

Terms of reference (ToR) for the procurement of services below the EU threshold

CONFIDENTIAL

Consultancy to conduct a study on the establishment of a digital trade sub-community under EABC	Project number/ cost centre: 20.2280.4-010.00
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0. List of abbreviations

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AG	Commissioning party
AN	Contractor
AVB	General Terms and Conditions of Contract for supplying services and work
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
EAC	East African Community
EU-EAC DEEP	Digital Economy, E-Commerce, E-Payment, and Public E-Services
FK	Expert
FKT	Expert days
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
KZFK	Short-term expert
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
ToRs	Terms of reference

1. Context

1.1. Background

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), in collaboration with Expertise France (EF) and the Estonian Centre for International Development (EstDev), is implementing the EU-EAC DEEP programme, which focuses on Digital Economy, E-Commerce, E-Payment, and Public E-Services. This programme is supported by several organizations, including the European Union, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia.

The programme contributes to the Team Europe Initiatives “Supporting African economic integration towards the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) for eCommerce” and “Digital Economy and Society in Sub-Saharan Africa” to provide comprehensive support for trade and digitalization towards a sustainable setup of an African single digital market with a robust cybersecurity environment.

A key area of the programme is designed to enable, expand, improve and make more inclusive cross-border digital trade in East Africa, as well as between East Africa and Europe. This includes supporting the nascent e-commerce ecosystem in East Africa, which holds tremendous potential both to improve access to high quality and low-cost consumer goods, and to open up new markets to East African suppliers and SMEs. Several countries have initiated steps to set up a regulatory framework to facilitate e-commerce, such as e-commerce and e-payment strategies, customs regulations and electronic transaction laws. A separate study financed by the same project will take a closer look at that. However, these processes often do not include key actors of the digital trade sector such as the private sector. This results in restrictive policies and additional burdens on e-commerce actors and entrepreneurs. There is therefore a need for private sector associations to jointly address these challenges, advocate for policy change and participate as informed partners in policy-making processes.

At the regional level, the East African Business Council has the mandate to represent the private sector. It is an apex body with a membership of a wide range of private sector associations in the East African Community. Some countries, such as Rwanda and Uganda already have dedicated associations to digital trade, whereas others are in early stages or with a different institutional setup. The E-Commerce Engagement Platforms (EEP)s which have been set up both regionally and nationally for the implementation of the EAC E-commerce strategy, also serve as key platforms for national engagement. The project sees great value in activating these national communities and connecting them in a regional community under the auspices of EABC. This will allow the limited national e-commerce sectors to draw on a much larger network of contacts, experts and commercial partners. It will also allow linkages between the companies within the EAC, laying the grounds for regional collaboration and cross border trade. In addition, it will allow for exchanges on best practices in terms of policy recommendations, regulatory trends and how best to support the private sector, in addition to exposure and moral support.

In this context, GIZ-EAC is seeking a qualified and experienced consultant to conduct a study on the establishment of a digital trade sub-community under the EABC, which would ensure the participation of the e-commerce sectors of all EAC partner states.

1.2. Objectives

The overall objective of this assignment is to support the East African Business Council (EABC) in establishing a vibrant and sustainable Digital Trade Sub-Community that brings together key private sector stakeholders engaged in digital trade within the East African Community (EAC). The sub-community will serve as a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and policy advocacy on emerging digital trade issues across the region.

Specifically, the assignment seeks to:

- Assess the relevance, feasibility, and potential value of forming a Digital Trade Sub-Community under EABC.
- Based on the existing stakeholder landscape, propose an appropriate governance and operational structure for the sub-community, including membership categories, coordination mechanisms, and sustainability models.
- Identify and recommend thematic focus areas to guide the sub-community's agenda in alignment with regional and continental digital trade developments.
- Recommend a strategic approach to convening thematic sessions (e.g., at forums, roundtables, or annual summits), including proposed topics and speakers and develop a proposed events calendar for 2 years.
- In cooperation with EABC, identify and propose a package of incentives and value propositions to encourage broad and sustained private sector engagement in the sub-community, and develop a workplan.
- Propose a roadmap for establishment and operationalization of the Sub-Community, and support its implementation

2. Tasks to be performed by the contractor

The consultant will undertake the following tasks:

a) Conduct a situational analysis

- Review the existing legal, organizational and operational structures of the EABC.
- Analyse current trends, challenges, and opportunities in digital trade for businesses operating in the region, including the needs and challenges of the private sector (several recent studies exist, and another parallel consultancy will also provide insights).
- With support from GIZ and EABC, map key private sector stakeholders in the EAC, including private sector associations, SMEs, startups, digital platforms, logistics and fintech actors, and regional platforms active in digital trade.

