

## Call for Expressions of Interest (EOI)

### Grant Awards for Mobile Social Networking Activities in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia under the “Creating Sustainable Businesses in the Knowledge Economy” Program

*infoDev, a donor-funded agency hosted by the World Bank, invites suitable organizations to propose a suite of mobile social networking activities Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, to foster innovation and collaboration among different stakeholders in the mobile communications sector. To respond to this EOI, please submit a capability profile together with a covering letter by email to Maja Andjelkovic ([mandjelkovic@worldbank.org](mailto:mandjelkovic@worldbank.org)) with a copy to [info@infodev.org](mailto:info@infodev.org), no later than 11.59 pm EST on **25 October 2010** mentioning in your subject line “Eoi for MSN in ECA”.*

#### 1. Introduction: Creating Sustainable Businesses for the Knowledge Economy

*infoDev, a donor-funded ICT for development agency hosted by the World Bank, has formed a public/private partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Finland and Nokia (“the partners”) to undertake a joint program on Creating Sustainable Businesses for the Knowledge Economy, worth some €12.9 million (US\$16.5m), that will run from 2010 – 2012. The program foresees three tracks – on mobile applications for development, on business incubation and technology entrepreneurship and on hosting of the Global Forum in 2011 – together with a supporting track of analytical work in the field of ICTs and Innovation Systems in Agriculture. The program will be implemented at the country level in Finland’s development partner countries; at the regional level in Africa, Asia and in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (ECA) as well as at the global level. More information is available at: <http://www.infodev.org/csb>.*

#### 2. Background and Selection process

This call for expressions of interest concerns Track 1B of the program, on the establishment of social networking hubs and complementary online communication channels to support interaction and collaboration of developers, entrepreneurs, mentors, partners, investors and other technologists working in the mobile space. While the program is also being implemented in Africa and Asia, this

particular call refers to Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia<sup>1</sup> (ECA), where it is planned to establish social networking hubs in two city-hubs in the region. (The precise number and location of planned city hubs depends on initial scoping missions.) Typically, grants worth around US\$35'000 will be awarded per hub, but *infoDev* retains discretion to change the number or precise value of specific awards.

This project is closely allied to track 1A of the program which foresees the establishment of a series of mobile applications laboratories in the same regions. It is also accompanied by a program of analytical work on the impact of mobile applications in different sectors (“mobile flagship report”). One chapter of the mobile flagship report will comprise an evaluation of mobile social networking as a tool to stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship, and will draw upon the experiences of this program.

The selection process is taking place during a sequence of phases:

- December 17 2009: The Creating Sustainable Businesses program launch took place in Washington DC and the steering committee agreed upon the work program during 2010. Regional launches took place in Africa (in Durban, 17 March), in Asia (in Hanoi, 15 March) and in ECA (in Berlin, 5 May).
- Feb—April 2010: A series of scoping missions were undertaken to meet with stakeholders in the mobile industry in Africa and Focus Group discussions were held in Kampala (10 March), Johannesburg (18 March), Nairobi (27 April) and Cape Town (30 April). These discussions were used to refine the project implementation plan<sup>2</sup>, to launch the mobile social networking hubs in Kampala and Nairobi, and to prepare the procurement process. Scoping missions in Asia and ECA will take place in autumn 2010.
- May 2010: A procurement process was launched to identify potential host organizations for mobile application laboratories in Africa. Similar calls will be issued for ECA and Asia, in the second half of 2010. In a parallel procurement process, which started in May 2010, a consultant firm has been hired to develop a business plan for the labs to become self-sustaining.
- October 2010: Through this call for EOI, *infoDev* is seeking partners to implement a suite of complementary mobile social networking activities the ECA region (Track 1B), having already issued a similar call for all three regions in August 2010.

It is planned that a total of five or six regional mobile applications labs will be established in Africa (2), Asia (2) and in ECA (1-2), although the total number may change. It is envisaged that they will be networked together and will have similar branding. The city-wide social networking hubs will be expected to interact closely with the labs, for instance by hosting regular meetings there, and by

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this project, ECA is defined by Finland’s WIDER project which covers Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

<sup>2</sup> The Project Implementation Plan on Mobile Applications for Development is available at: <http://www.infodev.org/en/Publication.909.html>.

providing opportunities for networking with the business community, the finance community, and with other stakeholders such as governments and users.

