

Request for Proposals

Project Name:	New programs feasibility study – Non-traditional financial service provider ecosystem
Project Objective:	To gather insights on the strategic issues and identify capacity building needs of non-traditional finance service providers
Timeframe:	The project is expected to start in July 2016 and finalize at the end of March 2017
Budget:	Up to USD \$60,000
Proposal Deadline:	May 24, 2016

About the Boulder Institute of Microfinance

As the paramount training institution for inclusive financial services for over two decades, Boulder Institute has trained over 5,000 professionals from microfinance institutions, support organizations and government agencies. Boulder Institute is known for helping finance professionals understand the changes needed to effectively serve lower-income client market. Boulder Institute's programs have a unique mix of elements:

- **Global perspective:** Boulder's faculty have a global view, which combined with the diversity of participants attending our programs, enhances the exchange of experiences between countries and continents.
- **Technical approach:** Boulder's courses convey evidence-based models and approaches that critically analyze what does and does not work when providing access to financial services.
- **Strategic in nature:** Boulder's programs are designed not only to build participants' capacity, but to challenge them to understand different perspectives, providing a diverse menu of strategies, tools and references for solving complex problems.

Boulder is currently developing new programs that respond to the emerging issues in the field of financial inclusion. We are currently gathering insights on capacity building needs for distinct market segments, in order to identify the content that should be included in our new programs.

Our perspective on the future

We are approaching a new era in access to finance, where new players and technologies are expanding the possibilities of financial inclusion. At the same time, microfinance's success in reaching clients in new markets has increased competition, with some markets showing signs of maturity.

Traditional microfinance players are currently perceiving seismic changes brought on by digital technologies that can profoundly transform the market. Some of the effects of digital technology trends that redefine competition¹ are already being felt by financial service providers today:

- Prices and margins are pressured as consumers can compare prices and switch to new providers.
- Barriers to entry and product differentiation are undermined as new competitors emerge from unexpected places.
- Business models are continually evolving at a fast pace.

¹ Source of these trends that could redefine companies by McKinsey & Co.:

http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/strategy/strategic_principles_for_competing_in_the_digital_age

Boulder Institute's future role will focus on supporting, through learning and peer exchange, those traditional and non traditional players working to provide access to finance for those clients who are underbanked and/or within the low income market segment.

About the study

To ensure Boulder's ability to offer programs that focus on the emerging issues and sustain the ability to remain current and relevant, we are seeking a consultant to conduct a market study of non-traditional access to finance players to assess their demand for learning regarding how to best serve the low income market segment with financial services.

Our expectation is that the study will:

- Map out the non traditional players relevant for the ecosystem of the alternative delivery channels;
- Perform a brief analysis of the roles non traditional players have, vis a vis the traditional ones;
- Interview a broad set of stakeholders, including the non traditional players, industry associations such as the ITU, GSMA, funders, regulators and other partners to understand potential capacity building needs of the non traditional players in the financial inclusion space and how they are currently being met; and
- Present the above findings regarding the demand for training programs and content segmented by region/countries, experience, level within an institution, and type of institution.

Scope of work, deliverables and timeline

The consultant will:

- Assess the opportunities and challenges non-traditional financial service providers perceive, and the main issues they consider will be pertinent in the following decade
- Identify the current capacity building sources and offerings for non-traditional players
- Analyze how these capacity building offerings are responding to the needs of non-traditional players, identify gaps
- Based on the above analysis, prepare a report/study. The report is to include:
 - o Overview of the capacity building market for non-traditional players
 - o Estimate demand size and content for specific client segments within non-traditional players such as: level within the organization, type of organization, region
 - o Current Boulder brand image strengths and weaknesses among non-traditional players and suggestions for branding/marketing strategy for this client segment
 - o Recommendations for future programming that can be developed by Boulder Institute, including topics and potential faculty that could deliver the training
 - o Best messaging, contacts and channels for marketing the new programs, and
 - o Other sections as deemed necessary by the consultant

The work is expected to take up to **45** working days, starting July, 2016. The consultant is expected to propose a schedule for the most appropriate way to accomplish the above goals, along with the schedule of deliverables adjusted as necessary.