Call for proposal - Consultancy

Youth employment opportunities in the digital economy – Ethiopia

1. Background and rationale

A joint venture between the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) intends to leverage the mandates and technical expertise of the two institutions, as well as potential partners to support the GoE's development plans with regards to digital economy and interlinkages with skills building and job creation, as well as support the inclusion of forcibly displaced persons and their host communities in this focus area of the country's development vision.

The ITU protects and supports everyone's right to communicate. Among the objectives of the Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) are fostering an enabling environment for the development of telecommunication and ICT networks, building human and institutional capacity, and promoting digital inclusion. ITU, at its core, also aims to support countries in internet connectivity and in developing digital skills at basic and intermediate levels, particularly in underserved communities, including refugees.

ILO aims to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Its main aims are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen social dialogue. This joint venture will also re-inforce PROSPECTS, a Partnership ILO is part of and launched launched with the support of the Government of the Netherlands that brings together the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR, the UN Children's Fund UNICEF and the World Bank. PROSPECTS aims to help transform the way governments and other stakeholders, including the private sector, respond to forced displacement crises. In this partnership PROSPECTS, the ILO stimulates labour market demand and immediate job creation through employment-intensive investment, local economic and business development and promotion of specific value chains and market systems. The ILO brings also expertise on technical and vocational education and training and on the recognition of prior learning for certifying the skills of refugees to better ensure access to the labour market, and methods for assessing labour market demand to provide the right skills to refugees needed by employers.

The partnership targets two geographical locations, specifically, the North Western Zone of Tigray (also refered to here as the Shire area) and the Fafan Zone, the capital of which is Jigjiga. **JIGJIGA** is a city in the eastern Somali region of Ethiopia, which borders Somalia and Somaliland. As of June 2020, there were more than 37,5000 Somali refugees and asylum-seekers hosted in camps near the city: Awe-Barre (11,500+), Kebribeyeh (14,600+), and Sheder (11,400+). There are also a significant number of IDP locations in the surrounding areas. **SHIRE** is a town in the northern Tigray region of Ethiopia,

which borders Eritrea and Sudan. As of June 2020, there were nearly 95,5000 refugees and asylum-seekers, predominantly Eritreans, spread over four camps: Shimelba, Mai-Aini, Adi Harush, and Hitsats[1].[2]

The Digital Economy

The digital economy can unlock new pathways for inclusive growth, innovation, decent job creation and poverty reduction in Africa. Recognizing that technological change has been the primary driver of social development, productivity improvements and inclusive growth, in June 2020 the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) approved a national digital transformation strategy, "Digital Ethiopia 2025 - A Strategy for Ethiopia Inclusive Prosperity". The strategy proposes an inclusive digital economy approach that will catalyse Ethiopia's broader development vision, including by aligning to the 2019 Home-grown Economic Reform Agenda and the Ten-Year Development Plan (2020-2030), as well as with international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Continental Digital Strategy. While improving basic digital literacy is recognized as being critical, the ICT sector has yet to contribute more to creating jobs.. The GoE aimed to create three million jobs in 2019/20, including 300,000 digital jobs by 2020, and intends to create a total of 14 million jobs over the next five years. The digital strategy acknowledges that it is important to look beyond improving basic digital literacy in order to meet this target. Job-oriented digital upskilling—through training for skills such as typing and printing, advanced Microsoft office skills, data analysis and graphics, coding— could create jobs in data entry, marketing, creative design and Business Process Outsourcing. The Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, the global alliance of multisectoral partners achieving youth employment related goals of agenda 2030, is the custodian for the thematic plan on digital skills for youth working closely with the International Telecommunications Union and the ILO's skills development branch.

Forced displacement and the digital realm

At the same time, the world is witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record. In recent years, forced displacement has increased in scale and complexity. While forcibly displaced persons face specific vulnerabilities, including psychological trauma, lack of opportunity and protection risks, host communities struggle to pursue their own development efforts in an environment that has been transformed by a large influx of newcomers. The responses to these challenges are becoming more focused on durable solutions to support more dignified, inclusive and comprehensive programmes for refugees and the communities that host them. For many forcibly displaced people, Internet and mobile connectivity have a similar level of importance as basic needs such as water, food and energy.[3] They can provide access to loved ones, support networks, vital information, and mobile money services. They can bring education to displaced youth, so that they do not fall irretrievably behind through lack of learning, and training opportunities to young people and adults. Importantly, digital technologies can also enable displaced persons to find decent employment and become more self-reliant. However, meaningful connectivity is still out of reach for many forcibly displaced people,

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[1] The Government of Ethiopia announced in March 2020 that Hitsats camp will be closed. Al-Jazeera, "Ethiopia plans to close Eritrean refugee camp despite concerns", 19 April 2020. Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/04/ethiopia-plans-close-eritrean-refugee-camp-concerns-200417165129036.html

[2] UNHCR, "Ethiopia", *Operational Portal: Refugee Situations,* accessed 3 August 2020. Available at: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/eth

[3] UNHCR, *Connecting Refugees,* 2016. Available at: https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/20160707-Connecting-Refugees-Web_with-signature.pdf

especially for women, older persons and those with lower levels of education. A lack of digital and language skills is an important barrier.[4]

Host communities also struggle to pursue their own development efforts in an environment that has been transformed by a large influx of newcomers. A lack of economic opportunities, combined with a lack of contact among communities and grievances over access to livelihoods and basic assets, may negatively affect relations between forcibly displaced persons and host communities and their resilience.[5] In this context, access to skills development opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship are equally important to both groups. As the accelerating global digital transformation impacts all countries—disrupting traditional sectors and growing the share of the overall economy that is linked to, enabled by or otherwise impacted by digital technologies, products, services and data—the ability to work, engage with, and innovate in the digital economy in particular is increasingly important to securing decent employment or creating a successful enterprise. Moreover, pandemics such as COVID-19 have narrowed down opportunities for learners and job seekers and increased the recognition of the importance of remote learning and jobs.

