Assignment Title: Promotion of Handicraft in E – Commerce Platform
No of Position: 01
Duty Station: Takhar and Kunduz
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The Aga Khan Foundation, Afghanistan (AKF (Afg)) is an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a group of international, private, non-denominational development agencies working to improve living conditions and opportunities for people in some of the poorest parts of the developing world. The Network's organizations have individual mandates that range from the fields of health and education to architecture, rural development and promotion of private-sector enterprise and institutions that seek to empower communities and individuals, usually in disadvantaged circumstances, to improve living conditions and opportunities.

The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) is a non-denominational international development agency established in 1967 by His Highness the Aga Khan. Its mission is to develop and promote creative solutions to problems that impede social development, primarily in Asia and East Africa. Created as a private, non-profit foundation under Swiss law, it has branches and independent affiliates in 19 countries.

AKF seeks to provide sustainable solutions to long-term problems of poverty, hunger, illiteracy, and ill health. In Afghanistan, AKF works with rural communities in mountainous, remote or resource poor areas to improve quality of life in the areas of natural resource management, market development, governance, education, and health.

1. Project Background

The UNDP "Livelihood Promotion in Tajik Afghan Cross-border Areas" (LITACA III) project financed by the Government of Japan through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and implemented by UNDP Tajikistan and Afghanistan. LITACA III aims to help SMEs by providing equipment and supporting marketing, labeling, design, and export. The beneficiaries are small and medium farmers, agro-processors, handicraft workshops, both individuals and cooperatives and traders (wholesalers, retailers, small- and medium-sized enterprises) in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The project focuses on supporting vulnerable women, unemployed youth, and people with disabilities.

LITACA III project aims to create sustainable livelihoods and increase incomes, create markets for commodities produced in the targeted areas, and promote cross-border cooperation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. The beneficiaries (120,000 individuals) are small and medium farmers, agro-processors, handicraft producers, cooperatives, traders (wholesalers, retailers), and small and medium-sized enterprises on both sides of the border.

One Village One Product (OVOP) is a development concept that originated in Japan and has been adopted by many countries worldwide. It focuses on promoting local economic development by identifying a unique product or craft from each village and leveraging it to stimulate economic growth. By highlighting each community's distinctive cultural heritage and resources, OVOP aims to empower local residents, preserve traditional skills, and create sustainable livelihoods. This grassroots approach boosts economic opportunities and fosters a sense of pride and identity within each village, contributing to overall regional development. The rationale for promoting the "One Village One Product" (OVOP) initiative on e-commerce platforms can be multifaceted and beneficial for both the communities involved and the e-commerce platform itself:

- Market Expansion: E-commerce platforms offer a vast reach, allowing products from remote villages to access national and international markets. Promoting OVOP products online expands the market beyond local communities, potentially increasing sales and revenue for villagers.
- Product Visibility: E-commerce platforms allow OVOP products to gain visibility among a diverse range of consumers. These unique products can attract attention and stand out in competitive markets through effective product listings, descriptions, and visual content.
- Empowerment of Local Producers: Promoting OVOP on e-commerce platforms empowers local producers by providing them with direct access to consumers, cutting out intermediaries, and allowing them to earn a fairer share of the profits. This can contribute to poverty alleviation and economic development in rural areas.
- Cultural Preservation: Many OVOP products are deeply rooted in local culture, traditions, and craftsmanship. Showcasing these products on e-commerce platforms not only provides economic benefits but also contributes to the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage.
- Diversification of Product Offerings: E-commerce platforms thrive on offering diverse product selections to cater to different consumer preferences. Integrating OVOP products adds unique and authentic offerings to the platform, enriching the overall shopping experience for consumers.
- Sustainability and Social Responsibility: Supporting OVOP initiatives aligns with sustainability and social responsibility principles. E-commerce platforms can appeal to environmentally conscious consumers by promoting locally sourced and handmade products and contribute to sustainable development goals.
- Brand Storytelling and Differentiation: OVOP products often come with compelling stories behind their production, reflecting the heritage, traditions, and values of the communities involved. E-commerce platforms can leverage these stories for brand storytelling, creating emotional connections with consumers and differentiating themselves in the market.

