UNDP Cameroon COVID-19 Response Fund

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Recruitment of a structure for the organization of a virtual start-up weekend to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic in Cameroon

A. Background

The outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a novel coronavirus that was first detected in Wuhan City, China in December 2019 has now been detected in 210 countries across all continents. The first laboratory-confirmed case was reported in Cameroon on 6 March 2020. Since then, the epidemiological situation has evolved rapidly. Cameroon has one of the fastest-rising coronavirus infection rates in Africa, tallying more than 1,800 cases and 61 deaths as of April 30th. It also has ongoing conflicts in three regions – the Far North, North West, and South West – which is complicating the response.

Despite the significantly high reproduction capability of the virus, the Government of Cameroon acted swiftly and put containment and mitigation measures in place to limit transmission and to slow down the spread of COVID-19. The Ministry of Health introduced 13 restrictive measures, including mandatory self-isolation for people returning from abroad, closure of schools, closing of bars and restaurant at 6 pm, restricted movement, mandatory social distancing in addition to a travel abroad ban and closure of borders.

Despite measures taken, the latest developments unveiled increased risk of spread of COVID-19 across the Cameroonian territory. Below are the three major risks identified for Cameroon:

- Weak Healthcare system: The Cameroonian under-resourced hospitals and fragile health systems are likely to be overwhelmed. Indeed, the healthcare system exhibits gaps that make it extremely difficult to scale up a response across the country. Shortages of health workers and lack of life-supporting medical equipment exposes the country to a severe COVID-19 outbreak.

- Lack of Government Trust: Adoption of public health measures such as social distancing amongst the population is closely tied to trust in the government. If citizens do not trust the data on transmission rates, then they are less likely to cooperate, contributing to alternate narratives of the severity of the disease.

- Economic slow-down:
  - Urban-based sectors: Urban sectors of the economy (manufacturing and services) are expected to be hit hard leading to substantial losses in productive jobs. Urban consumption and expenditure (of food, manufactured goods, utilities, transport, energy and services) is likely to experience a sharp fall considering COVID-related lockdowns and reduced restrictions
  - Agriculture-based sectors: Vulnerable groups including small-scale farmers, pastoralists, and fishers might be hindered from working their land, caring for their livestock, or fishing. They will also face challenges accessing markets to sell their products or buy essential inputs or struggle due to higher food prices and limited purchasing power.
Prolonged unrest in the North-West, South-West and Far North regions, compounded by poor governance and lack of resources have left national health systems profoundly ill-prepared to fight an epidemic such as COVID-19. The global outbreak has the potential to trigger widespread unrest and severely test international crisis management systems. Ongoing conflict in these regions has deeply divided societies and damaged the social fabric and cohesion. The COVID-19 response therefore needs to factor in that any programmatic action will be understood through local conflict sensitivities. Local populations will appraise and measure any response in terms of wider conflict divisions, which will determine how help is received.

Moments of crisis can also provide turning points. Creative thinking on how to address COVID-19 and conflict together could play a game-changing role in appeasing the ongoing conflicts in the North-West, South-West and Far North regions of Cameroon and will strengthen the existing initiative of Recovery and Reconstruction that UNDP has undertaken. Bringing together leading innovators and entrepreneurs from across the country is crucial to find creative local solutions to the COVID-19 pandemic and fill serious gaps in the national response. Innovators have the capacity to design and implement innovative solutions in addition to providing technological products or services designed to limit or even overcome the effects of the pandemic.

B. About the call for proposal

UNDP Cameroon COVID-19 Response Fund provides an allocation to support the emergence of innovative solutions to the COVID-19 pandemic in Cameroon. Solutions may range from strengthening health systems, encouraging increased coordination or supporting socio-economic recovery.

UNDP Cameroon seeks to recruit a structure with expertise and experience in the organization of innovation challenges (hackathons, start-up week-ends, start-up challenges etc.). Given current sanitary circumstances the structure must organize the start-up weekend virtually (through the use of Zoom, Microsoft Teams or any other platform). The challenge must be organized rapidly (maximum end of May) and UNDP will finance the top 3 ideas. This initiative strives to leave no one behind and to reach the most remote and vulnerable communities, including the urban poor and inhabitants of conflict-affected regions (North-West, South-West and Far North).

Interested national and international structures are welcome to submit their bids containing a detailed technical proposal and a financial proposal. These can include:

- Private companies (national or international)
- Firms or business councils
- Incubators / laboratories of public or private companies (national or international)
- National or international organizations
- Academic organizations
C. Application file

1. Technical offer

Your offer needs to be in line with UNDP’s COVID-19 Response Plan that you can find in a separate document, attached to the online offer.

Your technical offer must include:
- Activity understanding note
- Presentation of the methodology to be used, including a schedule for the completion of the mission and the milestones and the technical/human resources (experts, mentors) to be mobilized
- A portfolio of the sponsor's structure or CV (fairly succinct and should highlight the required experience and skills that would be relevant to the engagement).

You must focus exclusively on the following outputs and corresponding activities to build your methodology:

Output 1: Operational and institutional capacities of the Health system improved to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak
- Public Health actions (Activity 1.3 and 1.4 in the Response Plan)

Output 2: Inclusive and Integrated Crisis Management and Response: Strengthened capacity of the Government to manage and respond to the crisis in an inclusive and integrated manner
- Communication and awareness raising on the prevention of health risks (Activity 2.2 and 2.3 in the Response Plan);
- Create information sharing platforms to fight against COVID-19 (Activity 2.8 in the Response Plan).

Output 3: The socioeconomic effects of the outbreak on vulnerable populations are mitigated by interventions at the policy and community level
- Basic needs support to vulnerable households of affected communities (Activity 3.3 in the Response Plan)
- Prevention from socio-economic impact of the health crisis (Activity 3.4 and 3.7 in the Response Plan).

Note: Additional information may be requested to applicants whose technical offer has been judged admissible.

2. Financial offer

The financial offer may be made in US Dollars and CFA francs. It will detail the following items:
- Fees
- Communication expenses
- Travel if needed and other to be specified.
D. Duration of the mission

The selected structure is expected to organize the activity within two weeks at maximum from the date of signature of the contract.

E. Deliverables

The following deliverables are expected from the mission:
- An activity report detailing the number of people reached by the communication; the total number of participants; the progress of the activity; the technical/human resources (experts, mentors) mobilized;
- A list of the best projects (innovative and easy to implement). An advantage will be given to projects with a finalized prototype.
- A shortlist of the top 5 projects
- A proposal for monitoring the implementation of the projects to be funded

UNDP will consider the best offer based on the technical and financial proposal and the promoter shall be contacted.

Proposals can be completed in English or French and submitted via the following email address: Procurement.cameroon@undp.org