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

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

CONFIDENTIAL

Consultancy for the selection and provision of Business Development Services to e-commerce companies	**Project number/ cost centre: G-011659-010** **Tender number 7000012724**

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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	European Union
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 Digital Economy, E-Commerce, E-Payments, and Public E-Services (DEEP) Programme, which is a regional initiative that supports the East African Community (EAC) in advancing integrated, inclusive, and competitive digital markets. Co-financed by the European Union (EU), the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, and France, the programme focuses on promoting cross-border digital trade, strengthening regional payment systems and digital financial services, and enhancing digital public service delivery to accelerate the growth and security of digital markets across the region.

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.

Over the past years, significant regional initiatives have been undertaken to create an enabling environment for digital trade. These efforts include the development and implementation of the EAC E-Commerce Strategy, which, under Pillar 3: Improving Market Access Conditions, calls for the promotion of diverse and sustainable e-commerce business models aligned with prevailing market dynamics.

However, despite these efforts, most e-commerce companies continue to operate primarily at the national level, limiting their participation in cross-border trade. In this regard, the lack of viable and revenue-generating business models has been identified as one of the key constraints hindering the growth and regional expansion of e-commerce in the EAC.

Considering the above, there is an ongoing study to develop an actionable, evidence-based, and stakeholder-driven set of recommendations to strengthen the regulatory framework for cross-border digital trade in the EAC. The study also intends to identify capacity gaps and propose targeted institutional strengthening and training interventions to support effective implementation.

However, in addition to addressing structural challenges, it is also important to strengthen the private sector itself. To this end, the EAC Secretariat, in collaboration with its partners, seeks to provide tailored technical assistance to selected e-commerce companies. This support will strengthen their capacities, enhance compliance and operational efficiency, and enable them to scale beyond national markets, contributing to a more integrated and competitive regional digital economy.

The intervention will be implemented in three phases: (i) call for applications and selection of e-commerce companies, (ii) capacity needs assessment of the selected e-commerce companies, and (iii) tailored support to improve business models based on individual company needs.

1.2. Objectives

The overall objective of this assignment is to improve the capacity of e-commerce companies in the EAC region to access markets beyond their primary jurisdictions. Through this intervention, the cross border digital trade of the supported companies should grow substantially, both in volume and value. The learnings from the assignment will be relevant to design similar interventions in future.

Specific Objectives

- Design and implement a transparent and competitive call for applications to select minimum ten (10) e-commerce companies across EAC Partner States, prioritizing companies with scalable, innovative, and proven business models that demonstrate potential for regional market expansion.
- Conduct comprehensive capacity needs assessments to identify constraints limiting market access, including gaps in regulatory compliance, trust and consumer protection mechanisms, payment integration, logistics and fulfilment systems, digital marketing, corporate governance and operations, data use, and cross-border trade readiness.
- Based on agreed criteria, select a minimum of 5 e-commerce companies and co-create a tailor-made technical assistance and capacity building package for them. The technical assistance and capacity building can include areas such as strengthen operational capacities, enhance sustainable, market-aligned business models to improve competitiveness and market access, hands-on technical assistance to refine and strengthen the business models, improving value propositions, revenue models, operational efficiency, customer acquisition strategies, regional expansion approaches, export marketing efforts, and integration into regional and international digital value chains.
- Document key challenges, good practices, training material and scalable approaches emerging from the technical assistance process to inform regional digital trade policy dialogue and future support programmes.

2. Tasks to be performed by the contractor

The contractor is responsible for providing the following services:

The assignment will be implemented in three phases.

Phase 1: Call for applications and selection of e-commerce companies

- In cooperation with GIZ and EAC/EABC, develop clear eligibility criteria and selection methodology for a call for applications targeting e-commerce companies across the EAC region. The criteria could involve areas such as innovation, scalability, cross-border potential, alignment with regional digital trade priorities, geographical balance and traditional business indicators. The selected companies should either already be doing cross border digital trade with potential for expansion or be export-ready companies with a proven business model and track record in their home market.
- The selection process should also look at capabilities of the companies to trade with European markets. Whereas this is not the primary target of this intervention, the outreach will benefit other activities under the EU-EAC DEEP Project.
- Disseminate the call widely and in relevant networks in all 8 EAC partner states.
- Screen and shortlist applications in consultation with GIZ, EAC and the EABC.
- Select minimum 10 e-commerce companies based on predefined criteria and facilitate the signing of letters of cooperation with them

Phase 2: Needs assessment

- Conduct detailed needs assessments of the 10 selected companies with regard to their participation in cross-border trade., including areas such as digital operations, data sharing, corporate governance, marketing, logistics, customer management, financial management, and compliance with regulatory frameworks.
- Conduct individual consultations with each company to review their long-term goals.
- Identify opportunities to enhance revenue streams, operational efficiency, digital strategy and cross-border trade and specify clear recommendations and action points
- Tailor technical assistance and capacity packages for minimum 5 e-commerce companies, based on the needs assessments and in close cooperation with their management and GIZ.
- Put in place mechanisms to ensure full participation of the selected companies

