

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST [TO BE ISSUED BY UNHCR]

Note: The purpose of the Call for Expression of Interest (CfEol) is to solicit interest from existing or prospective partners that wish to collaborate with UNHCR to achieve common outcomes.

UNHCR Offices are required to provide context for the partnership and selection criteria. A sample template for a Call for Expression of Interest (CfEol) is below.

Please note that the following template mirrors the structure of the information required on the UNPP for the CfEol. Any supplementary information should be attached as an additional document.

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (CfEol)

Project Details	
CfEol ID	HCR/AFG/2024/008
Title	Livelihoods, Economic and Financial Inclusion
Project/Programme Focal Point(s)	Hide Furumoto – Snr Reintegration Officer Mildred Watchipa – Snr Prog Officer-
Project location	20 PARRs with limited interventions in other areas subject to assessment findings. Focus will be on refugee returnees as main target population. Interventions outside the 20 PARR areas will be very limited as it will depend on the number of refugee returnees to these non-PARR areas. <i>Please refer Annex A2 - 2025-2027 PARRs</i>
Sector(s) and Area(s) of Specialization	
Sector(s)	Livelihood & Economic Inclusion and Financial Inclusion
<u>Area(s) of Specialization</u>	Livelihoods and economic inclusion, Financial Inclusion
Issued by	UNHCR
Project background:	
Processing of personal data ¹ (if required within the partnership)	C2P arrangement
Direct contact with forcibly displaced and stateless persons	YES

Overview of the targeted population

Estimated to be 43 million in 2022, the Afghanistan population comprises 49 percent women and girls with 51 percent men and boys. The country has one of the highest youth populations in the world, with 47 per cent of the population under 15 years old. Afghanistan is also characterized by high numbers of the forcibly displaced populations, including the internally displaced and returnees, especially in the context of forced returns from Pakistan. Afghanistan had an estimated 3.25 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) as of June 2023; 1.46 million IDP returnees between 2021-2023; 57,000 refugee returnees between 2023 – February 2024; 52,100 refugees and asylum-seekers as of 31 December 2023 and 870,000 host community population. The number of total returnees from Pakistan between 15 September 2023 and 27 January 2024 reached 508,000 and were expected to increase further, mainly on account of the measures implemented by the Government of Pakistan under the "Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan.

Operational Environment for the partnership – Protection and Solutions Situation

¹ Please see below for arrangement definitions for processing of personal data.

Afghanistan is faced with one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. The crisis is underpinned by multiple, complex, and interrelated challenges all of which affect the livelihoods of the people, including the forcibly displaced and returnees, pushing them into extreme vulnerability and subjecting them to diverse protection risks. The more than four decades of conflict have decimated infrastructure and disrupted production and market networks, considerably impacting income and livelihood opportunities for the people. Afghanistan also faces increasing drought incidences and intensity, and other natural disasters, which have been exacerbated by the impacts of climate change. These are negatively affecting agricultural and other productive activities thereby constraining livelihoods of the people. The agricultural sector which has been one of the largest employers of the Afghan labour force has particularly been impacted by both climate change and disasters. This vulnerability of the population engaged in agriculture is compounded by price fluctuations of inputs, notably fertilizers, poor and inefficiency water use, high levels of post-harvest losses due to pests or livestock diseases and lack of cold storage infrastructure. Investment in building resilient agriculture and upscaling efforts to insert the forcibly displaced in the agriculture value chains will be crucial to increasing opportunities for income generation, employment creation, and better economic inclusion. Promotion of alternative agriculture will enhance protection dividends especially in places where the population used to rely on poppy cultivation for their livelihoods, and of non-agriculture livelihoods leveraging regions' endowments and the population's traditional skills such as carpet weaving, as well as artisanal skills will spur other productive activities.

Afghanistan has also experienced declining economic growth. This is evidenced by the contraction of the economy by 20.7 per cent in 2021 and 3.6 per cent in 2022, signalling a reduction in economic opportunities for the population. The decline in economic activity has also resulted in closure and decline in employment across small, medium, and large firms. The World Bank (2022) highlights that only around one-third of small and women-owned firms are fully operational, citing restrictions on women's economic activities and limited availability of financial capital as the major factors. The restrictions placed on women and girls' also account for part of this situation.

