

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix – Travail – Patrie

AGENCE DE PROMOTION DES PETITES ET MOYENNES
ENTREPRISES

DIRECTION GENERALE

DIVISION DE LA CREATION D'ENTREPRISE



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace – Work - Fatherland

SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES
PROMOTION AGENCY

GENERAL DIRECTORATE

DIVISION OF ENTERPRISE CREATION

**CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF
INTEREST IN THE
PROTOTYPING SUPPORT FUND**

MECHANISM TO FACILITATE THE INITIATION OF INNOVATIVE PROJECTS BY SMES AND
ENTERPRISE CREATORS IN CAMEROON

Procedures for the submission, evaluation and selection of Experts and
Service Providers to support project owners and SMEs in the swift
prototyping process

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST No. _____

FOR THE SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT OF EXPERTS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS IN SWIFT PROTOTYPING, IN ORDER TO ASSIST SMEs AND PROJECT OWNERS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROTOTYPING SUPPORT FUND

1. BACKGROUND

Within the framework of its missions to facilitate business creation and promote inclusive entrepreneurship in Cameroon, the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Promotion Agency (SMEPA) has designed systems and mechanisms aimed at developing entrepreneurship and strengthening national business incubation policy.

To this end, the Programme for the Promotion of Entrepreneurial Spirit among Youths has been operational since 16 May 2016 and has already benefited nearly 4,350 young Cameroonians from various backgrounds and social strata in urban, peri-urban and rural areas in the nation's 10 Regions, taking into account the diversity of the local economic fabric and the plurality of promising sectors.

In the same vein, an Integrated Incubation Process has been developed to professionalise ventures and streamline businesses and good practices in business incubation in Cameroon.

All these specific programmes thus make up a wide range of non-financial services designed to encourage, structure, develop and perpetuate entrepreneurship. This approach is based on entrepreneurial spirit or business culture, with a particular emphasis on promoting innovations. The goal is to continuously bring out new generations of Cameroonian entrepreneurs and creators of innovative and sustainable enterprises.

Moreover, looking at the sectoral issues that the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper seeks to resolve, in a context where Cameroon wants to accelerate its Industrialisation Process (see Master Plan for Industrialisation), it seems right and appropriate to encourage the emergence and implementation of innovations, the promotion of productive investments or the improvement of the competitiveness of SMEs in the industrial sectors, including through collaborative projects to boost all these promising sectors. This shift is based on some promising growth sectors, systematically taking into account their respective value chains and the establishment of clusters and other economic activity zones.

Based on the foregone, the SME Promotion Agency has set up a Support Fund for Prototyping, known as PROTO-FUND. This is a new mechanism that has been developed to facilitate the initiation of innovative projects by SMEs and Cameroonian project idea carriers whose relevance, usefulness, feasibility and potential for growth or profitability have been proven. This will enable Cameroon and all its Local and Regional Authorities to have not only solid economic sectors, structured in particular around competitiveness hubs and clusters, but also a strong R&D capacity giving priority to collaborative projects.

The said PROTO-FUND comes downstream of the Programme for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship Spirit among Youths (PE2MJ) and mid-way through the integrated incubation process, as well as within the framework of other non-financial services developed and disseminated by SMEPA and other government institutions and partners. The purpose of this PROTO-FUND is to reduce (1) the early mortality rate of SMEs after their creation, (2) the rate of abandonment of innovative projects led by youths, due to a lack of financial resources and technical assistance, and (3) the difficulties of SMEs and project carriers in accessing finance.

By allowing SMEs and innovative project carriers to develop various prototypes of forms, uses and beta-prototypes, they will be able to legally have (1) intellectual property assets that can generate a serious possibility for equity contributions or (2) movable and immovable securities that can serve as collateral and thus increase their ability to access professional credits. This is also a practical and certain way of addressing the issue of SMEs' limited access to finance.

As part of its 2019 Annual Performance Plan, the Agency will mobilise part of its budget to make payments to Consultants specializing in technical assistance or support for swift prototyping.

The general objective of the Consultant/Provider's mission is to mobilise his/her expertise and infrastructure in order to provide assistance or support, on the basis of the Terms of Reference and Specific Technical Specifications, to SMEs and project carriers until the various outputs described in their roadmap are achieved. This may be a Proof of Concept, a pre-series or a final prototype ready for marketing.

