

Call for proposals for Finnpartnership's human rights consultancy voucher 2020-2021

1. Background

The Finnish Business Partnership Programme, Finnpartnership, provides advisory services for the business activities of Finnish companies in developing countries as well as financial support in the planning, development and training phases of a project. The support can be granted to Finnish companies and other organisations for commercially viable, long-term activities aimed at economic cooperation in developing countries. All projects should contribute to positive developmental effects in the target country.

Finnpartnership's mission is to increase commercial cooperation and promote business partnerships between companies in Finland and in developing countries and hence help to achieve positive developmental effects in developing countries. Developing countries are the ODA recipients listed by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The principles of development effects are used in the project assessment. In addition, the development effects of the projects are assessed according to separate social and environmental performance standards.

The main principle in projects supported by Business Partnership Support is their compliance with internationally accepted social and environmental standards as well as local legislation related to environment, employee rights etc. Social and environmental assessment criteria are based on International Financial Corporation's (IFC) Performance Standards on Social & Environmental Sustainability (see also EHS Guidelines). Adjusting to higher standards can be an asset for the project.

It is vitally important for the overall feasibility of a project to take social and environmental sustainability into account at the very beginning of project planning, especially if external financing is required. Support can be applied and granted for social and environmental assessments already at the pre-feasibility study stage. Projects are classified according to their potential social and environmental impacts (A - high/B - medium/C - low).

Key challenge:

- **Supporting the sustainability of the Business Partnership Support projects is a crucial part of Finnpartnership's work. Finnish companies, predominantly SMEs, applying for grant-based government funding have different levels of capabilities in taking environmental and/or social aspects into account. At the moment, Finnpartnership offers project-specific E&S consultancy voucher for projects which are considered riskier either in terms of environmental or social aspect of the project. However, Finnpartnership is now in the process of deepening the knowledge on the social and human rights issues of the granted projects and via this aims to support sustainability of the projects. For this reason, Finnpartnership will start to offer human rights consultancy voucher, which will specifically concentrate on social and human rights aspects. The voucher will be offered for granted projects which are considered to possibly have higher risks related to the social/human rights issues.**

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA)/Finnpartnership has decided to integrate the human rights issues voucher consultancy in the framework of Finnpartnership Support Facility and is now seeking potential service providers.

In 2020, applications can be received at any time of the year, but the processing of the applications happens in six application periods: in January-February, March-April, May-June, July-August, September-October and November-December. Typically, Finnpartnership processes around 20 to 30 applications during each period.

Only applicants who receive a positive Discretionary Government Transfer Decision from the MFA are eligible for the voucher consultancy. Projects with an E&S category A (high risk) will be offered the voucher, however Finnpartnership will use discretion as regards to the E&S needs and capabilities of the applicant company when commissioning assignments. Hence, also B (medium risk) and C (low risk) projects may be offered the voucher.

2. Objectives and scope

The overall objective of the voucher consultancy is to assess and raise the level of awareness of the applicant with regards to potential social/human rights aspects of their project.

The E&S voucher allows the applicant to use external consultancy services for conducting a preliminary analysis of social issues, including key social risks, impacts and opportunities, which should be taken into consideration in their project. By integrating the voucher concept in the Support Facility and providing an expert/consultant opinion on the quality and credibility of information on social and human rights aspects, Finnpartnership aims to contribute to positive social development in the target countries and leverage added value on E&S issues to Finnish companies.

A voucher consultancy process has the following objectives:

- Providing the basis for a more in-depth analysis of social issues/risks in the area of human rights. The voucher report can be used as a preliminary listing for the planning of a more in-depth analysis or ESIA. The result will not be an exhaustive analysis; the voucher is intended for orientation purposes only.
- Consultant provides suggestions for any next steps that should be taken and useful sources and links that can be of assistance and guides the applicant towards these next steps.
- Further recommendations to the applicant and Finnpartnership

The preliminary analysis will be based on information made available to the consultant, to allow a preliminary screening of social/human rights aspects to be taken into account during the project.

3. Deliverables

Key deliverable of the consultancy is a final report that gives concrete guidance for the applicant in managing applicant's project-relevant social risks, especially related to human rights issues and impacts, and in ensuring generally the sustainability of the applicant's project. The final report can be in Finnish or English depending of the need of the applicant. The report includes concrete guidance on applicable E&S standards, country-specific requirements, and sector-specific best practices for the applicants.

The consultant will:

- prepare a list of the needs for assessing and managing social/human rights aspects of the applicant's project, considering the specific sector and target country (/countries)
- give guidance on finding further information for the implementation of the analysis of social issues during project's preparation and life cycle
- provide guidance for the applicant on the budget necessary to ensure proper assessment and management of social risks, considering the type and scope of the project and the operating environment of the project
- provide suggestions for any next steps that should be taken and useful sources and links that can be of assistance and guides the applicant towards these next steps
- further recommendations to the applicant and Finnpartnership

The preliminary analysis will be based on information made available to the consultant and online resources. Finnpartnership reserves the right to accept or reject the report of the consultant.

Finnpartnership provides an introductory note regarding the voucher exercise to the applicant.

Assignment workflow includes at least, but not limited to, the following general steps:

- Finnpartnership provides an introductory note regarding the voucher exercise to the applicant.
- Consultant establishes contact with the applicant and collects available information and carries out
 - Desk Study
 - Interview(s)
 - Reporting (approved by Finnpartnership)
 - Wrap-up with the applicant, preferably face-to-face
 - Applicant feedback to Finnpartnership

4. Duration of the consultancy

Finnpartnership issues a framework contract for the voucher consultancy with several consultants until the 31st of December 2021.

Every assignment will be commissioned separately.

Time needed for each voucher assignment is estimated to be 1 to maximum 2 days for the consultant.

5. Voucher consultant qualifications and expertise required

The work will be commissioned on a given project only after receiving notice of a positive Discretionary Government Transfer Decision from the MFA. An adequate number of consultants should be designated for the work.

The consultant(s) should have the following:

- a higher university degree e.g. in development and environmental economics, financing, social studies, or human rights
- solid understanding of internationally accepted social and environmental performance standards, E&S impact assessments

- solid understanding and knowledge of human rights issues of projects run in developing country context
- specific business sector expertise and country knowledge/cultural sensitivity
- understanding of the Finnish development policy objectives and principles and implementation of the human rights based approach (HRBA) in Finland's development cooperation

6. Project responsibilities and management

Finnpartnership Business Partnership Support applications are received on a demand-based practice. Finnpartnership does not guarantee that an assignment is given to the consultant. Finnpartnership does not commit to any minimum procurement quota or allocation per consultant company.

Send your proposals by 5th of June 2020 to fp@finnpartnership.fi. Please enclose designated key personnel responsible for the voucher related consultancy activities and their CV's in the proposal, as well as applicable project references. Highlight your experience in human rights issues, focus sectors and specific country experience in the proposal. Also include fee per day (EUR). For inquiries related to the human rights voucher consultancy and the call please contact Senni Muiniekkka, Programme Officer, p. 040 749 2529.

Finnpartnership will assess proposals, notify selected consultants and commence contractual arrangements during June-July 2020.