and approach, including strategies for stakeholder engagement
- Description of relevant experience and roles of proposed team, highlighting relevant expertise.
- Work plan with key activities, timelines and deliverables. Include the level of effort and associated team member(s).

**Financial proposal:** Estimated budget, including level of effort for each staff, brief description of their role in the assignment, and current unit cost for the role, and key assumptions in contributing to the overall objective of the assignment. The budget should be all tax inclusive, and all costs should be in Uganda Shillings.

**Appendices:** The proposal submission should include the following appendices:

- CVs (Include CV for each team member seconded to the project) not exceeding 4 pages.
- Contact of two references. (Organizations that the firm has supported on similar assignments)
- Upon request, Salary Rate/Scales, and most recent audit reports for the past two years.

**Declaration of conflict of interest.** All bidders must disclose any actual, apparent, or potential conflicts of interest related to this call. A conflict of interest includes, but is not limited to, any direct or indirect involvement in the preparation of this call, financial or personal relationships with the EYE-C Consortium partners and the Foundation staff, or any other situation that could influence or appear to influence the impartiality of the bidding process. Bidders shall include a declaration clause in their bids on Conflict-of-Interest Declaration. Failure to disclose any conflicts may result in disqualification. If a conflict of interest arises during the evaluation or contract performance, the bidder must immediately notify aBi Development.

Process step	Date
Release of the ToR	4 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
Deadline for submitting applications	25 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
Notification of award	10 <sup>th</sup> October 2025
Contract signing	17 <sup>th</sup> October 2025
Start date	20 <sup>th</sup> October 2025
Assignment closure date	2 years from the date of signing the contract

### How to submit

Proposals comprising a cover letter, a technical and a financial proposal must be submitted via email to aBi procurement at [procurement@abi.co.ug](mailto:procurement@abi.co.ug) **not later than 5.00 pm on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2025**. All proposals should be clearly labelled; **“Proposal to provide TA Services for MEL Partner for EYE-C Program”**. Proposals must remain valid for 90 days after the submission date.

### 11 Evaluation of the offers

The following criteria will be used to evaluate and rank the proposals submitted. Offers that score less than 80% will be rejected on technical grounds and will be excluded from the financial evaluation.

Section	Points
Team Technical competence (qualifications and skills)	20
Team leader's experience in similar assignment	20
Team member's experience	20
Technical Proposal (methodology)	20
Financial Proposal	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Upon completion of the technical evaluation, the financial offers of consultants who passed the technical evaluation will be evaluated. The best price-to-quality ratio is determined by weighing technical quality against price on an 80/20 basis.

## 12 Ownership and Publication

All work product created by the consultant under this scope of work is "work for hire" and is the property of aBi Development EYE-C Program. The MEL partner will assign the EYE-C program all rights, titles, interests, and copyrights that they may have to works created about and/or as a result of the scope of work.

## 13 Ethics Clause

Any attempt by a bidder to obtain confidential information, enter into unlawful agreements with competitors, or influence the Evaluation Committee or aBi staff during the process of examining, clarifying, evaluating, and comparing tenders will lead to the immediate elimination of the bid.

## 14. Confidentiality

All information contained in this ToR is provided on a strictly confidential basis, solely for the use of bidding for the supply of services for the above assignment. It is a condition of this competition that bidders (and any subcontractors) shall:

- Take all reasonable measures to protect this confidentiality and avoid the unauthorized use, disclosure, publication, or dissemination of confidential information.
- Do not use this information other than to prepare a proposal
- Not disclose, publish, or otherwise reveal any of the information contained herein except with specific prior written authorization.
- Failure to comply with the above will result in the bidder's exclusion from consideration.

### Polite Note.

- Only complete Application shall be accepted and considered for review.
- Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.



- Proposals will be assessed taking into account the technical expertise, experience and financial offer.