



Near East Foundation Call for Expression of Interest

Assignment: Call for Expression of Interest (EOI): Technical Compliance, Fundraising, and Strategic Networking Consultant for the Institutionalization of the RCF Model.

Location: Baghdad

Category: Consultancy

About NEF

The Near East Foundation (NEF) is an international non-profit organization dedicated to promoting economic development, financial inclusion, and community resilience across the Middle East, Africa, and beyond. In Iraq, NEF has been at the forefront of designing and implementing innovative programs that support entrepreneurs, small businesses, and underserved communities, particularly women-led enterprises and agribusinesses. Through its work in business development, access to finance, and workforce advancement, NEF has strengthened Iraq's private sector by fostering sustainable economic opportunities.

NEF's initiatives have focused on enhancing financial inclusion by introducing tailored financial products and business support services that enable micro and small enterprises to grow and thrive. By integrating digital financial solutions and market-driven interventions, NEF has helped businesses access essential resources, improve financial literacy, and expand their market reach. Its ongoing efforts to establish a sustainable Revolving Credit Fund (RCF) model reflect a commitment to providing affordable and accessible financing to those excluded from traditional financial systems. Through strategic partnerships and a deep understanding of Iraq's economic landscape, NEF continues to drive economic resilience and long-term growth in the country.

Purpose

The purpose of this consultancy is to support the institutionalization of the Revolving Credit Fund (RCF) Model by ensuring its technical compliance, financial sustainability, and strategic stakeholder engagement. The consultant will design the operational and technical framework, mobilize funding, and engage key governmental and non-governmental actors to facilitate the successful integration of the RCF into Iraq's financial ecosystem.

Background Information

Access to finance remains a significant challenge for micro and small enterprises in Iraq, particularly for **women-led businesses, agribusinesses, and home-based entrepreneurs**. Limited financial infrastructure, restrictive eligibility criteria, and high borrowing costs have resulted in the exclusion of many businesses from formal financial services. While donor-driven initiatives have provided short-term financial relief through grants and subsidized loans, these models have often proven unsustainable, leading to market distortions and dependency.

To address these challenges, the **Sustainable and Inclusive Access to Finance (SIAF) project**, implemented by NEF under the **ICCA initiative**, aims to develop a **locally managed, sustainable, and replicable Revolving Credit Fund (RCF) model**. This initiative builds on the success of NEF's **Women's Economic Empowerment in the Livestock Value Chain (WEEL) project**, which demonstrated the feasibility of debt financing for rural women entrepreneurs in Anbar, achieving high repayment rates and strong business outcomes. The project seeks to provide **affordable, demand-driven financial services** that empower underserved businesses while ensuring long-term sustainability.

Theory of Change

If **micro and small enterprises, agribusinesses, and women-led businesses in Anbar** gain **affordable and accessible financial services** through a **sustainable Revolving Credit Fund (RCF) model**, then they will be able to **invest in their businesses, increase productivity, and expand market opportunities**, leading to **greater economic resilience, job creation, and long-term financial stability**.

This change will be achieved through the following key interventions:

1. **Enhancing Financial Access:** By addressing barriers such as **high borrowing costs, restrictive eligibility criteria, and limited financial outreach**, the project will develop **tailored financial products** that meet the needs of underserved businesses.
2. **Developing a Sustainable Financial Model:** Through **market research, feasibility assessments, and benchmarking with global best practices**, the project will design an **RCF model** that ensures **long-term financial sustainability** and is adaptable to Iraq's economic and regulatory environment.
3. **Building Institutional and Market Linkages:** By engaging **MFIs, NGOs, banks, and policymakers**, the project will create an **enabling financial ecosystem** that fosters collaboration and investment in **inclusive lending mechanisms**.
4. **Integrating Business Development Support:** By providing **financial literacy, digital financial tools, and capacity-building services**, the project will help

businesses **manage credit effectively, reduce risks, and enhance their growth potential.**

As a result, micro and small enterprises that were previously excluded from financial systems will gain **sustainable access to capital**, enabling them to **scale operations, increase household incomes, and contribute to local economic development**. This will drive **long-term socio-economic stability** in Anbar by fostering a **resilient, self-reliant entrepreneurial ecosystem**.

Key Roles and Responsibilities:

The selected consultant will be responsible for the following:

- Developing a comprehensive fundraising and investment mobilization strategy for the RCF.
- Identifying and engaging donors, investors, and funding institutions to secure financial support.
- Organizing an Investor Forum to showcase the RCF model and attract funding commitments.
- Strengthening relationships with government entities to facilitate the institutionalization process.
- Conducting high-level engagement with INGOs, financial institutions, and private sector actors to promote collaboration.
- Designing the operational and technical framework for the RCF model, ensuring its alignment with best practices and financial sustainability.
- Developing a monitoring and performance evaluation mechanism to track the effectiveness of the RCF's implementation.

Expected Deliverables

- A structured fundraising and donor engagement plan.
- A detailed donor and investor mapping and outreach report.
- Planning and execution of an Investor Forum event.
- Engagement strategy and record of consultations with government and non-governmental stakeholders.
- Contribution to the development of a technical and operational blueprint for the RCF model
- A performance monitoring framework to assess the effectiveness of the RCF.

Qualifications & Experience

- Degree in Business Administration, Finance, Development Studies, or related fields.
- Proven track record in fundraising, investment mobilization, and donor relations.
- Demonstrated experience in strategic networking with governmental and non-governmental actors.
- Strong proposal writing and presentation skills.
- Experience in designing operational and technical models for financial and development programs.
- Knowledge of the Iraqi financial and institutional landscape is an asset.

How to Apply

Interested firms must submit their applications to the Near East Foundation careers page no later than March 31st, 2025:

<https://neareast.bamboohr.com/careers/445?source=aWQ9NA%3D%3D>

Application Requirements:

1. Cover Letter – Outlining relevant experience, expertise, and availability.
2. CV – Showcasing relevant experience, key qualifications, and expertise in compliance, fundraising, and stakeholder engagement.
3. References – At least two references from previous assignments of a similar nature.
4. Financial Proposal – Including a detailed breakdown of the level of effort, specifying assigned tasks and deliverables with expected daily wages (*wages are subject for negotiation when contracting based on available budget*).

Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted. Applicants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Near East Foundation and its work by visiting www.neareast.org.