

TERMS OF REFERENCE – INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTOR AGREEMENT

This vacancy is open for locally residing Sierra Leonean nationals ONLY

Vacancy No: ITC/ICA/24/2024

Assignment Title	Programme Operations Assistant
Category/Grade	UNOPS – LICA 5
Requesting Division / Section	Division of Sustainable and Inclusive Trade / Women, Youth and Vulnerable Communities
Duty station	Freetown, Sierra Leone
Duration	From 1 December 2024 until 31 May 2025, with possibility of extension
Application period	17 September – 30 September 2024

BACKGROUND

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is a joint agency of the United Nations and World Trade Organization based in Geneva. ITC's mission is to enable small business export success in developing and transition- economy countries, by providing, with partners, sustainable and inclusive development solutions to the private sector, trade support institutions (TSIs) and policymakers.

Having worked with SMEs for 60 years, ITC is familiar with the unique needs of SMEs, including youth and women-led enterprises, and has vast experience in improving their international competitiveness and connecting them with markets:

- ITC's Youth & Trade Initiative takes a market-led approach to address gaps in skills and enhance the competitiveness of young entrepreneurs. The programme works with ecosystem actors to strengthen the business environment for youth-led companies and provide pathways to youth employment in key value chains. ITC manages a global community supporting young entrepreneurs – Ye! Community, which connects youth entrepreneurs and key ecosystem actors to provide access to resources, tools, opportunities, and networks, to enhance their entrepreneurial capacities.
- ITC ecomConnect has developed a well-practiced methodology accompanies SMEs on their digital journey through its training programme, research, and facilitation of innovative solutions, collaborative structures, partnerships, and digital tools and technologies. In addition, the ecomConnect programme works closely with a wide range of local stakeholders and partner agencies, especially BSOs, and provides them with capacity building and knowledge on online trade and exports.
- ITC's Tech Sector Development team supports the internationalization of African tech start-ups. ITC has implemented projects in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Senegal and Uganda focused on supporting local tech companies and digital freelancers, as well as the local innovation ecosystems. In 2019, ITC launched the #FastTrackTech initiative. FastTrackTech provides targeted coaching, matchmaking with potential clients and investors to digital entrepreneurs who aspire to international growth in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Mali, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zambia.
- ITC SheTrades Initiative aims to create an ecosystem of integrated solutions that empower women economically through greater integration in trade and investment. The Initiative ensures that the right capacities and conditions are present for women to trade and that they are supported by an ecosystem of market partners and effective support organizations. At the same time, SheTrades works to remove inequalities in the trade policy space that hinder women's participation.
- ITC Institutions and Ecosystems section is dedicated to support and enhance the performance of business support organizations (BSOs). The support to BSOs is structured in three key pillars: assess,

improve, and connect organizations. The end goal of the support is to ensure that MSMEs and startups receive targeted and well-structured support from efficient and professional organizations.

- The ITC Trade Policy and Investment Facilitation (TPIF) Unit supports trade and investment policy formulation and implementation by working with policymakers to review and update policies and regulatory frameworks and informing and advising trade and investment negotiators. TPIF also assists chambers of commerce and other business support organizations (BSOs) to articulate MSMEs views effectively to ensure that policies, regulatory reforms, and negotiations all reflect a well-informed business perspective.

Unemployment and underemployment are key drivers of poverty in Sierra Leone. At 10.1%, the youth unemployment rate is over double the national average, and 60-70% of the working population are classified as working poor. The digital economy provides opportunities for more and better paid jobs, and digitalization has the potential to drive SME competitiveness and growth.

However, Sierra Leonean youth, especially young women, lack awareness of opportunities available in the digital economy as well as the relevant knowledge and skills to take advantage of them. Consequently, many youths are not employable in technology-related jobs. Youth entrepreneurship is key to reduce unemployment in Sierra Leone, yet most youth-led MSMEs, especially those led by young women, lack skills to adopt digital technologies in their businesses, maximize e-commerce opportunities, and secure financing. Young people and young entrepreneurs lack an effective and coordinated voice to influence policymaking processes related to the digital economy to ensure that their needs are met.

At the business ecosystem level, entrepreneurship support provided by the government, development agencies, and NGOs rarely offer a combination of sector, digital, and entrepreneurship-oriented programmes. There is a lack of coordination among BSOs, tech service providers, and market partners. Business and digital support services are insufficient and not adapted to the needs of young people and young entrepreneurs. BSOs and tech hubs do not provide sufficient digital entrepreneurship support to youth-led MSMEs, and financial institutions have limited service offerings to support young women entrepreneurs to contribute to the digital economy.

Implemented over a four-year period from June 2024 to 2028, the 'Sierra Leone: Empowering youth through digital technologies' project has the overall objective of contributing to economic growth and job creation in Sierra Leone by enhancing the participation of youth in the digital economy.