With respect to employment, the World Bank highlights that employment declined 61 percent in October 2021, with men's employment declining 48 percent, and women's 75 percent. Employment taken up by women has also declined across all areas/sectors from 11 percent in 2022 to 6 percent in 2023, with notable reductions in daily labour (from 4.5 percent in 2022 to 1.4 percent in 2023) and small businesses – from 0.9 percent in 2022 to 0.3 percent in 2023 – (UNDP, 2023). The high rate of unemployment among women is explained by many factors including the restrictions placed on women with respect to participation in the labour market and movement, lack of familiarity with the labour market, as well as lack of education and basic literacy among women (World Bank, 2023). Concerted efforts are needed to enhance access to economic opportunities, particularly for women and youth by, among other things, promoting the development of micro, small and medium enterprises, addressing issues related to skills upgrading through, among other things, market-oriented technical, vocational and education and training, literacy, and provision of information to increase knowledge of the labour market as well as facilitating linkages with the employers.

The financial services sector has also suffered since 2021. The microfinance sector which had been booming and provided a source of credit for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), contracted by 50 percent between 2021 and June 2022, evidenced a sharp decline in the SME portfolio from AFN 9.5 billion to AFN 4.4 billion (UNDP 2023). Women-run SMEs were the worst hit as illustrated by a sharp drop in the proportion of women clients from 56 percent of total clients to 29 percent. These developments have reduced access to financial capital for SMEs, constraining their birth and growth, employment creation and income generation. The forcibly displaced face additional barriers in their quest to access finance due to their perceived flight risk by financial institutions, the lack of a credit history, lack of property and related titles for use as collateral, and loss of social capital to leverage for use in meeting guarantor requirements, among other challenges. This situation increased protection risks as the forcibly displaced are likely to seek credit from informal systems and networks some of which might not be safe.

The country is also faced with rapidly growing population with a growth rate of about 2 per cent, not matching economic growth leading to a sharp per capita income drop of 30 per cent between 2020 and 2022. A combination of this and other factors, has pushed millions of people into poverty and requiring safety nets and

depending on humanitarian support. These extremely poor households require support aimed at getting them out of this situation and placing them on paths for the realization of durable solutions.

In addition to these challenges, refugees and asylum seekers face legal barriers related to access to employment and livelihoods. Currently they are not allowed to legally get into gainful employment including self-employment.

Expected results:

The interventions to be implemented by the partner (s) hereunder, are linked to the following impacts:

- i. By 2027, an increasing number of forcibly displaced, returnees, stateless persons, and most vulnerable host communities, with specific focus on women and girls benefit from more resilient livelihoods and socio-economic self-reliance opportunities.
- ii. By 2027, refugees, IDPs and returnees have increased access durable solutions.

With respect to outcomes, the interventions are linked to:

- i. More refugee/IDP returnees and IDPs have attained increased access to employment, financial and economic inclusion.
 - Formal micro, small and medium enterprises and households are supported with cash, assets, infrastructure, and technical capacity building.
 - More refugee and IDP returnees as well as host communities participate in climate resilient agriculture and non-agriculture value chains through UNHCR support
 - Refugee/IDP s returnees have their skills upgraded through TVET and other employability enhancement schemes.
- i. Refugee returnees and IDP returnees have access to reintegration support and sustainable solutions.
 - Assessments and capacity building for solutions programming
 - Evidence-based livelihood, economic inclusion, and solutions programming
- ii. Coordination and partnerships among stakeholders are strengthened.
 - Coordination and partnerships with public, private and development stakeholders is strengthened.
 - Inclusion of the forcibly displaced in interventions of other stakeholders

To ensure the adequate protection of forcibly displaced and stateless persons, UNHCR requires partners to adhere to applicable sector standards outlined within [UNHCR's areas of specialization](#). Refer to livelihood and economic inclusion and financial inclusion.

Indicative budget (optional):

N/A

Processing of personal data (if required within the partnership):

The partner will process and use some of the data for persons we serve through the **Controller-to-processor (C2P)**. Hence, the partner will require to conduct Partner Data Protection and Information Security Self-Assessment using this link "Partner Data Protection and Information Security Self-Assessment and should be completed at the country level and submitted with the concept note."

