International Labour Organization | PROSPECTS

Call for proposal

Applications to Conduct Rapid Assessment on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Labour Markets in Targeted Intervention Areas[1] of the PROSPECTS Programme in Uganda

Context

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a severe contraction in economic activity due to a combination of global supply chain disruptions, travel restrictions, measures to limit contact between persons, and the sudden decline in demand. Consumer-facing sectors have been severely affected by social distancing measures and heightened uncertainty, while the manufacturing sector has declined on account of disruptions to the inflow of raw materials. Economic activity in the trade sector has also been weighed down by the decline in external demand and supply chain disruptions, while service sectors such as finance, insurance, and information and communications are affected by the general stall in business activity and investment.

This pandemic has moved rapidly beyond an international health pandemic to heralding a global socio-economic crisis not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s.[2] According to the ILO, the pandemic is devastating labour markets, creating a disproportionate impact on certain segments of the population, [3] including women and youth.[4] Forcibly displaced populations, including refugees and host communities will be among the hardest hit.[5] The overwhelming majority of the

[1] West Nile and Western Uganda (Arua, Madi Okollo- Rhino Camp and Isingiro- Nakivale Settlement)

[2] "Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19", United Nations, March 2020: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_report_socio-economic_impact_of_covid19.pdf

[3] https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/impacts-and-responses/lang--en/index.htm

[4] Transcript of video message by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, 9 April 2020: https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sgsm20040.doc.htm

[5] "UNHCR warns social and economic consequences of pandemic may be worse than health impact", Euronews, 10 April 2020: https://www.euronews.com/2020/04/10/unhcr-warns-social-and-economic-consequences-of-pandemic-may-be-worse-than-health-impact

forcibly displaced are hosted in developing countries with limited resources and capacities to respond to such an unprecedented situation.[6]

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic refugees and host communities were confronted with a range of challenges, including loss of assets and psychological trauma, limited access to services including education, lack of opportunities, numerous protection risks and a lack of a planning horizon. Host communities, which tend to be among the poorest in their country, typically located in lagging regions, have had to pursue their own development efforts in an environment that has been transformed by a large inflow of newcomers.

These populations are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19 as they face higher rates of unemployment and underemployment and informal employment. Many refugees and host community workers are either self-employed or casual workers most often in the informal economy and will be disproportionately hit as they do not have access to paid or sick leave systems, and are less protected by conventional social protection mechanisms. The gender dimension across these populations is especially acute as women also have less access to social protection and will bear a disproportionate burden in the care economy, in the case of closure of schools or care systems. In camp and settlement settings, these situations become heightened. Furthermore, People With Disabilities (PWDs) among these populations, already at significant disadvantage in the labour market, will inevitably be more negatively affected by COVID-19 than others.

The COVID-19 crisis is also threatening peaceful coexistence within countries and between forcibly displaced and host communities. It will have an impact on social cohesion, specifically over access to services and livelihoods, which might lead to increasing social tensions. Maintaining and further investing in social cohesion efforts will be particularly important for countries experiencing fragility resulting from forced displacement.

Action is urgently needed to better understand the situation on the ground in the context of socio-economic impacts to be able to mitigate the plight of both refugees and host communities. Humanitarian assistance is of course critical, but insufficient when situations become protracted, and they need to be complemented by a development approach that is focused on the socio-economic dimensions of the crisis. The immediate short-term impacts are already placing millions of people in danger of falling into poverty,7 and the situation will require major investment to support the recovery process, helping economies, local labour markets, societies and communities recover and ensuring that the most vulnerable are protected.

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[6] The forced displacement crisis has increased in scale and complexity in recent years. According to UNHCR, there were about 70.8 million forcibly displaced persons in 2018, of whom about 25.9 million refugees and asylum-seekers.

[7] Research reveals that the economic impact of COVID-19 could push a further half a billion people into poverty unless urgent action is taken: https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/dignity-not-destitution

PROSPECTS Partnership Programme

UNICEF, UNHCR, ILO, IFC and the World Bank, in collaboration with and supported by the Government of the Netherlands, are implementing a joint and fully integrated approach to respond to the forced displacement situation in the Middle East and North Africa and the Horn of Africa by joining the partners' efforts to develop a new paradigm in responding to forced displacement crises through the involvement of development actors.

The PROSPECTS programme aims to help transform the way governments and other stakeholders, including the private sector, respond to forced displacement crises – and in particular:

(1) to enhance the enabling environment for the socio-economic inclusion of forcibly displaced persons (to mitigate their plight during years of exile and to best prepare them for their return);
(2) to enhance access to education and child protection for vulnerable children on the move; and
(3) to strengthen the resilience of host communities through inclusive socio-economic development that also benefits forcibly displaced persons. In Uganda, the partnership is focusing on Education and Skills, Jobs, Livelihoods and terprises; and, Protection with a focus on inclusion of refugees in national planning.

