Call for Low-value Grant Proposals

"Supporting the Development and Strengthening of Cooperatives in the Wheat Value Chain"

Provision of Grants and technical support to local cooperatives for production, operation, and Business Sustainability

Ref.: 4–2025-GRANTS-UNDP-LBN

In the framework of the project *"Improving Food Security in Lebanon Through Revival of the Seed Production Value Chain at LARI"* and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Lebanon

GLOSSARY

The following terms are used across the document:

- **Low-value grants (LVG)** – cash awards to cooperatives to sustain and maintain their operations.
- **Grant recipients/grantee** – Cooperatives who directly benefit from the grant.
- **Grant selection committee** – a resolute committee for review and selection of grantees.
- **Grant agreement** – legal document to which the grant proposal is attached.
- **Grant proposal** – the document prepared by an interested entity in response to a grant solicitation process.
- **Grant applicant** – an entity that submits grant proposal to UNDP.
- **Cooperative** – Cooperatives which are active in Lebanon and employing women, working mainly in agriculture, agri-food production, or related fields

PROJECT BACKGROUND

To address the socio-economic impact of the ongoing crisis in Lebanon, UNDP is implementing an integrated livelihoods response approach focused on immediate income generation, capital injection into the local economy, diversifying livelihood opportunities and supporting the productive sector. Recognizing the vital role of cooperatives in the Lebanese economy, this response will provide much-needed support through emergency grants and technical assistance, which have proven to be the most adaptive forms of support. Additionally, support will be provided to help businesses adapt to changing market conditions by exploring new markets, diversifying products and services, and adopting innovative approaches to ensure business continuity.
Under Output 2 of the project **"**Value Chain productive units involved in input production strengthened", farmers, MSMEs, and cooperatives will be provided with technical[1] and in-kind assistance.

This output aims at supporting cooperatives, farmers and MSMES, all working on the wheat value chain whether soft or hard wheat, with technical and in-kind assistance. This intervention recognizes the vital role of the private sector in the overall value chain.

Cooperatives play a vital role in Lebanon's productive sectors, particularly in agriculture and agri-food value chains. Strengthening and supporting cooperatives is essential to enhancing economic resilience, promoting inclusive growth, and sustaining livelihood opportunities across the country. Despite their importance, many cooperatives continue to face a range of structural and operational challenges. These include limited access to inputs such as seeds and pesticides, high logistics and labor costs, difficulties in affording land rental, and the need to upgrade or replace essential machinery and energy-efficient equipment.

To address these multifaceted needs, cash assistance has proven to be an effective support modality, enabling cooperatives to respond flexibly to their most pressing priorities—whether those entail repairing assets, rehabilitating facilities, restocking inventory, or covering operational expenses. Tailored technical trainings, including coaching and developing business plans for the cooperatives will complement the assistance to further enhance the capacity of the cooperatives to sustain their operation.

UNDP will ensure that the selection criteria prioritize entities that contribute to local production, and address community needs, noting that 30% of the selected cooperatives should women led. The criteria will also reflect findings from the value chain analysis, vulnerability considerations, and the entities' contributions to the value chain, among other relevant factors. These will be refined and presented to the donor for approval prior to finalizing the selection process. To align with the project's objectives and respond to commonly observed needs, UNDP will conduct an exhaustive assessment to identify priority areas for support and potential pathways for growth. Based on this assessment, selected entities will receive a tailored support package that primarily consists of in-kind and technical assistance valued at up to USD 16,000. This package may include cash grants to support the rehabilitation or purchase of machinery and equipment, repair of damaged physical assets, inventory replacement, procurement of essential raw materials, and activities that enhance local market engagement. Additionally, technical and marketing guidance will be provided through capacity-building, coaching, and specialized training. This soft support component may cover export planning, marketing strategies, market trend analysis, and environmentally sustainable production practices. Through this comprehensive approach, the intervention aims to deliver impactful and targeted assistance, maximizing benefits for both the selected entities and the broader sector.

