



ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
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**DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE,
ENERGY AND DIGITALISATION**

Directorate of Digital Economy and Post

**TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) TO DEVELOP A REGIONAL
ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT (E-GOVERNMENT)
STRATEGY**

1. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was created in 1975 by the Treaty of Lagos (revised in 1993). ECOWAS is composed of 15 Member States and covers an area of 5.2 million km² with a population exceeding 400 million citizens. Its main mandate is to promote cooperation and integration among its Member States, economic and political stability, and increase the economic opportunities and welfare of its nation.

ECOWAS regional strategic framework is reflected by the Vision 2050, which envisages: "A fully integrated Community of peoples, living in a peaceful and prosperous region, with strong institutions and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, working for inclusive and sustainable development". This Vision is anchored on five main pillars, namely:

- (i) Peace, security, and stability.
- (ii) Governance and rule of law.
- (iii) Economic integration and interconnectivity.
- (iv) Transformation, inclusive and sustainable development.
- (v) Social inclusion.

This vision is translated into concrete actions through a first Community Strategic Framework (CSF) 2023-2027, specifically *Pillars 3 and 4* contribute towards transformation, inclusive and sustainable development of the region. Pillar 3 works towards economic integration and interconnectivity through, among other things, the intensification of infrastructural development and inter-connectivity, including improved telecommunication infrastructures and services. In addition, among the expected effects of Pillar 4 are improved access to basic social services including ICT, improved entrepreneurship and research and development (R&D) including complementary digital entrepreneurship (startups).

Given the potentials of digital transformation as a real lever for the development and modernisation of governments as well as improving the quality of life of the citizens, some Member States have already taken proactive measures to develop national plans to promote the use of digital technology through the provision of online public services to citizens.

Therefore, the ECOWAS Commission has embarked on a regional coordination process for digital transformation to ensure that the region takes advantage of this global digital development trend. This transformation will in many cases support all socio-economic activities using information and communication technology (ICT) as a means for sustainable growth as well as financial and social inclusion.

As such, at the end of the regional e-government expert forum held in February 2023, it was agreed to develop a regional e-government strategy guided by the priorities identified by Member States, to ensure a smooth transition conducive to the acceleration of socio-economic development through digital public services.

2. CURRENT SITUATION OF THE REGION

The ECOWAS region has intensified his commitment in the deep-seated digital transformation trend like all countries worldwide since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic served as a wake-up call to the importance of ICT and the need for digital transformation in the region. Indeed, several measures have been taken at the regional level, notably on governance, regulation, development of Internet, telecommunication infrastructure and security.

Regarding governance, in order to position digital services as a driving force for economic growth and inclusion, pursuing efforts to build a single digital market for a future of shared and sustainable prosperity in the region, the ECOWAS Commission is finalising the development of the 2024 – 2029 strategy for the development of the digital sector in ECOWAS region. In addition, the commission is taking the necessary steps with the WAEMU commission for completion of the development of the new legal and regulatory framework to govern the digital economy sector in West Africa to harmonize policies and regulatory frameworks in the region.

Given that security is the keystone to digital transformation, ECOWAS has implemented a programme to support Member States in building their cybersecurity capacity, protecting their cyber spaces and relevant infrastructure, boosting digital trust and security, and contributing to the fight against cybercrime. Thus, Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRT) and Digital Forensic Laboratories (DFL) are gradually being set up by Member States with the support of the ECOWAS Commission and its partners. These efforts have been made in alignment with the Directive C/DIR.1/01/2021 on the regional strategy for cybersecurity and the fight against cybercrime as well as Directive C/DIR.1/08/11 on the fight against cybercrime.

In terms of infrastructure, significant progress has been made with internet penetration rate rising from 47.44% as of 31 December 2019 to over 54% by December 2021. For broadband, the deployment of national backbones continues in all Member States. In the same growth trend, all ECOWAS coastal countries are now connected to at least one submarine cable for high-speed internet connectivity, while countries in the hinterland have at least two routes for their submarine cable access.

Despite this progress, there is still a way to go for a successful digital transition of the administrations in ECOWAS Member States. The level of e-government maturity of a country is defined by the e-Government Development Index (E-GDI) which is based on the level of utilisation of e-services in government, the development of telecommunication/ICT infrastructure and the available human capacity. According to the UN DESA report "E-Government Survey 2022: The Future of Digital government", only three ECOWAS countries have a development index above the continental average.

The region faces various complex issues that can hinder a successful digital transition in the region, these include lack of appropriate institutional frameworks, adaptation and harmonisation of legal and regulatory texts, accessibility of services, availability of human resources, development of digital skills, introduction of disruptive technologies, affordability of tariffs, and reduction of the digital divide with regard to the poorest and most vulnerable people (women, youth, people living with disabilities, grassroots communities , etc.).

3. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION for AFRICA /WESTERN AFRICA REGIONAL DIGITAL INTEGRATION PROGRAM SERIES OF PROJECTS 1 (DTfA/ WARDIP SOP-1)

Lastly, ECOWAS is committed with the World Bank for the DTfA/ WARDIP SOP-1 project in the digital economy sector aiming to increase broadband access and usage and strengthen the foundations for the establishment of a single digital market in Western Africa.

Specifically, the project is designed for connectivity market development and integration, removing barriers to regional telecom infrastructure and services deployment; a data market development and integration, enabling the secure exchange and processing of data across borders; and an online market development and integration, allowing the access and delivery of public and private services online and digital trade across borders.

The Online Market Development and Integration component includes digital government services development to foster the regional integration by helping make public services widely accessible online across regional borders. The elaboration of a regional e-government strategy is one of the priorities activities identified to launch a 5-year strategic roadmap and action plan for development of public digital services serving regional integration.

4. OBJECTIVES

The aim of this assignment is to develop for the ECOWAS region **a five-year regional e-government strategy** in order to enable the region to:

- Strengthen its governance through e-government, promoting **full digital integration** and ensuring the **online participation and the digital inclusion of all citizens**.
- Improve efficiency and transparency of public administrations in the region, by establishing citizen-friendly (accessible, resilient, and secure) e-government services and solutions.
- Position itself as an important player in the global digital economy.
- Promote digital skills enhancement and bilateral and multilateral cooperation among West African Countries, to foster and sustain digitalisation take-up.

- Promote a harmonised global approach through the adaptation of the legal and regulatory framework fostering a conducive environment and positive conditions for the development of e-applications.

In broad terms, the assignment will cover the following activities:

- Analysis of the external environment in terms of digital transformation.
- Assessment of the e-government level of development. This assessment will investigate:
 - The existing digital transformation coordination instruments: institutional frameworks, national instruments including policies, regulatory frameworks, and strategies.
 - The Online services provision including content provision and online participation of citizens, businesses, and civil servants in the public actions via national government portals, open government data, and online consultation tools.
 - The digital and data infrastructure including the governance aspects and broadly the foundational technology environment.
 - The capabilities, culture, skills, and change management.
 - Emergency response, resilience, and cybersecurity.
- Analyse the regional digital sector development strategy for the ECOWAS region to identify the needs and expectations in terms of digital transformation of public administrations in order to make e-government a lever of differentiation in the region and increase the value add for citizens, businesses, government agents and other relevant structures.
- Review the global state of play and benchmark successful regional e-government strategies experiences with a focus on innovative services integrating disruptive emerging technologies such as Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, connected objects, blockchain, smart sensors, robotic process automation and 5G to learn from those experiences and build on it as a regional body, specifically for the definition of the role of ECOWAS.
- Develop a master plan with identified programmes and/or projects at the regional and national level with an assessment of associated costs that will promote the transformation of public administrations in the region over a five (5) year period.
- Identify key partners and propose financing mechanisms for selected programmes and/or projects.
- Define the bodies and develop the tools for coordinating governance, monitoring, evaluation, sensitisation and learning in relation to the regional e-government strategy.

5. EXPECTED RESULTS

The expected results at the end of the consultancy are as follows:

- An overview of the strategic component of the ECOWAS digital sector development strategy, including the strategic external trends (continental and international), to serve as the guiding framework for the regional e-government strategy.
- The main digital transformation challenges facing the ECOWAS region in the next five years.
- The status of digital transformation in public administrations, including the institutional frameworks, the national instruments and the level of their implementation, the use of e-services by governments, the development of telecommunication/ICT infrastructure, and the human capacity available in the Member States.
- A diagnosis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats of digital transformation initiatives in the region.
- A list of current and future digital transformation needs of governments.
- A depository of good practices and standards in e-government.
- The objectives and major areas of the regional e-government strategy, in line with the priorities identified by Member States and the prospects of ECOWAS Community Strategic Framework.
- The definition of the targeted e-government model (vision) that can support regional integration and inclusion, with the list of the associated programmes (regional and national level) to be conducted in order to reach the digital transformation goals. **The systems to be digitalised must be indicated.**
- The planning of programmes.
- The resources needed to implement the programmes of regional e-government strategy (full time equivalent, budget).
- A robust and agile governance framework and implementation plan giving the details for each strategic goal and strategic objectives, the associated measures, the key performance indicators, and the timeframe.
- A monitoring and evaluation framework including a strategic steering tool, a programme evaluation template, a reporting template, and a PowerPoint template as material for the presentation to the regional e-government strategic coordination body.

