**Social Performance Fund**

**CALL FOR PROPOSAL for NETWORKS**

**AND**

**APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

Issued: **26 September 2016**

Responses Due: **6 November 2016**

**CALL FOR PROPOSAL**

**SP COUNTRY REPORT DEVELOPMENT**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

The Social Performance (SP) Fund (“Fund”) is a mechanism to engage and support networks in their efforts to mainstream social performance management (SPM) in the microfinance sector. The Fund recognizes that microfinance associations and networks (“Networks”) play an important role in increasing transparency and mainstreaming good practice in SPM to foster responsible sector development, while responding to the needs and constraints of their member Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) and other stakeholders.

The Universal Standards for Social Performance Management represent the culmination of ten years of unprecedented industry-wide collaboration to align definitions and consolidate best practice around social performance management and assessment. Today, building a responsible inclusive finance sector depends on our ability to mainstream the Universal Standards across the sector.

Importantly, in recent years we have made significant progress in co-creating the very tools that will facilitate Universal Standards adoption. These tools have the potential to harmonize social performance measurement and reporting, and foster stronger practice among practitioners, networks and investors by providing real-time and relevant information on our processes and outcomes.

Currently, the Fund launches the third round of the grant support, thanks to the support from Ford Foundation. The Fund aims to significantly accelerate Universal Standards adoption, to mainstream both the concept and systematic practice of SPM by:

* promoting the SPI4 as a data collection and performance management tool among MFIs, networks and investors. For investors, the “SPI4-ALINUS” will guide harmonized data collection, reducing reporting burden and improving data quality, benchmarks and support to SPM.
* supporting MFIs to fully integrate SPM into their operations, by promoting useful technical resources and sharing practical experience.

The Fund will provide support to the leading networks globally, with proven track record and successes in mainstreaming SPM, to engage member MFIs and other stakeholders to collect SP data through usage of SPI4 tool and developing country reports. During the first call for proposals in spring 2016, 9 national networks were selected.

1. **GOALS AND OUTCOMES**

The goal of the Fund is to help **networks** ensure their members provide meaningful and reliable information which will:

1) be integrated into country reports and shared with investors and/or regulators to increase sector transparency,

2) identify areas for improvement where the networks can work with their members.

For information about other SP Fund opportunities, please check the website: http://mfc.org.pl/social-performance-fund/

The Fund will offer reimbursement grant (lump sum) up to 10 000 USD for networks which will achieve the following planned outcomes:

1. Get buy-in from its members (covering at least 60% of microfinance market) to participate in the project and organize logistics of the kick-off workshop (awareness raising workshop) facilitated by the SP Fund Team
2. The national network will collect SP data from MFIs which at least cover 60% of country market share (the network will be guided to use an excel database to aggregate SPI4 data – see below)
3. The national network will review the collected SP data.
4. The national network will develop 1 country report in English Spanish or Russian and in addition they may develop it in local language based on general template proposed
5. The national network will organize at least 1 dissemination event including various stakeholders - members, non-member providers, investors, regulator and broader public.
6. The national network will disseminate the country report to broader membership and public via other channels (website, social media, electronic mailing, etc.)
7. The network will promote the SP Fund free assistance related to 1) support in completion of SPI4 self-assessment tool (including ALINUS investor format) 2) advisory related to improving own operations based on identified gaps in the completion of SPI4 self-assessment
8. [optional] The national network will support members in identifying improvements needed to achieve compliance with selected dimensions of the Universal Standards and support their improvement implementation efforts.
9. [optional] The national network will build own capacity in providing assistance in implementing SPI4 tool through taking an opportunity of SPI4 assessment conducted by the SP Fund in the country or joining any SPI4 training proposed in the country (by SP Fund or other partners). The network can also use opportunities to finalize qualification process to become SPI4 assessor qualified by CERISE.

**III. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

The applicants must be microfinance networks and need to:

* propose to SP Fund a project engaging members and non-member MFIs jointly covering at least 60% of their national microfinance market
* have verifiable track record on SPM, specifically related to promotion/implementation of the Universal Standards, organizing dissemination events involving different stakeholders (including regulators and investors)
* experience with member data collection (social or financial)
* verified list of member MFIs willing to conduct an SPI4 self-assessment (e.g. with signed commitment letters).
* be able to cover the advanced costs of projects – the SP Fund will be providing grant on reimbursement bases once the project is completed.

The networks receiving support through RMF facility are not eligible for this grant but this can be discussed on a case by case basis, depending on the support received/expected from RMF.

**IV. USE OF FUNDS**

Funds are to be used exclusively for the purposes of carrying out activities related to the project implementation. None of the funds can be used for general support for the organization or other activities of the network.

**V. MAXIMUM AWARD AMOUNT**

The Fund will provide financial assistance - 10,000 USD as a lump sum (paid upon successful publication and dissemination of the SP country report).

The Fund reserves the right to reduce the amount of the award from the originally requested amount based on the network’s assessed capacity to implement the project, or to increase the amount of the award and scope for certain projects that are determined to have significant merit.

**VI. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES FOR SP FUND GRANT**

The reimbursement grant may cover the following costs:

* Logistic costs related to organizing the kick-off/awareness raising event (the SP Fund team travel, accommodation and time will be covered by the SP Fund)
* Staff or consultant time spent on SP data collection and verification for the country report
* Staff time spent on organizing country report dissemination activities
* Production of country report
* Other costs: local travel, translation
* [optional]Travel costs needed to participate in SPI4 training for assessors
* [optional] Staff time spent on building own capacity in SPI4

The following activities are not eligible for funding:

* International consultant fees
* Social audits, customer protection assessments or social ratings
* Purchase of equipment
* General costs

General support and general capacity building needs of the network may NOT be the focus of the grant funds.

