

**Sustainable and Inclusive Economy Department**



**Terms of Reference**

**Mission to mobilise expertise in Circular Economy and Green MSME Financing**

**June 2025**

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| Countires | Africa, Asia, Middle East, Latin America and Europe |
| Maximum number of consulting days | 170 days |
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General information

I. Context

The transition to a circular economy (CE) has become an increasingly strategic priority for national governments, regional institutions, and international development actors. This shift is essential to address the growing environmental and socio-economic challenges linked to linear production and consumption patterns—particularly in high-impact sectors such as packaging, plastics, electronics, construction, biomass and agriculture. The circular economy promotes resource efficiency, waste reduction, and regenerative business models, contributing to climate resilience, green job creation, and sustainable industrialisation.

In Asia and Africa, the challenges are significant. Asia is responsible for over 50% of global plastic production and accounts for more than 80% of plastic leakage into the ocean[[1]](#footnote-1). In Africa, while the absolute volumes are lower, plastic waste is growing rapidly with an expected more than tripling by 2060[[2]](#footnote-2). Informal recycling systems remain widespread but under-supported, and formal circular value chains are still in their infancy. Across both continents, Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) play a pivotal role in shaping these emerging circular economies, particularly in waste management, sustainable packaging, green innovation, and local bio-based value chains.

Recognising this, Expertise France (EF) is increasingly engaged in programmes that support the development of enabling CE ecosystems and provide targeted financing and capacity-building to green MSMEs. CE and MSME finance are fast-growing areas within EF’s portfolio, requiring targeted technical expertise and operational support.

This mission will also support EF’s internal learning and knowledge management objectives, helping to build long-term institutional expertise in circular economy and sustainable MSME support across different regions.

**Possible supported projects**

The expert recruited under this assignment will be expected to contribute to ongoing and future EF projects, including but not limited to

* SWITCH-2-Circular Economy in Eastern and Southern Africa programme. The project promotes a transition toward a circular economy in the region by focusing on improved policy frameworks, enhanced business development services, and tailored financing instruments. The programme targets priority sectors such as packaging/plastics and e-waste value chains, supporting both public policy reforms and the scaling of sustainable business models.
* EU- PH Partnership for Green Economy in the Philippines. Expertise France’s implementation responds to the imperative to improve the engagement of the financial and private sectors in the circular economy. To this end, the two focus areas of the project are: 1) support to the private sector for circular economy innovation and transformation; 2) assistance to circular economy infrastructure projects.
* Greenov’i, Tunisia. Financed by the European Union, the project seeks to respond to the financing gap for green and circular economy initiatives. With over 6 MEUR in grant assistance, Greenov’i works with local incubators and accelerators to support private sector innovation. In parallel, a voucher programme provides access to expertise and financial assistance for equipment purchase, targeting more traditional businesses.

II. Objectives and expected results of the engagement

The objective of the contract of this expert is to provide technical support to EF projects in developing, setting up and monitoring circular economy projects, financing MSMEs activities and capacity building to EF team in Circular economy.

It is composed of three main packages:

* **Work Package 1**: Design, implementation, and monitoring of financing mechanisms (e.g., calls for projects, voucher schemes) to support green MSMEs;
* **Work Package 2**: Development of initiatives favouring private sector engagement in green and circular economy infrastructure programmes (Public Private Partnerships);
* **Work Package 3**: Reinforce the technical capacities of Expertise France partners and project teams on circular economy and green economy.

Objectives

Work package 1: To develop and pilot financial support mechanisms targeting eco-entrepreneurs and green MSMEs, in close collaboration with local Business Support Organisations (BSOs) and other grant management organisations.

Work package 2: To support municipalities and other local government structures on the design and implementation of green/circular economy infrastructure projects which attract private sector partners, notably through PPP’s

Work package 3: EF teams progressively gain confidence and autonomy on circular economy issues, enabling more productive exchanges with project partners, improved capacity to draft technical specifications, and the ability to critically engage with technical experts. EF partners may equally request capacity-building on circular economy.

III. Method and services to be rendered

Approach

The expert will work closely with Expertise France project teams from the Sustainable Inclusive Economy department based in Paris, as well as with field teams in locations such as the Philippines, Zambia, and Tunisia. Depending on the mission, the expert will report directly to Project Deputies and Project Leads in the field or to Project Officers at Headquarters.

The expert will also collaborate closely with the M&E Officer, Grants Officer(s), and other team members, fostering a cooperative and integrated approach.

Additional support will be provided by Expertise France’s headquarters, and the expert may be asked to participate in meetings involving both the project and headquarters support teams.

This assignment falls under a framework contract, and the expert will be mobilised through purchase orders based on the needs and demands of various existing, upcoming, or in-development Expertise France projects.

Finally, the expert will collaborate with other international partners as required, depending on the scope and context of each mission. A focus will be placed on local ownership and co-development with national partners.

Description of the Services and deliverables

**Work Package 1: Design, implementation, and monitoring of financing mechanisms to support green MSMEs**

**Key Activities:**

* Map and assess existing grant management organisations (including BSOs, incubators, accelerators, R&D centers, etc.) and their service offerings for green MSMEs;
* Facilitate co-construction workshops (online or in-person) with ecosystem actors to prioritise interventions and identify synergies;
* Lead the selection process for the target geographical area (LGU) and sector for the pilot phase;
* Conduct needs assessments and produce a diagnostic report identifying gaps in support for BSOs and green MSMEs;
* Provide technical support to BSOs and other interested organisations in preparing applications for the call for projects;
* Develop concept notes or detailed technical specifications for support mechanisms (e.g., voucher schemes, grant programs), including operational guidelines and eligibility criteria;
* Provide technical expertise to support the launch and operationalisation of calls for projects;
* Provide a technical evaluation of candidates for financing mechanisms;
* Offer technical guidance to organisations selected through the call for projects throughout the implementation phase.