b) Design the digital trade sub-community framework

- Outline key strategic objectives for the East African E-commerce sub-community, as well as a vision and mission
- Based on international best practices and in close consultation with EABC, design a proposed structure and governance model for the digital trade sub-community, including its functions, membership models and coordination with EABC leadership, to achieve these strategic objectives.
- Suggest operational modalities such as frequency of meetings, communication channels, and resource mobilization mechanisms.

c) Propose a private sector engagement model

- Identify barriers and motivations for private sector participation in regional associations such as the proposed sub-community
- Develop a set of incentives and value-added services to encourage engagement.
- Suggest communication and outreach strategies for member recruitment and retention.

d) Develop a roadmap for establishment and operationalization of the sub-community

- Outline critical steps such as stakeholder mobilization, governance setup, inaugural activities, member onboarding, communication strategy, and potential partnerships.
- Identify potential risks or challenges to the operationalization and suggest corresponding mitigation strategies.

e) Define thematic focus areas and speakers for digital trade topics

- As a first step of the implementation of the private sector engagement model, identify and propose key priority themes for the sub-community based on private sector needs and policy developments.
- Recommend formats and frequency for hosting thematic sessions.
- Propose a list of potential speakers and knowledge partners from within the EAC and globally.
- Together with the EABC, develop an events calendar for at least 2 years to meet the sub-community's objectives
- Develop a workplan for the sub-community including roles and responsibilities for at least 1 year, including the events and the private sector engagement strategy
- Support the EABC in the implementation of the workplan for the first 6 months through coaching and supporting the organisation of at least 4 events/sessions (3 virtual and 1 physical).

f) On-site work and validation

- Carry out at least 2 physical visits to EABC offices in Arusha to collaborate on the completion of the assignment. One could coincide with the organisation of a physical event
- Organize a virtual validation session including key stakeholders from all partner states validating the proposed framework and structure of the regional sub-community

Certain milestones, as laid out in the table below, are to be achieved during the contract term:

Milestones/process steps/partial services	Deadline/place/person responsible	Criteria for acceptance
Inception report - with detailed methodology, work plan and stakeholders' engagement plan.	Within 2 weeks of contract signing / Consultant	Final inception report

Design of sub-community framework – including strategic objectives, vision and mission	Within 4 weeks after approval of the inception report / Consultant, EABC and GIZ	The framework must include all required components as outlined in the scope of assignment
Roadmap for the implementation of the sub-community, Private sector engagement strategy, Events calendar and workplan – taking into account strategic objectives	Within 4 weeks after approval of sub-community framework / Consultant and GIZ	Including suggestions for topics and speakers, existing conferences to hold events at, etc.
Implementation of workplan	Up to 6 months after approval of workplan	Workplan with status updates on completed items Session outlines of at least 4 sessions, and attendance lists of participants

Period of assignment: from **1st of November 2025** until **31st August 2026**.

3. Concept

In the tender, the tenderer is required to show how the objectives defined in Chapter 2 (Tasks to be performed) are to be achieved, if applicable under consideration of further method-related requirements (technical-methodological concept). In addition, the tenderer must describe the project management system for service provision.

Note: The numbers in parentheses correspond to the lines

of the technical assessment grid.

Technical-methodological concept

Strategy (1.1): The tenderer is required to consider the tasks to be performed with reference to the objectives of the services put out to tender (see Chapter 1 Context) (1.1.1). Following this, the tenderer presents and justifies the explicit strategy with which it intends to provide the services for which it is responsible, including comments on the TOR and a high-level methodology (see Chapter 2 Tasks to be performed) (1.1.2).

The tenderer is required to present the actors relevant for the services for which it is responsible and describe the **cooperation (1.2)** with them. EABC and GIZ are able to support with the identification of relevant stakeholders in many countries.

The tenderer is required to present and explain its approach to **steering/project management** of the measures with the project partners (GIZ and EABC) (1.3.1) and its contribution to the **results-based monitoring system** (1.3.2).

The tenderer is required to describe the key **processes** for the services for which it is responsible and create an **operational plan** or schedule (1.4.1) that describes how the services according to Chapter 2 (Tasks to be performed by the contractor) are to be provided. In particular, the tenderer is required to describe the necessary work steps and, if applicable,

take account of the milestones and **contributions** of other actors (partner contributions) in accordance with Chapter 2 (Tasks to be performed) (1.4.2).

The tenderer is required to describe its contribution to knowledge management for the partner (1.5.1) and GIZ and to promote scaling-up effects (1.5.2) under **learning and innovation**.

4. Personnel concept

The tenderer is required to provide personnel who are suited to filling the positions described, on the basis of their CVs (see Chapter 7), the range of tasks involved and the required qualifications.

The below specified qualifications represent the requirements to reach the maximum number of points in the technical assessment.

