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**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)**

**GENDER AND TRADE FACILITATION CONSULTANCY FOR ENHANCEMENT OF ECOWAS AND AFCFTA GENDER COMMITMENTS**

**TENDER NUMBER: PRQ20251119**

**TENDER ISSUE DATE: 30TH APRIL 2026**

**TENDER SUBMISSION DATE: 21ST MAY 2026 ON OR BEFORE 15.00 PM (GHANA TIME)**

## DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

### **GENDER AND TRADE FACILITATION CONSULTANCY FOR ENHANCEMENT OF ECOWAS AND AFCFTA GENDER COMMITMENTS**

#### **Introduction**

##### **About TradeMark Africa**

TradeMark Africa (TMA) is a leading African Aid-for-Trade organization founded in 2010, with the mission to grow intra-African trade and increase Africa's share in global trade, while helping make trade more pro-poor and environmentally sustainable. TMA operates on a not-for-profit basis and is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, France, Ireland, the Mastercard Foundation, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. TMA works closely with regional and continental organizations, national Governments, the private sector, and civil society.

Since its inception, TMA has delivered substantial gains for trade and regional economic integration in East Africa and the Horn of Africa, including a reduction of 16.5% in cargo transit times on the Northern Corridor from Mombasa to Bujumbura, and a reduction of an average of 70% in the time taken to cross selected one stop border posts. TMA works in 14 countries across East and West Africa, Southern Africa and the Horn.

In 2022, TMA set up a catalytic finance company – Trade Catalyst Africa – that will pilot commercially viable projects for creating trade infrastructure (both physical and digital) as well as increasing access to Trade Finance for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

Both TCA's and TMA's headquarters are in Nairobi, Kenya. Offices are in: EAC Secretariat - Arusha, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Rwanda, Somaliland, Tanzania, and Uganda, with operations in Mozambique, South Sudan and Zambia. For more information, please visit [www.trademarkafrica.com](http://www.trademarkafrica.com).

#### **Background**

The Abidjan-Lagos and Tema-Ouagadougou corridors are indispensable arteries for regional integration and economic development in West Africa. The Abidjan-Lagos Corridor alone facilitates approximately 75% of trade activities within the ECOWAS sub-region and serves as the backbone for multi-modal logistics. The Tema-Ouagadougou corridor is similarly vital, providing a critical connection for landlocked countries like Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, and accounting for about 70% of transit traffic originating from the port of Tema.

A significant driver of the economic vitality along these routes is cross-border trade, a sector in which women are the principal actors. While estimates vary by location, studies confirm women's dominant role, constituting between 70% and 90% of informal cross-border traders in West Africa. More specifically, a World Bank study found that women make up 38% of traders along the Tema-Ouagadougou corridor and 61% along the Abidjan-Lagos corridor. These women are predominantly engaged in the trade of agricultural products, processed foods, and other consumer goods, playing an essential role in food security and local economies. Their activities, though often informal, are a cornerstone of regional resilience and household well-being.

#### **Rationale for the Assignment**

Despite their central economic role, women traders face disproportionate and systemic gender-specific constraints that are not merely social issues, but critical economic bottlenecks hindering the corridors' full potential. The rationale for this consultancy is to move beyond general acknowledgment of these problems to develop a targeted, evidence-based strategy for intervention at specific border posts.

Recent studies provide a stark picture of the challenges:

**Harassment and Security:** Gender-based violence and harassment are persistent threats. A 2025 baseline study found that 35% of women traders at the Akanu-Noepe border and 28% at Seme-Krake reported experiencing harassment or abuse (Agramondis, 2025<sup>1</sup>). This includes economic violence (reported by 24% of women), verbal abuse (20%), and physical violence (3.5%).

**Inadequate Infrastructure:** Living and working conditions at the borders are poor, with 60% of women traders rating them as "average" and 21% as "poor". Most border posts lack specific, safe facilities for women traders, such as adequate sanitation or rest areas, which directly impacts their security and ability to conduct business efficiently.

**Financial and Information Gaps:** Access to finance is severely limited; 62% of women traders rely on their own funds, with only 10% using bank loans. This is compounded by a lack of access to information, with 39% of all traders being unfamiliar with necessary trade documents and many women having low literacy levels that prevent them from understanding complex trade regulations.

