

Argidius-ANDE Talent Challenge (AATC) Round One Request for Proposals

Request for Proposals Open Date: November 17, 2015

Proposals Due: 11:59 pm (EST) on January 31, 2016

Round One Winners Announced: April 2016

To Apply, Email: Alex Pan at Alexander.pan@aspeninst.org

The Argidius Foundation and the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) are pleased to announce the Argidius-ANDE Talent Challenge, a new competition designed to support scalable models to address human capital constraints for small and growing businesses in emerging markets. The goal of the challenge is to accelerate the development of innovative and sustainable solutions in a number of emerging markets, ideally establishing models that can be replicated.

Eligibility: Eligible applicants include non-governmental organizations, government organizations such as SME development agencies, universities and socially orientated private enterprises. Collaborations that include multiple partners, including public sector partners, are also eligible. Successful applicants will have significant expertise in offering or enabling human capital solutions to emerging market entrepreneurs and strong internal metrics and evaluation capacity with established tools for measuring impact.

The Challenge is open to entities working to help small and growing businesses to recruit, develop and/or retain talent at the middle and upper level management in the specific target countries. ANDE defines small and growing businesses (SGBs) as commercially viable businesses with 5-250 employees that have a significant potential for growth and whose managers desire to grow them. Typically, SGBs seek growth capital from \$20,000 - \$2 million.

Target countries: The challenge seeks to support solutions currently being implemented in one or more of the following geographic areas.

- **Latin America** (Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama)
- **West Africa** (Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo)
- **East Africa** (Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda)

Eligible organizations should have a focus on small and growing businesses in emerging markets and must have developed at least a prototype for the intervention(s) they are proposing. We are seeking early stage, not idea-stage, programs. Successful proposals may transport a proven model from other locations to the target countries or support expansion of existing models in target countries. We are explicitly not seeking to support well-established programs or operations that would be able to obtain commercial capital to fund their development or expansion.

The implementing organizations can be headquartered anywhere, but must be operating in at least one of the target countries. We expect that successful applicants will already have experience in the market(s) where they propose to implement their activities. The selected projects can be implemented in countries beyond the target countries as long as at least one target country is included.

Process: Funds will be disbursed in two rounds of funding. Round one aims to disburse up to €200,000 to each of up to five pilot programs in April 2016. It is expected that the pilot programs will run for up to three years. However, the final timing will be determined based on the pilots selected. Round two will evaluate the pilot programs and award a grand prize of up to €1 million to the pilot program deemed most successful and most likely to scale. If minimum standards of actual or potential impact are not met, the Argidius Foundation reserves the right to not make awards.

Requirements: Round 1 winners will be expected to:

- Participate in the ANDE Talent Working Group and other forums as deemed appropriate by ANDE staff to solicit feedback, advice, and share lessons learned throughout the pilot program
- Cooperate with an evaluation process that will strive to assess success and impact of the pilot program
- Submit required reports in a timely manner
- Track metrics utilizing impact measurement framework as described below

Winners will be strongly encouraged join ANDE and/or maintain good standing as an ANDE Member

Application Requirements

To apply for the Argidius-ANDE Talent Challenge, please provide the following information:

1. Summary Information (on one page) :
 - Project title
 - Total amount in euro you are requesting (note: maximum award will be €200,000)
 - Organization(s) involved with request
 - Geographic area/countries of proposed program
 - Brief description of the pilot program (1-4 sentences)
 - Brief description on how initiative will address talent challenge for small and growing businesses (SGBs) (1-4 sentences)
2. Organizational Overview/Information (no more than two pages)
 - Lead Organization Name and Address
 - Brief description of your organization(s) and why it/they are well suited to carry out the proposed project. Overview of your current activities in the target geography, if relevant.
 - Organization's annual budget
 - Proposal's main contact name, title, and contact details

3. A narrative description of the proposed program, including: (no more than 8 pages)
 - a) **The problem.** Outline the specific talent-related problems(s) you are trying to address with the proposed intervention.
 - b) **The solution.** Describe your solution and how it will address the identified talent challenge(s). Explain the impact you hope to create in the first three years, and ideally beyond.
 - c) **Risks and Risk Mitigation.** What are the biggest risks or challenges to the success of your proposed initiative? How will you address these risks?
 - d) **Sustainability.** If the project is successful, what factors are necessary to ensure the sustainability, scaling, and potential replicability of the program?
 - e) **Resources.** Who will implement/participate in the proposed effort and what are their qualifications? What cost-share does your organization bring to the project? Who are other actual or potential funders?
 - f) **Partnerships.** Please explain what kind of local or global partnerships, if any, could be critical to the greater success and sustainability of your program.
4. Impact Measurement Framework

We expect proposals to have specific measurable outcome indicators. Please respond to the questions below in regards to your current and proposed impact measurement framework. Please note that the final impact measurement framework will be subject to negotiation.

- Please explain how you are currently evaluating the impact of the project for which you are requesting funding, and the specific outcome indicators you are using.
 - Please provide the outcome indicators you propose to use and the specific goals you have for each measure
 - Please explain how you plan to track progress toward these outcomes
5. Total proposed project budget, which includes:
 1. A detailed line-item breakout (e.g., personnel, office costs, travel, etc.)
 2. Any additional cost share (e.g., full budget vs. AATC portion vs. “3rd party” contribution”)
 6. Timeline of the project milestones/activities

Proposal submissions are preferred in English, but will also be accepted in Spanish and French.

Section Criteria.

Proposals will be assessed utilizing the following criteria:

AATC Assessment Criteria	
Clarity	Are objectives clearly articulated? Is there a well-defined roadmap to achieve objectives?
Feasibility	How feasible are the objectives and the roadmap? Is the timing, sequencing, and resourcing of the effort reasonable and take into account the specific context of the target geography? Has the organization demonstrated its ability to achieve the milestones laid out in the proposal? Is the team assigned to implementation qualified and of sufficient size?
Internal Capacity	Does the organization have the means to manage the implementation of the program? If not already on the ground in the country of implementation, have they shown they can identify and create partnerships?
Impact	How likely is it that the proposed initiative will help SGBs recruit, develop, and/or retain middle and upper level management? How soon will impact be achieved? What impact will addressing the talent challenge have on firm growth and sustainability? Does this particular project provide a compelling return on the total investment required?
Sustainability/ Scaling/ Replicability	Is there a clear plan for how the initiative will become self-sustaining over the medium term? How could the initiative be scaled up (in the target country)? If successful, will this model be replicable in other countries/regions?
Measurable Outcomes	Has the organization designed a clear system for measuring the impact of its initiative? Does the organization have the internal control systems available to accurately measure the impact of the proposed project/intervention?
Leverage	Has the organization included additional sources of support (e.g., own funds, other donors, private investment) to maximize the contribution by the Argidius Foundation?

Please send a completed application to Alexander.Pan@aspeninst.org with the subject line:
“AATC Proposal- Organization Name”
Please format all applications as PDFs with titles formatted as:
“*Organization Name-AATC Proposal*”
Proposals must be submitted by 11:59 PM (EST) on January 31st, 2016.

Questions about the Argidius ANDE Talent Challenge should be directed to Alexander Pan
 (Alexander.pan@aspeninst.org)