Tasks of the Consultant

- Coordinating and ensuring communication with GIZ, partners and others involved in the project
- Conduct desk review, collect and analyze data across Partner States using interviews, surveys, and stakeholder consultations
- Draft the report with all specified elements
- Facilitate a regional validation workshop and synthesize stakeholders' inputs
- Revise and finalize the report based on feedback from stakeholders
- Support EABC in the implementation of a limited set of events
- Regular reporting in accordance with deadlines

Qualifications and experience of the Consultant

- A master's degree in economics, international trade, business administration, communication, information technology, organisational development or a related field.
- At least 7 years of experience in organisational development and strengthening of the private sector
- Proven expertise in digital trade, e-commerce, export promotion and/or trade facilitation
- Strong knowledge of the EAC socio-economic and digital landscape, with familiarity with the East African Business Council (EABC) and private sector dynamics.
- Demonstrated experience in designing governance structures, membership frameworks, and strategic or operational plans for associations, networks, or sub-communities.
- Practical experience in managing multi-stakeholder platforms and developing roadmaps, action plans, and implementation strategies.
- Ability to design and implement private sector engagement models, including incentive structures, outreach, and retention strategies.
- Excellent analytical, communication, and problem-solving skills, with the ability to synthesize complex information into actionable recommendations.
- Fluency in English is required; knowledge of French and/or Kiswahili is an advantage.

5. Costing requirements

Assignment of personnel and travel expenses

Per diem allowances are reimbursed as a lump sum up to the maximum amounts permissible under tax law for each country as set out in the country table in the circular from the German

Federal Ministry of Finance on travel expense remuneration (downloadable from the German Federal Ministry of Finance – tax treatment of travel expenses and allowances for international business travel as of 1 January 2024).

Accommodation allowances are reimbursed as detailed in the specification below.

All business travel must be agreed in advance by the officer responsible for the project

Sustainability aspects for travel

GIZ has undertaken an obligation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (CO2 emissions) caused by travel. When preparing your tender, please incorporate options for reducing emissions, such as selecting the lowest-emission booking class (economy) and using means of transport, airlines and flight routes with a higher CO2 efficiency. For short distances, travel by train (second class) or e-mobility should be the preferred option.

CO2 emissions caused by air travel must be offset. GIZ specifies a budget for this, through which the carbon offsets can be settled against evidence.

There are many different providers in the market for emissions certificates, and they have different climate impact ambitions. The [Development and Climate Alliance \(German only\)](#) has published a [list of standards \(German only\)](#). GIZ recommends using the standards specified there.

Specification of inputs

Fee days	Number of experts	Number of days per expert	Total	Comments
Consultant	1	60	60	This is an individual consultancy
Travel expenses	Quantity	Number per expert	Total	Comments
Per-diem allowance in country of assignment				First trip for validation and follow ups with EABC Second trip to support the organisation of 1 physical thematic session
Overnight allowance in country of assignment				3 nights per trip
Transport				Comments
International flights				Against provision of evidence to be reimbursed by GIZ.

				1 air ticket to Arusha for the validation of report and 1 air ticket to the country that will host the physical thematic session
Domestic flights				Flights within the country of assignment during service delivery
Other travel expenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airport transfers • Local transportation • Visa fees 				Airport transfers- Against provision of evidence. Local transportation against provision of evidence Visa costs against provision of evidence
Fixed travel cost budget (all the above-mentioned cost items excluding fees has been included in the fixed travel cost budget)				A budget is provided for travel to the following countries: Tanzania and one Partner State that will host a physical thematic session. A fixed travel cost budget of USD 5,023 is provided. This amount will be settled against evidence.

6. Requirements on the format of the tender

The structure of the tender must correspond to the structure of the ToR. In particular, the detailed structure of the concept (Chapter 3) should be organised in accordance with the positively weighted criteria in the assessment grid (not with zero). The tender must be legible (font size 11 or larger) and clearly formulated. It must be drawn up in English (language).

The complete tender must not exceed 12 pages (excluding CVs). If one of the maximum page lengths is exceeded, the content appearing after the cut-off point will not be included in the assessment. External content (e.g. links to websites) will also not be considered.

The CV of the personnel proposed in accordance with Chapter 4 of the ToRs must be submitted using the format specified in the terms and conditions for application. The CV shall not exceed 4 pages. They must clearly show the position and job the proposed person held in the reference project and for how long. The CV can also be submitted in English (language).

Please calculate your financial tender based exactly on the parameters specified in Chapter 5 Quantitative requirements. The contractor is not contractually entitled to use up the days, trips, workshops or budgets in full. The number of days, trips and workshops and the budgets will be contractually agreed as maximum limits. The specifications for pricing are defined in the price schedule.