

INFORMATION NOTE

IMPROVING WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN MANO RIVER UNION (MRU)

COMPETITIVE GRANT SCHEME
FOR YOUTH LED INITIATIVES



The Youth Employment Network



1 WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OF THE GRANT SCHEME?

The competitive grant scheme for youth employment supports innovative, small scale youth employment projects submitted by youth led organizations from the countries of the MRU (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone). Grants of USD 2'000 to 50'000 will be awarded to innovative proposals chosen by a Selection Committee based on preset criteria.

Main Objective

The main objective of the grant scheme is to allow national/local/community based youth organizations to actively participate in employment generating projects. The scheme serves to identify and support small scale, innovative projects with potential to provide employment opportunities for young people (ages 15 to 30).

Management

The grant scheme is managed by the Secretariat of the Youth Employment Network (YEN), an inter agency partnership of UN, ILO, and World Bank. Support comes from the Government of Japan, World Bank, and the Swedish Agency for International Development (Sida).

The grant scheme forms part of a larger youth employment program for MRU countries - The Multi-Stakeholder Programme for Productive and Decent Work for Youth in MRU Countries coordinated by UNIDO.

2 WHO CAN APPLY TO THE GRANT SCHEME?

Eligible applicants and countries of implementation

Eligible applicants are officially registered, non-governmental, non-profit youth led organizations in the Mano River Union countries. By "youth led" it is referred to organizations with youth leading the Trustees Board/management Committee and/or are the primary personnel of the organization. Their main objective should be focused on the creation or promotion of decent employment for youth. Applicants have to be a legal entity in order to sign a grant agreement. An applicant may not submit more than one proposal under one call for proposals.

Eligible projects

Proposals should contribute to youth employment and directly benefit marginalized youth in any of the following areas:

- **Community projects and services;** e.g. construction and maintenance (renovation/building of housing) or Environmental projects (water, garbage collection, etc)
- **Youth entrepreneurship;** e.g. assistance in proposal writing for business start-ups, basic business management skills, link with micro-credit institutions and other sources of funding, or linking young entrepreneurs with other enterprises.

• **Transition from school to work;** e.g. job search assistance and counselling, combining on-the-job training with public works, or classroom and on-the-job training with paid work experience.

• **Vocational training for young people;** e.g. vocational training including apprenticeships, literacy & numeracy – young adult literacy programs, 2nd chance & equivalency programs in combination with life-skills.

• **Economic empowerment of young women;** e.g. projects including income generating activities for and economic empowerment of young women in rural or urban areas.

Partnerships

Applicants may apply with or without additional partners. However, partnerships with other actors such as private enterprises, business associations, foundations, government agencies are encouraged. These partners can be local or come from abroad. Hence, international NGOs can join the scheme as partners.

Project Duration

Projects must be completed within 12 months of receipt of first payment of grant.

Co-funding

Counterpart contribution (minimum 25% of the grant amount, in funds or in kind, such as staff time) from one of the organizations involved in the project is a requirement.

Language

Proposals must be submitted either in English or French

3 HOW DO I APPLY?

Application forms are to be filled out and sent to the YEN Secretariat before the deadline of **February 14th, 2009**. Application guidelines have been developed to assist applicants in filling out the application form and should be read in conjunction with this Information Note. The documents can be found at www.ilo.org/yen

4 HOW ARE PROPOSALS SELECTED?

Selection Process

All proposals received before the deadline will go through a threefold selection process. (1) The YEN Secretariat will do a first scoring of all proposals and establish a short list plus a reserve list. (2) Feedback will be sought from the Director of Youth from each of the four countries on the proposals from their respective country. (3) Short listed proposals will be presented to a Selection Committee. The Committee will decide on the final selection of applicants. Summary sheets on the selected projects will be published on YEN's website.

Selection Criteria

- 1. Targeting:** aim at improving the employment opportunities for marginalized young people between the ages of 15 and 30 in rural and/or urban areas.
- 2. Innovation:** extent to which the proposed project differs from existing approaches. YEN is particularly interested in projects which introduce a new approach, process or technology.
- 3. Sustainability:** organizational capacity and expertise to continue the activities after the end of grant funding.
- 4. Results and Measurability:** well defined and quantifiable outcomes and outputs. All projects must show tangible outcomes.
- 5. Growth Potential:** potential of the project to be applied at a larger scale or to be replicated elsewhere.
- 6. Partnerships:** potential to initiate strategic alliances and bring different stakeholders together.
- 7. Promoting gender equity:** promote inclusion and active participation of young women.

The grants will be selected on a competitive sub-regional basis. However, the Scheme and the Selection Committee will strive for a fair sub-regional distribution with at least 3 to 4 granted proposals per country, depending on quality and amount.

5 WHAT IS THE TIME LINE FOR APPLICATIONS?

Call for proposals: **December 1, 2008**

Deadline for receiving proposals: **February 14th, 2009**

Notification of awards: **March 31st, 2009**

Signing grant agreements with selected applicants and first disbursement: **April 15th, 2009**

Last disbursement: upon submission of final narrative and financial report to the satisfaction of the YEN Secretariat.

YEN Secretariat reserves the right to ask for additional information at any stage of the selection process.

6 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Road show on grant scheme

A series of information events will be organized in the MRU to provide practical information on the grant scheme. It also seeks to build the capacity of potential applicants by providing assistance on proposal design and application procedures. Time and venue will be announced on www.ilo.org/yen

Contract, disbursement, and financial monitoring

Following the decision to award a grant, the Grantee will be offered a contract based on YEN's standard grant agreement. The agreement will, in particular, establish the following rights and obligations:

The Grantee will receive a first disbursement amounting to 70% of the grant upon signing the agreement. The second and last payment (30%) will be paid at the end of the project upon validation of the final technical and financial reports.

The YEN Secretariat reserves the right to contract external and independent auditors for carrying out expenditure verifications of at least 5% of the projects.

If the Grantee fails to implement the project as stated in the agreement, the YEN secretariat reserves the right to suspend payments and/or to terminate the agreement. The grant may be reduced, and/or the YEN Secretariat may demand full or partial repayment of the amounts already paid, if the Grantee does not fulfil the terms of the agreement.

Reporting

Technical and financial reports are to be submitted on at mid-term and end of project.

Information sharing of lessons learned

All approved proposals have to include a strategy for monitoring and evaluation. This is to facilitate the learning aspect of the grant scheme for possible future replication and up-scaling of projects. The grant scheme will share tools and lessons learned through information sharing channels such as web site and newsletters. Furthermore, grantees are encouraged to participate in different information sharing events to present their experiences and learn from others.