Below are some examples of Key Products by Cooperatives Involved in the Wheat Value Chain:

[1] Coaching and developing business plans

Product Type	Description
Raw Wheat (Soft/Hard)	Sold directly or stored for milling or seed multiplication
Whole Wheat Flour	For household use, manakish, or traditional baking
Cracked Wheat / Bulgur	Common processed product, often sun-dried or machine-prepared
Freekeh	Roasted green wheat, traditional value-added item
Kishk	Fermented wheat and yogurt blend, popular in rural diets
Saj and bakery items	In some women-led coops, linked to flour processing
Wheat-based sweets	Maamoul and other local recipes in small-scale production

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

1. Purpose and objectives of the grant(s):	The primary objective of this call is to provide grants and technical assistance to cooperatives engaged in the wheat value chain in Lebanon. The support aims to help these cooperatives sustain their production and operations, serving as a foundational step toward long-term development. This initiative is part of a broader effort to strengthen local actors within the wheat sector, contributing to community resilience, reducing economic disruptions, and supporting national recovery efforts.
2. Scope of the grant:	To provide grants to cooperatives operating in the agriculture and agri-food sectors, specifically in the wheat value chain. The selected beneficiaries of the grant will also benefit from additional technical assistance based on their needs.
3. Expected results:	- Maintain ongoing operation/production and ensure business continuity. – Procure or rehabilitate machinery/equipment – Could support the development of a new product line – Purchase energy-efficient machinery or tools to reduce production/operation cost. – Purchase of raw material that are essential to the production process. - Increase market outreach through access to market activities
4. Target locations:	Cooperatives at national level
5. Eligibility criteria of grantee(s):	– Cooperative operating in the agriculture and agri-food sectors, **specifically in the wheat value chain** (hard wheat or soft wheat) – Cooperative must be registered in the General Directorate of Cooperatives المديرية العامة للتعاونيات at the Ministry of Agriculture – 30% of the selected cooperatives should be women led. – Cooperative must be in operation for at least three years – Cooperative is not operating from home – Cooperative must have submitted its budget to the General Directorate of Cooperatives in 2023.
6. Timeframe for implementation of LVGs:	Up to 8 months
7. LVG beneficiaries:	Cooperatives operating in agriculture, and agri-food, with a focus on wheat value chain (soft or hard wheat)
8. LVG amount:	Minimum: 7,000 USD, Maximum: 12,000 USD
9. Expected co-financing from a grantee (if any)	Only if requested amount exceeds the grant maximum amount.

INSTRUCTIONS TO GRANT APPLICANTS

1. General

Agricultural and agri-food cooperatives involved in the wheat value chain in Lebanon face ongoing challenges related to limited access to finance, technical resources, and market integration. Strengthening these cooperatives is critical to supporting the wheat value chain, preserving local production, sustaining livelihoods, and reinforcing the stability of rural economies. This funding modality is designed to provide low-value grants to selected cooperatives to help sustain their operations, expand production capacity, and enhance their resilience to future shocks. In line with promoting inclusive economic participation, at least 30% of the selected cooperatives will be women-led.

2. Purpose

The primary objective of the call is to provide grants to eligible cooperatives, especially those led by women, or have significant numbers of women members to enable them to sustain and increase their operation in a post-war and recovery setting. The assistance provided to cooperatives through this grant will support them in revitalizing their operations, rehabilitate, repair or replace damaged assets, improve production and product quality, and reach new market horizons and clients.

The grants will therefore be directed to achieve the following:

1) Recover/maintain production/operation and ensure business continuity or creation of a new product line.
2) Procure or rehabilitate machinery needed to support the wheat value chain.
3) Purchase or upgrade energy-efficient machinery or tools to reduce production and operational cost and have better environmental impact.
4) Purchase of raw material
5) Reach new customers, enabling increased sales opportunities.

Cooperatives need to meet the following criteria:

1. Cooperative operating in the agriculture and agri-food sectors, with a focus on the wheat value chain.
2. Cooperative must be registered in the General Directorate of Cooperatives **المديرية العامة للتعاونيات** at the Ministry of Agriculture
3. Cooperative must be in operation for at least three years
4. Cooperative is not operating from home
5. Cooperative with at least 10% of its members as female will be prioritized.
6. Cooperative must have submitted its budget to the General Directorate of Cooperatives in 2023
7. Cooperatives must have an official banking account, not in an individual name.

Selected beneficiaries who receive the grant will also be provided with additional technical assistance for operation enhancement.