2. Scope of work / Overall objective

The e-commerce platform will empower vendors with e-marketing capabilities while also managing photography, payments, packaging, transportation, logistics, product cataloging, branding, promotion, and various other relevant steps necessary for promoting the product effectively.

The overarching objectives of promoting the "One Village One Product" (OVOP) initiative on e-commerce platforms are:

- Orientation of E-marketing: To organize an orientation session for the vendor in the targeted province and briefly provide a capacity-building session for the OVOP vendor.
- Photography of the marketing products:
  - To have at least 10 snaps from each product/model.
  - To update the product snaps once a month on the marketing website.
- Payment of the product: The e-commerce platform will directly discuss with the OVOP vendor, and payment procedures need to be clear between the vendor and the e-commerce platform.
- Packaging, Transportation, & Cargo: The e-commerce platform will be responsible for packaging, transportation, and cargo of the ordered products from the coverage province.
- Product Selection and Cataloging: Collaborate with OVOP organizations, local artisans, and community leaders to curate a selection of authentic OVOP products suitable for e-commerce promotion. Create a detailed catalog of these products, including at least 10 high-quality images, descriptions, and pricing information.
- Platform Optimization: Optimize the e-commerce platform to showcase OVOP products effectively. This includes creating dedicated categories or sections for OVOP products,

implementing search engine optimization (SEO) techniques, and enhancing user experience through intuitive navigation and product filtering options.

- Branding and Storytelling: Develop a compelling brand identity for OVOP products that highlights their cultural heritage, craftsmanship, and unique value proposition. Create engaging storytelling content at least 10 products, such as product origin stories, artisan profiles, and community impact stories, to connect with consumers emotionally.

- Marketing and Promotion: Implement targeted marketing and promotion campaigns to raise awareness and drive traffic to OVOP products on the e-commerce platform. This may include social media marketing, email marketing, influencer partnerships, and paid advertising campaigns tailored to reach the desired audience segments. The product nature snaps to be updated once a month till the end of the contract.

- Content Creation and Distribution: Produce high-quality visual and written content to showcase OVOP products and educate consumers about their significance. This may include product photography, blog posts, and social media content highlighting different aspects of OVOP products and their production process.

- Customer Engagement and Support: Provide excellent customer service and support to enhance the shopping experience for consumers interested in OVOP products. Offer multiple communication channels for inquiries, assistance, and feedback, and ensure prompt responses to customer queries and concerns.

- Partnerships and Collaborations: Forge strategic partnerships and collaborations with OVOP organizations, local communities, influencers, and relevant stakeholders to amplify the reach and impact of e-commerce promotion efforts. Leverage these partnerships to co-create content, cross-promote products, and tap into new consumer segments.

- Data Analytics and Optimization: Continuously monitor and analyze key performance metrics related to OVOP promotion on the e-commerce platform, such as website traffic, conversion rates, and sales performance. Use data insights to optimize marketing strategies, product offerings, and platform features for better results.

- Sustainability and Impact Assessment: Assess the social, economic, and environmental impact of promoting OVOP products on the e-commerce platform. Monitor progress towards sustainability goals, such as supporting local communities, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting ethical production practices, and communicate these achievements to stakeholders.

3. Work Location (s)
Takhar and Kunduz

4. Main duties and responsibilities
The main duties of an e-commerce platform in promoting the "One Village One Product" (OVOP) initiative include:

- Product Listing and Optimization: Ensuring OVOP products are accurately listed on the platform with high-quality images, detailed descriptions, and relevant keywords to improve visibility and searchability.

- Marketing and Promotion: Actively promoting OVOP products through various marketing channels, including email campaigns, social media, online advertisements, and featured product sections. This may involve creating targeted promotions and discounts to attract consumers.

- Brand Collaboration and Partnership: Collaborating with OVOP organizations, local artisans, and community leaders to source and promote authentic OVOP products. This may involve establishing partnerships with OVOP initiatives to feature their products prominently on the platform.

