

Call for Tenders:

Evidence-Based Approaches to Supporting Young Entrepreneurs

About Youth Business International

An estimated one billion young people will enter the job market in the next decade, less than half of them will find a formal, secure job. The economic fallout from the Covid 19 pandemic has exacerbated the global youth unemployment crisis, shrinking the already narrow avenues for young people to find decent work.

Through entrepreneurship young people can achieve economic security and independence, transforming their lives and futures. When youth-led businesses thrive, they create new jobs, shape local communities, and drive economic growth. Young people are critical to future economic development and key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In the wake of Covid-19, youth entrepreneurship will act as a critical lever for economic resilience and recovery.

Established in 2000, Youth Business International (YBI) sits at the centre of a global network of 50+ enterprise support organisations (ESOs). This gives us a unique perspective on youth entrepreneurship across the world. YBI acts as a platform for these member organisations to exchange ideas, knowledge, and insights. Together we develop and scale the most effective solutions to the critical challenges facing young entrepreneurs.

The YBI network is powered by not-for-profit organisations and social enterprises with a passion for empowering young people to start, scale and sustain their businesses. Locally led, and locally rooted, these organisations offer young people aged between 18 and 35 a range of practical business support services from entrepreneurship, marketing, and soft-skills training to digital upskilling, mentoring and access to finance.

Aim and Objective

YBI is commissioning a consultancy to identify the evidence-informed arguments for supporting young entrepreneurs. The specific objectives are to:

- Review and compile available evidence on young entrepreneurs, specifically the characteristics, outcomes, inclusive practices, barriers, or needs that make them a distinct sub-group of entrepreneurs
- Critically evaluate 'what we know' about the importance of personal development, business development, and an enabling ecosystem to support these young people to start and grow their businesses

The study' objective is to synthesize available evidence, make it accessible to YBI and its members, and form the basis for YBI's thought leadership on the topic. This will allow the organization to speak with increased authority on the relevance of investing in both YBI and member organisations. It is expected that this will be an internal document, with the potential to be published at a later point.

The research has two complimentary components:

1. What makes Young Entrepreneurs Different

As the only dedicated global youth entrepreneurship practitioner, YBI has a significant opportunity to understand 'why youth businesses are different' and to use that information to inform our approach to entrepreneurship support and advocacy. This aligns with both YBI [Research and Learning Agenda](#), which explores the key assumptions and knowledge gaps behind YBI's Theory of Change, and its forthcoming strategy from 2023-2025 which seeks to expand the organisation's impact and reach.¹

The first research component seeks to explain why young entrepreneurs' businesses may be different in terms of composition, how these differences inform their performance and decision making, and what results this might have on specific business development support needs.

2. Evidencing the Young Entrepreneurship Support Approach

YBI has identified three critical areas of youth entrepreneurship development- documented in its [Entrepreneurship Within Reach](#). This framework was developed based on the experiences of our members, but more specific work is needed to align it with the global evidence base around youth entrepreneurship. It categorises the type of support needed for young entrepreneurs as:

Personal Development: Fostering resilient young entrepreneurs with the soft skills, life skills and leadership capabilities to run businesses that are innovative and agile to withstand future shocks.

Business Development: Equipping young entrepreneurs with the core business and digital capabilities that breed success.

An Enabling Ecosystem: Exploring new partnerships so all young entrepreneurs can access the markets and finance that foster business growth.

The second component of the research is meant to explore the available evidence to support young entrepreneurs in each of these distinct categories. Specifically, it seeks to align available evidence to these areas of support provided by Entrepreneur Support Organizations that meet the needs of young entrepreneurs.

¹ Our ToC is documented in the 2014-17 Strategic Plan; see http://youthbusiness.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/YBI_StrategicPlan_2014-17.pdf. The updated 2023-2025 strategy will be finalized prior to the start of the proposed consultancy.

Key Activities and Tentative Timeline

The project will have five phases:

1. Collaborate with the YBI team to scope and synthesise the research questions and approach
2. Desk-based review of existing academic and grey literature on youth businesses
3. Production of draft Document
4. Review of draft Document
5. Finalisation and production of final reports, of between 15-20 pages per research product

The timeline below is indicative, to be agreed with the selected Consultant/Consultancy Team. However, the project must be completed by 30 June 2023.

Activity	Estimated Timeline
Consultant Selected	January 2023
Facilitating defining scoping of Research Questions/Format	February 2023
Desk based review of literature and initial findings	February- April 2023
Review and Revision of Report	May 2023
Finalisation	June 2024

We are also happy for prospective applicants to get in touch with us prior to the submission date to discuss their ideas around how they may approach this study.

The researcher(s) will report to YBI's Head of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning and a MEL Manager, supported by other YBI Network staff.

Application Process

Expected Consultant Experience and Competencies

- Expert on research and evaluation, with particular focus on synthesising evidence i.e., systematic reviews and rapid evidence reviews
- Knowledge of youth entrepreneurship, business development support, market system development, and/or youth development
- Ability to produce concise, well-written, and jargon-free findings in English

Application Components

Proposals should be limited to 5 pages (**excluding** CVs and work samples), with the following information requested:

- Brief overview of how the candidate(s) meets the experience and skills preferences, as well as a motivation statement (no more than two pages)
- (Approx) 2-page proposed methodology for conducting the study, details of document review approach collection as well as the proposed approach for synthesising findings, including a list of deliverables aligned to the proposed schedule of activities
- Proposed study budget - this should be in United States Dollars and MUST include all fees (incl. VAT) and expenses and should not exceed US\$32,500
- CVs and a sample of a similar piece of work for each team member proposed.

Application Timeline

Proposals must be submitted by midnight UK time on **19th January 2023**. Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed the week of **24th January**, and the start date is anticipated in end January/early February 2023

Please state 'The Youth Entrepreneurship Research Study' in the email subject line and submit applications via email to: simon.bailey@youthbusiness.org