1. **SP FUND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

The Fund will provide assistance for country level microfinance networks to support implementation of key project activities. The technical support will include:

* workshop for network members to raise awareness about SPI4 (kick off workshop) and build interest among MFIs to provide data for SP country report. This workshop will be led by the SP Fund team in English, Russian or Spanish based on grantee preference indicated in the application form.
* Excel database for networks to consolidate SPI4 data at the country level and use benchmarks by region and/or type of MFIs provided by CERISE
* off-site support for data collection and verification by the network
* guidelines for developing country report (including template in ENG, RUS, SP)
* off-site support on project management, problem solving, etc. to the project managers.

The Fund will offer following capacity building activities for networks:

* possibility to finalize qualification process by participating/conducting external SPI4 assessments co-financed by SP Fund (networks are encouraged to recommend MFIs interested in conducting external SPI4 assessment followed by improvement plan development.
* possibility to receive scholarship for SPTF annual meeting
1. **APPLICATION REVIEW**

**Evaluation Criteria and Scoring of the Proposal**

Applications will be reviewed to determine overall consistency with the goals of the Fund.

Applications are evaluated to determine how well the proposed project meets the Grant requirements and priorities in 5 different areas and points are given on the basis of how well the project meets each criterion. A project can score up to a maximum of 25 points.

An application must receive at least 16 points to be considered for funding. During the selection process, the Fund Grant Committee will also take into account geographic (country of operation) submitted proposals.

In order to be eligible for scoring, an applicant must (1) meet the Section III. Eligibility Criteria and (2) the application submission must be considered complete by the Fund.

**SCORING:** 1 - Unacceptable

2 - Weak

3 – Average

4 – Good

5 - Exceptionally strong

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| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Score** |
| **Relevancy** of the project to the network and its members’ priorities and needs (SPM experience and achievements to date, network and members plans and priorities for SPM, synergies with other SPM projects underway/planned) |  |
| **Commitment** of the network members (commitment letters from the member MFIs to participate in the project, integration of SP in the network’ business plan, SPM experience and achievements to date of the networks and members) |  |
| **Capacity** of the network assessed through an analysis of the technical quality of the project proposal, the qualifications of the project team delegated to take part in the project, previous SPM and project management related experience and achievements. |  |
| **Contribution** to the Fund objectives (project outputs and outcomes in line with the Fund objectives). |  |
| **Feasibility** of the project within time and resources available. |  |
| **TOTAL Score** |  |

1. **APPLICATION PROCESS**

**A. General Instructions**

1. All applications are due at MFC by 23:59 Central European Time (CET) on **6 November 2016**
2. Applicants MUST meet the eligibility criteria (section III) appearing on this announcement.
3. Emailed grant applications should be sent to: SPFund@mfc.org.pl.
4. **Fax submissions will not be accepted**.
5. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that its application is received by the Fund on time. All applications will be logged as of date and time received and a confirmation email will be sent to the applicant within 24 hours of the receipt of the applicant’s application email.
6. Applications, using Grant Application Form (GrantApplicationForm.doc), must be typed in 11 point font, single spaced and be a maximum of 12 pages.
7. MFC reserves the right to request additional information from applicants during the review process and to use other available information as may be necessary in order to complete the review process.
8. Awards will be announced on/about **December 2016**.
9. **Application Instructions**
10. Please read carefully the application instructions and all supporting documents, and in particular:
	* Check whether your network fulfills eligibility criteria (section III)
11. Identify interested member MFIs to be part of the project activities and discuss their involvement. Collect commitment letters signed by the Board/Executive Directors from at least most important MFIs to secure their involvement in the project.
12. Draft project activities plan and budget
13. Decide about the team that will be tasked to implement the project. Define scope of work.
14. Fill in the application form (GrantApplicationForm.doc) provided with this grant announcement
	* Please answer all the questions in the order listed in the application form.
	* Please use the headings, sub-headings and numbers provided in the application form.
	* Please type and single-space all proposals.
	* Please do not exceed 12 pages.
15. Prepare and provide all necessary documents specified in the check-list as attachments to your application
16. Whenever you have any questions or need clarification to prepare your application, please contact the Fund staff to ensure that your application is in line with the specific grant-making guidelines and available resources.

Please submit the proposal electronically with all attachments in electronic form.

* + Please do not include any materials other than those specifically requested.
	+ Please do not send videotapes.

**Resources:**

* Email the Fund staff (please see contacts below) before 31 October 2016 if you have any questions

**Grant Timeline:**

* Grant announcement: 26 September 2016
* Questions to be sent to SP Fund: 31 October 2016
* **Application deadline: 6 November 2016**
* Award announcement: December 2016
* Grant start Date: January/February 2017
* Final report due: 30 September 2017

**Contacts:**

* Application submission – please email: SPFund@mfc.org.pl
* For any questions please contact: Kinga Dabrowska kdabrowska@mfc.org.pl (English and Russian), Alexandra Alvaradoa.alvarado@cerise-microfinance.org (Spanish)

**Attachments:**

* Grant Application Form
* Commitment letter (draft) – please see below

DATE

**NAME**

**[ADRESS: STREET, POST CODE, COUNTRY]**

**LETTER OF COMMITMENT**

Dear XXX,

As the legal representative of the NAME, I would like to express the commitment to actively participate as a project partner in the proposed initiative by NAME OF LOCAC ASSOCIATION. We will provide necessary social performance related data to the network which will develop the SP country report. We will also provide additional information required for data verification (if requested).

We fully support the goals of the project, its activities and our organization’s obligations in conjunction with achieving the project objectives.

The person responsible for this project is: NAME, POSITION, CONTACT DETAILS

Sincerely,

NAME, Position

Contact

Organization Name