

Extending the outreach of Business Development Services among rural businesses *Call for Proposals*

Project Unit: RisiAlbania – Partner for Growth

Sector: Agribusiness and agrotourism

Location: All locations in Albania

Deadline: 26th March 2021, 15:00

1. Background

The RisiAlbania Project is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), in partnership with the Ministry of Finance and Economy, and implemented by a consortium consisting of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and Partners Albania. The overall goal of the project is to contribute to an increase in employment opportunities for young women and men (age 15-29) in Albania.

. This goal will be achieved through:

- (i) enhanced growth and job creation by the private sector in three selected subsectors: agribusiness, tourism, and ICT (labour demand),
- (ii) improved access to job opportunities and labour market information and services (intermediation), and
- (iii) improved skills of young people by improving the offer of private training providers in the three selected sectors (labour supply).

Both in the **agribusiness** and in the **tourism** sectors, one of Risi's objectives is to increase the capacity of rural businesses to improve their performance by accessing growth-oriented consulting services.

2. Our vision and objective of the call for proposals

Our vision is to set the basis for a long-lasting service relationship between business service providers and rural businesses with growth potential that currently do not have access to or do not perceive the benefits of engaging Business Development Service (BDS) providers.

RisiAlbania will support BDS providers to sell their products to rural businesses. These products may include access to finance, management capacities, marketing, market linkages, food processing, traditional product know-how, certifications, safety standards, and quality assurance programs. The list is non-exhaustive.

The objective of this call is to support commercially minded BDS providers to conduct promotion activities to engage rural businesses as clients.

RisiAlbania invites interested companies (applicants) that offer BDS to the private sector to submit a proposal. Selected applicants will be eligible to receive support from RisiAlbania to introduce a sustainable service model around the provision of services to **small and medium-size rural businesses**¹ in rural areas.

¹ We are looking for proposals that will target the missing middle that currently exists for supporting rural businesses: micro businesses are served by the public administration, and large firms can afford consulting. In partnership with: Implemented by:

3. Submission of the proposals

We expect proposals to be submitted in English via e-mail by **26th March 2021, at 15:00**. Proposals handed after this deadline may be rejected by RisiAlbania.

The email must be addressed to info@risialbania.al with the subject line "BDS Call". Proposals should be sent as .pdf documents and should be signed in all pages.

For any questions you might have related the application, please write an email to info@risialbania.al with the subject line indicating "Clarification for BDS Call" before March 22nd, 2021.

4. Content of the proposals

Proposals must include the information required in the **attached business idea template** (narrative and financial). Applicants should include a concise list of services they provide to businesses in the field of grant absorption and other services emphasizing success stories.

Your **narrative** proposal must provide the following information:

- An overview of potential buyers of the services you plan to pilot and if possible a draft market segmentation;
- Your strategy to reach customers in rural areas, specifying your long-term plans to expand geographically and thematically.

Your **financial** proposal must include:

- A business plan for your company outlining the commercial viability and sustainability of the services you will provide, and the affordability of the costs for rural business, since to ensure long term viability applicants are encouraged to charge clients for the services. A three-year business model will be presented in the financial plan and you will need to cover at least 50% of the cost for promotion activities.
- You must show matching funds contribution for at least 50% of the total project costs.

Please note that **RisiAlbania does not support operational costs** (e.g, rent, salaries, utilities, etc).

The maximum contribution of RisiAlbania will be 5,000 Euro. Priority will be given to applicants with a higher share of co-investments.

5. Eligibility criteria

Eligible applicants must be registered businesses operating in consultancy in Albania. They must present evidence of at least 3 years of operation in commercial consulting (not only donors).

services.

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6. Documents to be included in the offer submission

- a) Business idea proposal ([Word format](#)) in English, no longer than 10 pages (without annexes),
- b) Financial proposal ([Excel format](#)) linked to the business idea clearly presenting the costs that will be covered by your company, and those that you expect Risi to cover, as well as revenue sources from the companies that will buy the services. The financial proposal will specify for how long Risi support will be required (maximum 6 months).
- c) CVs of the proposed team (Word format, maximum two pages per CV).

For a) and b), please use the templates provided by Risi.

7. Selection process

Shortlisted companies may be invited for an interview where certain aspects of the proposals may be discussed before a final selection is made.

The selection of the winning company / companies will be done based on the evaluation criteria below:

Evaluation criteria	Rating
Viability of the proposals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial sustainability • Affordability for buyers (rural businesses) 	25
Inclusiveness and outreach of services in rural areas , outlining women and vulnerable groups who will benefit	10
Suggested approach and methodology to reach the objectives of the call <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of the proposed team • Logic of the proposed methodology 	20
Track record and experience providing services to businesses on a commercial basis*	20
Value for money**	20
Focus on agrotourism	5
Total Points	100

* We will favour applicants that do not rely heavily on donor-funding as we want to support market players that operate on a commercial basis. RisiAlbania will not support service providers that are beneficiaries of any other donor-funded project or agency in the field of IPARD and/or AZHBR grant support.

** Applicants should note that RisiAlbania's contribution will be up to 50% of the total cost. Applications where applicants contribute higher percentages of the budget will be considered more competitive.

If the company is subject to taxation, the company alone is responsible for paying taxes/custom duties and other expenses including VAT. For services provided by third parties who are subject to VAT the company shall make a pre-tax deduction.

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