In this partnership, ILO brings significant expertise and experience in supporting enabling environments to underpin inclusive socio-economic growth and decent work, strengthen labour markets and promote access to improved working conditions and fundamental rights at work, including through the involvement of its tripartite national constituents. The ILO stimulates labour market demand and immediate job creation through employment-intensive investment, local economic and business development and promotion of specific value chains and market systems. It provides targeted support to labour market institutions, services and compliance and monitoring mechanisms that facilitate the integration of refugees into the labour market in accordance with its strong normative foundation of international labour standards. The ILO brings also expertise on technical and vocational education and training and on the recognition of prior learning for certifying the skills of refugees to better ensure access to the labour market, and methods for assessing labour market demand to provide the right skills to refugees needed by employers.

Objective and scope of work

As the impact of the COVID-19 crisis deepens around the world, governments, social partners, multilateral agencies, donors and other national and international stakeholders, will need support through access to relevant data on the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 at macro level. This data will be further reinforced by local impact assessments to be able to review the actual situation on the ground. For Uganda, it is crucial that he PROSPECTS Programme together with national stakeholders and others have detailed understanding of the socio-economic situation in the targeted geographical intervention areas, ie; West Nile (Arua and Madi Okollo) and Western Uganda, Isingiro. To that end, the purpose of this assignment is to support the ILO specifically and national stakeholders and PROSPECTS partners more broadly through conducting rapid assessment in these intervention areas on the impacts of COVID-19 on jobs,

livelihoods and key elements of the local socio-economic environment, including social cohesion, among others.

The assessment is expected to contribute significantly to the development of immediate responses that may contribute to repurposing Year 1 activities or at least providing evidence to better guide decision-making for Year 1 work plans, and transitions between Years 1 and 2 of the PROSPECTS Programme in Uganda. In addition, the rapid assessment is expected to assist in informing medium-term post-crisis recovery strategies for the PROSPECTS programme, supporting government, including local governments, social partners and other stakeholders in this process. It is possible that the COVID-19 crisis could undermine gains made in improved policy and programmatic responses to forced displacement, further reinforcing the importance of targeted interventions to support efforts to avoid such negative impacts.

The rapid assessments will therefore seek to:

- Assess the current impact of the COVID-19 crisis, including government prevention and containment public health measures, on local labour markets (formal and informal) and the socio-economic environment in refugee and hosting areas[8] targeted by the PROSPECTS programme; and
- Identify the needs of the targeted communities to inform the subsequent responses that may lead to repurposing of activities and work plans and guidance on potential action in both the short and medium-term. This may include for example:
  - better understanding of the delivery of WASH services to refugee, IDP and host communities to consider developing Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) responses to support these services;
  - review of either existing health care facilities and infrastructure in targeted locations or gaps in availability that might require additional EIIP support to government public health responses, assessment of effective access to those facilities when they exist for refugees and associated financial health protection;
  - better understanding the level to which COVID-19 responses have affected or closed down both formal and informal jobs and economic activities and what livelihoods activities might still be either functioning or possible, both in the short, medium and long term;
  - supporting public health awareness programmes targeting formal and informal sector workers in targeted refugee and host communities;
  - assessing cash assistance and social protection to workers and economic units (formal and informal) in all targeted refugee and host communities to identify gaps and challenges that may lead refugee and host community families to adopt negative coping mechanisms.

In relation to the point above on cash assistance and social protection, the pandemic may well create local socio-economic environments in which negative coping mechanisms, including child labour and other exploitative practices such as sexual exploitation, may appear and flourish. It

[8] The PROSPECTS Programme in Uganda is targeting Arua, Isingiro and Madi Okollo as key focus districts

may also lead to exploitation and abuse of vulnerable workers in the labour market (formal and informal) and more generally informalization of jobs and units for the minority that used to be in the formal economy. The assessments will therefore also seek information on these situations to better inform protection responses, especially in respect of the impact on women, children and PWDs.

In an ideal situation, this assessment should be conducted through a survey targeting individuals, households and enterprises (formal and informal jobs and enterprises[9]) including cooperatives, associations and other social and solidarity organisations. However, with the current lockdown in Uganda, the population for the survey ie; refugees and host communities are restricted in terms of movement and gatherings of more than five people. Hence, the need for an innovative and less risky approach for conducting this survey is in Arua, Madi Okollo and Isingiro which are focus refugee hosting districts of the PROSPECTS Programme in Uganda.

Since data is lacking in terms of labour market and socio-economic impacts, it is essential that the assessment include questions that will assist in understanding changes brought about by the impact of COVID-19 on:

▶ Employment and self-employment (formal and informal) situation by status and sector (continuation or not of economic activities) ▶ Wages, incomes and needs ▶ Existence of coping measures to address COVID-19 in work places ▶ Caring responsibilities (children, elderly, PWDs) and needs ▶ Social cohesion between host and refugee/IDP communities (negative impact through increased social tension) ▶ Social protection coverage or availability of cash-based assistance programmes (and extent to which these meet actual needs) ▶ Access to other Covid-19 policy measures for workers and their families ▶ Immediate and medium-term concerns and needs	**For individuals or households**

[9] Gathering data from individuals, households and enterprises at the same time might not be possible. Therefore, this element of the TORs will need to be adapted to what is possible in the national context.

