



Economic Policy Reform and Competitiveness Project

THE MONGOLIAN COMPETITIVENESS FUND

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|-------|--|
| BDS | Business Development Services |
| BDT | Business Development Team |
| COP | Chief of Party |
| EPRC | Economic Policy Reform and Competitiveness Project |
| TMCF | The Mongolian Competitiveness Fund |
| NGO | Non-government Organization |
| SBA | Senior Business Advisor |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE FUND

This document describes the purpose, objectives, and operating procedures of a small matching grant fund, *The Mongolian Competitiveness Fund* (TMCF). Chemonics International Inc., the main contractor implementing the USAID-funded Economic Policy Reform and Competitiveness Project (EPRC) administers the fund.

A. Purpose of the Fund

The purpose of *The Mongolian Competitiveness Fund* (TMCF) is to contribute to the increase of foreign revenues for the Mongolian business sectors with a presence or the potential to compete in the world markets.

B. Objectives of the Fund

Objectives of the Fund are to support private and private-public partnerships that seek to:

1. Provide common access to resources, services, facilities, technologies, and information that demonstrably improve sectoral efficiencies in costs, market share, and foreign sales revenues by meeting international requirements for product, process, and service quality
2. Promote Mongolia's brand image abroad, market the country as a destination, and develop awareness of Mongolian-branded products that demonstrably lead to increased foreign sales revenues
3. Provide common access to resources, services, facilities, and information that demonstrably reduce business transaction costs or improve the business climate in the sector, cluster, or country
4. Remove barriers and facilitate sector access to international markets.

TMCF provides matching grants that provide partial funding to private and private-public partnerships seeking to develop and implement projects or activities satisfying one or more of the objectives supported by the Fund and that would not normally proceed without such assistance.

The general regulation of the fund will be based on a set of standard operating procedures and pro-forma documentation.

SECTION II: OPERATING PROCEDURES

A. General

The grant awarded will be the minimum required to allow the project to proceed and to a maximum of 50% of the total project costs including all fees, to a maximum of US\$ 20,000.

The applicant's contribution to project costs will normally be in cash, and the applicant will be required to show evidence of availability and source of own funds prior to any grant being awarded. In exceptional cases contributions in kind will be acceptable but only when the contribution can be accurately valued.

Though the program will seek to support a broad range of projects and to encourage innovative approaches, certain projects may be described as 'preferred', in that they maximize the impact of the program in a number of key areas:

Collective Good

- Technology upgrading
- Export Development
- Marketing and Promotion
- Introduction of International Standards
- BDS Development
- Institutional Development
- Common Facilities
- Training and skills development

Public Good

- Job Creation/Safeguarding
- Environmental Improvement
- Health and Safety

B. Eligibility

Eligibility of group. Any legitimate, Mongolian non-governmental group, representing an industrial sector, sub-sector or cluster will be eligible for grant assistance. This may include formal associations or clearly defined groups which come together to implement a specific, finite project.

Geographical coverage: The program is national in scope; any group based in the territory of Mongolia is eligible.

Eligible projects: Any project which can demonstrate a high likelihood of success in terms of positive impact on the competitiveness of a sector or sub-sector will be considered for grant assistance. All applications must be accompanied by a project development plan, clearly stating the current situation (benchmark), timescales, costs, expected outputs and long term impact.

Project Duration: No project can exceed six months duration from the time a grant award was made. In the case of a successfully completed project the applicant group may apply for a follow up grant.

Eligible expenditures. TMCF grants will directly fund short-term expertise and non-recurrent non-capital expenditures as defined and agreed upon in the project. Examples of non-recurrent, non-capital expenditures include the hiring of one or more persons with specialized business or technical skills to initiate a project, provide training, conduct a market analysis, etc. Examples of ineligible expenditures for TMCF grants are: recurring salary and wage costs, overheads, acquisition and maintenance of fixed assets, etc. These can be funded from the grantee's own funds. In all cases, TMCF will make direct payments to the provider of the services.

Products and deliverables. Projects shall have clearly defined and objectively verifiable products or deliverables. TMCF payments to providers will be made solely upon satisfactory completion and delivery of the products or deliverables as specified in the project. Chemonics will follow all standard applicable USAID procedures for procurement and disbursement.

C. Selection of service provider

Applicants are encouraged to propose a list of candidate eligible to provide the service but final selection shall be satisfactory to TMCF and the client. TMCF will verify supplier's competence for the task intended, the existence of a genuine arms-length commercial relationship between the group and the provider, and the suitability of fees and charges being proposed.

