TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR HIRING
A CONSULTANT TRAINER ON
'BANKING FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES' (SMES)

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Implementing Organization	Business Professionals Network (BPN)
Project Name	Supporting Women Entrepreneurs in Rwanda through Targeted Training, Mentorship and Engagement Activities
Thematic Area	SME Finance and Financial Literacy for Women Entrepreneurs
Donor	African Development Bank (AfDB)
Type of Work	Individual consultancy
Duration	24 months spanning between December 2026 and November 2028
Working Languages	English and Kinyarwanda
Reporting to	Project Manager, BPN
Application Deadline	27 November 2026, 5:00 P.M. Kigali local time

1. Introduction and Background

Business Professionals Network (BPN) is a Swiss international non-profit organization operating in five countries across three continents. It started its activities in Rwanda in 2011. BPN's main objective is to reduce unemployment by fostering entrepreneurship. Its vision is to create as many sustainable and dignified jobs as possible, thereby contributing to the sustainable development of the business sector and, ultimately, of the country.

BPN's work focuses on promoting value-based entrepreneurship, fostering values such as responsibility, commitment, honesty, reliability, diligence, transparency, integrity, and responsible use of limited resources. BPN's mission in Rwanda is to support the development of a value-based business culture and to promote sound entrepreneurship.

Project Summary

BPN, in partnership with the African Development Bank, is implementing a three-year project entitled "Supporting Women Entrepreneurs in Rwanda through Targeted Training, Mentorship and Engagement Activities." The project aims to empower women in entrepreneurship in Rwanda by:

- Encouraging and supporting women to grow their businesses and make them investment ready.
- Promoting gender equality and women in leadership in the SME ecosystem in Rwanda.

To achieve these objectives, the project is pursuing five strategies:

1. Providing training and mentorship to promising female entrepreneurs on women in business.
2. Providing training and mentorship on women's empowerment and gender equality to existing SMEs.
3. Creating and implementing a "twin sister" entrepreneur's peer-support mentor system.
4. Encouraging women to engage in business through public engagement events.
5. Training and coaching existing women-owned businesses to make them investment ready.

Women-owned SMEs in Rwanda often face constraints in understanding formal financial services, preparing bankable business proposals, keeping financial records, meeting collateral and documentation requirements, and managing credit responsibly. This assignment responds to those gaps by equipping women entrepreneurs with practical banking and finance knowledge that enables them to access finance, manage it well and become investment ready.

2. Purpose and Objectives of the assignment

BPN seeks an experienced trainer in SME banking and finance to design and deliver a practical, gender-responsive training programme.

Overall objective: To strengthen the financial literacy, banking knowledge and investment readiness of women entrepreneurs so that they can access and effectively use formal financial services to grow their businesses.

Specific objectives:

1. Develop a curriculum on banking for SMEs that is tailored to the needs and context of women entrepreneurs in Rwanda.
2. Produce participant manuals, facilitator guides and supporting training materials.
3. Deliver the training to 10 cohorts of women entrepreneurs over 24 months.
4. Assess learning outcomes and recommend follow-up support, including links to financial institutions and the twin sister mentoring system.

3. Scope of Work and Deliverables

3.1 Curriculum development

The consultant will conduct a brief training needs assessment (desk review, consultations with BPN and a sample of target participants, and interviews with selected banks and microfinance institutions) and develop a curriculum covering, at a minimum, the following modules:

- **Overview of the Rwandan financial sector:** commercial banks, microfinance institutions (MFIs), savings and credit cooperatives (SACCOs) and development finance institutions, the role of the National Bank of Rwanda, and guarantee schemes.
- **Business banking basics:** account types, payments, digital banking, mobile and agent banking, and building a banking relationship.
- **Understanding financial products:** working capital loans, term loans, asset finance, overdrafts, trade finance, leasing, guarantees and equity; interest rates, fees and repayment structures.

- **Preparing to borrow** assessing financing needs, the credit assessment process (the 5 Cs of credit), collateral and alternatives to collateral, credit history and credit reference bureaus.
- **Responsible borrowing and debt management:** repayment planning, avoiding over-indebtedness, managing arrears, and the rights and responsibilities of borrowers.
- **Investment readiness:** financial statements, business valuation basics, governance and compliance, pitching to lenders and investors, and the difference between debt and equity.
- **Risk management and insurance for SMEs.**
- **Gender-specific barriers to finance and strategies to overcome them,** including negotiation skills, confidence building and women's leadership in business.
- **Digital financial services, financial security and fraud awareness.**

The curriculum must use participatory, adult-learning methods (case studies, role plays, practical exercises, simulations with real loan applications, and guest sessions with bankers) and be gender-responsive. It must be produced in English and Kinyarwanda, or in English with Kinyarwanda adaptation of participant-facing materials, as agreed with BPN during the inception phase.