**Economic Disparity:** These barriers contribute to a significant income gap. The median monthly trade value for women traders is approximately USD 560, compared to USD 960 for men.

While various trade facilitation programs exist, there is a clear need for a coordinated, granular understanding of how these constraints intersect at targeted borders. This assignment is therefore essential to bridge the gap between identifying problems and implementing effective solutions.

Therefore, TradeMark Africa is seeking a top-tier consultant to assess existing initiatives, scale up the existing trade manuals for small-scale cross border traders, and support national actors in implementing gender-responsive reforms. Further, this intervention will provide a basis for evidence-based advocacy and guiding future investments to create a truly gender-responsive trading environment.

## Overall Objective

The overall objective of the consultancy is to strengthen an inclusive, secure, and efficient trading environment for women engaged in cross-border trade across priority West African corridors. Ultimately, this assignment is expected to result in improved knowledge and compliance among women traders, safer and more predictable border experiences, stronger accountability of border institutions, and measurable gains in women's participation, incomes, and economic resilience along the target corridors.

## Specific Objectives

- 1. Scale Up Access and Usage of Cross-Border Manuals**  
Expand the availability, accessibility, and practical usage of cross-border trade manuals among women traders, border officials, and Joint Border Committees (JBCs), ensuring language-appropriate, simplified, and user-friendly formats.
- 2. Track and Monitor Impact of Training Materials**  
Design and deploy a rapid monitoring framework to assess the effectiveness, usability, and real-world application of gender-responsive training materials by women traders and officials, identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement.
- 3. Strength Policy-Level Engagement and Alignment**  
Work with ECOWAS, UEMOA, national ministries, and RECs to accelerate policy adoption, alignment, and institutionalisation of guidance on simplified, gender-responsive cross-border procedures.

## Recipient

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<sup>1</sup> Agramondis (2025). *Baseline study report on the Making Trade Work for Women in West Africa project*

Trademark Africa will be the primary recipient, with the ECOWAS Gender Development Center (EGDC) and WAEMU as the second recipient.

## Scope of work/ Activities

### A. Scaling Up Manuals & Training Usage

- Review and update existing cross-border trade manuals for clarity, gender responsiveness, and alignment with AfCFTA and REC frameworks.
- Translate and adapt manuals into local languages, simplified formats, and visual formats.
- Develop and roll out sensitisation sessions with women traders, JBCs, border officials, and trade associations on manual usage.
- Introduce manuals into ongoing and planned capacity-building initiatives by RECs, ministries, and border agencies.

### B. Impact Tracking & Monitoring

- Develop a light monitoring framework to track distribution, uptake, and utilisation of manuals and training materials.
- Conduct periodic assessments with women traders and border officials to identify practical usage challenges.
- Provide recommendations for improving functionality and sustained use of training materials.
- Integrate monitoring indicators into REC and national border management systems where possible.

### C. Capacity Building & Technical Support

- Co-design or update training modules with RECs and national partners on AfCFTA Women & Youth Protocol.
- Train JBCs, border officials, and women's trade associations on gender-responsive procedures.
- Support RECs to institutionalize gender-responsive trade facilitation within their official border management frameworks.

### D. Policy-Level Support & Institutionalisation

- Engage policy actors in ECOWAS, UEMOA, national ministries, and customs to secure buy-in for the scale-up of manuals and gender-responsive procedures.
- Facilitate policy dialogues to align manuals and procedures with AfCFTA commitments.
- Develop policy briefs highlighting bottlenecks and opportunities for institutionalization.
- Support RECs in integrating manuals and gender-responsive guidelines into regional strategies and border protocols.

### F. Action Plan Development

- Consolidate findings into a corridor-specific action plan.
- Outline actionable priority interventions for 0–6 months, 6–18 months, and 18+ months.
- Provide recommendations for sustainability, including financing and institutional arrangements.