D. Monitoring and review

Throughout the duration of the project TMCF grant managers will monitor project progress against the timescales, expenditures and defined deliverables as per the project development plan and the letter of agreement (see Annex A). Material discrepancies may lead to suspension of grant payments. The frequency of monitoring will depend on the duration of the project but will not be less than once a month.

On completion of the project TMCF grants managers will review the project in terms of outputs and sector impact. The results of the review may be published and disseminated, and regarded as being in the public domain.

A comprehensive evaluation of fund impact will be carried out by means of a sample survey of recipients shortly before the program closing date. The impact on each individual group will be evaluated primarily in terms of the degree to which group members were able to translate fund support into increased sales and profitability.

E. Application procedures and indicative timescales

Applications will be accepted in either English or Mongolian. Exhibit II-1 presents indicative steps and timescales for the application process.

Exhibit II-1: Procedural table

| # | ACTIVITY | WITHIN |
|---|---|-----------------|
| 1 | Applicant contacts EPRC. | |
| 2 | Member of the EPRC Business Development Unit arranges appointment and explains the criteria and application procedure. Ensures proposal fulfils basic criteria. | 5 working days |
| 3 | Applicant completes application forms, financial forecasts, project development plan and project activity plan | 15 working days |
| 4 | Application documents checked by TMCF advisor at EPRC who advise on possible amendments, clarifications, etc. | 5 working days |
| 5 | Document bundle forwarded to appraisal panel comprising Chief of Party (COP), Deputy, Senior Business Advisor (SBA) | 1 working day |
| 6 | Appraisal panel meets to discuss application. The application is represented by TMCF advisor. | 5 working days |
| 7 | Applicant advised of panel decision. Letter of Agreement signed. | 5 working days |
| 8 | Grant disbursement | |

F. Disbursement

Matching grant disbursements will be made upon completion and satisfactory submission of deliverables or products as specified in the Letter of Agreement, with payments made directly to the service provider.

ANNEX A: GROUP LETTER OF AGREEMENT

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MONGOLIAN COMPETITIVENESS FUND
Group Letter of Agreement

Agreement NumberApplication Number.....

This agreement is between.....henceforth known as 'the group' and the Economic Policy Reform and Competitiveness Project of the United States Agency for International Development, henceforth known as EPRC, for the payment grant assistance as approved on

The Agreement is formulated under the Mongolian Competitiveness Fund (TMCF) which has been established with the object of promoting the competitiveness and expansion of the Mongolian private sector small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The Mongolian Competitiveness Fund is carried out under the supervision of Chemonics Inc., the main contractor implementing EPRC.

1. In the event of the group going into receivership, liquidation, ceases to operate or should the character of the group substantially change, this agreement shall be rendered null and void.
2. The approved grant relates to the grant application number noted above. The financial assistance, which is the subject of this Agreement, covers the approved eligible activities and costs detailed in the application and project plan to be implemented by the group. The approved plan, deliverables, and budget are considered an integral part of this Agreement.
3. In the event of a group membership activity, the signatory of this Agreement, acting as the Group, accepts full responsibility for the financial management of the approved activity and for meeting the requirements of TMCF.
4. Under this Agreement, TMCF agrees to reimburse the Group a maximum of being% of the cost of the approved project activities.

Such payment is dependent 1) on the TMCF having verified and approved the deliverables that are specified in the approved grant application and plan.

5. This Agreement commences on date of signature by TMCF.
6. Implementation of the approved plan or activity can begin on commencement of this Agreement. It shall be completed by on which date this approval will lapse. At this time the funds may be de-committed and re-allocated unless an extension is sought from TMCF and approval obtained in writing.
7. No changes or time extensions may be made to the approved activities without the formal and written advance approval of TMCF. Approval shall not be given retrospectively, and failure to get approval may invalidate the entire Agreement.

