The International Trade Centre is looking for a:

**Expert in the Japanese incubation and innovation ecosystem and digital freelancing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division/Section:</th>
<th>Division of Country Programmes, Office for Middle East and North Africa (DCP/OMENA)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Type of assignment:</td>
<td>International Consultant</td>
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<td>Type of contract:</td>
<td>Delivery contract</td>
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<td>Duty Station:</td>
<td>Home-Based</td>
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<td>Duration of assignment:</td>
<td>1 September 2023 – 28 February 2024 (120 working days, subject to change)</td>
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<td>Application period:</td>
<td>24.07.2023 – 03.08.2023</td>
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**Terms of Reference**

**BACKGROUND**

Established in 1964, the International Trade Centre (ITC) is the joint technical cooperation agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in charge of the sustainable promotion of trade and in particular of exports from developing countries and economies in transition. The goal of the ITC is to make businesses in developing countries more competitive in global markets, accelerate economic development and contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Thus, the organization contributes to the creation of jobs at the level of segments of agricultural value chains and promising services, especially for young people and women.

The ITC project “Create Self-Employment Opportunities for Vulnerable and Marginalized groups in Gaza through Digital Channels (Go Digital)” has achieved outstanding success in its Phase I (March 2018 – February 2019), Phase II (March 2019 – February 2020), and Phase III (March 2021 – February 2022). The Government of Japan has funded all phases of the project through their supplementary budget.

During the previous phases, ITC trained 600 youth on the development of marketable online services, two-thirds of whom were connected to virtual marketplaces for services and secured online businesses by selling these services (e.g., translation, web development, digital marketing, and others) to international clients using online channels. By the time the projects ended, the participants generated a total income of more than 263,000 USD. The project also supported 10 entrepreneurs in establishing their own businesses.

**OBJECTIVE**

In line with the previous interventions, Go Digital Phase IV (March 2023 – February 2024) aims to address the high unemployment rates among the Gazan youth, which resulted from the longstanding blockade and the closure imposed on the Gaza Strip. The blockade led to the closure of most of Gazan manufacturing industries, which explains the difficulty related to absorbing new graduates in the private sector. Recent challenges, including several episodes of bombing and soaring commodity prices, have aggravated the situation even further.
With an eye to addressing this challenge, the project aims to boost the demand for remote and online services supplied by youth freelancers and entrepreneurs on digital platforms. It will offer technical and vocational capacity building opportunity to a selected group of youth, including those with disabilities, to use digital channels as a new, innovative way to connect with clients, gain jobs and access new markets.

In this context, ITC is looking for an International Consultant, preferably with a Japanese professional background, who will connect potential partner institutions both within and outside Japan (e.g., business incubators and accelerators) with the project’s local partner institutions in the Gaza Strip with the objective of helping them understand and apply best practices in business incubation and innovation.

In addition, the Consultant will be expected to mobilize investors, entrepreneurs, and buyers to advise, inspire, and source from freelancers and entrepreneurs based in the Gaza Strip.

**DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES**

The consultant will work under the direct supervision of the Japan focal point at ITC and the overall guidance of the Project Manager, and will undertake the following duties:

1. Review and assess current trends in freelancing and entrepreneurship both within and outside Japan with Japanese (in addition to one advanced country in this field to be identified together with the expert) non-governmental organizations and/or Japanese private companies, and identify partners, buyers, investors, and/or any key actors in the incubation and freelancing ecosystem:
   - Go through existing documents on the Go Digital project and get acquainted with its objectives, approach, progress, impact, and results.
   - Review the profile/services of the project’s local counterpart and a benchmark report on it - produced under the project - and connect with the counterpart to better understand the programmes it offers, its capacities and performance as well profiles of well-performing freelancers and entrepreneurs in Gaza.
   - Identify profiles of potential clients for freelancers and possible business ideas for entrepreneurs to present to investors.
   - Identify main players in the incubation and freelancing ecosystem in Japan and provide a comprehensive and detailed analysis on what could be a successful entry point and where the project could achieve successful and concrete results.
   - Identify Japanese companies, institutions and buyers that are operating outside Japan, explore potential business opportunities with these actors, and provide a comprehensive analysis and recommendations on how to tap into these opportunities.
   - Conduct meetings to advance business talks with the targeted buyers, investors, institutions, and incubators and agree on the next steps.