Phase 3: Implement technical assistance and capacity packages

- Mobilise experts pool with relevant expertise in the focus areas of the tailored capacity building and technical assistance needs identified
- Oversee the implementation of workshops, webinars, knowledge exchanges, online trainings, mentorship and on-the-job training sessions
- Support companies in implementing recommendations to expand cross border digital trade and in adopting market-driven solutions, for example through on-the-job training, mentorship, coaching and follow ups
- Monitor and document the implementation of the technical assistance and capacity building packages

In addition to the reports required by GIZ in accordance with the AVB, the contractor submits the following reports:

- Methodology for selection of companies, dissemination strategy and work plan
- Contributions to reports to GIZ's commissioning party on a quarterly basis
- List of selected companies
- Needs assessment reports for each company
- Technical assistance and capacity building package for each company
- Documentation of relevant content for future activities: training material, online resources, lessons learned
- On a needs basis: content for the communications team of GIZ, EAC / EABC and the commissioning party

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

Milestones/process steps/partial services	**Duration in weeks**
Phase 1: Call for Applications and Selection	**10 weeks**
Methodology for selection of companies, dissemination strategy and work plan. Call for Applications Package - Application forms, eligibility criteria, evaluation framework, dissemination plan	4 weeks
Launch of call for proposals, open for 4 weeks	4 weeks

List of selected companies, as well as companies relevant for EU market activities	2 weeks
Phase 2: Capacity Needs Assessment	**8 weeks**
Needs assessment reports for each company	6 weeks
Technical assistance and capacity building package for each company	2 weeks
Phase 3: Implement Technical Assistance and capacity packages	**40 weeks**
Input to quarterly reports for commissioning party	Every 12 weeks
Content for the communications team	Minimum every 24 weeks
Documentation of relevant content for future activities: training material, online resources, lessons learned	58 weeks

Period of assignment: from 1 July 2026 until 31 August 2027.

3. Concept

In the tender, the tenderer is required to show *how* the objectives defined in Chapter **Error! Reference source not found.** (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 **Error! Reference source not found.** 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 (see Chapter **Error! Reference source not found.** Tasks to be performed) (1.1.2). This should include some initial ideas on the methodology of the selection process and the approach for the implementation of the technical assistance and capacity building support.

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. These may include actors leveraged for dissemination and mobilisation, roles of the EAC and EABC as well as the E-commerce associations.

The tenderer is required to present and explain its approach to **steering** the measures with the project partners (1.3.1) and its contribution to the **results-based monitoring system** (1.3.2). This could include regular meetings, online tools and proven approaches that have worked in the past managing part-time expert pools.

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 **Error! Reference source not found.** (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). In particular, this should include measures to ensure the selected companies are available and engaged in the process.

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, in particular how lessons from this assignment can be used for future similar assignments, or even as recommendations to the E-Commerce sector as a whole.

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 6), 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.

Team leader

Tasks of the team leader

- Overall responsibility for the advisory packages of the contractor (quality and deadlines)
- Coordinating and ensuring communication with GIZ, partners and others involved in the project
- Personnel management, in particular managing short-term assignments within the available budget, as well as planning and steering assignments and supporting local and international short-term experts
- Regular reporting in accordance with deadlines
- Propose methods to monitor progress on agreed targets in growing cross border digital trade, and how this should be tracked and documented
- Documentation for lessons learned

Qualifications of the team leader

- Education/training (2.1.1): Bachelor's degree in business administration, marketing, international trade/business, ICT, or related field. Advanced degree is an added advantage.
- Language (2.1.2): Knowledge of English (75% out of 10 points) and knowledge of French (25% out of 10 points).
- General professional experience (2.1.3): 10 years in organizational development and strengthening of business ecosystems
- Specific professional experience (2.1.4): 5 years in managing business development, training or advisory programmes in digital business fields
- Leadership/management experience (2.1.5): 7 years of management/leadership experience as project team leader or manager in a company
- Regional experience (2.1.6): 5 years of experience in private sector development in the EAC region.
- Development cooperation (DC) experience (2.1.7): 3 years of experience in DC projects

- Other (2.1.8): Industry certifications with relevant institutions for e-commerce.