8. Applications for grant disbursement must be made within two months of the project completion date, as stated in 6 above. Failure to do so may result in the-commitment and re-allocation of the funds. Any extension of the payment date requires the written agreement in advance of TMCF.
9. TMCF's obligation to make grant payments under the terms of this agreement is contingent on there being sufficient funds available to TMCF to enable it to do so. In the event that this ceases to be the case, then TMCF will not be liable to make all or any disbursements under the terms of this agreement.
10. EPRC/USAID or those authorized by them may at any time verify outputs and payment receipts. In its agreements (written or verbal) with service providers, the Group will specify that TMCF or its agents shall always have unhindered access to all reports, documents and records related to this Agreement. Further, the group agrees and declares that, to the best of their knowledge, the providers being contracted are not civil servants in the employment of the Government of Mongolia
11. In accepting financial assistance from TMCF, the group and its service providers agree to co-operate in any confidential survey of the operations of the TMCF designed to monitor the overall progress of the program. TMCF may, at any time during the execution of the approved project activity, seek information on its progress, which the group will give.
12. In the event that the group and/or its service providers commit any fraudulent act related to this Agreement it agrees that details of such acts, including the names of individuals, may be published in the national press, without any liability on the part of TMCF. Signature of this agreement binds the group to advise his service providers of the provisions hereof and as such service providers shall be bound by same.
13. The group agrees and declares that TMCF, EPRC, USAID and Chemonics Inc. (including its Board and contractors), is absolutely free of any form of responsibility for any act or omission relation or deed in which the Group and its service providers may be part.
14. In signing this Letter of Agreement, the Group, the group's service providers and TMCF accept and submit to each and every provision hereof. In the event that a dispute arises at any time over any aspect of this Agreement, the Group accepts that the General Regulations governing the Competitiveness Grant Program shall have over-riding authority and binding effect.
15. TMCF reserves the right at its sole discretion, prior to payment of the grant, to appoint an independent auditor to audit the financial transactions relevant to the Approved Project Plan and the Approved Activities. Such an audit would cover both the Group and its service providers. If fraudulent activities are uncovered, the names of the perpetrators may be published in the national press (without any liability on the part of TMCF) and such perpetrators will be debarred from any future assistance from, or involvement with the TMCF.

Please sign one copy of this agreement, initial it and any appendix materials on each page and return the document to TMCF. Please retain the other copy for your records.

For the group

For TMCF

Signature

Signature

Name _____

Name _____

Title _____

Title _____

Witness 1 (name and address)

Witness 2 (name and address)

ANNEX B: APPLICATION FORM



The Mongolian Competitiveness Fund

Application for a
COMPETITIVENESS GRANT
FOR
GROUPS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Economic Policy Reform and Competitiveness Project
Tavan Bogd Plaza, 2nd Floor,
Eronhii Said Amar Street,
Sukhbaatar District,
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia,

Tel: + 976 – 11 - 32 13 75

E-mail: bharris@chemonics.net

General guidance notes

Please read these notes carefully before completing your application. If you require any clarification you should contact the Business Development Department at EPRC who will advise you as to the correct interpretations.

References to the Project relate to the program of expenditure for which a grant is requested. If any questions are not applicable to your application please write 'N/A' rather than leaving a blank space.

Please remember to complete the financial and action plan appendices.

A **PROJECT PLAN** must accompany this application and you may find it easier to cross reference sections of your application to the project plan. To avoid delays in processing your application please only quote specific references if the project plan explicitly provides the information required.

APPLICATION FOR A COMPETITIVENESS GRANT UNDER TMCF

Introduction

The Competitiveness Fund is a grants program provided by the Economic Policy Reform and Competitiveness Project (EPRC) of the United States Agency for International Development, to encourage group-based projects that improve the competitiveness of businesses in Mongolia.

Project Criteria

| Criteria | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| Is the group registered as an NGO in Mongolia, or comprise a majority of Mongolian registered businesses | | |
| Does the project intend to engage third party advisers, consultants, or trainers? | | |
| Will the group or association be viable and profitable within three years? | | |
| Will at least 50% of the total funding be available from other internal/external private sector resources? | | |
| Is a Grant essential for the project to proceed | | |

DO NOT COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION UNLESS YOU CAN ANSWER YES TO ALL OF THE QUESTIONS ABOVE. IF YOU ARE IN ANY DOUBT AS TO WHETHER THE PROJECT MEETS ALL THE ABOVE CRITERIA CONTACT THE EPRC OFFICE.

Name and contact details of group or association.

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Tel:

Fax:

Email:

Contact within the group or association for discussing this application

Name:

Position:

Adviser/Consultant/Service Provider who will assist in the completion of the application and any subsequent project.

Name:

Company/Firm:

Tel:

Fax:

Email:

SECTION I: APPLICANT DETAILS

1.1 Association registration number (if applicable) _____

1.2 Legal status of association or group _____

1.3 Has the group been formed as a short-term vehicle to apply for a Competitiveness grant?

YES NO

1.4 Address of Registered Office (if different from page 3)

1.5 Member firms (list only those members directly involved in the project):

If the project is for the benefit of all members, please attach a full membership list

| Member firm | Represented by | Contact telephone |
|-------------|----------------|-------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

1.6 Principal Activities of the Group or Association.

1.7 Previous applications for other public sector support (include type of assistance, dates, and amounts offered)

SECTION III: PROJECT

3.1 Project description

Brief description of the project

3.2 Proposed project expenditure US\$ _____

This should equal the total expenditure detailed in the financial appendix

3.3 Sources of co-financing

Association funds, loans, members' contributions, retained profits

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

3.4 Project rationale

Explain why the project is being undertaken and what it is hoped to achieve initially and in the longer term (e.g. Five years from now)

Explain what alternatives to the proposals have been considered and why they were rejected

Discuss the consequences of not proceeding with the project

3.5 Start and finish date of the project

SECTION IV: DECLARATION

I confirm that all the information provided in this document is, to the best of my knowledge truthful and accurate,

Signed.....