## Deliverables

1. **Inception Report:** Methodology, workplan, and confirmed borders/stakeholders.
2. **Mapping & Diagnostic Report:** Summary of existing initiatives, manuals, and usage gaps.
3. **Updated Cross-Border Trade Manuals:** Revised, translated, simplified, and ready for use.
4. **Sensitization & Training Package:** Training materials + short report on sessions conducted.

5. **Monitoring Framework**; Simple tool for tracking distribution and usage of manuals and training materials.
6. **First Monitoring Brief**: Early findings on how officials and women traders are using the materials.
7. **Policy Engagement Outputs**: Policy briefs + short report on dialogues with ECOWAS, UEMOA, and ministries.
8. **Corridor Action Plan**: Priority actions for 0–6 months, 6–18 months, and 18+ months.
9. **Final Report**: Summary of all work done, tools produced, and recommendations.

## Qualifications

This assignment is only open to individual consultants.

### Technical Qualifications:

- A master's degree in economics, gender studies, international trade, development studies, or a closely related discipline.
- Demonstrated ability to conduct gender analysis and apply gender-responsive methodologies in programme or policy design, particularly in the context of trade and regional integration.
- Excellent ability to synthesize qualitative and quantitative data into high-quality reports, policy briefs, or strategic action plans for governments and development partners.

### Professional Experience:

- Minimum of seven (7) years of progressive professional experience in cross-border trade, regional integration, trade facilitation, or related fields in Africa, with strong preference for experience in West Africa
- Proven experience in leading participatory field research (surveys, focus group discussions, key informant interviews), including work with women traders, border agencies, and civil society organizations.
- Experience working with Governments or International Bodies: Familiarity with bureaucratic processes, legal compliance, and working in a multi-stakeholder environment.
- Familiarity with national and regional trade and gender frameworks, especially ECOWAS, UEMOA, and AfCFTA policies and strategies.

### Additional Skills and Competencies:

- Proficiency in English, with a working knowledge of French.
- Ability to effectively communicate technical concepts to non-technical stakeholders and collaborate with various teams.
- Demonstrable understanding of the socio-economic dynamics of the Abidjan–Lagos and Tema–Ouagadougou corridors, with established networks among border institutions, women's associations, and regional trade bodies considered an asset.

## Reporting

The consultant will report to the Programme Manager Inclusive Trade and Gender – TMA West Africa and/or the nominated representative responsible for the project. Additionally, the consultant will report to the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre Director. The consultant may be required to provide copies of the reports to the designated government agencies or relevant revenue authorities as guided by TMA Inclusive Trade Programme Manager.

## Timeframe

The consultant will provide services as and when required for a period of **18 months** commencing from the date of contract execution.

## A. INVITATION TO EXPRESS INTEREST

TMA therefore wishes to invite interested individuals possessing professional and demonstrable experience in the stated services. Bidders are required to confirm receipt of EOI and seek clarification through [procurement@trademarkafrica.com](mailto:procurement@trademarkafrica.com).

## B. EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) REQUIREMENTS

EOIs are invited from Interested and qualified individuals with appropriate experience and expertise in undertaking the stated assignment. Interested bidders are required to:

- Submit the EOI written in English language.
- Examine the documents comprising this EOI in detail and respond appropriately. Material deficiencies in providing the information requested may result in rejection of an EOI; and,
- Meet the qualification criteria stipulated. Those who do not meet the requirements need not submit EOI.

The EOIs must remain valid for not less than **120 days** from the date of submission. TMA shall endeavour to complete the evaluation and communicate within this period.

The EOI shall be prepared in indelible ink. It shall contain no interlineations or overwriting, except as necessary to correct errors made by the bidder. Any such corrections must be initialled by the person(s) who sign(s) the EOI.

## C. EOI SUBMISSION

EOIs will be submitted as follows:

Submission Mode	Details
<b>Electronic/ Soft Copies:</b>	Bidders MUST submit their CV via TMA procurement mailbox at the address <a href="mailto:procurement@trademarkafrica.com">procurement@trademarkafrica.com</a> on or before <b>21 May 2026, 15.00 P.M. (Ghana Time)</b> .

Any EOI received after the deadline in C above shall be rejected as a late tender and shall not be considered further. All expenses relating to the preparation and submission of the response to this EOI including providing any additional information shall be entirely incurred and borne by the individual.

