

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Short Term Technical Advisory: Product Development Mentor

BACKGROUND

Zimbisa is a private sector advocacy programme funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) with the aim of improving the quality and quantity of business advocacy and Public-Private Dialogue, resulting in an improved environment for entrepreneurs and small businesses in Zimbabwe. Over its 3 year duration, *Zimbisa* will work to support key participants in the advocacy 'system', including:

- Business Membership Organisations (BMOs) and the business media (demand-side);
- Government Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs) (supply-side);
- Research institutions and think-tanks (information/service providers to the demand and supply sides).
- Service providers to the above market players (such as facilitators, communication experts, trainers, etc.)

The support provided by *Zimbisa* to its partners focuses on improving their market strategies to successfully and sustainably fulfil their core business, which is to produce and disseminate evidence to inform policy making. In doing so, *Zimbisa* is careful not to influence its partners' priorities. It acts as a facilitator in the system and does not directly perform functions that should be performed by the actors themselves.

The overall vision for *Zimbisa* is that by the end of the programme dialogue will take place on a recurrent and sustainable basis between an ever-increasing number of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and Business Membership Organisations (BMOs) across Zimbabwe, resulting in an improved legal, policy and regulatory environment for business.

Development of New Business Environment (BE) Products

Presently, RIs do not adequately serve the MDAs, BMO and media sectors, in particular due to their scepticism of the validity of these markets, their consequent lack of engagement, their lack of sales and marketing skills and their lack of product development skills. As a result the MDAs, BMO and Media sectors do not have a strong understanding of the value of research, have little incentive to commission research and, even if they were to, have few useful products at their disposal. As a result there is a gap in research commissioning which could serve members, the public, the poor and policy discourse in general.

A root cause to the feeble ability of RIs' inability to develop products for BE, is their weak understanding of the actual needs of this set of clients and the audience these clients aim to reach. The current point of departure and focus taken by RIs in developing a new piece of research is the research technique that they will adopt, the sampling size and other research technicalities, all of which make a marginal contribution to the way the product will actually be read, understood and used. The products that RIs currently design and develop, therefore, tend to all be similar to each other in structure, language and research technique adopted. This restricts the ability of the RIs to segment the market and reach out to more audiences, by developing products of different nature, input costs and price. In order to help RIs think "out of the box" when it comes to product development, new product ideas need to be generated in the market from international experiences, and through a closer interaction with clients involved in the BE space.

Zimbisa proposes to intervene to correct this challenge through two parallel approaches: the first will provide training to RIs on how to develop new products tailored for BE issues. The training will help to identify potential partner RIs whom Zimbisa will support (through technical assistance and co-funding) in piloting these products with MDAs, BMOs and other BE actors. The second set of activities will consist in working with the pilot RIs in launching and marketing the new products.

The adoption and commercialisation of new products will not only help RIs better serve their clients and open up a BMO market which has historically been under-developed, they will also allow RIs to better access particular groups, including women and the poor, thus providing the opportunity for new research to be more inclusive.

OBJECTIVE

Zimbisa wants to address the shortage and quality of business research products useful for policy advocacy and capable of influencing policy.

The objective of this assignment is to stimulate changes in the way research institutions think about business environment research. It aims to create an appreciation amongst research partners of the existence of a viable business research market and create the supply of useful products for such market.

During this process, this assignment aims to help research institutions improve the design, packaging and pricing of research products, capable of meeting their clients' expectations and thus stimulating continuous demand for such products.

OUTPUTS & METHODOLOGY

This assignment will involve hands-on, tailor made, support to each of Zimbisa's research partners involving:

1. Conducting an analytical review of partners to determine capacity for BE product development based on partner resources, strengths, quick win opportunities etc;
2. Assisting partners to identify new business environment research opportunities;
3. Assisting partners to evaluate appropriateness of current product design and pricing models;
4. Assisting partners to develop and conduct a systematic client assessment to determine client's research needs;
5. Using the co-creation process, assisting partners to develop new or redesign existing business environment research products useful in policy advocacy and capable of influencing policy formulation;
6. Assisting partners to pilot the use of innovative research tools and launch developed products.

QUALIFICATIONS

Essential:

- A master's degree in a relevant discipline (e.g. economics, business, political science, development studies, etc.);
- Proven understanding of the business and operations of research organisations and think-tanks;
- Proven understanding of markets and market systems;
- Proven experience in product development;
- Capacity to think strategically and “out of the box”, and bring innovation to think-tank management and operations;
- Excellent qualitative research skills;
- Excellent communication skills and demonstrated ability to coach.

Desirable:

- Strategic thinking, team spirit.

TIMING & DURATION

The assignment will start on October 27th or the closest date. It is estimated that the assignment will require a total of 27 days distributed as follows:

- 20 days phased in-country product development & mentoring support for RIs;
- 7 days remote mentoring support;

RESPONSIBILITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

The consultant will report to the Research Component Manager (Rutendo Change) and Team Leader, Luca Crudeli on technical matters related to the task. Administrative matters (contracts, logistics etc.) will be the responsibility of the ASI Project Manager (Katharina Neureiter).