Name (please print).....

On behalf of (group or association)..... Date.....

SECTION V: CHECKLIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Please tick that they have been enclosed

Applicant

- Project Development Plan
- Financial Forecast (Annex 3)
- Project Activity Plan (Annex 5)
- Copies of most recent audited financial statements (Where applicable)
- Bank solvency certificate (Where applicable)
- Copy of front and signature pages of association charter (Where applicable)

Consultant /Advisers

- Terms of reference (TOR)
- Proposal
- Price quotation
- Offer letter or pro-forma contract
- CVs of key personnel
- References from reputable companies or other credentials

ANNEX C: FINANCIAL FORECAST: EXAMPLE

ANNEX C: TMCF FINANCIAL FORECAST (EXAMPLE)

EPRC - Competitiveness Fund- Financial Forecast Group: Fiber Mark Society Project: Market Intelligence Unit

2004

| Months | July | August | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | TOTALS |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| Short-term expertise (Eligible Costs) | | | | | | | |
| Professional Fees | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 | | | | 3,000 |
| Unit Manager | 300 | 300 | 300 | 300 | 300 | 300 | 1,800 |
| Assistant | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 1,200 |
| Consumables | 200 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 450 |
| Communications | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 600 |
| Travel | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 300 |
| Marketing | | | 600 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 1,050 |
| Sub-total | 1,850 | 1,700 | 2,300 | 850 | 850 | 850 | 8,400 |
| Capital Expenditures (Ineligible costs) | | | | | | | |
| Furniture | 600 | | | | | | 600 |
| Information Technology | 1,500 | | | | | | 1,500 |
| Sub-total | 2,100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2,100 |
| Total Expenditure (Project Cost) | 3,950 | 1,700 | 2,300 | 850 | 850 | 850 | 10,500 |
| Applicants Contribution | | | | | | | |
| Fiber Mark Society | 2,100 | 650 | 650 | 650 | 600 | 600 | 5,250 |
| *Grant Payments | | | | | | | |
| Professional Fees | | 1,500 | | 500 | | | 2,000 |
| Unit Manager | | 600 | | 600 | | 500 | 1,700 |
| Assistant | | 400 | | 400 | | | 800 |
| Consumables | | 200 | | | | | 200 |
| Communications | | 150 | | 50 | | | 200 |
| Travel | | 50 | | | | | 50 |
| Marketing | | | | 300 | | | 300 |
| Total Income | 2,100 | 3,550 | 650 | 2,500 | 600 | 1,100 | 10,500 |
| Opening Balance | 0 | -1,850 | 0 | -1,650 | 0 | -250 | |
| Closing Balance/Grant Required | -1,850 | 0 | -1,650 | 0 | -250 | 0 | 0 |

* Grant payments are made directly to the service provider against invoice, either as a full or part payment. In the case of a part payment, payment of the balance is the sole responsibility of the applicant.

ANNEX D: APPLICATION CONTROL FORM

ANNEX E: PROJECT ACTIVITY PLAN: EXAMPLE

ANNEX E: PROJECT ACTIVITY PLAN

APPLICATION FOR A GRANT UNDER TMCF

SPECIMEN PROJECT ACTIVITY PLAN (chronological order)

Group name.....

| Description of project component | Timing (from-to) | Anticipated outputs | Deliverable | Cost breakdown | Estimate cost in US\$ |
|---|----------------------|---|---|--|-----------------------|
| Analysis of current processes | 01.03.06 to 14.03.06 | Up-to-date comparison with currently available technology | Consultants report | 14 days professional fees @ \$100 per day | 1,400 |
| Visit to Germany to see latest technology | 21.03.06 to 26.03.06 | Knowledge and understanding of latest technology | Visit list Company literature Travel Vouchers | Flight Accommodation 10@ \$80 per night Per diems 10@ \$45 | 650 800 450 |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | Total Cost | |

(Add rows if required)

ANNEX F: GUIDE TO THE MONGOLIAN COMPETITIVENESS FUND

ANNEX F: GUIDE TO THE MONGOLIAN COMPETITIVENESS FUND

Experience in developed economies throughout the world indicates that competitiveness depends on the speed at which a small or medium enterprise (SME) is able to build the different skills, know-how, expertise, and market understanding required by the fast-changing economic realities external to the SME. An effective method for building these capacities is for firms to work within groups or 'clusters' which achieve synergies and collective efficiency.