To ensure the achievement of the e-government strategy vision's objectives, the role of ECOWAS and the Member States will need to be clearly differentiated.

6. SCOPE OF SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

6.1. Phase 1 – Framing of the Assignment (Inception)

6.1.1. Objective

Define the scope of the assignment, specify, and confirm the expected results of the mission and validate the methodological approach.

6.1.2. Tasks to perform.

- Present and validate the proposed approach.
- Detailed planning of the mission to develop the regional e-government strategy.
- Identify major actors to be met.
- Identify and collect the documentation needed to ensure the success of the mission.
- Organise and facilitate the mission’s inaugural online meeting.

6.1.3. Deliverables

- Quality assurance plan.
- Inception report including but not limited to detailed planning of the tasks.
- Inaugural meeting material.
- Inaugural meeting report.

6.2. Phase 2 – Preliminary analysis

6.2.1. Regional global status assessment

Assess the e-government level of development in the region including the implementation of the existing national strategies for digital transformation of public administrations.

6.2.1.1. Objective

Analyse and describe the following over the next five years:

- Major digital transformation issues to be addressed at the regional level.
- The digital transformation coordination instruments: institutional frameworks, national instruments including policies, regulatory frameworks, and strategies to ensure a conducive environment.
- Level of implementation of e-services by governments, development of telecommunication/ICT infrastructure, and human capacity available in the ECOWAS region.

6.2.1.2. Tasks to perform.

- Assess the digital transformation maturity of the region and analyse how e-government can contribute to its development in terms of growth, inclusion, sustainability, and regional integration.

- Conduct interviews with all relevant stakeholders (national and regional) to take full stock of the situation.
- Analyse national and regional e-government budgets and investments
- Conduct a SWOT analysis (strengths and weaknesses, threats, and opportunities) and analyse potential risks and assess their impact.

6.2.1.3. Deliverables

- Template guidelines or questionnaire for interviews with Member States
- Interview reports.
- E-government global status assessment report for ECOWAS region, including a SWOT analysis with recommendations for improvement, main e-government challenges in public administration in the region.

6.2.2. Regional Needs Assessment

6.2.2.1. Objectives

For strategic alignment purposes, conduct analysis of the strategic context (continental, and international) including challenges.

- Conduct a needs (current and future) assessment considering ongoing initiatives.
- Classify the needs based in order of priority and risk.
- Present an updated view of the best practices in e-government, this should include but not limited to detailed technological developments, their integration and application in e-government.

6.2.2.2. Tasks to perform.

- Study the external environment to identify major trends in digital transformation that will serve as a guiding framework for the development of the regional e-government strategy.
- Assess the needs arising from the CSF 2023 - 2027 and the priorities arising from the regional e-government expert forum.
- Conduct online workshops to assess and collect the needs of Member States.
- Analyse the deliverable of the digital sector development strategy for the ECOWAS region.
- Compile the best practices in governance, operationalisation, and support of e-government.
- Benchmark successful e-government experiences, focusing on innovative services integrating technologies such as Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, related objects, blockchain, intelligent sensors, robotic automation of processes.

6.2.2.3. Deliverables

- Template guidelines or questionnaire and presentation materials for collection of Member States needs.
- Interview and workshop reports.

- Digital transformation needs report, including the external environment major trends, the priorities to be considered in the forthcoming regional strategy, the state of art and best practices.

The E-government global status assessment report and the Digital transformation needs report can be combined as the preliminary report.

6.3. Phase 3 –Definition and development of the regional e-government strategy

6.3.1.Objectives

- Define the objectives and major axes of the regional e-government strategy.
- Define the targeted e-government model (vision) with minimum optimal e-government goal for Member States, conducive to regional integration and citizen inclusion.
- Set up national and regional programmes in line with the defined goal and assess the costs of implementation.
- Define an appropriate implementation plan to be adopted by Member States for a harmonised development of e-government.

6.3.2.Tasks to perform.

- Draft the regional e-government strategy based on all the documentation produced during the assignment.
 - Define the e-government vision and objectives for the region.
 - Conduct online workshops to define and refine the list of strategic axes based on the results of phases 1 and 2.
 - Define the e-government target.
 - Identify the programmes and outline the implementation strategies to be carried out based on the gaps with the e-government target both for the regional and national level.
 - Define and qualify programmes based on key criteria such as costs, inputs, complexity, planning.
 - Design the planning and resource allocation for the implementation of the regional strategy.
 - Develop the bodies (governance, monitoring, evaluation, awareness, and learning) and tools required for the implementation of the regional strategy.
- Conduct the physical validation meeting.
- Define a framework for approval and adoption of e-government strategy, this should consider the need to raise awareness among the sectoral Ministers to ensure their commitment as they will be responsible for approving the guidelines.

