



GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA

Ministry of Commerce and Industry Ministerial Complex Congo Town, Monrovia



**Liberia Investment, Finance and Trade (LIFT) Project
Project No.: P171997**

Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI)

Terms of Reference Small Medium Enterprise Specialist

Post Title: Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Specialist

Location of Post: Project Implementation Unit-Ministry of Commerce and Industry,
Ministerial Complex, Tubman Boulevard, Congo Town

Contract Duration: 2 years with possible extension based on satisfactory performance.

Reporting Line: Project Coordinator-LIFT-P

Recruitment: National Position

Type of Contract: Lump Sum Contract

Background

1. The Government of Liberia (GoL), through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI), has received a Project Preparation Advance (PPA) amount from the World Bank in preparation for the implementation of the ***Liberia Investment, Finance and Trade (LIFT) Project: P171997***. MOCI intends to recruit the **SMEs Specialist** to work with the PIU's team to be established at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
2. The overall objective of the LIFT-P is to improve the investment climate, expand sustainable access to finance, and increase the efficiency of trade in Liberia.

3. The LIFT-P is an explicit contributor to the FY19-FY24 Country Partnership Framework (CPF) Pillar I: Strengthening Institutions and Creating an Enabling Environment for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth. Specifically, the project implements Objective 3 of the CPF, that seeks to promote a more enabling environment for the development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The Project furthers the CPF's objective by fostering the emergence of an inclusive private sector through a more hospitable investment climate, expanded access to finance, and stronger market governance. The LIFT-P envisions the removal of key regulatory constraints and will facilitate trade and expand access to finance. Specifically, it will focus on (i) the regulatory areas where the need for enhancement exists (ii) implementation of the Financial Sector Development Implementation Plan and National Financial Inclusion Strategy, (iii) implementation of the Insolvency and Restructuring Law adopted in 2017, and (iv) support for Liberia's implementation of commitments to the World Trade Organization (WTO), Trade Facilitation Agreement, since adoption of the long-awaited Customs Code.
4. The project supports a Jobs and Economic Transformation (JET) framework for Liberia and its two pillars on which the outcomes sit: better market functioning and improved firm capabilities. In doing so, the project targets six of the ten-building blocks in this framework as a complement to other parallel activities under the Liberia CPF supporting macroeconomic management, infrastructure services, employment policy and human capital. The project takes account of the Government Recovery Program (GRP) project that seeks to support otherwise viable growth oriented private enterprises that were adversely impacted by the effects of the pandemic. As the mechanism for firm level support is structured, guardrails will be established to prevent adversely impacting financial discipline and commercial credit underwriting needed for a sustained recovery. At the same time, with various indicators highlighting access to finance as an issue, attention to expanding digital financial services (DFS) is needed.
5. In addition to its contribution to the Jobs agenda, the Project design supports a range of IDA priorities in operational ways including Gender, Climate, Governance, human capital and Maximizing Finance for Development (MFD). The project will ensure that women-oriented training and eligibility will be included in firm support and financial access component by deliberately incorporating, in the design of project activities, features that seek to address the identified gaps between men and women with respect to their participation in economic activity in the country, especially around differential constraints and performance between women-owned and men-owned firms. These include the reforms to the business environment (e.g., registration, permits and access to finance), as well as activities to support SMEs and entrepreneurs. The project will monitor the extent to which activities are contributing toward closing gender gaps by measuring, among other things: (i) the number of women led MSMEs with a loan through the project; and (ii) the percentage of women that are covered by the credit registry.

6. Finally, as a foundational project to strengthen the public sector's ability to facilitate growth of the private sector on a sustainable basis, significant efforts will be devoted to institution building activities in key agencies. In this light, the project's concept identifies the strengthening of institutional functioning, streamlining of business processes and use of automation to lower costs, improve services and remove face-to face interactions.

7. The Project will be implemented in all 15 counties of Liberia for the next 5 years.

Scope of Services

LIFT-PIU therefore seeks an **SMEs Specialist** who will coordinate all activities at the PIU relating to SMEs access to market and capacity building. The specialist will work primarily on Component 2.1 – SMEs Access to Market; and will work closely with the Project Financial Sector Development Specialist under Component 2.2 – SMEs line of credit/access to finance.