To achieve this, the project will:

- Increase the capacity of youth to use digital technologies for work, entrepreneurship and social inclusion;
- Enhance the competitiveness of young entrepreneurs through the adoption of digital technologies;
- Improve youth-specific service offerings of business support organizations and tech hubs;
- Strengthen the inclusive national strategies and policies related to the digital economy

FUNCTIONS

Under the direct supervision of the overall supervision of the SheTrades Senior Programme Officer and the direct supervision of the SheTrades Associate Economic Affairs Officer, under the guidance of the Project Operations Assistant based in HQ, and in close collaboration with the National Project Coordinator. the Programme Operations Assistant will be responsible for the following duties:

- Provide support in the coordination of project operations planning and preparation work for a four-year digital and youth project in Sierra Leone;
- Monitor status of project proposals, gathering and filing of relevant documentation for review and approval.
- Review and ensure the completeness, coherence, accuracy, quality, and compliance of project documents, cost plans/budgets, terms of reference, letters, rosters of participants, and procurement offer reviews before submitting them for final approval at HQ
- Serve as focal point for administrative and logistical coordination of project implementation activities, such as training sessions, workshops, community events, mobilization initiatives, etc., in close coordination with the Project Operations Assistant on all requests;

- Follow-up locally on administrative actions, such as travel arrangements, training/study tours, authorization of payments, procurement of goods and services, ensuring compliance with ITC operational processes.
- Draft and update regular reports, briefing notes, graphic and statistical summaries, accounting spreadsheets, etc., in support of the National Project Coordinator, in order to ensure timely monitoring of project expenditure and flag any issues as they arise;
- Support in general office assistance; respond to complex information requests and inquiries of meeting participants, officials, project stakeholders, vendors, etc.; maintain files/records as per UN rules and regulations, for audit purposes; maintain clear filing system as aligned with HQ team file sharing practices and standards;
- Liaise with relevant parties, including officials in country offices, implementing agencies, Resident Representatives, National/Programme Coordinators, and HQ teams, and provide regular reports on the status of operational matters
- Performs other duties as required.

KEY DELIVERABLE AND MONITORING / PROGRESS CONTROLS

Provides reliable assistance in the coordination of project planning and implementation activities and basic research support. Demonstrates understanding of the context of project and issues in assigned area, and uses increasing independence in processing of work and follow-up actions. Demonstrates initiative in the identification and resolution of issues/problems. Is well organised, produces accurate reports, records and/or data, put together with only general guidance. Consistently applies appropriate policies, guidelines and procedures. Effectively, and in timely manner liaises and interacts with colleagues and concerned parties internally and externally.

RECRUITMENT QUALIFICATIONS

Minimum education and qualifications (level and field of study)

High school diploma or equivalent.

Minimum experience (nature, length and field of experience)

A minimum of five (5) years of relevant experience in project administration and/or technical cooperation project implementation preferably in international contexts.

The minimum years of relevant experience can be reduced to three (3) for candidates who possess a first-level university degree or higher.

Desirable experience

Experience working with an Enterprise Resources planning system (SAP, Oracle or other) strongly desirable.

Experience working in development programme/projects in the United Nations system desirable

Experience working with government ministries, embassies, or other diplomatic offices will be an asset.

Minimum language requirement

Advanced knowledge of English. Knowledge of Krio is an advantage.

Critical job-specific competencies

ITC core values: Professionalism, Integrity, Respect for Diversity

Competencies:

Professionalism: Understanding of related communication protocols is an asset. Knowledge of UN rules and regulations will be an asset. Knowledge of UMOJA or similar ERP system, desirable Knowledge of internal policies, processes and procedures generally and in particular those related to programme/project

administration, implementation and evaluation, technical cooperation, programming and budgeting. Understanding of the functions and organization of the work unit and of the organizational structure and respective roles of related units. Ability to identify and resolve a range of issues/problems and to work well with figures, undertake basic research and gather information from standard sources. Demonstrated ability to apply good judgment in the context of assignments given. Shows pride in work and in achievements; demonstrates professional competence and mastery of subject matter; is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results; is motivated by professional rather than personal concerns; shows persistence when faced with difficult problems or challenges; remains calm in stressful situations. Takes responsibility for incorporating gender perspectives and ensuring the equal participation of women and men in all areas of work.

Communication: Speaks and writes clearly and effectively; listens to others, correctly interprets messages from others and responds appropriately; asks questions to clarify, and exhibits interest in having two-way communication; tailors language, tone, style and format to match audience; demonstrates openness in sharing information and keeping people informed.

Teamwork: Works collaboratively with colleagues to achieve organizational goals; solicits input by genuinely valuing others' ideas and expertise; is willing to learn from others; places team agenda before personal agenda; supports and acts in accordance with final group decision, even when such decisions may not entirely reflect own position; shares credit for team accomplishments and accepts joint responsibility for team shortcomings.

Planning & Organizing: Develops clear goals that are consistent with agreed strategies; identifies priority activities and assignments; adjusts priorities as required; allocates appropriate amount of time and resources for completing work; foresees risks and allows for contingencies when planning; monitors and adjusts plans and actions as necessary; uses time efficiently.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For information on how to apply please click [here](#). Applicants will be contacted only if they are under serious consideration. Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.