

Terms of Reference (TOR) for Blueprint Guide & MEL Consultant

1. Background

The Youth Innovation Circles (YIC) program is designed to support young innovators through structured mentorship, capacity-building initiatives, and technical assistance. Atypical innovators require specialised and targeted support, particularly in mentorship and coaching, as their needs differ significantly from typical startups in urban settings. Young women in rural communities, in particular, face unique challenges and require tailored mentorship support.

In many cases, assigned mentors lack rural experience and do not fully understand or connect with the local cultures and traditions that shape the thinking and business practices of these young innovators. This disconnect threatens the effectiveness of mentorship arrangements. Additionally, a key question arises: Must mentors necessarily be individuals working in the same field or value chain to provide the needed support?

This research also seeks to understand how these innovators develop solutions for local problems and create decent job opportunities within their communities. It aims to identify how the YIC can best support them in achieving this goal. Understanding their challenges and needs will help structure mentorship and support mechanisms that ensure they receive guidance suited to their specific socio-economic and cultural contexts.

This research seeks to establish a structured guide for effectively supporting atypical young innovators in rural communities, ensuring their mentorship and coaching experiences lead to meaningful growth and success.

2. Objective

The consultant will develop a comprehensive Blueprint Guide that provides structured methodologies for supporting innovators and a MEL framework to evaluate the effectiveness of program interventions.

3. Scope of Work

The consultant will be responsible for:

1. Blueprint Guide Development

- Conducting a needs assessment to identify key methodologies, tools, and strategies relevant to the YIC program.
- Designing a structured guide that provides step-by-step approaches for supporting innovators.
- Documenting case studies and best practices for innovation incubation.
- Ensuring the guide is user-friendly and applicable to various innovation hubs.

2. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Framework

- Developing indicators to track progress and effectiveness of mentorship and training.
- Designing tools for data collection and impact assessment.
- Establishing reporting mechanisms and feedback loops to ensure adaptive learning.
- Providing training to YIC staff on MEL implementation.

4. Deliverables

The consultant is expected to deliver:

- A finalized **Blueprint Guide** with methodologies and case studies.
- A structured **MEL Framework** with key performance indicators (KPIs) and assessment tools.
- A training session for YIC staff on using the MEL framework.
- A final report summarizing key findings, recommendations, and next steps.

5. Duration & Timeline

- The assignment will be conducted over a period of **8 weeks**, starting from the contract signing date.
- A detailed work plan and timeline should be submitted within the first week of the contract.

6. Qualifications & Experience

The consultant should possess:

- A Master's degree in Development Studies, Monitoring & Evaluation, Business Development, or related fields.
- At least **5 years of experience** in program evaluation, innovation support, or business incubation.
- Strong expertise in developing monitoring frameworks and training materials.
- Excellent research, writing, and facilitation skills.

7. Reporting & Coordination

The consultant will report to **Evelyn Appiah**, who oversees the Blueprint Guide & MEL component of the YIC program. Regular check-ins and updates will be scheduled to track progress.

8. Application Process

Interested candidates should submit:

- A cover letter detailing their experience and suitability for the role.
- A technical proposal outlining their approach to the assignment.
- A financial proposal detailing the consultant's fees and expected costs.
- Two references from previous relevant assignments.

The deadline for submission is **10th January 2025**.