**Terms of Reference**

**To Design, Execute, and Evaluate a Sector-Focused Virtual Job Fair (VJF) Pilot Model in Addis Ababa (Bid No. 024/26/SNV)**

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| **Project Name** | **LIWAY II** | **SAP No. (budget line)** | |
| **Organizer (SNV staff name)** | Tesfayesus A. and Solomon Assefa | | |
| **Place/s of the activity** | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: | | |
| **Duration** | Start Date: Contract signing date | End Date: Dec 31st, 2026 | |
| **Background and Context** | **1. Background and Context**<br><br>Livelihoods Improvement for Women and Youth (LIWAY) II, is a four-year program (March 2025–December 2028) funded by Sweden and implemented by a consortium of SNV and Mercy Corps. LIWAY aims to contribute to sustainable poverty reduction and social stability in Addis Ababa by increasing the incomes of 143,000 poor people at least 50% women through improved wage and self-employment opportunities using a climate-smart Market Systems Development (MSD) approach.<br><br>The program operates across four prioritized market systems: Labor, Micro and Small Enterprises (MSE), Medium and Large Enterprises (MLE), and Skills. Within the Labor and Skills systems, LIWAY has identified the digital gig economy and remote work as underutilized pathways for urban youth employment. While global online work platforms, local digital gig applications, and international outsourcing services are growing rapidly, participation among low-income urban youth remains highly constrained by three systemic barriers: a lack of market-responsive practical skills, low platform-bidding and employability competencies, and a severe resource disadvantage (the digital divide) regarding devices and internet connectivity.<br><br>Traditional recruitment channels reliant on fragmented physical job boards, manual resume processing, and high-overhead in-person expos create steep geographic and financial barriers for job seekers while delivering low conversion rates for employers. While Addis Ababa is seeing rapid growth in labour-intensive digital, financial, and green sectors (such as BPO, FinTech, and climate-smart businesses) with high demand for entry-level roles, existing market linkages remain inefficient and outdated. Newer virtual job fairs have attempted to bridge this gap, but they rely on heavy web portals that are slow, consume too much internet data, lack operational flexibility, and focus almost exclusively on fresh university graduates, leaving a vast pool of semi-skilled urban youth disconnected from active employment pipelines.<br><br>To address these labor-market gaps, the intervention will pilot an agile, sector-focused Virtual Job Fair (VJF) model for Addis Ababa. The model will bypass heavy web interfaces by leveraging low-bandwidth, accessible digital tools, specifically automated Telegram bots and mobile-optimized channels to ensure low-cost, inclusive user experience. Instead of hosting a rigid, one-off event, the platform will facilitate multiple continuous matching cycles over 5-months period. | | |
| **Purpose of the Assignment** | **2. Purpose of the Assignment**<br><br>The purpose of this **5-months** assignment is to pilot, test, and validate a market-driven, low-cost Virtual Job Fair (VJF) model for Addis Ababa's urban labor market. The pilot will focus on high-growth sectors with strong potential for mass employment, including the Digital Economy/BPO, Financial Services/FinTech, and Green Economy/Climate-Tech. It will replace traditional, high-cost physical career expos with targeted digital matching tools (infrastructure) and rapid skills-alignment pathways. This initiative will generate | | |

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| | practical evidence, employment business cases, and operational learning to inform future scale-up and support adoption by local JobTech platforms and public employment frameworks/systems.<br><br>**General Objective**<br><br>The general objective of this assignment is to design, implement, and evaluate a digital, sector-focused Virtual Job Fair model in Addis Ababa over five months. The pilot will connect/place at least **1,000** verified job seekers, with priority given to youth and women, to employers in the digital, financial, and green sectors, while testing employer demand, platform usability, placement conversion rates, and the model's potential for scale-up.<br><br>**Specific Objectives**<br><br>The assignment aims to:<br>▪ Evaluate employer willingness to migrate recruitment to virtual ecosystems by aggregating entry-to-mid-level vacancies from target growth-sector companies.<br>▪ Establish a standardized digital profiling and screening mechanism that registers urban job seekers, explicitly prioritizing women and youth.<br>▪ Assess the functional accessibility and performance of virtual matching tools like Telegram and mobile-optimized web platforms for end-users.<br>▪ Optimize matching workflows that actively transition registered job seekers into interviews, shortlists, or active employer selection loops.<br>▪ Diagnose the digital literacy, safety, and institutional barriers restricting the participation and career progression of urban women and youth.<br>▪ Measure the cost-effectiveness of virtual recruitment by analysing unit costs per registration, interview, and pipeline progression against traditional job fairs.<br>▪ Formulate the regulatory, technical, and commercial recommendations necessary for permanent public and private JobTech hosts to adopt and scale the model. |
| **Scope of Work** | **3. Scope of the Assignment**<br><br>The selected **service provider/s (possibly two)** will conduct a rapid operational assessment of the existing recruitment and JobTech ecosystem in Addis Ababa to identify placement gaps and avoid institutional duplication. Capitalizing on these insights, the service provider(s) will co-design (with key market actors), pilot, evaluate, and iteratively refine an adaptable Virtual Job Fair model.<br><br>Operating as a ready-to-use, practical toolkit that enhances existing platforms, this model will complement the existing urban labor market by driving specialized, cost-effective digital matching services that directly connect employers and job seekers within the capital's fastest-growing digital, financial, and sustainability ecosystems.<br><br>**Key Activities**<br><br>The selected service provider will:<br>1. Review and/or conduct rapid operational assessment of urgent hiring needs and existing local JobTech architectures to co-design a demand-driven, low-bandwidth virtual fair framework alongside platforms, sector associations, and major employers.<br>2. Deploy, manage, and market a virtual career campaign across target growth clusters such as the Digital Economy & BPO, Financial Services & FinTech, and Green Economy & Climate-Tech sectors to aggregate entry-to-mid-level vacancies from active hiring entities. |