Main Responsibilities

The specific responsibilities of the SMEs Specialist shall coordinate with the hired consulting firm to identify highly potential and growth-oriented SMEs to be enrolled in the project. He/she shall identify both the market and capacity needs of SMEs as prescribed in the LIFT design and propose solutions to remove those constraints. The following are additional responsibilities of the SMEs Specialist:

- Works with the hired consulting firm in the vetting and recruitment of potential SMEs to be enrolled into the activity.
- Works with the PIU and other stakeholder in addressing market failure constraint-supporting SMEs with market information, trends and requirements.
- Supporting SMEs to improve and demonstrate their ability to produce to the required specifications of buyers in selected supply chains and facilitating relationship with buyers, financiers, etc.
- Develops TORs for consultants/consulting firms working to improve the MSEs ecosystem; approves work plans and training manuals developed by consultants in consultation with the Project Coordinator and other PIU staff linked to such plans and manuals.
- Launching a program delivering technical assistance (soft and hard skills training, tailored advice) to facilitate market access by SMEs and improving functional capacity of the SBA
- Builds horizontal and vertical market linkages among actors in the SMEs ecosystem through mentorship and knowledge sharing.

- Collaborate with the Financial Sector Development Specialist under sub-component 2.2 to provide SMEs with training that will enable them to submit bankable proposals for financing, especially if the financing required is linked to accessing high value markets that the technical assistance seeks to provide.
- Collaborates with the Climate Change Specialist to create awareness among SMEs on the benefit of green investment.
- Works with the Small Business Administration (SBA) at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in accessing training needs and or capacity gap of SBA; proposes innovative ways the SBA can deliver services to SMEs.
- Participate in the development of the PIU’s annual work plan and budget preparation, including project report writing, etc.
- Coordinate needs assessment and support the delivery of technical assistance and capacity building by a consulting firm to all eligible SMEs in Liberia;
- Conduct research on best practice and innovative ways SMEs can be served and propose to the government and the World Bank findings and recommendations, etc.
- Participate in tours, visits, meetings and other support missions and periodic meetings with World Bank team; and
- Perform other tasks as may be assigned from time to time by the Project Steering Committee (PSC), the Project Technical Committee (PTC) and the Project Coordinator.

1. Qualification and Experience

- At minimum a master’s degree in Economics, Economic Policy, Finance, Agriculture or Business Administration or related fields.
- A minimum of 5 years of experience within the SMEs ecosystem of Liberia with proven records of helping to solve some of the challenges in the sector.
- Familiarity with the World Bank procedures is an added advantage.
- Experience with implementing other donors’ initiatives is an added advantage.
- Familiarity with the challenges in the SMEs sector and other government policies to address these challenges is a plus.
- Familiarity with the SBA at the Ministry of Commerce and its operations is a plus.

2. Key Competencies which are a desirable

<u>Abilities</u>	<u>Skills</u>	<u>Knowledge</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated ability to plan and co-ordinate, and monitor his or her own work plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer literacy, especially with the software of Microsoft Office is essential • Excellent team building and interpersonal skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working knowledge of World Bank and/or GOL rules and procedures will be advantageous.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated ability to meet deadlines • Self-motivated professional, with ability to work with/ under minimum supervision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficiency in English language with excellent communication skills • Private Sector Stakeholder management • Research and problem-solving skills. 	<p>Knowledge of government regulations, policies and rules regarding SMEs in the country;</p> <p>Knowledge of BDS providers in Liberia and their challenges.</p> <p>Knowledge of SMEs in different categories and their challenges.</p> <p>Appreciation and understanding of the required trainings and markets needed by SMEs.</p>
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3. PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (i) Provide support for the timely submission of reports to the World Bank for review and approval;
- (ii) On a monthly basis prepare status report of achievements and challenges in the sector and submit same to LIFT PC.
- (iii) With approval from the Project Coordinator and in collaboration with other PIU staff (Social, Climate Change and Financial Sector Development Specialists), draft the TORs for consultants;
- (iv) Support activities and processes for the timely disbursement of funds to consulting firms and/or consultants upon completion of project activities in conformity with approved contracts.

Selection Method: Individual Consultancy Selection (INDV) method.