2. Develop communication materials targeting Japanese audience:
   - Based on the above, develop promotional/communication materials, including in Japanese, for the potential investors, partners, and buyers, ensuring that the materials are tailored to their expectations.
   - Once the communication materials are circulated, conduct close follow-up with the identified potential investors, partners, and buyers.
   - Provide strategic advice and technical support for the project’s external communications activities with the objective of ensuring the visibility of the Japanese funding. It is important
to highlight that the incubator, institutions, freelancers are beneficiaries of a Japan-funded projects.

- Assist in the preparation of reports to the donor.

3. Develop recommendations and connect local counterpart(s) with potential investors, institutions, companies and/or buyers:

- Based on the above, develop a list of recommendations for each beneficiary group (institutions, entrepreneurs, freelancers) to enhance and/or expand their operations.
- Provide advisory to the local counterpart and the selected freelancers/entrepreneurs on the demanded services, opportunities, and/or partnerships. This advisory should include solid steps the beneficiaries can take to improve the chances of making a concrete deal/partnership.
- Organize meetings and matchmaking events between the local counterpart, the selected freelancers and entrepreneurs and the potential buyers, investors and/or institutions to facilitate the implementation of the next steps.
- Follow up on the business matchmaking opportunities to catalyze the creation of business cases.

The Consultant is expected to submit a final report detailing all activities conducted and results achieved, using ITC reporting templates.

The Consultant is obliged to provide full access to ITC external and internal auditors to documents and information. In addition, the contractor shall comply with any audit undertaken in line with the financial regulations and rules of the United Nations.

Copyright Clause: The Consultant has to ensure that s/he has obtained the necessary permissions with regard to intellectual property rights required to perform his/her services under this consultancy contract and for the subsequent dissemination by ITC in any form. Documentary proof is to be submitted to ITC. Should any license fee be due for the use of copyrighted materials of third parties, the Consultant shall request prior written permission from ITC. S/he has further to ensure to obtain accreditation to event(s), if required.

**EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND TIMELINES**

1. Review and assess current trends in freelancing and entrepreneurship both within and outside Japan with Japanese (in addition to one advanced country in this field to be identified together with the expert) non-governmental organizations and/or Japanese private companies, and identify partners, buyers, investors, and/or any key actors in the incubation and freelancing ecosystem by 30.09.2023 (subject to change).

2. Develop communication materials targeting Japanese audience by 30.09.2023 (subject to change).

3. Develop recommendations and connect local counterpart(s) with potential investors, institutions, companies and/or buyers by 28.02.2024 (subject to change).

**TRAVEL:** Potential travel
**Requirements**

**Education:**

Advanced university degree in business administration, management, economics, or a related field. Extensive relevant experience may be accepted in lieu of the university degree.

**Required Experience:**

A minimum of four years of relevant experience in managing and/or supporting entrepreneurship, freelancing and/or incubation is required. Experience in communications, external relations, including donor engagement, or related fields is required.

**Additional Experience:**

Experience in supporting small businesses, including start-ups and entrepreneurs in the State of Palestine and/or other countries in the Arab region is desirable. Experience in developing materials for external communications is desirable.

**Skills:**

Familiarity with Japanese and Palestinian and/or Middle Eastern business culture is required. Network within Japan’s incubation and innovation ecosystem is desirable. Strong communication and coordination skills are required.

**Language:**

Advanced English and Japanese are required. Knowledge of Arabic would be an advantage.

*ITC champions workforce diversity, inclusion, gender equality and gender parity and considers all qualified persons - of all genders - equally, including those with disabilities, without discrimination or prejudice of any kind.*