TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. Partner country

Republic of Armenia

1.2. Contracting Authority

Microsoft Innovation Center Armenia Foundation

1.3. Country background

Today, about 600 ICT companies operate in Armenia, generating an average annual growth of 20%. The majority of these companies are Yerevan-based (about 88%), but the number of companies operating in other regions of Armenia is growing from year to year, due to the development of educational and scientific infrastructure, particularly in the Shirak and Lori regions. While developing the 'Program of socio-economic development of Shirak marz for 2014-2017' development of IT skills of unemployed population, capacity building of operating IT companies in the fields of financial management and marketing and exploring export opportunities for products of SMEs are considered as a high priority and special efforts are required to satisfy those needs.

1.4. Current situation in the sector

IT and high technology sectors are one of the fastest industry in Armenia. Due to the growing number of IT companies in Armenia the demand of IT specialists continues to increase. According to the conservative estimation, if the market and productivity continue to grow with an average rate of 18% and 1% respectively, the absorption potential of additional IT specialists will grow at a rate of 17% annually and reach 15,000 by 2017. This implies that the annual number of new specialists, required in the next 3 years will be around 1,000 -2,000. In order to sustain the growth based on the high-quality labour force, the country currently faces the issue of providing sufficient supply. This is a complex issue, as the skills gap increases with the positive dynamics and development of the industry. The local universities do not yet offer up to date technological curriculum and specific courses on entrepreneurship and newest industry trends, which leads to mismatch with the industry requirements. Microsoft Innovation Center Armenia has joined its efforts with Gyumri Information Technology Center, aiming to boost technological development in Shirak marz through capacity building of the targeted population and operating IT companies. The project intervention will include targeted actions aimed at both expanding IT companies and creating new workplaces through skill and knowledge enrichment of unemployed population and already involved staff and better positioning in local and international markets. The project activities on the enterprise-level will lead to the enhancement of their activities, which will require new staff to be hired. Considering the significant scarcity of practical developers in the marz and the market irrelevance of the curriculum offered by the university departments majoring in Computer programming, the project will conduct intervention on trainee-level as well to prepare qualified workforce for the assisted companies. Intensive training courses will be developed, based on the HR needs of IT companies and delivered to the unemployed young population of Shirak marz.

2. OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1. Overall objective

The overall objective of the project of which this contract will be a part is as follows:

The overall objective of the project, offered by the consortium of MICAF and GITC is to support economic development of Shirak marz through skill enrichment of unemployed young population and business development of IT community. The one of the project goals is to enlarge the operation of existing IT companies in the region through skill enhancement of the companies in the form of business development and financial assistance.

The current practice, established at IT companies, operating in Armenia is the following: they usually outsource a local or international consultant who undertakes the task of generating leads, running the first stage of communications, setting the areas of partnership and then handing over to the company technical team. Currently, local IT companies do not have a specific person in their staff who will work with current and new partners to attract new contracts, and their outsourcing work is carried out in a very chaotic way. The managerial staff of companies are also senior developers, and often they lack time and skills in communications and negotiations which are required in establishing contacts with new partners. The project plans to hire sales consultants, who will work with the management of IT companies, understand their tech stack, get familiar with current partners, identify new partners, establish communications with them, which will lead to new outsourcing contracts.

2.2. Purpose

The purposes of this contract are as follows:

- To get acquainted with 2-4 partner IT companies (through in-person meetings with the representatives of IT companies), operating in Shirak marz, which provide small-scale outsourcing services to companies abroad, mainly Europe, the US and Australia

- To learn about the technical stack of their companies: programming languages, main areas of expertise and technologies

- To understand current and past projects of those companies, learn about their current partners and the methods, which were used to identify them

- To develop main methods of identifying new partners: freelance platforms, direct outreach, introductory calls etc

- To generate leads for those partner IT companies

- To attract new relevant partners interested to outsource IT projects

- To understand the current online presence of those partner IT companies on relevant professional platforms, including freelance ones

- To manage their accounts and use them to attract new partners

- To start communications with identified potential partners, set up areas of collaboration

- To run the initial stages of communications with them, until handing it over to the technical team

2.3. Results to be achieved by the Contractor

The contract duration is expected to be 11 months, starting from January 2018 till November 2018

Results for the first month

- Full information of tech stack and current partners of assigned 2-4 IT companies, operating in Shirak marz

- Preparation of initial marketing materials for IT companies

- Identification of 10 new relevant partners interested to outsource their projects

- Study of current online presence on various platforms for each company and if they are not represented on those platforms, set up of their profiles

Results for each upcoming month

- Follow-up communication with at least 5 partners, identified in the previous month

- Hand-over the communication with at least 2 identified partners to the technical leads of partner IT companies

- At least 10 new relevant partners identified

- Management of online presence on various freelance platforms for each company

3. ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

3.1. Assumptions underlying the project

The partner IT companies, operating in Shirak marz are small-scale and employ up to 10 persons. The study has showed that they do not have a specific person who works on Sales and Marketing. This function is carried out by the technical lead, which lacks Communications and English skills and doesn't have time to find new partners and follow-up with already established contacts.

3.2. Risks

The majority of the partner IT companies, operating in Shirak marz does not have experience with working with sales agents, which may lead to various difficulties in running the communication with potential clients smoothly. However, the service of sales agents is a unique chance for them to attract new clients and expand their scope of activities and they are committed to collaborate with them closely.