2. SUBJECT OF THE CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS

This Call for Expressions of Interest aims at selecting national and international firms, consulting firms or individual consultants to assist SMEs and innovative project carriers in their swift prototyping process, which should lead in particular to:

- Developing a physical model (model, prototype, sample, specimen, beta version...);
- Manufacturing a pre-series for a market test in a real situation;
- Finalising an existing prototype for marketing;
- Making recommendations and formulating strategies, through action plans or business plans for industrialisation and support for the growth of products developed or in the final marketing phase.

N.B: Applications from women and physically challenged persons are strongly encouraged.

3. MISSIONS OF THE CONSULTANT

On the basis of specifications specific to each project, the consultant's mission is to provide technical assistance to SMEs or project carriers receiving support from the Fund in order to:

- either facilitate the manufacture or final work of a physical model (model, prototype, sample, tooling, application and beta version) within a very short deadline, at optimal cost and with the efficiency of tools and intermediate steps in the production process,
- or arrive at a Proof of Concept to know if the proposed service or product meets a real need and if the business model is viable. This Proof of Concept consists of elements relating to the validation of the business model, financial projections, the profitability of the products/services offered, and the analysis of development costs.

Specifically, the technical support of the Expert or Service Provider will increase the chances of success of innovative projects by focusing on the design and development cycle of a product/service to:

- ✓ Detect possible design problems as early as possible, without major effects on the final cost;
- ✓ Test alternative solutions (technological choices for the part, processes used for its manufacture...);
- ✓ Quickly validate the industrial feasibility of the product and optimise the shapes and cost of future tools required for its mass production, thus minimising the risk of modifications during industrialisation;
- ✓ Refine the operational characteristics of the product (mechanical, aerodynamic, aesthetic, ergonomic, etc.) through full-scale tests on a physical prototype;
- ✓ Have a rest object, and thus avoid the arbitration of possible conflicts or the parallel development of process and process elements inherent to each business line (obtaining the raw material, machining, metrology, assembly, packaging...);
- ✓ Develop and have a Proof of Concept that shall enable funds to be raised in a bid to strengthen the marketing and sales sector;
- ✓ Attract potential investors more easily and facilitate the mobilisation of financing for its production and marketing;

- ✓ Arouse the interest of the State in public financing/investment if the project turns out to of national interest.

4. PARTICIPATION

Only national and international private consultants, firms, designing offices based in Cameroon can participate in this pre-qualification.

5. BENEFICIARIES

They are mainly made up of SMEs and project carriers based in Cameroon or SMEs to be created in Cameroon:

- ✓ Existing SMEs (engaged in an innovation process);
- ✓ Newly created innovative SMEs or legalised start-ups; and
- ✓ Carriers of innovative project ideas or yet to be legalised start-ups.

6. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING BIDDERS

- **Elimination Criteria**
 - Incomplete or non-compliant administrative file;
 - False declaration or falsified documents;
 - No methodological note;
 - Submission of a project proposal as a candidate for the Proto Fund Call for Projects¹ ;
 - Technical score less than seventy-five (75) points out of one hundred (100)
- **Essential Criteria**

The quality of the technical offers will be assessed over 100 points based on the following criteria:

| No. | Criteria | | | |
|-----|--|------------|---|------------|
| | Firm/Designing Offices | Points | Consultant | Points |
| 1 | Relevant qualifications and experience of key personnel | 30 | Relevant qualifications and experience of the Consultant | 35 |
| 2 | Relevant references of the Firm / Designing Office | 10 | Relevant references of the Consultant | 10 |
| 3 | Understanding of the mission | 25 | Understanding of the mission | 25 |
| 4 | Presentation of the file | 10 | Presentation of the file | 10 |
| 5 | Availability of adequate and functional infrastructure or facilities (own technical equipment and logistics), related to the field of activity concerned | 25 | Partnership or successful relationship with one (or more) organisation(s) with adequate and functional infrastructures or facilities (technical equipment and logistics) related to the field of activity concerned | 20 |
| | Total | 100 | Total | 100 |

¹ See: Decree No. 2018/355 of 12 June 2018 to lay down the general rules and regulations governing contracts in public enterprises and public establishments– Article 72-Sub-paragraph (3): A consultation mission shall not be entrusted to an individual consultant likely to be in a situation of conflict of interest.