▶ Formal (e.g. registered) or informal enterprise ▶ Type and size of business (to establish qualification under MSME categories) ▶ Output of enterprise and destination[10] ▶ Payment of wages ▶ Social security payments (if relevant) ▶ Prevention measures taken to address COVID-19 in the work place ▶ Operational status of business in current climate (e.g. current levels of capacity, sales, income, etc.) ▶ Challenges faced in continuing operations (e.g. impact of containment measures, supply chain bottlenecks, etc.) ▶ Access to Covid-19 measures to support enterprises (e.g. access to any financial relief, grants, etc.)	**For enterprises**

Questions will also be required to ensure the availability of more qualitative data, including on quality of work and enterprise activity to identify exploitation and abuse where this exists, including situations of child labour. It is possible that social tensions may arise over the delivery of support services to the different communities which could be addressed through targeted interventions to establish equitable and inclusive service delivery that may reinforce social cohesion. Overall, this data is vitally important to identify potential short and medium-term responses that can be integrated into the ILO country work plan, in collaboration with PROSPECTS partners, central and local governments, social partners and other relevant stakeholders, such as UN agencies and INGO's. Hence, the survey must also include questions to identify needs and expectations of these populations and enterprises during and in the aftermath of COVID-19.

▶ Duties and responsibilities

- Conduct desk research to review measures introduced by the governments (central and local), including those that extend to economic support on both the demand- and supply-side (sample reference sources could include ILO COVID-19 country profiles[11] and other relevant international and national sources).
- Document the regulations and procedures pertaining to the formalization of economic activities of refugees and host communities (economic units).
- Identify the different Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) organizations such as cooperatives and associations that are active and present the legal framework in which they are allowed to operate as well as the challenges they face in operating and supporting their member workers and economic units.

[10] **Note:** Locally, the direct effects of COVID-19 are going to be either through the virus, containment of the virus or supply chains. For example, enterprises in the construction sector in rural areas might be less affected than those in manufacturing in urban settings.

[11] COVID-19 and the world of work, Country policy responses, ILO, Geneva, 2020: https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/country-responses/lang--en/index.htm

- Conduct mapping/review of existing or current assessments of relevant international and national organisations, in particular UNHCR and UNICEF, and review measures being implemented for forcibly displaced populations, for example, closure of camps and restrictions on movement, and integrated these where relevant in the ILO rapid assessment.
- Develop surveys targeting individuals/workers, households and enterprises including cooperatives (formal/informal). The surveys should include questions to understand the impact of COVID-19 on local labour markets and socio-economic environments, and identify needs of refugees and host community populations to inform subsequent response actions as explained above.
- Design a rapid sampling plan to determine the sample frame, size and method to use in identifying the sample in targeted intervention areas of the PROSPECTS programme. The sample must include affected populations as relevant: refugees and host communities. Baselines may be available from the PROSPECTS Programme country partners among others.
- Based on the sample selection, conduct face-to-face, online or telephone surveys, collaborating with others as necessary to support this process, for example, UNHCR, UNICEF, and OPM as needed.
- Prepare an indicative and actionable work plan with time frame and an estimated budget for short and medium-term interventions.
- Compile raw data, clean and check these for consistency.
- Analyse data, draft an interim report based on initial analysis of data and submit for comments and inputs.
- Special attention needs to be paid to women in order to present gender-sensitive findings.
- Finalise the report based on comments and submit to the satisfaction of the ILO.

Expected deliverables and time frame

The rapid assessment will take a **maximum of 2 months** for completion from initial desk research to finalization of the report after incorporating comments from the ILO.

Deliverables	Indicative Deadline	Indicative Amount of Payment
Desk review, survey questions and methodology including the sampling plan	**Within 1 week upon signature of the contract**	40 % of the total contract amount
Final report	**Within max. 1 months upon signature of contract**	60% of the total contract amount

Desired background qualifications, experience and competences

The consultant or service company should have the following experience, expertise and competences:

- experience in primary information gathering, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with government, private sector, multilateral agencies, and other relevant key actors;
- capacity to write high quality, concise and analytical reports;
- experience in conducting labour market and socio-economic assessments (supply and demand elements of labour markets), including project and programme implementation at local level;
- experience in research activities in forced displacement settings would be an advantage, as would experience in conducting assessments in East/Horn of Africa, North Africa, Arab States (as appropriate).

Application Submission

Interested applicants should submit their technical and financial proposal as well as other supporting documents via email to the Project Finance and Administrative Assistant Ms. Helen Ayot on email via ayot@ilo.org citing "Assessment on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Refugee and Host Community Labour Markets in Uganda, as a subject latest by Friday 29th May 2020.