**Terms of Reference**

**for**

**Quality Evaluation and Coaching Services for Startups under Matching Grants Program**

**Reference No. GE-GITA-68550-CS-CQS**

**1. Background**

The Government of Georgia has secured support from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) (hereinafter ‘the Bank’) for a National Innovation Ecosystem (GENIE) Project in the amount of 40 million US dollars. **The main objective** of the project is to increase innovative activities of the micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and individuals in Georgia and their participation in the digital economy.

The Project will enhance Georgia’s national innovation ecosystem through an integrated approach across **three components**, plus project implementation support.

**Component 1: Innovation Infrastructure.** The component will: (a) develop a network of Regional Innovation Hubs (RIHs) and Innovation Centers (ICs) in selected cities, towns and villages (b) design a Broadband-for-Development (BfD) program to increase use of broadband internet services and advanced information technology by eligible households and eligible MSMEs, with a focus on rural areas, *inter alia,* by providing BfD Payments and related training.

**Component 2: Innovation Services.** This component will deliver services, many in coordination with the ICs and RIHs, tailored to Project beneficiaries at various stages/levels of the innovation ecosystem. The component will carry out outreach and communication activities, and provide training and technical assistance in support of: (a) building the innovation community, and organizing and carrying out innovation competitions; (b) carrying out periodic skills needs assessments of firms and developing digital economy skills of individuals; and (c) developing the innovation capacity of individuals and firms.

**Component 3: Innovation Financing.** This component supports the: (a) provision of matching grants, selection of eligible MSMEs for receipt of matching grants, and supervision of matching grants; (b) provision of technical assistance to eligible MSMEs to prepare and implement sub-projects (with the matching grants); and (c) provision of technical assistance to stimulate alternative forms of innovation financing and investment in the digital economy.

Innovation Financing, the third component of the project, aims at supporting Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) by providing financing for development of innovation products, services, technologies and processes. The Project is designed to provide two types of matching grants: Start-up and Innovation. The Start-up matching grant size is GEL 100’000 for projects that will be completed within 1 year, with minimum of 10% of co-financing of project costs in pilot call for proposals.

**2. Implementing Agency**

The central institution responsible for implementation of the project is **Georgia’s Innovation & Technology Agency (GITA)** under the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia (MoESD). GITA is responsible for all project implementation. It will coordinate the gathering and processing of the results of monitoring, reporting, fiduciary functions, and safeguard procedures in close cooperation with relevant institutions participating in the project.

**3**. **Objectives**

The objective of this assignment is to select startups in the frame of the Startup Matching Grants program by providing the evaluation of project proposals and coaching services necessary for each step of the evaluation process (step 2 - peer review and step 3- final evaluation by the Independent Investment Committee): Further, the assignment shall be broken down into the following four main tasks:

1. Drafting recommendations to the Matching Grants Manual;
2. Conduct a Peer Review of each project proposal that passed through the desk review (conducted by GITA);
3. Provide pitch coaching sessions for startups pre-selected for final evaluation by the Independent Investment Committee (IIC);
4. Conduct the final evaluation of the pre-selected startups.

**4**. **Scope of Work**

Following the objective of this assignment the company shall assume the following scope of work for each of the four tasks described above:

***Task 1 – Drafting recommendations for Matching Grants Manual:***

1. Familiarize itself with the latest version of the Matching Grants Manual;
2. Draft the recommendations regarding the Matching Grants Manual, including its annexes and the evaluation criteria for pre and final evaluation stages;