This EOI does not entail any commitment on the part of TMA, either financial or otherwise. TMA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOIs without incurring any obligation to inform the affected applicant/s of the grounds.

## D. TIMETABLE FOR THIS EOI

The timetable for the EOI stage is detailed in the table below.

Activity	Expected dates.
Expression of Interest (EOI) sharing	<b>30 April 2026</b>

Deadline for receipt of EOI proposals

**On or before 21 May 2026 15:00 PM (Ghana time)**

TMA may at its discretion alter this timetable.

**E. Potential bidders are informed that all bidders shall be contacted on the outcome of the EOI **RESPONDING TO THIS EOI****

Bidders will be required to present their EOI proposal in a format providing a table of contents clearly showing the pages of the relevant section and the related contents in response to the specific requirements of the EOI as indicated.

**F. FURTHER INFORMATION AND CLARIFICATION**

All enquiries about this EOI should be submitted via the email address below:

<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
<b>Name:</b>	Attention, Mr. Joe Namwaya Head of Procurement
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:procurement@trademarkafrica.com">procurement@trademarkafrica.com</a>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>GENDER AND TRADE FACILITATION CONSULTANCY FOR ENHANCEMENT OF ECOWAS AND AFCFTA GENDER COMMITMENTS</b>

**Enquiries must only be for the purposes of clarifying the content of this EOI. All enquiries must clearly specify the tender title and number.**

**TMA cannot answer any query relating to this tender seven (7) days or less prior to the submission deadline.**

TMA will endeavour to reply within three (3) business days of receipt of the sought clarification(s) to any reasonable request for explanation. It will be at TMA discretion to provide additional information where necessary.

All clarifications from respondents and TMA responses through [procurement@trademarkafrica.com](mailto:procurement@trademarkafrica.com) on or before **14 May 2026 (on or before 15.00 PM. Ghana Time)**.

**G. EVALUATION of proposals**

The EOI shall be evaluated using the criteria below:

<b>Description</b>	<b>Marks</b>
Master's degree in economics, gender studies, international trade, development studies, or a closely related discipline. (Provide a valid degree certificate)	10
Minimum of eight (8) years of progressive professional experience in cross-border trade, regional integration, trade facilitation, or related fields in West Africa	16

Demonstrated ability to conduct gender analysis and apply gender-responsive methodologies in programme or policy design, particularly in the context of trade and regional integration.	5
Proven experience in leading participatory field research (surveys, focus group discussions, key informant interviews), including work with women traders, border agencies, and civil society organizations.	10
Experience working with Governments or International Bodies: Familiarity with institutional processes, legal compliance, and working in a multi-stakeholder environment.	10
Experience in developing training materials on national and regional trade and gender frameworks, especially ECOWAS, UEMOA, and AfCFTA policies.	15
Proficiency in English, with a working knowledge of French.	10
Ability to effectively communicate technical concepts to non-technical stakeholders and collaborate with various teams.	10
Demonstrable understanding of the socio-economic dynamics in West Africa, with established networks among border institutions, women's associations, and regional trade bodies considered an asset. (Provide contact information of 2 resource persons)	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

**Note:**

***Only applicants that attain a minimum of 70 marks out of 100 marks shall be shortlisted for the interview stage, which will comprise of an oral interview. It will test the candidate's analytical, communication and interpersonal skills.***

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THIS EOI**

**1. Acceptance of Terms and Conditions**

In submitting a response to this EOI, the respondent is deemed to have accepted the terms and conditions of this and all other sections of this EOI.

**2. No Contract**

This EOI process does not create a binding legal contract or relationship either explicit or implied, between TMA and any respondent or any other party to this EOI.

The issue of and response to this EOI does not create any obligation on TMA to enter any commitment to procure services specified in this EOI.

**3. Cancellation, Suspension or Change to the EOI**

TMA reserves the right in its sole and unfettered discretion to:

- a) Cancel or suspend this EOI or vary any of the terms, dates, timings, or processes in this EOI.
- b) Call and/or re-advertise for responses or revisit any evaluation criteria or process pertaining to this EOI; and
- c) Seek clarification about any response.

