

TERMS OF REFERENCE

External Collaborator for Innovation Hubs for the project

*“Bringing Back Jobs Safely under the COVID-19 Crisis in the Philippines:
Rebooting Small and Informal Businesses Safely and Digitally”*

Background

The COVID-19 crisis has brought unparalleled impacts on the people of the Philippines, particularly those in the micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) as the backbone of the economy and employment. The pandemic not only reduced existing jobs and income of them, but prompted many to resort to alternative livelihood, often as informal activities, to survive the prolonged community quarantine measures with various restrictions imposed on businesses.

While tremendous efforts have been made to address the extreme vulnerability of MSMEs and informal businesses under the pandemic, there are two areas which would merit further support in the world of work at this stage – first, the occupational safety and health (OSH) including the prevention and mitigation of the COVID-19 risks (COVID OSH) and; second, the digitalization of business operations for those currently left behind the big wave of the digitalization of the economy prompted by the pandemic. The COVID-19 risks for MSMEs and the capacity gaps among them are deemed larger outside of Metro Manila, and more prominent among the smaller and informal ones.

With this understanding, the International Labour Organization (ILO) with the support of the Government of Japan started the project – *“Bringing Back Jobs Safely under the COVID-19 Crisis in the Philippines: Rebooting Small and Informal Businesses Safely and Digitally”*. The project is aimed at contributing to improving the safety and health of workers in MSMEs in the non-metropolitan regions of the Philippines and mitigating the negative socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 crisis. To achieve its goals, the project will work with the national network of training service providers to deliver the training on i) COVID OSH¹ and ii) digitalization of business operations (e.g., digital entrepreneurship, e-commerce strategies and digital financial literacy).

To bridge the digital divide outside Metro Manila, the project will also support the pilot implementation of the three Innovation Hubs. Through these Hubs and the affiliated satellites such as the local internet cafes, the project will provide internet connectivity, co-working spaces, back-office services and linkage to the support digitalization and business development efforts of MSMEs.

ILO is interested to engage an external collaborator who could provide technical assistance to the implementation of the innovation hubs. Due to the limitation in the project's implementation period, and to ensure efficiency in the completion of the expected deliverables, ILO may opt to engage more than 1 External Collaborator for this assignment.

Overview and Nature of Innovation Hubs

The weak connectivity in the rural regions has been a major constraint of the Philippine competitiveness, and the GOP has been trying to promote better connectivity and other ancillary measures particularly for the last few years. The pandemic has accelerated their efforts to do so, but the difficulties the regional MSMEs face are imminent. One of the latest plans to address the immediate lack of connectivity in the non-metropolitan area is the establishment of the Innovation Hubs as the flagship of the multi-pronged Digital Transformation Centers. This is the extension of the

¹ The OSH component will be implemented in the framework of the Safety + Health for All Flagship Programme of the ILO.

efforts of the GOP spearheaded by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (D-ICT) in recent years. The initiative will build on the earlier efforts of the Tech4ED Project of D-ICT which has built 4,330 TechEd Centers in rural communities to provide the much-needed internet connectivity for the students and businesses in the remote areas. With the reflection that it did not meet the demand of the local businesses as co-working spaces, the newly proposed Innovation Hubs are meant to be the upscale centers with higher accommodation capacity with a variety of training and support services. It will also realize the idea of virtual hub to bring the expertise of the experts and advisers for the local MSMEs from the urban areas.

The 25 candidate cities have been already pre-identified as part of the Digital Cities 2025 Program across Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, and the key local governments started securing the land for the Hub/Center. A related issue is how to ensure the inclusive access to the services of the Centers by the MSMEs suffering from the digital divide including those distant from the Hubs and those who lost jobs/reduced income due to the pandemic particularly youth who records the highest unemployment rate among the population.

In support thereof, the ILO through this project will arrange for the construction of 3 regional Innovation Hubs in collaboration with D-ICT and local governments outside of Metro Manila. The Hubs will provide co-working spaces, connectivity to private sector-operated satellite internet service centers, and linkages with public services and other MSME business development services including trainings on entrepreneurship development. In terms of design, the Hubs will adopt latest standards on Occupational Safety and Health to prevent the spread of COVID19, accessibility standards for PWDs, and energy efficiency.

Objective

The external collaborator will provide technical expertise to facilitate the establishment of three innovation hubs through the different phases of planning and design, procurement of goods and services, construction monitoring and turn-over.

Key tasks and outputs

Specifically, the external collaborator will help organize the following activities in collaboration with the ILO Country Office for the Philippines (CO-Manila) and the concerned ILO technical and operational staff of the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok (ROAP) and the headquarters technical departments/units such as the Enterprises Department (ENTERPRISES) and the Labour Administration Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health Branch (LABADMIN/OSH) of the Governance and Tripartism Department (GOVERNANCE). The external collaborator will work closely with the project management unit, the technical team of DICT, and other external collaborators as necessary.

1. Conduct a rapid market assessment of the innovation hub infrastructure development in the country, identifying available construction and IT services especially in the localities where the hubs will be established;
2. Prepare technical documents required for the tender process, in coordination with the DICT and the project management unit. Technical documents would include, but not limited to, the concept design, description of functionalities, technical specifications including engineering works and IT equipment, cost estimates, terms of reference for construction services, with selection criteria, among others. This includes carrying out field surveys and appraisal of infrastructure works;
3. Provide technical support in the selection of construction service contractor, based on results and standards prescribed in items 1&2 above; and,
4. Supervise the progress of construction of the 3 innovation hubs and recommend acceptance of the construction works based on proven compliance with agreed plans, specifications, and timelines. This requires participation in the conduct of community consultations as part of the planning and preparation of

works as well as securing local involvement in the implementation of works. Field inspections should include checking on contractor's compliance with applicable OSH standards and COVID 19 prevention measures.