***Task 2 – Pre-evaluation of Applications***

1. The company is expected to evaluate the applications that passed the desk review stage. Each application shall be reviewed individually by two Peer Reviewers.
2. The company shall register the Peer Reviewers (key staff specified in the relevant contract Annex) in the Matching Grants Portal also indicating the areas of their expertise. Further, the company shall assign the proposals through the Matching Grants Portal to the respective reviewers. Each proposal shall be simultaneously assessed by two peer reviewers and the third one shall be involved in the event that scores assigned by two peer reviewers result in high discrepancy;
3. The company shall evaluate the proposals under Matching Grants Program and ensure that each Peer Reviewer performs the following activities:
   * + - 1. Provide a written review (using Pre-Evaluation Grid through Grants Portal) of each project proposal based on the evaluation criteria and scoring instructions defined in the Matching Grants Manual;
         2. Provide clear comments and justifications explaining reasoning behind the score assigned to each criterion included in the Evaluation Grid;
         3. If required, draft clarifications and recommendations for each assessed proposal, for the consideration of GITA and the Independent Investment Committee;
         4. Provide explanations and answers to the questions and comments raised by GITA and the Independent Investment Committee;

Each peer reviewer should preserve the highest standards of integrity and therefore shall sign the Statement of Impartiality and Confidentiality.

***Task 3 – Conducting the pitch coaching sessions for pre-selected startups***

1. Develop the coaching program/methodology, including all visual aid materials for the pre-selected applicants invited to pitch their projects and answer the questions imposed by the Independent Investment Committee members; Documents elaborated, shall be accepted by GITA;
2. Train and consult the pre-selected applicants to build their pitching skills and prepare them for questions imposed by the Investment Committee Members.
3. The company shall train the pre-selected applicants
   1. To familiarize them with pitching techniques and help them build their pitching skills;
   2. When appropriate, refer the trainees to other sources of information, provides advice or further supports for a specific area of focus of their business;
   3. Assess the potential for internationalization of the proposed products/services and provides necessary recommendations;
   4. Individually consults each applicant, helps them prepare for pitch and Q&A sessions, provides support in preparation for presentations;
   5. Provide necessary support to the assigned applicants requiring urgent assistance. The Coaches shall dedicate days and schedule hours after coaching sessions are over, when applicant can call and seek for the remote support;

***Task 4 – Final Evaluation by the Independent Investment Committee***

1. The company shall conduct the final evaluation of the proposals and ensure that each Investment Committee Member performs the following activities:
   1. Attend pitching and Q&A sessions delivered by the pre-selected applicants;
   2. Participate in consensus meeting(s) and based on the results of the pitching and Q&A sessions, evaluates pre-selected proposals and assigns scores against the criteria laid down in the Matching Grants Manual;
   3. Provide clear comments and justification in the Final Evaluation Grid explaining the logic behind the scores assigned to each criterion;
   4. Draw the recommendations, if any, for the consideration of GITA and the Applicants;
   5. Draw the list of selected applications during a consensus meeting(s);
   6. Preserve the highest standards of integrity and therefore shall sign the Statement of Impartiality and Confidentiality.

The entire evaluation process shall be managed through the Matching Grants Portal (<https://grants.gov.ge>)

**5. Location, Timeframe and Duration**

Duration of assignment is 6 (six) months and it is expected to commence in October, 2018.

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| **Task** | **Activity** | **Duration (days)** | **Location** |
| 1. Recommendations for manual | * 1. Drafting the recommendations for Matching Grants Manual including annexes and the evaluation grids | 14 | Homebased |
| 1. Pre-evaluation (Peer Review) | 2.1 Peer Review – pre-evaluation  (expected approximately 300 applications to be reviewed) | 12 | Homebased |
| 2.2 Evaluation Report / Publication of Scores on matching grant’s web portal at: https://grants.gov.ge |
| 1. MG Coaches | 3.1 Develop the coaching program/methodology including all visual aid materials | 2 | Homebased |
| 7 |
| 3.2 Coaching sessions  (expected approximately 40 hours per each coach - 5 working days) | 5 | Tbilisi, GEO |
| 3.3 Remote Consultations  (expected approximately 2 hrs. x 2 days per coach) | 2 | Homebased |
| 4. Final Evaluation (IIC) | 4.1 Pitching and Q&A  (expected approximately 40 hours per each IIC member - 5 working days) | 5 | Tbilisi, GEO |
| 4.2 Consensus Meeting  (expected approximately 4 hours per each IIC member - 1 working day) | 1 |

**6. Reporting Requirements and Deliverables**

All communication with GITA, as well as documents/deliverables related to the assignment shall be submitted in English.