3.2 Training materials

The consultant will produce:

- **Templates and tools** for use by participants, for example a loan application template, a cash flow forecast template, a simple income statement and balance sheet template, a business record-keeping tool and a loan repayment planner.
- **A facilitator guide** with session plans, timings, methods, activities, assessment tools and tips for working with women entrepreneurs.
- **Participant manuals,** presentation slides and handouts.

All materials must be reviewed and validated by BPN before use and updated after each of the first two cohorts based on feedback.

3.3 Training delivery

The consultant will:

- Deliver the training to 10 cohorts of women entrepreneurs over 24 months, according to a delivery schedule agreed with BPN. Each cohort is expected to have approximately 25 women.

- Provide approximately two days of in-person training to each cohort.
- Facilitate sessions in Kinyarwanda, English or both, as required.
- Coordinate with BPN to link participants to banks and financial institutions, to the twin sister peer mentoring system, and to the project's public engagement events and investment readiness coaching.
- Contribute inputs to BPN's monitoring and reporting to AfDB, including success stories and lessons learned.
- Submit a final report at the end of the assignment with consolidated results and recommendations for sustaining and scaling the training.

4. Methodology and Working Arrangements

- The consultant will work under the supervision of BPN's Project Manager and in close coordination with the project team.
- BPN will handle participant recruitment, venues, logistics, and the participant's refreshment arrangements.
- The consultant must comply with BPN and AfDB policies on gender, safeguarding, ethics and confidentiality.

5. Qualifications and Experience

Required:

- A university degree (minimum Bachelor's) in banking, finance, economics, business administration, accounting or related field. A master's degree is an advantage.
- At least 7 years of relevant professional experience in SME banking, microfinance, business advisory or SME finance.
- At least 5 years of experience designing and delivering training on financial literacy, SME finance or entrepreneurship, preferably to women or underserved groups.
- Demonstrated experience developing curricula, training manuals and facilitator guides.
- Strong knowledge of the Rwandan financial sector, its products and regulations, and the challenges SMEs face in accessing finance.
- Excellent facilitation skills using participatory adult learning methods.
- Fluency in English and Kinyarwanda.
- Understanding gender issues in entrepreneurship and access to finance.

Desirable:

- A network within banks, MFIs, the Business Development Fund (BDF) and other financial institutions in Rwanda.
- Familiarity with investment readiness programmes and business development services.

6. Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated against the criteria below. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview, and the consultant is expected to start on 4th December 2026.

#	Description	Weight
1	Suitability, qualifications and experience of the consultant (supported by CV, relevant degrees, years of experience in SME banking and training, language skills, and references from previous assignments)	30%
2	Technical proposal (Understanding of the assignment, proposed approach, work plan, and approach to gender-responsive training (maximum 5 pages))	25%
3	Samples of previous work (Two to three samples of previous curricula, manuals or training reports, and/or certificates of service completion).	25%
3	Financial proposal (Clear breakdown in Rwandan Francs (RWF) of consultant fees, curriculum development, needs assessment, and training fees for 10 cohorts of about 25 women each)	20%
Total Score		**100%**

7. Application Requirements

Interested consultants should submit:

1. A cover letter expressing interest and availability.
2. An up-to-date CV highlighting relevant experience.
3. A technical proposal (maximum 5 pages) outlining understanding of the assignment, the proposed approach and the work plan.
4. A financial proposal in Rwandan Francs, with a rate and a breakdown of costs for curriculum development, the needs assessment and per-cohort delivery.
5. Two to three samples of previous training materials, curricula or training reports.
6. At least three references from previous relevant assignments.

Applications should be sent to businessacademy@bpn.rw with the subject line "*Application: Trainer on Banking for SMEs*" by 27th November 2026 at 5:00 P.M. Kigali local time.

8. Reporting and Supervision

The consultant will report to the **Project Manager, BPN**, who will review and approve all deliverables, and will meet the project team regularly to review progress.

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