7. TENDER FILE

The SME Promotion Agency invites interested firms, designing offices or private consultants with an established reputation to express their interest and provide a file presented in two anonymously sealed envelopes.

- **The first envelope, known as "Envelope A", shall be labelled "Administrative Documents" and shall contain the following documents:**

| Firms and Designing Offices | Private Consultants |
|--|---|
| The Declaration of Intent to Submit, presented on the Letterhead of the Firm/Design Office, specifying the fields and type of competence prototyping, addressed to the Director General of the SMEPA | A Letter of Motivation duly signed by the Consultant, specifying the fields and type of prototyping competence, addressed to the Director General of the SMEPA |
| Legalised photocopy of the promoter's national ID Card | Legalised photocopy of the consultant's national ID Card |
| Photocopies certified by the competent services of the Trade Register or Certificate of Non-Failure, A Business License Tax or Debt Clearance Certificate, A Taxpayer Card, the Certificate of Non-Exclusion from Public Contracts Regulatory Agency (ARMP), the Certificate for Tender (NSIF) | Photocopies of the Consultant's taxpayer card, as well as the Certificate of Non-Revenue or Certificate of Debt Clearance, the Certificate of Non-Exclusion from Public Procurement certified by the competent services |
| | Certificate of Availability |
| Certified copies of the certificates of experts | Certified copy of the Consultant's last or highest Degree |
| Legalised location plan | Legalised location plan |
| Certificate of Bank Domiciliation | Certificate of Bank Domiciliation |
| A Letter of Commitment not to participate or a Declaration of Exemption, not to have participated, as a bidder to the Proto-Fund Call for Proposals | A Letter of Commitment not to participate or a Declaration of Exemption, not to have participated, as a bidder to the Proto-Fund Call for Proposals |

The required administrative documents listed above must, under pain of rejection, be produced in certified photocopies and be less than three (03) months old.

- **The second envelope, known as the "Envelope B", shall be labelled "Technical Offer" and shall contain a technical document comprising:**

| Firms and Designing Offices | Private Consultants |
|--|--|
| The Declaration of Intent to Submit, presented on the Letterhead of the Firm/Design Office, specifying the fields and type of competence prototyping, addressed to the Director General of the SMEPA | A Letter of Motivation duly signed by the Consultant, specifying the fields and type of prototyping competence, addressed to the Director General of the SMEPA |

| | |
|---|--|
| A document presenting the firm and CVs of the main experts | A detailed CV of the Consultant |
| Certified copies of the certificates of experts | Certified copy of the Consultant's last or highest Degree |
| References and supporting documents of the firm and experts in terms of work carried out in prototyping or design and development of industrial and technological products/services | Consultant's references and supporting documents in terms of work carried out in prototyping or design and development of industrial and technological products/services |
| The material resources available at the Firm/Designing Office | A Letter of Commitment not to participate or a Declaration of Exemption, not to have participated, as a bidder to the Proto-Fund Call for Proposals |
| A Letter of Commitment not to participate or a Declaration of Exemption, not to have participated, as a bidder to the Proto-Fund Call for Proposals | -//- |

At the end of this request for expression of interest, a short list of pre-qualified consultants to bid will be drawn up and sent to them by correspondence.

8. SUBMISSION OF TENDERS FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION

The bidding files written in English or French will be submitted in five (5) copies, one (01) of which must be original and in accordance with the requirements of the consultation file, must be submitted in a sealed close envelope, against receipt, to the General Directorate of SMEPA, located in Yaoundé, TSINGA neighbourhood, at "Boulevard du Sultan NJOYA", no later than 20 July 2020 at 14:00 PM prompt.

The administrative file (Envelope A) and technical file (Envelope B) must be placed in a single, anonymous envelope bearing only the following:

“CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST No...../CEI/SMEPA/OF..... FOR THE SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT OF EXPERTS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS IN SWIFT PROTOTYPING, WITH A VIEW TO SUPPORTING SMES AND PROJECT CARRIERS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROTOTYPING SUPPORT FUND "TO BE OPENED ONLY DURING THE BID-OPENING SESSION

9. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information may be obtained during working hours from the Division of Enterprise Creation (DCE) of SMEPA, via the following telephone and e-mail contacts: Tel : +2376 72 881 088 / 655 373 998
E-mail : fonds-proto@apme.cm / fondsproto@gmail.com.

The Director General of SMEPA