Controller-to-processor (C2P) is a relationship between UNHCR and a partner for processing the data of forcibly displaced and stateless persons. UNHCR is the data controller, defining the purposes and essential means of the personal data processing. The Partner processes the personal data on behalf of UNHCR and under UNHCR's instructions. UNHCR is accountable for the personal data processing including the responsibility for addressing requests by data subjects relating to their data subject rights. See also Controller-to-Controller (C2C).

Other information (optional): Interested National and International Non-Governmental Organizations in Afghanistan are invited to [submit concept notes](#) and other required documents to UNHCR, as specified below

Concept note

The concept note should be concise and contain clear information on proposed activities specifying Outcome area, outcome statement and specific activities that Partner is able to implement, indicating location of implementation. Concept notes should not exceed six pages and should not be a fully developed project proposal, should make clear reference to guidelines and other similar approved interagency tools and must be submitted in a Template attached to this call for EoI as Annex A1. Budget should be included in the concept note as a table or submitted separately as an attachment.

Important Notes: Registered NGOs in Afghanistan are required to register the organization, if not yet done, on the UN Partner Portal- <https://unpartnerportal.org>; upload all required documents, including Concept Notes, budget and other supporting documents in response to this call for Expression of Interest by **24 October 2024 midnight Afghanistan time**.

UNHCR is committed in undertaking adequate due diligence and conduct the process of selection of partners in an objective, consistent, transparent and timely manner. All applicant organizations will receive written notification on the outcome of the selection process.

Call of Expression of Interest Timeline				
Request for clarification deadline	Application deadline	Notification of results	Estimated start date	Estimated end date
23 October 2024 AFGKAEOI@unhcr.org	24 October 2024	15 November 2024	01 January 2025	31 December 2025
Selection Criteria				
	Criteria Description	Assigned Weighting		
	<p>Sector expertise and experience: the required specific skills, sector specialists, performance, knowledge, material and human resources. Knowledge of relevant protection, humanitarian principles and the approach to Age, Gender, Diversity (AGDM). Approach to the participation of forcibly displaced and stateless persons in the Programme Cycle. Partner's PSEA capacity self-assessment and data protection and information security self-assessment have been completed and submitted (where relevant to the partnership). Mainstreaming measures to integrate environmental sustainability within proposed activities. Environmental considerations are aligned to the objectives of UNHCR's Strategic Framework for Climate Action.</p>	35		
	<p>Project management: ability to effectively deliver project objectives with robust management systems/processes, and meet the expectations of all stakeholders, as well as provide accountability mechanisms and sound financial management, taking into account the audit results of the previous UNHCR-funded projects, past performance and the external audit of partners' financial statements and pending open audit recommendations (accounts receivables and internal control related recommendations) where applicable. Clear segregation of duties policy, as well as the integration of risk management; adequate control over procurement, of assets and inventory (if applicable).</p>	15		
	<p>Local experience and presence: ongoing programme in the area of operation; local knowledge; participation in inter-agency coordination fora, engaging forcibly displaced and stateless persons in the programme cycle; trust from</p>	25		

	<p>local communities; local presence; partner policy on community relations; feedback and complaint mechanisms for affected communities; self-organized groups of forcibly displaced and stateless persons; and other factors that would facilitate access to and better understanding of the affected communities and that would reduce administrative difficulties.</p>	
	<p>Cost effective: Evidence of a methodology for allocation of shared costs to project activities. Evidence of procedures/systems that ensure maximum resources are directed to project outcomes while also ensuring that resources are also directed to activities that ensure project risks are being appropriately managed.</p>	15
	<p>Access/ Security Considerations: ability to operate in security conditions of the Project site(s) or country as well as existence and functionality of partner's organizational policies, procedures and practices related to security risk management.</p>	10

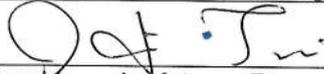
Issuing UNHCR Office

UNHCR Country Office Kabul

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Signature, Head of Office



Full name and title, Head of Office

PP. Jamal Arafat, Representative UNHCR
Afghanistan

Name of UNHCR Office

UNHCR Country Office Kabul

Date

26- September- 2024