**Expected Deliverables:**  
The deliverables and their respective due dates will be specified in each purchase order issued under the framework contract. Indicative deliverables may include:

* Grant management organisations diagnostic and ecosystem analysis report;
* Workshop facilitation report and stakeholder engagement summary;
* Pilot geographical area and sector selection report;
* Concept note or technical specification document for the green MSME financing mechanism (grant rules or others);
* Analysis report of financing candidates.

**Work Package 2: Support municipalities and other local government structures on the design and implementation of green/circular economy infrastructure projects which attract private sector partners, notably through PPP’s**

**Key Activities:**

* Conduct diagnostics and mapping of existing CE initiatives, stakeholders, legal frameworks, and institutional maturity levels;
* Engage stakeholders (public, private, institutional) through consultations, workshops, and participatory processes;
* Identify opportunities and co-develop strategic partnerships, including Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs);
* Assist local governance structures in the preparation of concept notes and other proposals for financing;
* Design, implement, and monitor pilot projects in conjunction with local governance structures;
* Identify opportunities to support local NGO’s present in implementation sites, particularly with the aim of formalising waste worker employment through PPP contracts;
* Outreach and capacity-building on PPPs as a model for circular economy infrastructure projects.

**Key Deliverables**

* Diagnostic report;
* Benchmark of pertinent PPP and PPP models;
* Technical criteria for the design of pilot projects, including the selection of locations;
* Concept notes and project proposals;
* Training materials and summary report on capacity-building and outreach activities.

**Work Package 3**: Reinforce the technical capacities of Expertise France partners and project teams on circular economy and green economy.

**Key Activities:**

* Organise thematic workshops, presenting benchmarks and lessons learned from past circular economy projects, key definitions and concepts, etc;
* Participate in missions for the onboarding of new staff and long-term experts (including mission debriefs);
* Participate in brainstorming sessions on project planning, drafting of technical specifications, etc. (incl. technical specifications, logframes, and theory of change models);
* Support teams in institutional meetings, consortium meetings, or other, and including in the context of new project development;
* Contribute to the development of M&E frameworks and tools, including outcome indicators, data collection methodologies, and monitoring plans adapted to CE project contexts;
* Synthesise learnings and support knowledge capitalisation efforts, including the production of case studies, learning notes, and project factsheets.
* Create accessible reference material tailored to project needs (guides, checklists, etc.);
* Collaborate with EF’s M&E Officers to ensure consistent reporting of CE-related outcomes and impact metrics across projects;
* Design and deliver training sessions and awareness-raising activities on CE and waste management-related topics for EF partners upon request.

**Expected Deliverables:**  
The deliverables and their respective due dates will be specified in each purchase order issued under the framework contract. Indicative deliverables may include:

* Training materials (presentation, guides, etc.);
* Mission reports;
* Technical inputs on project infrastructure documents such as log frame and related indicators;
* Inputs into technical offers for projects in development;
* Knowledge products such as learning briefs, case studies, and knowledge-sharing event reports;
* Other reference material (incl. checklists, best practice summaries, internal FAQs).

V. Methods

Organisation

Expertise France will provide the preliminary elements of the project work, including the Descriptions of Action, formats and examples of key EF documents (such as prior Calls for projects), and key contacts. EF will monitor the execution of the work ensuring alignment with the overall project.

Date and location

The expertise should be primarily mobilised remotely, with the possibility of travel ranging from several days to several weeks to project countries or to the Expertise France headquarters in Paris. The contract duration will be 24 months.

VI. Required expertise

Professional Qualification and Experience

Experts with the following qualifications and experiences are invited to apply:

* A Master’s degree or higher in international cooperation, sustainable development, engineering, economics, or other relevant fields related to the programme’s themes.
* A minimum of 5 years of professional experience in the circular economy, in either the public or private sector. Relevant examples may include working for a circular economy start-up, a specialised consulting firm, or a government agency.
* At least two consulting assignments in support of international cooperation programmes focused on the circular economy, private sector development or sustainable development, particularly those involving private sector engagement.
* Demonstrated experience in MSME financing, capacity-building for MSMEs, and the design of circular economy business models.
* Proven experience in strengthening the capacities of business development support organisations and grant management organisation.
* Demonstrated expertise in designing and managing grant or matching grant facilities targeting MSMEs.
* Professional experience in Asia and/or Eastern and Southern Africa would be a strong asset.
* Demonstrated capacity to work within multicultural teams with a spirit of collaboration, adaptability, and flexibility.
* Analytical skills and ability to synthesize information.
* Proficiency in office tools (Advanced Excel, Word, PowerPoint, etc.).
* Excellent written and oral communication skills in English.

VII. Required documents

The candidates should provide the following documents in order to be considered for the engagement:

* Curriculum Vitaes (CV) and cover letter
* A financial offer (rate per day)
* At least 2 examples of previous works (e.g. publications, reports, slide decks, recordings, etc)

1. <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2018/09/asia-s-plastic-problem-is-choking-the-world-s-oceans-here-s-how-to-fix-it/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.oecd.org/en/about/news/press-releases/2022/06/global-plastic-waste-set-to-almost-triple-by-2060.html?utm\_source=chatgpt.com [↑](#footnote-ref-2)