

TERMS OF REFERENCE

MARKET SYSTEMS & PRINCIPLES CAPACITY BUILDING CONSULTANCY

Background

Mercy Corps is a global non-profit organization working in more than 40 countries to support communities facing complex humanitarian and development challenges. Through its Caribbean Resilience Initiative, Mercy Corps works across Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to strengthen economic resilience in Small Island Developing States and territories. The initiative supports locally driven strategies that help communities, small businesses and local partners respond to structural economic pressures, expand opportunity and influence decision-making around inclusive growth.

The Strengthening Caribbean Economic Growth (SCEG) program responds to persistent barriers to employment, entrepreneurship and livelihood security across the Caribbean. Mercy Corps' research highlights challenges such as high import dependency, costly logistics, youth unemployment and NEET status, skills mismatches, precarious tourism employment, limited business support, weak access to finance and constraints on small business growth. In response, the program aims to build the economic strength and job skills of women, men, girls and boys aged 16 and older by supporting market-aligned workforce training, entrepreneurship and business development, digital capability, access to finance, small grants for locally led solutions, and stronger technical capacity among CSOs and local stakeholders.

Objective of the assignment

SCEG seeks a Market Systems and Principles Capacity Building Consultant to support the grantees implementing program activities in order to strengthen their capacity to design and deliver sustainable, market-driven interventions that improve job skills, employment opportunities and livelihood outcomes. The consultant will conduct group online training, provide one-on-one mentoring, and manage an in-person Pause and Reflect Workshop to help grantees understand market constraints and client opportunities, and make practical decisions about intervention design and implementation.

The consultancy should be grounded in sound market knowledge, ensuring that capacity building is directly connected to the market realities shaping each grantee's intervention. The consultant may support grantees in interpreting market data, understanding sectoral demand, identifying MSME and value chain opportunities, addressing market access barriers, and aligning workforce development pathways with sectoral needs. Through training, mentoring, and structured reflection, grantees will be supported in refining their interventions, strengthening digital and private-sector linkages, adapting to local culture and demographic realities, and improving the sustainability and measurable impact of their small-grant activities.

Activities of the Consultant

The consultant will undertake the following key activities to increase the capacity of SCEG grantees. These activities are designed to be practical, context-specific, and closely aligned with the grantees workplans in their grant agreements, longer-term goals, and current capacity. The activities will be divided in three phases:

1. Provision of group on-line (remote) training

- Engage each partner to gather a comprehensive understanding of their programming, ensuring a tailored approach is taken relevant to their organization's mission.
- Develop a remote training program on the basics of market analysis, market system development, and demand-driven support.
- Develop a training schedule that meets the timing needs and language requirements of all participants (*online sessions beginning within approximately one month of contract start, exact schedule TBD*).
- Conduct on-line training.

2. Facilitation of in-person Pause and Reflect Workshop

(tentatively planned for late 2026 or beginning 2027, pending scheduling)

- Work with the SCEG Program Manager and Market Constraints and Opportunities Consultant to develop a workplan for the in-person workshop, including prioritizing themes and activities based on on-line training.
- Develop relevant material for in-person workshop
- Facilitate relevant sessions for in-person workshop
- Facilitate structured discussions on selected interventions.

3. Provision of Focused Coaching and Follow-up Support

- Provide one-on-one coaching for SCEG grantees on individual support needs.
- If appropriate, guide them in conducting market assessments and review plans.
- Complete final report summarizing capacity of participants, possible follow-on support needs, and opportunities for programming.
- Synthesize case examples and lessons emerging from coaching engagements into a learning brief on partner market adaptability, to feed into SCEG's broader learning agenda.
- Where relevant to a partner's sector, support identification of opportunities to expand market programming toward regional and U.S. trade linkages, as part of individualized coaching on market positioning.

Estimated Level of Effort

The table below reflects Mercy Corps' anticipated level of effort (LOE) for this assignment, provided as a pricing reference for the financial proposal. Consultants should confirm or adjust the LOE in their technical proposal based on their proposed approach and workplan. Travel-related time for the in-person workshop is not included below and should be itemized separately in the financial proposal.

Phase	Activity	Estimated LOE (days)
Phase 1	Preparation for online workshops	6
Phase 1	Two half-day online workshops (English and Spanish)	2
Phase 2	In-person workshop (preparation and facilitation)	4
Phase 3	Post-workshop coaching support	2
Phase 3	Post-training report and analysis	3
Phase 3	Learning report/brief	3
	Total estimated LOE	20

Deliverables:

The consultant will provide the following prioritized outputs:

1. Training materials and workplan for group on-line training
2. Post on-line training workplan
3. Agenda and materials for in-person workshop
4. Outputs and individualized follow-up from in-person workshop
5. Final report on capacity of each grantee and possible follow-up needs
6. Learning brief/case study on partner market adaptability, synthesized from the Pause and Reflect Workshop and individual coaching engagements

Required Experience & Skills:

- 7-10 years of experience providing market system development (MSD) training, capacity building, coaching, and program development.
- Expertise in MSD, market assessments, and private sector engagement.
- Proven experience delivering remote training and coaching in MSD.
- Strong ability to understand the experience and capacity of participants and tailor training and mentoring to their abilities.
- Experience working across different geographies and contexts. Knowledge of small, island developing states preferred.
- Ability to work independently and drive workplans.
- Ability to work professionally in English.
- Willingness and ability to travel to Mercy Corps project sites.
- Familiarity with Mercy Corps' market systems programming and MSD training modules, preferred

Mercy Corps responsibilities:

- Selection and recruitment of the individual consultant
- Provide grantee scopes of work and connect the consultant to grantee focal points
- Provide logistical support for on-line meetings and finance logistics of in-person workshop

Evaluation criteria

A committee will assess and prioritize proposals using the following criteria:

- Technical proposal 70%: Relevant experience of the consultant, including experience in similar assignments, approach to the scope of work and work plan.
- Financial proposal 30%