Expert 1: Business Development Services Expert

Tasks of expert 1

- Conduct in-depth assessments of selected e-commerce companies' business models, including value proposition, revenue streams, cost structures, and scalability potential
- Engage with companies through consultations and virtual sessions to identify constraints and opportunities for business model optimization and regional expansion
- Design meaningful and relevant technical assistance and capacity building packages for each selected company, including recommendations on the required profiles to execute the activities
- Provide business development services and capacity building sessions to the companies through webinars, on-the-job training, coaching, mentoring and tailored sessions
- Develop tailored, actionable recommendations to enhance operational efficiency, competitiveness, and integration into regional and international digital value chains

Qualifications of Expert 1

- Education/training (2.2.1): Bachelor's degree in business administration, economics, marketing, innovation, or related field
- Language (2.2.2): Knowledge of English (75% out of 10 points) and knowledge of French (25% out of 10 points).
- General professional experience (2.2.3): 5 years in export readiness/access to foreign markets business development and private sector support
- Specific professional experience (2.2.4): 5 years in e-commerce, platform development, or digital business models
- Leadership/management experience (2.2.5): 3 years of managing advisory or training activities
- Regional experience (2.2.6): 5 years of experience in the EAC region
- Other (2.2.8): 5 years of experience in designing business development services programmes (50% out of 10 points), and 3 years' Experience in running a digital business in the EAC (50% out of 10 points)

Key expert 2

Tasks of expert 2: Communications and administration

- Support the Team Lead in preparing communication materials for the call for applications, including announcements, guidelines, and outreach content. Provide communications content throughout the assignment process.
- Coordinate the dissemination of the call for applications across the EAC region through appropriate channels, including partner networks and media platforms.
- Liaise with key stakeholders (e.g., EAC Secretariat, EABC, national institutions, and private sector actors) to ensure wide visibility and outreach of the call.
- Manage communication with applicants by responding to inquiries and providing clarifications in a timely and professional manner.
- Organize and maintain a centralized system for receiving and registering applications and other assignment related documents,

- Conduct initial administrative screening of applications to verify completeness, eligibility, and compliance with submission requirements.
- Support the coordination of evaluation processes, scheduling meetings, webinars, online and physical training sessions and documenting results and progress on agreed targets.
- Assist in organizing information sessions, webinars, or briefing meetings
- Provide general administrative and logistical support throughout the entire assignments

Qualification of expert 2

- Education/training (2.2.1): Bachelor's degree in business administration, marketing, communications, public relations, information technology, or related field
- Language (2.2.2): Knowledge of English (75% out of 10 points) and knowledge of French (25% out of 10 points).
- General professional experience (2.2.3): 3 years in administrative and/or communications functions
- Specific professional experience (2.2.4): 2 years in administration of an entity providing training, capacity building and launching calls for applications
- Regional experience (2.2.6): 2 years of experience in the EAC region

Expert X: Pool 1 'Local Business Development Services Experts' with 4-6 experts

(section 2.X of the assessment grid) In derogation from the number of experts mentioned above, **6** CVs must be added to the tender. The ability of the tenderer to offer the pool of experts required here is assessed solely on the basis of these exemplary CVs.

The actual number of experts assigned from the pool may differ from the number of experts required in section 4 of the Terms of Reference. For experts not named in the tender, GIZ must confirm before the assignment that their qualifications are equivalent to those of the short-term experts proposed in the tender.

<u>Tasks of the expert pool</u>

- Provide expert input on the design of technical assistance and capacity building activities
- Co-create and develop work plans for the technical assistance and capacity development activities with the companies
- Ensure high level of motivation and engagement from selected companies
- Execute technical assistance and capacity development activities in cooperation with other experts through webinars, external trainings, workshops, on-the-job training, coaching and mentorship
- Conduct audits of the digital systems of the companies and provide recommendations and support to address key security vulnerabilities, propose integrations and services to boost cross border digital trade, provide input on architecture, use of AI, third party integrations and carry out capacity development of staff
- Develop export marketing plans for the companies and support them in their implementation, build capacity in digital marketing

- Support companies in partnership outreach, strategic networking efforts, preparing and following up of key partnerships to enter new markets
- Provide hands-on technical advisory support to companies on integrating secure, efficient, and scalable payment solutions, including mobile money, fintech integrations, and payment gateways
- Identify operational bottlenecks affecting order processing, warehousing, cross-border delivery, last-mile, fulfilment and returns management
- Support companies in designing and implementing practical solutions to improve trade facilitation, delivery efficiency, and customer experience
- Provide tailored advisory support to companies on compliance with data protection, consumer protection, and e-transactions frameworks at national and regional levels
- Support companies in establishing practical data collection and reporting mechanisms to measure progress and outcomes across project phases
- Provide hands-on guidance to companies on using data for decision-making, performance improvement, and strategic planning
- Collect and analyze company-level data to assess the impact of technical assistance and identify trends, challenges, and success factors
- Contribute to validation workshops, technical reporting, and documentation of lessons learned and communications materials
- Support company boards and management team in the development of export strategies and support the implementation
- Ensure quality assurance and timely delivery of all agreed outputs and recommendations
- Coordination and engagement role with relevant local actors in the respective countries.
- As agreed with team leader, support on-going activities
- Prepare and participate in events or workshops
- Deliver tasks and take on responsibilities as agreed with the Team Leader and report back to the Team Leader