#### **4. Official Communication**

Respondents must provide full contact details of the person nominated to represent the respondent for the purpose of making and receiving communications about this EOI.

#### **5. Clarification of Meaning**

Respondents will document their interpretations, assumptions, and perceived risks they have used in response to this EOI where they deem necessary.

#### **6. Ownership of Documents**

This EOI is the property of TMA and may not be copied or reproduced in any way, other than for the purpose of preparing and submitting responses without the prior written approval of TMA. The responses submitted to TMA shall be retained by TMA.

#### **7. Conflict of Interest**

Respondents will ensure that, throughout the evaluation process, TMA is kept informed of any perceived, potential or real conflicts of interest that should reasonably be brought to the attention of TMA, where such conflicts arise from the interests or duties of the respondent or its employees, officers, shareholders or directors.

#### **8. Acceptance of Responses**

TMA shall not accept a response which does not comply with or fails to provide the information specified in this EOI.

#### **9. Notification to Respondents**

TMA will notify **all** respondents on the outcome of this EOI once the evaluation process has been completed.

#### **10. Confidentiality**

The information provided in this EOI, and any other information, material or communication released during this EOI process is for the sole purpose of enabling a respondent to prepare and submit a response.

#### **11. No Liability**

TMA will not be liable (in contract or tort, including negligence) for any direct or indirect damage, loss, or cost (including legal and lawyer/client costs) to any respondent or other person in respect of this process.

#### **12. Costs and Charges**

This EOI is issued on the understanding that no charge will be made by the respondent for preparation of any EOI response or any other information that may be supplied.

#### **13. Ghana Laws Apply**

This EOI and any subsequent decisions, actions, contracts or outcomes are subject to and governed by the laws of Ghana.

#### 14. Evaluation Process

The evaluation team will follow a formal evaluation process to ensure a fair and transparent assessment of each response. The evaluation will allow the team to eliminate responses that do not meet the minimum criteria. The responses that do meet minimum criteria will be evaluated on the basis of best fit to the objectives and will be short listed for interviews.

#### 15. Special conditions

Special conditions of EOI as relates to the General Conditions Contract (GCC):

REFERENCE OF GCC	SPECIAL CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT
1. Acceptance of Terms and Conditions	The following conditions shall apply: a. TMA is not bound to accept any EOI. b. No queries shall be responded to 7 days to the submission deadline. c. It is a bidder's responsibility to seek for an update on this opportunity. d. Canvassing shall lead to automatic disqualification. e. All communications must be written to <a href="mailto:procurement@trademarkafrica.com">procurement@trademarkafrica.com</a> f. Incomplete responses and late submissions shall be rejected. g. TMA at its own discretion, may seek any clarification and/or additional information from tenderer(s) within reasonable time.
2. Clause 13: Applicable laws	The contract for this assignment shall be domiciled in Ghana and the relevant applicable taxes in Ghana shall apply.

#### ANNEX 1 : CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

##### CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

Position Title and No.	{e.g., K-1, TEAM LEADER}
Name of Expert:	{Insert full name}
Date of Birth:	{day/month/year}
Country of Citizenship/Residence	

**Education:** {List college/university or other specialized education, giving names of educational institutions, dates attended, degree(s)/diploma(s) obtained **attach valid copies of the certificates and testimonials**}

**Employment record relevant to the assignment:** {Starting with present position, list in reverse order. Please provide dates, name of employing organization, titles of positions held, types of activities performed and location of the assignment, and contact information of previous clients and employing organization(s) who can be contacted for references. Past employment that is not relevant to the assignment does not need to be included.}

Period	Employing organization and your title/position. Contact info for references	Country	Summary of activities performed relevant to the Assignment
[e.g., May 2005-present]	[e.g., Ministry of ....., advisor/consultant to...  For references: Tel...../e-mail.....; Mr. Hbbbb, deputy minister]		

**Membership in Professional Associations and Publications:**

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**Language Skills (indicate only languages in which you can work ranking from 1 to 5 for speaking, writing and reading where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**ANNEX 2: TMA SUPPLIER CODE OF CONDUCT**

This document is shared as a separate document to the tender document.