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| | 3. Roll out automated basic screening, standardized digital candidate profiling, and rapid virtual readiness checks by leveraging and modifying existing JobTech platform features to replace manual resume sorting.<br>4. Coordinate and manage structured virtual interview loops, localized chat workflows, and automated candidate referral tracking to streamline communication and secure fast-tracked feedback from participating employers.<br>5. Establish real-time data feedback loops during the live pilot to continuously optimize platform features, concluding with a stakeholder validation workshop to share insights, cost-effectiveness metrics, and scale-up pathways. |
| **Expected Outcomes and Results** | **4. Expected Outcomes and Results**<br><br>● The 5-months pilot intervention the intervention is expected to create digital profiles for **2,000** women and young job seekers and find openings with **25–30** growing businesses to place at least **1,000** women and youth.<br>● By using easy digital tools, the intervention will remove traditional barriers and ensure that at least 50% of the participating youth are young women entering digital, financial, and green energy fields.<br>● Moving from traditional, expensive career fairs to digital channels will cut hiring times for employers from weeks to days, reduce their recruitment costs, and save job seekers money on travel and printing paper documents. The pilot will provide clear proof that digital recruitment works better and costs less than physical jobs fairs, making it easy for permanent market actors to take over and expand the model on their own. |
| **Key Deliverables** | **5. Key Deliverables**<br><br>The service provider will submit the following four streamlined, practical deliverables across the lifecycle of the 5-months intervention:<br><br>● **Inception Report, Tech Architecture & Sourcing Plan:** A single operational document containing the project timeline (Gantt chart), technical bot specifications, data privacy rules, a tracking system (MEL framework), a list of committed employers, and youth recruitment strategies.<br>● **Live Platform Deployment & Mid-Term Progress Report:** A mid-term report containing user data, lists of aggregated job openings, a log of scheduled interviews and candidate matches, and a record of technical fixes made to resolve user bottlenecks.<br>● **Final Matching Results, System Assets & Institutional Handover Report:** A comprehensive package containing final placement statistics, validation workshop feedback, and a ready-to-use digital toolkit (including Telegram bot configurations and screening scripts). The report will also feature a strategic evaluation comparing cost-savings against physical job fairs, local market insights, and a step-by-step roadmap for permanent partners to fund and sustain the system independently. |
| **Market Systems Development (MSD) and Sustainability Considerations** | **6. Market Systems Development (MSD) & Sustainability Considerations**<br><br>Applying a Market Systems Development (MSD) approach, this 5-months pilot will deploy a lean matching framework using existing low-bandwidth digital tools to reduce transaction costs and catalyze direct commercial relationships between growth-sector employers (BPO, FinTech, Green Economy) and the local JobTech ecosystem.<br><br>Technical proposals must demonstrate how the service provider will leverage empirical pilot data and pipeline conversion rates to design a self-sustaining business model complete with premium employer |

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| | subscription or fee-for-service options and deliver a validated digital toolkit that allows permanent institutional hosts to independently replicate, commercialize, and scale the model without external subsidies. |
| **Duration of the Assignment** | **7. Timeframe**<br>The assignment is expected to be implemented within **5 months (from signing of agreement to Dec 31st, 2026)** from the date of contract signing. |

## 8. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Applicants shall be legally registered **consulting firms/service providers** (Bidders shall submit copy of business license, tax registration certificate and any other legal documents).

Proposals will be evaluated using a two-stage selection process based on a total weighting of **70% Technical** and **30% Financial**.