Deliverables

The External Collaborator is expected to deliver the following outputs:

- i) Market assessment on innovation hub infrastructure development (clearly identifying reference projects, construction companies servicing the Hub sites, and prevailing market rates);
- ii) Completed technical documents required in the tender process, including but not limited to concept design (with Perspective and Layout), description of functionalities of the innovation hubs, technical specifications including engineering works and IT equipment, cost estimates, Terms of Reference for construction services, with selection criteria;

[Note: The general schedule for procurement of construction services is as follows: Preparation of tender documents (01-31 Mar 2022); Clearances from ILO ROAP/HQs (01-07 Apr 2022); Publication of Request for Quotations (08 – 30 Apr 2022); Evaluation and selection of construction service contractor (01-07 May 2022); Award of contract (08-31 May 2022)]

- iii) Accomplished evaluation matrix clearly showing the objectivity of the contractor selection process, and justification for the decision on the award of contract;
- iv) Signed inspection reports on progress of construction, with clear recommendation on acceptance of the works delivered by the contractor; and,
- v) Final report compiling the above deliverables, including a description on how the accomplishment achieves the associated target and indicator in the project document, lessons learned and recommendations.

Confidentiality Statement

All data and information received from ILO for the purpose of this assignment are to be treated confidentially and are only to be used in connection with the execution of these Terms of Reference (TORs). All intellectual property rights arising from the execution of these TORs are assigned to the ILO. The contents of written materials obtained and used in this assignment may not be disclosed to any third parties without the expressed advance written authorization of the ILO.

Duration of the assignment

The work of the External Collaborator will be carried out between 01 March 2022 – 15 June 2022, until officially extended. (Note: Due to the limitation in the project's implementation period, and to ensure efficiency in the completion of the above deliverables, ILO may opt to engage more than 1 External Collaborator for this assignment.)

Contract Value and Payment

The full contract price will be inclusive of all expenses that may be incurred for the implementation of the assignments in the ToRs. Payments will be based on the following schedule:

- First Payment – Upon complete submission and acceptance of the ILO of the following deliverables (expected by 31 March 2022):

- Complete submission of technical documents required for the tender process per above deliverables i and ii.
- Second Payment – Upon complete submission and acceptance by ILO of the following deliverables (expected by 31 May 2022):
 - Technical inputs to the selection of contractor for the construction of innovation hubs by providing individual objective assessment and scoring of bidders' proposals, using the approved evaluation criteria and filling out appropriate elements of the Evaluation Sheet per above deliverable iii.
- Final Payment – Upon complete submission and acceptance by ILO of the following deliverables (expected by 15 June 2022):
 - Final Report per above deliverables iv and v.

Payments will be made upon submission of the deliverable, as specified above, to the satisfaction of the ILO, and accompanied by an Invoice.

Administration, Reporting and Coordination

The contract for this assignment will be issued by CO-Manila. Office space, equipment, and other logistics arrangements in the implementation of the activities including the internet connectivity and web meeting devices required under the present telework environment will be organized and on the account of the external collaborator.

The External Collaborator will report to the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) of the project and liaise closely with the MSME Digitalization Coordinator and OSH Coordinator of the project. The external collaborator will also coordinate closely with the other relevant external collaborators and project partners as well as with the technical backstopping officials of the concerned technical units at the ILO headquarters including the Enterprise Development Specialist and the Programme team of CO-Manila as appropriate.

Qualifications and Experience

Applicants for the External Collaborator post must submit their curriculum vitae clearly meeting the following:

Education – First-level university degree in Civil Engineering. Other engineering disciplines, including in Architecture, and related fields of study, may be considered provided with proven experience in related projects constructing innovation hubs.

Experience – At least two years of relevant experience in construction/renovation works for offices or institutional facilities. Proven experience in construction management of innovation hubs or other ICT centers desirable.

Languages – Excellent command of English and Filipino/Tagalog (oral and written).

Competencies:

- Ability to interpret project information to identify and analyze challenges as a basis for finding appropriate solutions and provide guidance and support to counterparts, contractors, local communities, and workers involved in the infrastructure works.
- Ability to work independently with a clear focus on reaching defined outputs in a timely manner as agreed in contract documents and work plans.
- Ability to establish priorities and to efficiently plan, organize, coordinate and monitor works activities.
- Ability to travel by land, sea, air, as required in conducting fieldwork to selected project sites.
- Good supervisory skills and ability to provide clear instructions and guidance to staff, workers, and contractors.



- Ability to build and maintain relationships and networks with government agencies at national and local levels, working in related fields.
- Ability to work in a team and maintain effective working relations in a multicultural, multi-ethnic environment with sensitivity and respect for diversity.
- Good appreciation of gender and minority issues, gender mainstreaming and equal opportunity principles and approaches.
- Good communication skills, both written and verbal.
- Computer literacy, especially on use of engineering and project management software (e.g., AutoCAD).

Expression of Interest

The interested candidates must submit: i) letter of intent, ii) qualifications and relevant experience of the consultant/s (include detailed CV/s as annex), and iii) Info about your daily fee and working days for this engagement (please refer to the attached TOR).

The documents must be submitted to Ms Bea Arnela Parungo, *MSME Digitalization Coordinator*, for the project “*Bringing back jobs safely under the COVID-19 crisis in the Philippines: Rebooting small and informal businesses safely and digitally*” at parungo@ilo.org, with copy to Mr Jayson Umaguing at umaguing@ilo.org, *Programme and Administrative Assistant*, on or before **24 February 2022**, 5:30 pm (Manila Time).

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for interviews for the final selection.