2. Objective of the assignment

In light of the above, to fill existing knowledge gaps on how the digital economy can drive decent job creation in Ethiopia, including for refugees and host community members, the ILO and ITU seek the support of a consultant to carry out mappings and consultations on the employment potential of the digital economy. The consultations will explore the employment potential in the digital economy (ICT sector as well as jobs affected by digitalisation in non-ICT sectors), the adequacy of the training capacities available as well as opportunities for job creation through digital entrepreneurship, remote work through digital platforms and the creation of digital related jobs by employers in the ICT sector. Findings of the consultations are expected to inform interventions of the ITU, ILO and other partners of the PROSPECTS partnership in Ethiopia as well as with other relevant national and international partners.

In summary, the objective of the assignment is to conduct stakeholder consultations and mappings of existing initiatives in Ethiopia as well as to identify gaps and opportunities for the ITU, ILO and partners to support skills development and decent job creation in the digital economy for young people, including refugees, Internally Displaced Populations (IDP) and host community members in or near Shire and Fafan zone of the Tigray and Somali regions, respectively.

3. Scope of work/ deliverables

The consultant's **scope of work** will comprise the following:

- Conducting desk research to prepare consultations and develop an inception report .
- Preparing an annotated outline (around 5 pages) of the consultation report.
- Conducting up to 20 semi-structured key informant interviews.

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[4] Other barriers include variable levels of network coverage and device ownership (especially due to the urban/rural divide) and affordability constraints. Ibid.

[5] Brück et al., *Jobs Aid Peace: A Review of the theory and practice of the impact of employment programmes on peace in fragile and conflict-affected countries,* 2016. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---ifp_crisis/documents/publication/wcms_633429.pdf

- Analysing data and writing/submitting the consultation report (no more than 40 pages excluding annexes)

The **target group and areas** will include:

- Employers (companies) within the digital economy in the Fafan zone (Jigjiga and Kebribeyah areas) of Somali Regional State, and the North Western Zone (Shire area) of Tigray Regional State, and any other city/region.
- Refugees and host community members (ultimate beneficiaries), in the above mentioned Fafan Zone of the Somali Region and North Western Zone of the Tigray Region, that would be the ultimate beneficiaries from digital jobs.

4. Timeline and key deliverables

The consultancy is expected to start by 26 October 2020 and take approximately **40 days** to complete. The selected consultant will be expected to deliver high quality work within the stipulated timelines. COVID-19 limitations to carrying out consultancy will be taken into consideration.

5. Staffing, Roles, and Reporting

The Consultant will work under the overall authority of Director ILO Country Office for Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan and Special Representative to the AU and ECA, under the direct supervision of the ILO-PROSPECTS Programme Manager in Ethiopia. The consultant will receive technical guidance from the YOUTH team in the ILO's Employment Policy Unit in Geneva (EMPLOYMENT) and additional technical and operational support from the ILO – PROSPECTS Ethiopia team.

Throughout the course of the assignment, the consultant will report on a weekly basis to the ILO for coordination and follow–up. If it appears necessary to modify the tasks or timeline of work or exceed the time allocated, the consultant must discuss the circumstances with the ILO and obtain prior written approval.

ILO may disclose the draft or final report to any person and for any purpose ILO may deem appropriate.

6. Required skills/experience

- Post-graduate qualification in a relevant field (social science, ICT, social policy, economics, development studies, etc.).
- 10 years of progressive experience in social and economic research, including labour markets, digital economy, ICT.
- Awareness of context and digital trends in Ethiopia as well as Ethiopia's laws and policies guiding the digital economy.
- Knowledge and understanding of global economic and digital trends influencing different economic sectors.
- Exceptional organizational and communication skills, ability to work independently in order to meet deadlines.
- Excellent English drafting skills, good communication skills.

7. Submission of applications

Interested consultants should submit, via the below email, his/her letter of expression of interest addressing it to the ILO Country Office as written in full below) along with supporting documents including, technical and financial proposals, curriculum vitae; and contact detail (email, telephone number etc). Kindly title your email subject as, "Call for proposal – consultant Youth employment opportunities in the digital economy – Ethiopia".

> Subject: "Call for proposal – consultant Youth employment opportunities in the digital economy – Ethiopia"
> Email: ADDIS_PROCUREMENT@ilo.org
> **ILO Country Office for Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan**
> **UNECA Compound- Addis Ababa**

Only shortlisted candidates will be notified.
Deadline for submitting applications: **5 PM, 28 September 2020.**