In the Africa region, a pilot program was established in association with *Mobile Monday*. MoMo is a volunteer-run Innovation Network, and has established chapters for the mobile industry in around 100 cities worldwide, including (with *infoDev* support) in Kampala (launched on 8 March 2010) and Nairobi (launched on 11 March 2010). The pilot program established with Mobile Monday in Africa has had some early success, and shows considerable promise, but *infoDev* is also open to alternative models to promote mobile social networking. The primary aim is to identify the most effective model for promoting innovation and entrepreneurship, recognizing that this may differ from one region to another. In Asia, *infoDev* plans to establish at least two city-wide hubs, possibly in Vietnam and Cambodia, although the final locations are subject to change.

In issuing this call for expressions of interest, *infoDev* and its development partners would invite respondents to clarify the geographical scope of their bid. We would welcome proposals that cover either:

- the entire WIDER European region; or
- a single city-wide hub.

We would also welcome expressions of interest from organizations with similar aims that may want to partner in this undertaking with *infoDev*, the government of Finland and Nokia. This EOI phase will be followed by one or more requests for proposals (RFP) for mobile social networking activities in specific geographic territories.

### 3. Objectives, partners and measurement of success

The objectives of the mobile social networking component of the program are to:

1. Support the **creation of social networking hubs**, or sustain existing ones, that will engage applications developers with the wider community of colleagues, researchers, investors, operators, content providers, device manufacturers and other organizations through regular meetings in each city and through continued online interaction.
2. Encourage the creation of content for a **mobile applications community of practice**, to be created by the partners, which will allow mobile applications developers to stay in close touch with one another and the wider mobile community, in an informal and convenient way. This should also provide opportunities for south-south learning.

3. Create a **competition for ideas** to encourage entrepreneurship, in collaboration with the mobile applications labs, for instance by using a mixture of incentives such as peer recognition, trips to international conferences, access to mentoring etc as ways of rewarding good idea.
4. Establish **mentorship opportunities** for developers, by linking them with mobile industry professionals in the ECA region as well as internationally.

The above objectives should in each case strongly complement the goal of the mobile applications laboratories to increase the competitiveness of innovative enterprises in the mobile content and applications area. A further aim is to ensure that locally relevant applications are created to meet growing user demand in developing countries.

One measure of success of the social networking component would be the regular interaction between developers within each lab, across different labs and between developers and the wider technical and investor communities. One expected outcome of this would be the creation of collaborative initiatives between individuals and organizations that come into contact through the social events and online forum. A monitoring and evaluation exercise will be conducted to examine the effectiveness of different models for social networking in creating a suitable environment to generate innovative mobile applications. *infoDev* will also document and examine the above activities and produce a chapter for an analytical report with the aim of informing future work using social networking tools within the World Bank Group more broadly.

## 4. Deliverables

The key deliverables of this component will include:

- The hosting of social events, typically on a monthly basis, in the selected cities to promote collaboration and innovation in the mobile sphere;
- Success in attracting local participants to the events and online, especially mobile applications developers but also representatives from operators and other private sector, NGOs, government agencies and other organizations;
- Animating the planned mobile applications community of practice, with at least 500 user-generated contributions from the mobile applications community over the next two years.

## 5. Evaluation criteria

- The successful applicant should be able to demonstrate a **commitment to supporting entrepreneurs, especially mobile applications developers**, either directly or through a link with a partner organization (this could be a private, public or hybrid entity).
- Applicants should be able to demonstrate substantial **local knowledge and engagement with stakeholders** in the proposed cities or region. In this respect, the ability to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the local market, entrepreneurial culture and social networking trends specific to different cities will be crucial.
- **A strong link to innovation** will be considered an asset. For instance, a successful track record in social networking that has helped bring innovations to market or that has supported a creative physical space where innovation will flourish. The ability to encourage strong social ties conducive to creating an open innovation platform would be a strong plus. (In this case, this would mean a platform not tied to a single operating system or network operator.)
- In both design and outreach strategy, **the proposed social network should align with a range of stakeholder interests** – including private sector, government, academic and grassroots/community groups. Where possible, potential implementing organizations should demonstrate effective past support to a variety of stakeholders.
- Finally, the successful applicant should be able to demonstrate fiscal sustainability, through a **sound business plan** that will extend beyond the initial period of donor funding (i.e. the ability to identify revenue sources and additional sources of funding).

Although the call for EOI is open to all relevant proposals, the partners are particularly interested in hearing from volunteer-based organizations, community-based organizations and non-governmental organizations.

To respond to this EOI, please send a capability profile and a covering letter by email to [mandjelkovic@worldbank.org](mailto:mandjelkovic@worldbank.org), with a copy to [info@infodev.org](mailto:info@infodev.org), no later than 11.59 pm EST on **October 25, 2010** and mentioning in your subject line “Eoi for MSN in ECA”.