



Job Description for:

Bid Writing Consultant (BWC)

A. Background:

[ARK Group International](#) is focussed on supporting investment into small growing businesses (SGB) that create impact aligned with the sustainable development goals (SDG). Our model is based on two complimentary services.

- First, we work with businesses through a range of risk-sharing subscriptions to access grants for catalytic growth, through our Grant Access Platform (GAP).
- Second, we work with successful grantees to become investment ready and position for private finance - to support growth beyond their grant funding.

ARK supports SGBs in Sub-Saharan Africa, and social enterprises in the UK. BWCs are output-based paid consultants, that lead the bid writing for partner businesses, through the Grant Access Platform we are creating. This TOR outlines the responsibility, scope and way of working with ARK.

B. Contextual Rational:

For the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be adequately financed, global development finance flows must increase from the order of billions to trillions. However, high levels of actual and perceived risks pose significant barriers to increasing volumes of private capital flowing into private sector-led solutions that can service SDG progress. This is particularly true in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), where incomplete markets, high transactions costs, low state capacity, incidence of conflict, and significant information asymmetries make returns to investment a) often potentially lower; and b) much harder to assess.

This has a severe impact on Small and Growing Businesses (SGBs), which constitute a 'missing middle' of firms that are too large for micro capital yet remain too risky in the eyes of traditional investors to achieve significant flows of commercial investment. To overcome this, investment must be 'de-risked'. Blended finance – defined by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda conference in 2015 as finance that combines concessional public finance alongside non-concessional private finance – is a way through which de-risking can occur.

However, blended finance as it stands struggles to reach businesses in the lowest-income countries (LICs), many of which are located in SSA. The Overseas Development Institute estimates that private capital mobilised via blended finance tends to flow to wealthier developing nations, leaving LICs behind. Vitally, contextual heterogeneity in LICs means that conditions vary sector-to-sector, municipality-to-municipality, and, critically, business-to-business. As such, disaggregated blended finance with tailoring on a case-by-case basis is required to adequately serve this missing middle.

To fill this gap, ARK Group International focus on the provision of disaggregated and contextually appropriate blended finance support for Small and Growing Businesses (SGBs), often in LICs in Sub-Saharan Africa. Primarily, concessional financing is achieved through support in achieving public grants – generally from governmental and multilateral development assistance funds. This infusion of concessional public capital de-risks further private investment, increasing investor confidence in the



recipient organisation. ARK then aids in leveraging this grant finance to allow SGBs to access private capital, with a focus on diaspora investment.

C. Bid Writing Consultant (BWC) responsibilities:

BWCs are an important part of ARK's model. They provide high-quality grant writing services for partner businesses across sectors that align with their individual career interests and expertise.

This offers opportunity to i) build a credible portfolio of influential work, ii) build expertise in bid writing and business development, iii) contribute to securing funding for impactful organisations in your focus sector, iii) build relationships with market leading organisations.

The BWC responsibilities falls into the following categories:

1. Lead on drafting grant applications:

- BWCs are responsible for doing the heavy lifting on writing bids on behalf of partner businesses (typically through surge capacity support for internal Business Development Staff (BDS)). The framework of a grant application is usually provided by the funder, which a BWC would lead on compiling. Each grant framework and company being served is different, but the process followed to submit a competitive application is constant. There are 3-key stages to the drafting process, which is led by the BWC:

- I. Building understanding of the funder's priority:** this refers to deep diving into the funder requirements and mastering the details about the funding opportunity.
- II. Building a narrative:** Through both a narrative session with the partner business as well as background information about the business, BWCs support on co-generating a narrative with the partner business. This ensures that there is a clear purpose placed on the funds being applied for, which is used as the main pitch throughout the bid. This is often from the partner business, but shaped and drawn out through the strategic conversation led by the BWC.
- III. Bid writing heavy lift:** BWCs are paid based on the completed application. A completed application is one that has been approved by both the partner business and the ARK account manager. There are typically two review stages for each application, which requires BWCs to update their draft applications, to finalise and be approved. Once the final application is approved, it is in the responsibility of the partner business to submit.

2. Learning and growth:

- The partner business is the expert in their given context. As a BWCs you can only do business development effectively, if you understand the context, you serve and can capture and communicate that effectively. BWCs are required to be curious and ask as many questions as possible to build understanding of not only the work the business is doing, but also the context they operate in and the problem they are



solving. This takes relationship building, humility, cultural sensitivity, and recognising that you are partnering with a business that already has significant expertise in their field.

- Business development, which consists of bid writing and strategic planning is a well sort after skill in international development and beyond. Learning and growth in both dimensions of business development through the opportunity provided at ARK is a key responsibility that we expect BWCs to take on. The business development skills you develop will be on the job but should be led by the BWCs to maximise quality of work and learning through the process.

D. Eligibility: Each Bid Writer has their own unique skills, writing style and background, so we consider each applicant on a case-by-case basis. The general minimum eligibility criteria are the following.

- Demonstrated passion and commitment for progressing and achieving the sustainable development goals or creating social impact.
 - Recently completed or due to complete a master's degree in an international development or social impact related discipline.
- Ability to write clear and concise for different audiences.
 - Completed or due to complete a dissertation in a relevant subject area or has proof of other research and written work.
- A clear problem solver, who is dedicated to seeing a solution put in place on behalf of partners.
 - Reflected through an ability to be a strong relationship builder, team player, can think creatively, ask pertinent questions to identify problems and can think logically to inform solutions.
- Self-starter, who can complete a task in good quality with little guidance.
 - Good attention to detail, willing to learn, driven by being part of creating impact.

In addition to the above, BWCs also have the following qualities:

- Integrity with a dedication to serve the partner business to get the job done well.
- Committed to quality.
- Ability to work independently but not afraid to seek guidance and support.
- Ability to research and draw on evidence to create a compelling pitch.
- Can lead virtual meetings proficiently and professionally.
- Curious and excited to explore, ask questions and build understanding about new contexts.

E. Remuneration: BWCs are paid based on outputs (i.e completed and approved assignments). Remuneration is set at £150 per completed and approved grant application, for grants below £80k, and £200 for grants above £80k. BWCs also receive a commission share on successful grant outcomes for bids they work on of 0.25% of the grant value won. We are committed to work with bid writers early after master's graduation to help progress their careers, through opportunities to build their portfolio, mentoring, and relationships with credible businesses.



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We therefore assign bid opportunities based on matching of SDG related interest between bid writers and member businesses. This position is ideal for existing skilled bid or grant writers who are looking to expand their portfolio, alongside entry-level bid writers who are looking for the help and guidance needed to enter the international development sector. Successful bid writers have progressed through ARK to work at organisations such BRAC, Crown Agents, FCDO, LSE, McKenzie, and United Nations.

F. Next steps: To apply please complete the form through the ARK Group International website www.arkgroupint.com