- Category Creation and Curation: Creating dedicated categories or sections on the platform specifically for OVOP products to highlight their uniqueness and cultural significance. This helps consumers easily discover and explore OVOP offerings.
- Educational Content and Storytelling: OVOP provides educational content and storytelling about its products, including their cultural heritage, production process, and impact on local communities. This helps consumers connect with the products on a deeper level and understand their value.
- Customer Support and Assistance: Offering dedicated customer support services to assist consumers with inquiries, orders, and returns related to OVOP products. This may include information about product origins, shipping details, and customization options.
- Logistics and Fulfillment: Managing logistics and fulfillment processes to ensure timely delivery of OVOP products to customers. This includes coordinating with local artisans or producers, arranging packaging and shipping, and tracking orders to ensure smooth delivery.
- Quality Assurance and Compliance: Ensuring OVOP products meet quality standards and comply with relevant regulations and certifications. This may involve conducting quality checks, verifying product authenticity, and addressing any issues related to product quality or authenticity.
- Community Engagement and Feedback: Engaging with the OVOP community and soliciting feedback to continuously improve the promotion and presentation of OVOP products on the platform. This may involve hosting community events, gathering consumer insights, and implementing suggestions for enhancement.
- Market Expansion and Internationalization: Supporting the expansion of OVOP products into new markets, including international markets, by providing localization services, multi-language support, and international shipping options. This helps broaden the reach and impact of OVOP initiatives.

5. Product for Marketing
Afghani Carpet/Qaleen and Handicraft in Takhar and Kunduz Provinces.

6. Deliverables
The deliverables of an e-commerce platform in promoting "One Village One Product" (OVOP) initiatives include:

- Comprehensive Product Catalog: A curated collection of OVOP products listed on the platform, showcasing their diversity, uniqueness, and cultural significance. The product listing should include detailed descriptions, high-quality images, and pricing information.
  - To submit one catalog with a maximum of 10 pages of project and product information.
- Dedicated OVOP Section: A dedicated section or category on the e-commerce platform specifically highlighting OVOP products. This section is a focal point for consumers interested in supporting rural artisans and purchasing authentic handmade goods.
- Engaging Content: Engaging and informative content related to OVOP products, including product origin stories, artisan profiles, and community impact narratives. This content helps educate consumers about their purchases' cultural heritage and social impact.
- Marketing Campaigns: Targeted marketing campaigns to promote OVOP products and raise awareness among relevant consumer segments. These campaigns may include social media promotions, email newsletters, influencer partnerships, and paid advertising initiatives.
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO): Optimized product listings and website content to improve visibility and search engine rankings for OVOP-related keywords and phrases. This enhances the discoverability of OVOP products on search engines and within the e-commerce platform itself.

- Partnership Collaborations: Collaborations with OVOP organizations, local communities, NGOs, and government agencies to amplify promotion efforts and reach new audiences. Partnerships may involve co-marketing initiatives, joint events, and cross-promotion opportunities.
- Customer Support Services: Dedicated customer support services to address inquiries, provide assistance with orders, and resolve any issues or concerns related to OVOP products. Prompt and responsive customer support enhances consumer trust and satisfaction.
- Performance Analytics and Reporting: Monitoring and reporting on key performance metrics related to OVOP promotion efforts, including website traffic, conversion rates, sales performance, and customer engagement metrics. Regular performance analysis helps assess the effectiveness of promotional strategies and optimize future campaigns. The number of sales by beneficiaries should be at least USD 5,000.