4. SCOPE OF THE WORK

4.1. General

4.1.1. Description of the assignment

The Contractor will work with 2-4 partner IT companies, operating in Shirak marz and study the tech stack and portfolio of current and past projects. The management of the company will provide all technical information during face-to-face meeting. Afterwards the Contractor will start the online work, which includes identification of potential partners, starting communications with them and presenting areas of potential collaboration. It is anticipated that each month the Contractor should identify 10 potential clients and follow up the communications with at least 5 of them in the upcoming month. The Contractor should lead the communication till the point when very technical details are required and hand over it to the management of partner company. The contractor should arrange in-

person meetings with the representatives of IT companies frequently to understand the status of previous deals.

At the same time the Contractor should ensure the online presence of partner IT companies on various platforms: both freelance and non-freelance and prepare the marketing materials for IT companies.

4.1.2. Geographical area to be covered

Shirak marz, Armenia

4.1.3. Target groups

- Partner IT companies, operating in Shirak marz

- Potential clients, working in Armenia and abroad

4.2. Specific work

Month 1

The Contractor should

- learn about the technical stack of 2-4 partner IT companies assigned through in-person meetings with the representatives of IT companies

- study current and past projects,

- understand what type of clients the companies are working with,

- learn about the online presence of their companies on various freelance platforms.

The research period should be followed by identification of at least 10 potential clients, who need projects in accordance with the technical stack of those companies. The Contractor should start communication with the potential clients and present scope of potential collaboration.

Month 2- Month 11

The Contractor continues identification of new clients, at least 10 per month and at the same time follows up with the ones, which were identified in the previous month and contacted. The Contractor should be the main contact person till handing it over to the management of the companies to discuss the technical task in details.

The Contractor should involve the management of partner IT company in all stages of the process and share his/her expertise in all aspects of Sales and Communications. Thus, the partner IT companies will develop their skills in this sphere and will be able to run the same process later alone after the end of the project implementation period. Their active involvement will lead to the sustainability of their actions in the future.

4.3. Project management

4.3.1. Responsible body

Microsoft Innovation Center Armenia Foundation will be responsible for managing the contract.

4.3.2. Management structure

The Operations Officer from MICAF will manage the activities under this Contract and give the final approval of the monthly reports after discussion with the partner IT companies.

4.3.3. Facilities to be provided by the Contracting Authority and/or other parties

The Contracting Authority will organize the face-to-face meeting of the Contractor with the management of partner IT companies and will assist with organizations of any meeting required.

5. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

5.1. Location

Gyumri, Shirak marz, Armenia

5.2. Start date & Period of implementation of tasks

The intended start date is January 2018 and the period of implementation of the contract will be 11 months from this date.

6. REQUIREMENTS

- Higher Education/ Master degree in Business Administration, Sales, Marketing and other relevant field will be considered an advantage.

- Certificate of participation in training on sales-related topics, such as Sales, Marketing, Communications, Digital Marketing etc.

- At least two-year experience as a business development manager, sales executive or a relevant role. Experience as a sales specialist in IT company will be considered as an advantage

- Upper-intermediate level of English

- Highly motivated and target-driven person

- Market knowledge

- Communication and negotiation skills

6.1. Facilities to be provided by the Contractor

The Contracting Authority will arrange the first face-to face meeting with 2-4 partner IT companies in Gyumri Shirak marz.

7. REPORTS

7.1. Reporting requirements

The Contractor will submit the following reports in English in one original and 1 copy:

- **Inception Report** of at least 3 pages to be produced after the first month from the start of implementation. In the report the Contractor shall describe study results about the tech stack,

current and past projects and partners of assigned 2-4 companies, identified ten potential clients and the status of communications with them, any difficulties encountered or expected, the work done to ensure the online presence of partner IT companies on various platforms. The Contractor should also indicate hours worked for each task. The Contractor should proceed with his/her work unless the Contracting Authority sends comments on the inception report. The inception report template will be provided.

- The Contractor should provide **monthly reports** of at least 3 pages, indicating the work done in the following directions: identification of relevant partners, communication with them and follow-up work with clients, identified in the previous month, management of online presence on various freelance platforms

- **Draft final report** of at least 5 pages (main text, excluding annexes.) This report shall be submitted no later than 15 days before the end of the period of implementation of tasks.

- **Final report** with the same specifications as the draft final report, incorporating any comments received from the parties on the draft report. The deadline for sending the final report is 5 days after receipt of comments on the draft final report. The report shall contain a sufficiently detailed description of the different options to support an informed decision on Contract outcomes. The detailed analyses underpinning the recommendations will be presented in annexes to the main report. The final report must be provided along with the corresponding invoice.

7.2. Submission and approval of reports

The reports referred to above must be submitted to the Project Manager, identified in the contract. The Project Manager is responsible for approving the reports.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

8.1. Definition of indicators

Month	Task	Indicator
Month 1	Study of tech stack and portfolio of 2-3 partner companies	Short description of tech stack and activities, completed for each company
	Identification of relevant potential partners	10 partners, identified and contacted
	Study of online presence of 2-3 partner companies on various freelancing platforms	Online presence on various platforms for each company
Month 2-11	Identification of relevant potential partners	10 partners, identified and contacted
	Updating online info of 2-3 partner companies	Online presence on various platforms
	Follow-up communication with previously identified potential partners	Communications with at least 5 previously identified partners Handover to the company management