**Timeline and Reporting Schedule**

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| **Deliverables** | **Submission Date** | **Language and form of the report** |
| **Inception Report:**  Recommendations to the latest version of the grants manual | within 10 days from the commencement of services | English, Electronic |
| **Pre-evaluation Report:** Evaluation grids and ranked list of pre-selected applications | Next business day from completion of peer review stage | English, Electronic through matching grants portal |
| **Coaching Program Materials:** Develop the coaching program/methodology including all visual aid materials. | By the end of peer review stage. | English, Electronic |
| **Coaching Report:** Report on the conducted activities, observations regarding coaching sessions | Within five business days from completion of coaching sessions. | English, Electronic |
| **Final Evaluation Report:**  Final Evaluation Grids by IIC  (through matching grants portal)  Activities conducted during the assignment | Promptly following to the consensus meeting. | English, Electronic |

**7. Staffing and Qualifications Requirements**

* The consultant shall possess at least 5 years of general experience in Innovation/Startup Ecosystems;
* And at least two similar assignments completed successfully during last 5 years (i.e. January, 2013).

**Peer Reviewers:**

The company shall form the roster of 50 (fifty) experts to conduct the peer review (pre-evaluation) of proposals submitted under the Startup Matching Grants Program. Experts shall have the skills in compliance with the above requirements and the experience in the same domain/industry as the applications assigned for evaluation; Further, GITA will select the experts to be involved in the evaluation process prior to the start of the Peer Review (pre-evaluation) stage.

Education:

* At least Master’s degree in one of the following areas: exact and natural sciences, engineering and applied sciences, medicine and health, agriculture, and business or economics;

General experience:

* At least 5 years of work experience in commercialization, innovation development, business development, and management in at least one of the industry sectors listed below:
* Agriculture and Food;
* Artificial Intelligence;
* Arts & Fashions;
* Biotechnology, Healthcare and Pharmaceutical;
* Computer Hardware & Electronics;
* Consulting and other services;
* Energy and Environment, Green Technology;
* ICT & media, gaming;
* Mechanical and Civil Engineering;
* Chemical Engineering and Nanotechnology;
* Other industries relevant to the assignment;

Specific Experience:

* Experience in the peer review/evaluation/assessment of similar programs for start-ups, SMEs, innovative solutions, research and development or related fields;

Language knowledge:

* Excellent verbal and written communication skills in English.

**Coaches**

The company shall involve at least 5 coaches. The coaches shall have the skills in compliance with requirements listed below and the experience in the same domain as the proposals to be assigned;

Education:

* At least Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration or the related field.

Or

At least 5 years of successful entrepreneurial experience in the international context.

Specific Experience:

* At least 5 years of international experience in Management, Business Development, Venture Capital, Investments, Commercialization, Development of high-tech or the innovative solutions, Marketing, Startups and/or Entrepreneurship, internationalization of business;
* At least 2 years of experience in business development services and/or coaching/mentoring;

Language

* Excellent verbal and written English communication skills.

**Investment Committee Members**

The company shall form the roster of Investment Committee Members, comprised of 10 (ten) persons. Further GITA will select the 5 (five) Investment Committee Members to be involved in the Final Evaluation of startups; the members of roster shall have the following skills and experience:

Specific Experience:

* At least 5 years of international experience in any of the following fields as: Executive Management, Entrepreneurship, Business Development Venture Capital, Investments, Commercialization, Development of high-tech or the innovative solutions[[1]](#footnote-1);
* At least 3 years of experience in the capacity of the Investment Committee Member.

Language

* Excellent verbal and written communication skills in English.

**8. Obligations of Georgia’s Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA)**

GITA will provide:

1. Access to all available data, information, and documents relevant to this assignment;
2. Necessary permissions in the context of Matching Grants web portal;
3. Access to key program stakeholders;
4. Accommodate the presence of representative during the meetings, where necessary.

1. Product/Service, Technology or Process [↑](#footnote-ref-1)