**Technical Evaluation Criteria (Weight: 70%)**

A pre-defined technical criterion will be employed to evaluate applicants. To be eligible for financial evaluation, proposals must secure a minimum score of 70% of the technical points (i.e., **50 points out of the 70 available** in the evaluation matrix below). Failure to meet this threshold will result in automatic disqualification.

| Technical Qualifications | Scoring Criteria | Max. Score |
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| 1. Page Limit on Technical Proposal | The technical proposal should be between 10 pages. CVs and other supporting documents should be included as annexes. Proposals that exceed this page limit may be automatically disqualified. | Mandatory |
| 2. Solid Experience and Knowledge | Direct institutional experience in similar assignments, specifically: mapping and aggregating vacancy pipelines; designing and executing digital job-matching systems, virtual recruitment channels, or large-scale employment linkage platforms; and managing Market Systems Development (MSD) or Private Sector Development (PSD) initiatives. | **20** |
| | - More than 3 years of direct experience in similar assignments: | 20 |
| | - 2 – 3years of relevant experience: | 10 |
| | - 1-2 years of relevant experience: | 5 |
| | - Less than 1 year of relevant experience: | 0 |
| 3. Quality of Technical Proposal | Clear understanding of objectives, detailed methodology & logical work plan. | **30** |
| | **Full Understanding & High Quality:** Proposal demonstrates a thorough understanding of the urban labor market structural constraints in Addis Ababa, the dynamics of the target growth sectors (BPO, FinTech, and Green Economy), and the Market Systems Development (MSD) approach, backed by a detailed, innovative virtual matchmaking methodology and a concrete 6-month work plan. | 30 |
| | **Partial Understanding:** Proposal indicates a fragmented or superficial understanding of the virtual placement assignment, targeted sectors, and MSD principles. | 15 |
| | **Poor Understanding:** Proposal fails to demonstrate a viable, scalable approach. | 0 |
| 4. Team Capacity and Composition | Multi-disciplinary team with recruitment facilitation, digital platform matching, workforce development, and private sector engagement expertise. | **20** |

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| | **Highly Multi-Disciplinary Team:** Structure features senior experts in employment linkages, corporate partnerships, and MSD frameworks. The team must include at least one dedicated expert specialized in low-bandwidth digital platform architecture/maintenance (e.g., Telegram bot workflows, mobile portals) and automated screening tools. | 20 |
| | **Acceptable Team:** Lacks demonstrated expertise or a solid track record in one or more of the core recruitment technology or sector specializations. | 10 |
| | **Inadequate Team:** Missing more than half of the required team capabilities. | 0 |
| **Total Technical Score** | | **70** |

**Financial Evaluation Criteria (Weight: 30%)**

- The financial proposal must be submitted in a separate document/envelope. It must be simple, transparent, and explicitly itemize all applicable taxes.
- Proposals must be submitted in **Ethiopian Birr (ETB)**. **Bidders who submit their financial proposals in a currency other than Ethiopian Birr (ETB) will be automatically disqualified**.
- **Legal Registration Requirements:** Bidders must be legally registered consulting firms or consortia and attach copies of valid business licenses, TIN numbers, and VAT/tax registration certificates.
- Only proposals scoring 50 points (out of 70%) or above in the technical evaluation will have their financial proposals opened and evaluated for the remaining 30% financial weight.

**Firm Qualifications and Key Expert Requirements**

**Interested service providers (firms) are expected to meet the following critical qualifications:**

**Please Note: Priority and strong preference will be given to service providers who already run active, similar business operations and are willing to adapt their current models to fit the requirements of this call.**

**Educational Background**

- **Key Experts:** Must hold at least a Master's degree in a relevant field, such as Computer Science, Information Technology, Business Administration, Economics, Development Studies, Environmental Studies, or social sciences, with specialized professional competence in digital recruitment platforms or modern sector development.

**Demonstrated Experience & Technical Capacity**

- **Core Systems Experience (Critical Path):** Proven track record designing and executing high-impact workforce development initiatives, digital job-matching campaigns, or automated recruitment matching pipelines.
- **Target Sector Familiarity:** Demonstrated capacity to engage corporate partners and aggregate mass entry-level vacancies within the Digital Economy/BPO, Financial Services/FinTech, and Green Economy/Climate-Tech fields (e.g., solar distribution, circular economy, waste management).
- **JobTech Infrastructure Capacity:** Bidders must demonstrate the technical capability to deploy or adapt agile, low-bandwidth digital matching tools (such as automated Telegram bot configurations and mobile-optimized portals) accessible to vulnerable urban youth.
- **Data Systems Capacity:** Possess the required data management setup to securely run digital onboarding portals, automate candidate profiling templates, and utilize real-time interaction analytics to track interviews and placement rates.
- **Development Sector Alignment:** Direct experience working within international or government development frameworks, with specific familiarity in project reporting and performance monitoring. Past application of Market Systems Development (MSD) concepts is highly desirable.

