



ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Provision of Technical Advice to support the implementation of the ECOWAS Ecommerce Strategy

I. CONTEXT

E-commerce and the digital economy offer new opportunities for regional integration, economic growth, industrial diversification and job creation in the ECOWAS region. Increased use of the Internet over the last 10 years mirrored in the increase in mobile Internet coverage, and a strong commitment by governments in the region to digital transformation to deliver on economic, social and environmental development goals, highlight the region's ambitions and the progress achieved. The ECOWAS region has 41% Internet penetration this is a great stride from a mere 2% in 2005. More people are using the Internet for commercial purposes. This increase has partly been influenced by a rise in Internet penetration, the adoption of mobile devices, the development of innovative payment systems and a growing youth population.

Despite all positive factors that create an optimistic forecast for e-commerce in the region, there are still gaps when the prerequisites for cross-border e-commerce in each of the 15 ECOWAS member States are considered. These challenges relate to barriers that hamper trade facilitation, costly and unequal access to ICT infrastructure and services, insufficient online consumer protection and confidence, the low uptake of business and e-commerce skills, as well as the absence of specific data on e-commerce-related activity in the region. In addition, to provide evidence-based policy direction to advance adoption and innovation in the sector.

In July 2023, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) developed the ECOWAS E-commerce Strategy (ECS) with the objective to support ECOWAS Member States in their efforts to use technology to accelerate structural change and development, and foster regional integration, including through economic diversification, job creation and more inclusive trade activities.

The strategy is guided by all ECOWAS, African Union (AU) and African-led initiatives in e-commerce and digital development (such as the African Union's vision 2063, the African Digital Transformation Strategy), the African Continental Free-Trade Area (AfCFTA), and other relevant programmes/projects implemented by the eTrade for all Initiative and other

development partners and will also directly support the Community's efforts to promote regional cooperation and integration.

The strategy is composed of the follow four strategic goals: (i): Institutional Strengthening; (ii) Secure trust along the e-commerce supply chain from producers to consumers; (iii) e-commerce intelligence: Improve access to e-commerce statistics and market information in ECOWAS; and (iv) Foster inclusion for e-commerce development in ECOWAS with a focus on Women, Youth, people with disabilities, and informal cross-border traders (ICBTs).

The ECOWAS Commission, with the support of the World Bank, is seeking to recruit a regional consultant to support the implementation of ECOWAS Ecommerce Strategy.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The objective of the assignment is to provide Technical Advise to ECOWAS in the implementation of the ECOWAS Ecommerce Strategy with a view to supporting intra-regional trade, job creation and economic diversification in the ECOWAS region by leveraging on the power of technology and connectivity.

The TA would support the ECOWAS Commission and member States in creating an enabling environment for the development of e-commerce and the digital economy to enhance regional cooperation and integration on e-commerce and the digital economy.

III. DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Working under the overall guidance of the Commissioner for Economic Affairs & Agriculture at the ECOWAS Commission, and under the direct supervision of the Director of Trade Directorate, the consultant is expected to perform the following activities:

- a. Support the ECOWAS Commission to strengthen ministries of trade with a view to supporting domestic and cross-border e-commerce development.
- b. Support the ECOWAS Commission to secure trust along the e-commerce supply chain from producers to consumers.
- c. Support the ECOWAS Commission to improve access to e-commerce statistics and market information in ECOWAS, in collaboration with a data collection consultancy on cross-border e-commerce.
- d. Support the ECOWAS Commission to strengthen the capacities of digital entrepreneurs, particularly women and youth, to drive and contribute to the development of e-commerce and digital trade in the region.
- e. Support the ECOWAS Commission on regional coordination directly related to implementing the ECOWAS E-commerce Strategy, and in monitoring its implementation.
- f. Support ECOWAS member States in the implementation of the ECOWAS e-commerce strategy.

IV. DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

The following deliverables for this assignment are as follows:

#	Deliverable	Description	Timeline
1	Plan to Improve Access to E-Commerce Statistics and Market Information	Draft a report to facilitate better access to comprehensive e-commerce statistics and market information in ECOWAS member states, in collaboration with the data consultancy.	Months 1-2
2	Capacity Building Plan on e-Commerce Development for Ministries of Trade	Design and implement a plan to enhance the capacity of ministries of trade to support domestic and cross-border e-commerce development.	Months 1-12
3	Secure Trust Along the E-Commerce Supply Chain Strategy	Develop a strategy to build trust from producers to consumers across the e-commerce supply chain in in ECOWAS member states.	Months 8-12
4	Plan to Strengthen Capacities of Digital Entrepreneurs	Develop and implement training programs to enhance the skills and capabilities of digital entrepreneurs, with a focus on women and youth in ECOWAS member states	Months 6- 18
5	Supporting Regional Coordination for ECOWAS E-Commerce Strategy Implementation	Support the ECOWAS Commission in coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the ECOWAS E-commerce Strategy at a regional level. Assist member states in the practical implementation of the ECOWAS E-commerce Strategy through guidance and support.	Months 1-18

V. EXPECTED DURATION AND LOCATION

The expected duration of the assignment is eighteen (18) months.

The consultant is expected to be based in Abuja during this assignment. All travel costs and DSA will be paid separately according to prevailing WBG rules and regulations.

VI. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Qualifications and skills

- Advanced university degree (i.e. Master's degree) in Trade, Law, Economics, Digital Transformation, E-Commerce, Development Studies or related field with relevance for the assignment

Professional experience

- Ten (10) years of proven experience in trade policy formulation, regional integration and development, or related areas
- Five (5) years of proven experience in Digital Trade/ Ecommerce
- Proven experience in digital startups, digital development, indicators frameworks, statistics, data analytics, or related areas.

Language

- English, French and Portuguese are the working language of the ECOWAS Commission.

VII. CONTACT

For further information, please contact Mr. Kolawole Sofola, Director – Trade at ksofola@ecowas.int