6.3.3. Deliverables

- Strategic framing report including:
 - Presentation material from the workshops to finalise the strategic axes.
 - Workshop reports.
- Regional e-government strategy.
 - Description of programmes and KPIs.
 - Provisional planning.
 - Economic survey report.
 - Description of governance and implementation bodies.
- Tools for facilitating the digital e-government strategy (such as programme evaluation template, a reporting template, etc).
- Outreach plan over a five (5) period
- Final report

7. QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR THE CONSULTANCY

7.1. Qualification and competence of candidates

7.1.1. Candidates' experience relevant for the consultancy

- Proven experience (10 to 15 years) in the development of digital strategies particularly in the field of public administration.
- Proven experience in promoting issues on governance, legislation, regulation, awareness raising and capacity building on digitalisation (support with evidence).
- Carried out at least two (2) digital strategy development assignments in a similar institution as ECOWAS within the last five (5) years.
- Good knowledge of the West African digital environment.

7.1.2. Compliance with the methodology and work plan of the terms of reference

Applicants shall include a detailed note on the proposed methodology, work plan, timetable, and composition of key personnel. The application will include details of services and activities defined in the Terms of Reference (TOR).

7.2. Qualification and skills of key personnel

Applicants shall at a minimum have the following key personal.

7.2.1. Team leader

- General qualification
 - Master's degree in organisation and business strategy with at least ten (10) years' work experience including seven (7) in the development of digital or transformation strategies.

- Strategic management and organisational skills (support with evidence).
- Experience in digital governance and programme management with a strong digital component (support with evidence).
- Good knowledge of public administration.
- Must have conducted similar assignment.
 - Participation in the last (5) years in one (1) similar digital strategy development assignment in a similar structure as ECOWAS as team leader (support with evidence).

7.2.2. Team of experts

7.2.2.1. Digital development expert

- General qualification
 - Master’s degree in information systems management, certificate in digital transformation, with at least eight (8) years’ working experience including five (5) in digital development.
 - Skills and experience in strategic management and organisation (support with evidence).
 - Skills and experience in digital government notably in Africa, with a complete understanding of the operational modes of digital programs.
 - Skills and experience in enterprise architecture (support with evidence).
- Experience in similar assignments is required.
 - Participation in the last (3) years in one (1) similar digital strategy development assignment in a similar structure as ECOWAS as an expert (support with evidence).
 - Prior experience of enhancing the capacities of in e-government
 - Proven experience in the field of digital innovation.

7.2.2.2. Digital economy expert

- General qualification
 - Master’s degree in digital economy, with at least seven (7) years’ work experience.
 - Specialist in e-government, e-commerce, e-health, e-education, and e-agriculture value chains (support with evidence).
 - Good knowledge of basic digital economy and social inclusion, and key economic sectors (support with evidence).
- Experience in similar studies is required.
 - Participation within the last three (3) years including at least one (1) year as an expert in the field of digital economy (support with evidence).

7.2.2.3. Legal expert in the digital sector

- General qualification
 - Master's degree in law with at least seven (7) years' working experience, a certificate or its equivalence in digitalisation will be an advantage.
 - Specific legal competences in digitalisation and IT with a mastery in legal and digital issues.
 - Proven experience in similar missions
 - Participated in at least one (1) assignment on issues relating to digital law (IT security, dematerialisation, e-commerce, etc.).
 - Present evidence of at least a legal case involving participation in a digital project.

8. CONSULTANCY COORDINATION AND ECOWAS EXPECTATIONS

8.1. Organisation of consultancy

The composition of committees (ECOWAS and Consultancy team) for the coordination of the assignment will be clearly outlined.

8.2. Consultancy risks

An overview of the risks identified will be carried out at the beginning of the assignment and updated accordingly during the duration of the assignment.

8.3. ECOWAS Expectation

Applicants shall ensure compliance with the identified plan. To this end, S/he will indicate in his/her application the methodology proposed for conducting the assignment, the actual number of people available (the minimum required is presented above) and present the profiles and roles of proposed participants at every stage of the mission.

Except unforeseen circumstances, continuity of the appointed experts is desired throughout the duration of the assignment.

8.4. Venue and duration of the mission

The development of the regional e-government strategy will involve at least one mission for the validation meeting and various online workshops with interpretation (French, English and Portuguese) as stipulated in the work plan.

The duration of the consultancy must not exceed six (6) months, and the applicant will propose the timetable.