3. Grant Type

- **Purchase or rehabilitate of equipment or machinery:** purchase and rehabilitation of critical equipment that directly impacts cooperative's ability to produce goods and enhance its production capacity.
- **Repair and rehabilitation of facilities and assets:** to support operational efficiency and ensure long-term sustainability of the cooperative key assets. This includes repairs to infrastructure, and structures which are essential for functionality and service delivery.
- **Purchase of energy-efficient equipment:** Purchase of energy-efficient machinery/tools/equipment that would support in streamlining production and reducing operation costs. The grant will only fund the purchase of new energy-efficient equipment or the upgrade of existing / damaged systems (only panels and inverter covered).
- **Purchase of raw material:** purchase of raw materials and/or products that are essential to the production process.
- **Access to local markets:** including paying for participation in local fairs or other relevant promotional activities
- **E-commerce and digital solutions:** Develop or upgrade an e-commerce platform (or website upgrade) or entering online marketplace to expand market reach to improve customer engagement and enhance sales channels.

4. Financing scheme and ineligible costs

Any funds requested for the grant(s) under this Call for Proposals must meet the following minimum and maximum amounts:

Minimum amount: USD 7,000 USD
Maximum amount: USD 12,000 USD

Ineligible Costs include:

- Office/shop rent
- Purchase of motor vehicles
- Fuel and diesel.
- Personal expenses
- Daily allowances
- Insurance
- Currency exchange losses
- Luxury or unjustified high-end purchases
- Unjustified expenditures
- Salaries and wages of existing or new employees

Additional ineligible costs are detailed in the Annex I - ELIGIBLE GRANT ACTIVITIES.

5. **Grant proposal should contain:**

- **Grant Application Form**: Complete the grant application form (Annex III - GRANT APPLICATION FORM).
- **Grant Proposal**: Include a proposal outlining the proposed activities, work plan, performance targets, risk analysis, budget, and impact (Annex IV - LOW VALUE GRANT PROPOSAL)
- **Grant Required Documents**: All applicable required documents mentioned in Annex II - REQUIRED DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST.

6. Grant proposal must be submitted **in full** through the link provided on the UNDP call page no later than *July 9, 5:00 pm* local time. Hard copy submission by courier or email or hand delivery will not be accepted.

7. UNDP may, at its own discretion extend this deadline, in which case all rights and obligations of UNDP and grant applicants previously subject to the deadline will thereafter be subject to the deadline as extended.

The proposal must be marked with the reference number of the grant that is indicated on the cover page of the present document: Ref.: 4–2025-GRANTS-UNDP-LBN

8. Grant proposals must offer services as per requirements and in the standard template (Annex IV- LOW VALUE GRANT PROPOSAL). Incomplete proposals will be rejected.

9. All applications and proposals must be dully filled. A signed and stamped proposal will be requested from shortlisted Cooperatives after being reviewed by UNDP team including all possible amendments required.

10. Grant proposals and all correspondence related to the proposal shall be written and submitted in English or Arabic language.

11. All figures included in the grant proposal shall be quoted in USD.

12. A prospective grant applicant requiring any clarification on the grant solicitation documents or application process may notify UNDP in writing at the indicated organization's mailing address foodsecurity.lb@undp.org. UNDP will respond in writing to any request for clarification within three (3) working days provided that the request is submitted at least one week prior to the deadline for submission of grant proposals.

13. Grant applicant shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission

of the grant proposal. UNDP will in no case be responsible or liable for those costs, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the solicitation.

OPENING AND EVALUATION OF GRANT PROPOSALS

1. The deadline to submit application is 1 month after the launch of the call for application

2. For review and evaluation of grant proposal, UNDP will establish a dedicated grant selection committee comprising of qualified personnel and/or project stakeholders with technical expertise on the subject. The composition of the grant selection committee is approved by UNDP Resident Representative.

3. Each member of the grant selection committee will sign a disclaimer of conflict of interest. In case of conflict of interest, the member recues himself/herself from further participation in the discussion and voting.

4. Grant selection committee will do a pre-screening of grant proposals with regards to eligibility of the applicants in line with the eligibility criteria described in Section II of the present document using the following format:

Table 1. Pre-screening matrix

In order to be considered for the grant, the applicants should meet all the following eligibility criteria:

Submitted Application	The Cooperative has submitted the **Application Form and Proposal Form** duly filled
Eligibility Criteria	Cooperative must be operating in the wheat value chain, either soft wheat or hard wheat.
	Cooperative must be registered in the General Directorate of Cooperatives **المديرية العامة للتعاونيات** at the Ministry of Agriculture
	Cooperative must be in operation for at least 3 years before the call
	Cooperative is not operating from home
	Cooperative must have submitted its budget to the General Directorate of Cooperatives in 2023

5. Following the pre-screening, the grant selection committee will review the proposals of eligible grant applicants and will assess them against grant selection criteria specified below of the present document.