Qualifications of the expert pool

- Education/training (2.6.1): All 6 experts with bachelor's degrees in finance, economics, fintech, logistics, supply chain, international trade, law, digital policy, economics, statistics, or related field
- Language (2.6.2): Knowledge of English (75% out of 10 points) and knowledge of French (25% out of 10 points).
- General professional experience (2.6.3): All 6 experts with 5 years in financial systems or digital payments, logistics or trade facilitation, legal or regulatory advisory in digital trade topics, export marketing, digital marketing, e-commerce or digital trade business models, logistics and customs topics, e-commerce IT support and systems
- Specific professional experience (2.6.4): All 6 experts with 5 years of professional experience in conducting business assessments and providing advisory services to enterprises, including analysis of business performance, identification of operational gaps, and delivery of tailored workshops, on the job training sessions, mentorship and coaching
- Regional experience (2.6.5): All 6 experts with 2 years of experience in the EAC region

The tender must provide a clear overview of all proposed short-term experts and their individual qualifications.

Soft skills of team members

In addition to their specialist qualifications, the following qualifications are required of team members:

- Team skills
- Initiative
- Communication skills
- Socio-cultural skills
- Efficient, partner- and client-focused working methods
- Interdisciplinary thinking

5. Costing requirements

Assignment of personnel and travel expenses

Per-diem and overnight accommodation 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 at https://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de).

Accommodation costs which exceed this up to a reasonable amount and the cost of flights and other main forms of transport can be reimbursed against evidence

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

Sustainability aspects for travel

GIZ would like to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (CO_2 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 CO_2 efficiency. For short distances, travel by train (second class) or e-mobility should be the preferred option.

If they cannot be avoided, CO_2 emissions caused by air travel should 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
Designation of TL	**1**	**87**	**87**	

Designation of key expert 1	**1**	**87**	**87**	
Designation of key expert 2	**1**	**87**	**87**	
Designation of Expert Pool	**6**	**27**	**162**	
Travel expenses	**Quantity**	**Number per expert**	**Total**	**Comments**
Per-diem allowance in country of assignment				
Overnight allowance in country of assignment				
Transport	**Quantity**	**Number per expert**	**Total**	**Comments**
International flights				Travel to the place of service delivery
Domestic flights				Flights within the country of assignment during service delivery
CO_2 compensation for air travel				A fixed budget of EUR is earmarked for settling carbon offsets against evidence.
Travel expenses (train, car) • •				Travel within the country of assignment, transfer to/from airport etc.
Other travel expenses				e.g. visa costs
Fixed travel budget				A budget is earmarked for travel to the following countries: EAC partners states. A fixed budget of EUR **24000** is earmarked for settling travel expenses against evidence. You can find further information on the travel expense budget in the 'Price schedule' document. Please use the 'Explanations' column in the price schedule to

				break down the individual items. Settlement is possible only until the budget is depleted.
Other costs	**Number**	**Price**	**Total**	**Comments**
Flexible remuneration				A budget of EUR **12000** is foreseen for flexible remuneration. Please incorporate this budget into the price schedule. Use of the flexible remuneration item requires prior written approval from GIZ.
Workshops				The budget contains the following costs . *Alternatively:* Please calculate a budget for workshops taking the following cost items into account:
Subcontracts				The budget contains the following costs .
Procurement of materials and equipment				The budget contains the following costs .
Local contributions				The contractor administers the following local *contributions* in accordance with Section 2.7 AVB: .
Other costs				The budget contains the following costs **1500**.

6. Requirements on the format of the tender

The structure of the tender must correspond to the structure of the ToRs. 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 CVs 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 CVs shall not exceed 4 pages each. They must clearly show the position and job the proposed person

held in the reference project and for how long. The CVs 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.

7. Outsourced processing of personal data

When the GIZ hires a contractor to develop or upgrade a data processing system (platform, website, app etc.) on behalf of a local partner, who determines the purposes and means of the data processing activity, the GIZ does not bear ANY responsibility for such processing. Although the GIZ builds such systems in conformity with the highest data protection standards, however, its responsibilities end with the handing over of the systems to the partner. As a data controller, the partner must ALONE comply with all local and regional laws applicable to such processing (including the GDPR, where applicable). Consequently, the data protection principles such as lawfulness, data minimization, accuracy, purpose limitation, storage limitation, transparency, integrity and confidentiality, and accountability, as well as the numerous rights of the data subject should be paid due attention. We equally recommend the partner to conclude data protection agreements with the hosting service provider(s) and the maintenance service provider(s), where applicable. The GIZ would be available to support the partner whenever need arises.