**Language & Ethical Standards**

- **Language Proficiency:** Fluency and excellent professional writing skills in English and Amharic. Knowledge of other local languages is an advantage.
- **Ethical Compliance:** Strict adherence to Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and SNV organizational policies, child safeguarding principles, data privacy laws (especially regarding candidate profile security), and codes of ethical conduct.

**Submission of Proposals**

Proposals must be submitted in **two separate**, clearly marked components (separate files via email or separate sealed envelopes if submitted in person):

**Technical Proposal Components**

- Cover Letter (1 Page Max): Expressing clear interest in the assignment ("To Design, Execute, and Evaluate a Sector-Focused Virtual Job Fair (VJF) Pilot Model in Addis Ababa"). It should summarize the consortium's or firm's core capacities, emphasize alignment with the project's strategic labor-matching objectives, and cite similar placement assignments completed within the last three years.
- Detailed Technical Proposal:
  - o *Understanding of the Assignment:* A clear analysis of the urban labor market, recruitment blockages, and emerging modern/green sector landscapes in Addis Ababa, highlighting specific barriers faced by fresh graduates and low-income young women.
  - o *Detailed Methodology:* Practical operationalization of the agile Virtual Job Fair, including automated pre-screening, localized Telegram bot integrations, employer demand aggregation across BPO/FinTech/Green sectors, and the digital matchmaking loop.
  - o *Comprehensive Work Plan:* A logical timeline covering the entire compressed 6-month pilot lifecycle (identifying preparation, candidate sourcing, live fair deployment, implementation, compilation, and sustainability strategy development phases).
  - o *Resource Allocation:* A comprehensive matrix showing team members assigned to specific tasks, along with estimated man-days per member.
  - o *Value-Add Recommendations:* Innovative ideas to maximize platform replication, institutional handover, and long-term commercial sustainability beyond initial project funding.
- Annexes: Updated CVs of key experts, proof of language proficiency, signed ethical compliance statements, and corporate registration/licensing documents.

**Financial Proposal Components**

An itemized breakdown of all anticipated costs, structured as follows:

- **Breakdown of all Relevant Cost Elements:** Provide a clear, itemized breakdown of all anticipated costs. For each cost element, include:
  - *Description:* (e.g., Professional Fees, Daily Subsistence Allowance, Travel Costs, Communication Costs, Report Production, Platform/Bot Deployment Overhead).
  - *Unit:* (e.g., day, trip, unit, people).
  - *Number of Units:* (e.g., total man-days, number of platform users, etc.).
  - *Unit Cost:* (e.g., daily rate, cost per item).
  - *Total Cost:* for each item.
- **Personnel Costs / Service Fees:** Indicate the daily rate for each professional team member and specify the number of days each team member will be engaged during the 6-month pilot assignment.
- **Travel Costs:** Itemize travel expenses, including local operational travel within Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- **Communication and Technology Costs:** Include costs for communication, digital hosting, mobile internet for data validation, and any other miscellaneous technical expenses necessary for the successful delivery of the virtual fair ecosystem.

**Submission Guideline and Application submission date**:

Interested and qualified applicants (Consulting firms) who meet the qualifications stated above should submit their proposals as indicated below.

Title of the specific assignment: "**To Design, Execute, and Evaluate a Sector-Focused Virtual Job Fair (VJF) Pilot Model in Addis Ababa"** should be mentioned in the envelop/email subject. SNV will not be responsible for proposals submitted without indicating title of the assignment on the envelope or subject of the email.

Both the Technical and Financial proposals should be submitted in a separate email to **ettenders@snv.org** or in separate envelopes for those who are submitting in person. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in automatic rejection of the bid.

SNV will not be responsible for proposals submitted without indicating the title of the assignment **"To Design, Execute, and Evaluate a Sector-Focused Virtual Job Fair (VJF) Pilot Model in Addis Ababa"** on the subject of the email or on the envelope.

Proposals must be received by the SNV Addis Ababa office at the address below no later than **July 28, 2026, 17:00 (5:00 PM) close of business**.

**All submissions should be sent to:** Via email to **ettenders@snv.org** or must be submitted in person.

**All physical submissions should be sent to:** SNV Ethiopia, Mexico Sar Bet Road Next to African Union, P.O. Box 40675, Addis Ababa | Ethiopia. Fax + 251 (0) 11 616 6252, Tele + 251 (0) 11 616 6232 or via **ettenders@snv.org**.

**SNV-Ethiopia reserves the right to cancel the bid in whole or in part.**