6. Grant selection committee will rank the proposals in line with the grant selection

criteria and will award points to each grant proposal in the grant evaluation matrix.

7. Final consolidated grant evaluation matrix shall be signed off by all members of the grant selection committee and endorsed by UNDP Resident Representative.

8. The secretary of the grant selection committee will prepare a brief report on the grant selection process with an indication of results, i.e., which entity is receiving a grant, and which proposals were rejected and why. The grant selection report shall be endorsed by UNDP Resident Representative.

GRANT SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Grant selection criteria are defined under programmatic considerations that are closely linked to the project document.

2. Grant selection criteria play a central role in a successful grant programme and may vary depending on the grant purpose, scope and objectives.

3. The total obtainable number of points is 100. Minimum passing score is 70.

Selection Criteria	Description	Max Points
Women's Representation in the Cooperative	10% or more of cooperative members are women and/or- At least one woman holds a leadership or board position Cooperatives meeting these conditions will be prioritized.	10
Justification of Proposed Activity	Strength and relevance of the proposed activity in terms of impact on production, sustainability, and alignment with the cooperative's operational needs.	30
Alignment with the Wheat Value Chain	The cooperative's direct involvement in one or more aspects of the wheat value chain (e.g., seed multiplication, production, milling, packaging, food processing or distribution).	25

Financial and Operational Capacity	Assessment of the cooperative's turnover, financial viability, and ability to manage and sustain the grant.	20
Technical Readiness and Governance Structure	Existence of active leadership, clear decision-making processes, recent board elections, and ability to implement the grant.	15
		Total: 100 Points

AWARD OF GRANTS AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. Winning grant applicant(s) will receive LVG agreement from UNDP as soon as the review and UNDP endorsement are completed

2. Within seven (7) working days after receipt of the LVG agreement, the successful grant applicant shall sign and stamp the agreement and return it to UNDP.

3. UNDP shall affect payments to the Grant Recipient in USD as per the approved amount by UNDP. Payment will be made to the Cooperative's bank account indicated in the LVG agreement signed with the Grant Recipient.

4. The first disbursement of the grant amount takes place in line with the schedule of payments set out in the LVG agreement before the results or achievements are obtained, and totaling 50% of the approved grant amount. A final installment should be paid only after the completion of all activities including training attendance.

5. UNDP reserves the right to obtain all evidence, including site monitoring visits, to substantiate that performance conditions have been achieved before issuing subsequent phases of the grant. UNDP also reserves the right to suspend disbursements in case a grant recipient is found to be in breach of its obligations.

6. Since the solution to a development challenge is generated by the grantee, and not UNDP, the intellectual property for solutions rests with the grant recipient, but through the grant application process, the grantee agrees to give UNDP an irrevocable, unlimited, cost-free license to use the solution in its programmes, and to replicate and disseminate it. The grant recipient retains the right to use the solution for its own commercial benefits.

7. The grantee uses their own personnel, systems, designs, networks and procedures to implement the grant.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

1. UNDP will monitor implementation of grant activities in line with its monitoring policy to ensure

that grants result in new solutions, direct engagement with certain stakeholders, and better uptake of development solutions as set out in the grant work plan.

2. Frequency and scope of monitoring visits will be defined by UNDP. Although in most cases, Grant Recipient will be notified in advance on the planned monitoring events, UNDP reserves the right to convey ad-hoc monitoring visits when and as needed.

3. The grantee is responsible for substantive and financial reporting on the utilization of the grant as defined in the LVG agreement. Appropriate evidence that the activities reported were completed should be attached to the report, such as photographs, boarding pass copies, meeting minutes, or sign-in sheets.

4. The grantee must provide performance reporting to UNDP at least 15 days before the expected release of the next tranche. At the end of the grant period, the grant recipient is required to submit a final substantive and financial report, which shall include certification by the Recipient Institution's representative with institutional responsibility for financial reporting, including the certification date.