The Mongolian Competitiveness Fund (TMCF) is a key element of the competitiveness component within the USAID funded Economic Policy Reform and Competitiveness Project (EPRC) in Mongolia. It provides a grant to groups of SMEs to subsidize the costs of innovative projects which enhance the competitiveness of an industrial sector or sub-sector.

TMCF is administered through the EPRC headquarters based in Ulaanbaatar, and their professional staff can advise you on the application process, and provide you with information about local advisers and consultants. You can contact EPRC by telephoning or e-mailing the Business Development team of EPRC (you will find a list of contact numbers at the end of these guidelines).

What is the Mongolian Competitiveness Grants Program?

The Mongolian Competitiveness Fund (TMCF) provides discretionary financial assistance to new projects that are designed to improve the competitiveness of Mongolian industry. The grant is for up to 50% of the cost of eligible activities to a maximum of the MNT equivalent of US\$ 20,000, i.e. total project cost of US\$ 40,000.

Eligible Activities?

The activities eligible for TMCF support include:

- Professional fees of advisors/consultants
- Training costs
- Travel costs
- Associated consumables

Expenditure on fixed assets or promotional materials must not exceed the contribution of the applicant group). Salaries for staff employed by the supported group are not eligible, nor are any other normally recurring costs such as overhead.

Which types of projects are encouraged?

Any project which will lead to improved competitiveness will be considered, however the facility will be particularly supportive of projects that involve one or more of the following elements:

- Technology upgrading¹
- Market Development
- Export Readiness
- International Quality Standards
- Introduction of Management Information Services (MIS)
- Business and Financial Planning
- Management and Skills Development
- Improved facilities or services to the sector

Who is eligible?

Most viable business groups (non-government) representing an industrial sector or sub-sector are eligible; however, some specific sectors may be regarded as not suitable for support. You may obtain the list of exclusions from the EPRC team.

Prior commitment.

There must be no prior commitment to the project otherwise there will be difficulty in establishing a need for grant assistance. Project appraisal must have been completed and a formal offer of assistance issued before the applicant proceeds with the project.

How to apply for a Competitiveness Grant.

If you consider your project needs financial assistance in order to go ahead, you should contact the EPRC to check your eligibility. You should also talk to potential advisers (EPRC can help you with this) before you decide to apply. If you do apply you will need to submit an appropriate completed application form, along with the financial appendices, and a project plan. The detail expected in the project plan should be proportionate to the size of the grant applied for. EPRC will be happy to provide guidance.

The project plan should expand on the information contained in the application form including for example:

- A description of the group and its membership
- Details of the sectors principal products/ services
- A description of the market served by the group and its current marketing strategy
- Project description and rationale and expected future benefits to the group or sector in terms of new production processes, quality improvements, increased sales opportunities, jobs to be created or safeguarded etc.
- An estimate of the required project working capital requirements

¹ Consultancy on modernization and innovative processes; no grants for fixed assets

- A description of how the project will be financed
- An explanation of why the Competitiveness grant is necessary for the project to succeed

Appraisal time-scale

The target time taken for decisions on applications, from the date of receipt of a fully completed application (including all specified financial information) is 30 days. Larger, more complex cases may take longer than this to appraise. Where this is necessary, EPRC will aim to take account of the commercial needs of the applicant group. EPRC may discuss the project with the applicant or their advisers to seek clarification on further details, and may wish to visit the project location.

Larger grants are normally released in instalments upon achievement of project milestones and deliverables that are set out as an appendix in the formal offer of grant assistance (letter of agreement). The milestones and deliverables will be agreed with applicants during the appraisal process and are generally arranged to coincide with the expected progress of the project. Smaller grants will be paid on satisfactory completion of the project.

Successful applicants will be allocated a contact person in who will provide advice on the procedures for submitting a claim for payment of a grant instalment.

Fully documented claims will be processed within 30 days of receipt. Completed and signed claim forms must be accompanied by supporting documentation (i.e. an independent accountant's report, documentary evidence of any preconditions to be met and a copy of the latest audited/management account)

Contact Information

Economic Policy Reform and Competitiveness Project
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Sukhbaatar District,
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