7. Qualifications Required

The qualifications of an e-commerce platform in effectively promoting "One Village One Product" (OVOP) initiatives include:

- Technical Expertise: Proficiency in e-commerce technologies and platforms, including website development, content management systems (CMS), and online marketplace solutions. The platform should be able to showcase OVOP products effectively and provide a seamless shopping experience for consumers.
- Digital Marketing Skills: Expertise in digital marketing strategies and tactics, including search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, email marketing, and online advertising. The platform should be able to create targeted campaigns to promote OVOP products and reach relevant consumer segments.
- Content Creation Abilities: Capability to create compelling and engaging content, including product descriptions, visuals, and storytelling narratives. The platform should be able to produce high-quality content that highlights the cultural significance and artisanal craftsmanship of OVOP products.
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM): Ability to manage customer relationships and provide excellent customer support services. The platform should have robust CRM capabilities to address consumer inquiries, assist with orders, and resolve issues related to OVOP products.
- Cross-Cultural Understanding: Understanding diverse cultures, traditions, and consumer preferences, particularly those relevant to OVOP products. The platform should be sensitive to cultural nuances and able to tailor marketing messages and strategies accordingly.
- Collaboration and Partnership Skills: The platform should have the capacity to collaborate with OVOP organizations, local communities, NGOs, and government agencies to amplify promotional efforts. It should also be able to foster strategic partnerships and collaborations to expand the reach and impact of OVOP initiatives.
- Ethical and Sustainable Practices: The platform should be committed to ethical and sustainable business practices, including fair trade principles, environmental sustainability, and support for marginalized communities. It should prioritize OVOP products that adhere to ethical production standards and contribute to positive social impact.
- Accessibility and Inclusivity: Accessibility features and inclusivity measures to ensure that OVOP products are accessible to all consumers, including those with disabilities and diverse backgrounds. The platform should strive to create an inclusive shopping experience that caters to a wide range of consumers.
- Continuous Improvement and Innovation: The platform should be dedicated to continuous improvement and innovation in OVOP promotion efforts. It should be proactive in exploring new marketing channels, adopting emerging technologies, and experimenting with innovative strategies to enhance the promotion of OVOP products.

8. Terms of Payment

The terms of reference of payment to the E-commerce platform will be based on installment.

9. Timeline / Work plan

06 months (July – December 2024).

Application

Interested firms or individual should submit their proposal to Jobs.Afghanistan@akdn.org no later than 26th June 2024. For more technical information and query please contact Mr. Abdul Qahhar Balkhi at: abdulqahhar.balkhi@akdn.org on or before the cutoff date.

Important Points:
- Please quote the Vacancy Number as the Subject of the e-mail when applying.
- Please submit the resume of the responsible individual along with the company license when applying.
- Only shortlisted proposals will be contacted for further assessment.

The Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan (AKF- Afg) promotes a transparent and equitable recruitment process. We reiterate that all services related to job applications, including processing, seminars, and training programs, are provided free of charge.

Our official job announcements are posted on the ACBAR website (acbar.org/jobs). Interested candidates are encouraged to submit their applications through our designated email address: jobs.afghanistan@akdn.org. Please note that each job vacancy is assigned a unique identification number for your reference. After you submit your application, you will immediately receive an automatic confirmation acknowledging its receipt.

Aga Khan Foundation - Afghanistan (AKF- Afg) recruitment and selection process reflect our commitment to equal opportunity and protecting children and at-risk adults, beneficiaries, partners, community members and employees from safeguarding violations. We will do everything possible to ensure that only those who are suitable to work with children and at-risk adults are recruited to work for us. In the process of recruitment, selection and appointment AKF (Afg) implement a range of procedures and vetting checks including criminal records disclosures to ensure everyone associated with AKF (Afg) is kept free from harm and abuse is prevented.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) is the responsibility of everyone, and all selected individuals will be required to comply with AKF (Afg)s Safeguarding Policy at all times.

By sharing your cover letter and resume with AKF (Afg) in response to this job application, applicants consent AKF (Afg) to keep this information on file for Recruitment and Human Resources Management purposes.

Female candidates are encouraged to apply.

We request all job seekers to be attentive and report any instances of individuals or entities claiming to charge fees on behalf of AKF Afghanistan to AKFA.HR@akdn.org. Our commitment to ethical

practices ensures that your career aspirations are supported without any financial burden during recruitment.

Your details and information shared in this advertisement shall remain confidential.