CALL FOR PROPOSALS (CFP) FOR GRANT

TENDER TITLE: PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO STRENGTHEN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS TO LEAD TRADE POLICY DIALOGUE, ACCESS TO MARKET TRANSFORMATION, AND EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY FOR WOMEN SMALL-SCALE CROSS-BORDER TRADERS ALONG THE ABIDJAN-LAGOS AND ABIDJAN-OUAGADOUGOU CORRIDORS

TENDER NUMBER: GRFO20260001

ISSUE DATE: (14th August 2026)

DUE DATE: [1st September 2026 *No Later Than* 1200 hrs (Ghana Time)].

Funded by:
European Union (EU)

Implemented by:
TradeMark Africa (TMA)

INVITATION TO TENDER INSTRUCTIONS

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General

1. This Call for Proposals (CFP) and the instructions for compiling and submitting Your Tender are designed to help you produce a tender that is acceptable to TMA as well as ensuring that tenders are given equal consideration. TMA will select the most economically advantageous tender. It is essential, therefore, that you provide the information requested in the specific format and no other.

2. TradeMark Africa (TMA) is not bound to accept the lowest bidder, or any, tender. We also reserve the right to request any, or all, grantees to clarify the proposals submitted.

Instructions to Grantees.

1. Costs and Charges

The grantee shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of its proposal, and TMA shall not be responsible or liable for those costs, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the selection process. TMA is not bound to accept any proposal and reserves the right to annul the selection process at any time prior to award, without thereby incurring any liability to the Grantee.

2. Language of Proposal

The proposal, as well as all correspondence and documents relating to the proposal exchanged between the Grantee and TMA shall be written in **ENGLISH** language. Any other language shall lead to the disqualification of the proposal. In cases where there is a translation, it must be endorsed by an authorized translator.

3. Only One Proposal

A grantee shall submit only one proposal, either in its own name or as part of a Joint Venture (JV) in another proposal. If a grantee, including any JV member, submits or participates in more than one proposal, all such proposals shall be disqualified and rejected. This does not, however, preclude the Grantee's staff from participating as key experts and non-key experts in more than one proposal. However, the same sub-Grantee may participate in several submissions.

If the Grantee is a consortia/JV, the CFP shall include:

a copy of the JV agreement entered by all members,

or

a letter of intent to execute a JV agreement, signed by all members together with a copy of the agreement proposal.

All consortium/JV members must meet the applicable eligibility requirements, including the requirement to be duly registered and legally authorised to operate in West Africa, as applicable.

In the absence of this document, the other members will be considered as sub-Grantees. Experiences and qualifications of sub-Grantees shall not be considered in the evaluation of the proposals.

4. Validity

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

5. Clarifications and Amendments

Enquiries must only be for the purposes of clarifying the content of this CFP. All enquiries must clearly specify the tender title, number, section being queried and should be emailed to **grants@trademarkafrica.com**

Interested Grantees may request for clarifications on this CFP up to **Seven (7)** days before the submission date. TMA will endeavour to reply as soon as is possible. It will be at TMA's discretion to provide additional information where necessary.

Final clarifications with TMA's responses will be shared with all potential Grantees.

Should TMA deem it necessary to amend the CFP, because of clarifications, it shall do so by issuing an amendment in writing or by standard electronic means. The amendment shall be sent to all Grantees and will be binding on them. TMA may offer limited extension to the proposal submission deadline to give the Grantees reasonable time to take an amendment into account in their proposals.

6. Eligibility

This assignment is eligible to grantees and consortiums only. Application received from individual shall be automatically disqualified. The below requirements will be considered;

- Regional Trade support organisations (Within West Africa Region) must be duly registered to work in West Africa, covering the ECOWAS region, and must demonstrate a solid presence in one or many of the countries as follow **Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, and Nigeria**; as well as demonstrate a strategy on how to implement in all of the following countries **Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, and Nigeria**, either as a not for profit (ASBL), a cooperative or a business **(Attach supporting documentation e.g. Company statute, Ministerial registration letter, Commercial registry and TIN, as applicable);** The organisation should be able to deliver the assignment in all the mentioned countries.

Where an application is submitted by a consortium or joint venture, each consortium/JV member must be duly registered and legally authorised to operate in West Africa and must provide evidence of such registration.

- **International organisations (Registered outside West Africa), in addition to the proof of their registration in their country of origin, must** be registered and have presence (office) in either **Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, and Nigeria;** as well as being able to implement in the other countries Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, and Nigeria as at the time of the application. **(Attach supporting document)**;

In the case of a consortium or joint venture, this requirement shall apply to each international organisation participating as a consortium/JV member, as applicable.

- Organisations must have a mandate in at least one of the following areas: trade policy, governance, market access, or economic development programmes;
- International organisations must have clear strategies to partner with local organisations with a mandate and on the ground experience in either trade policy, governance, market access, or economic development programmes;
- In the case of a consortium or joint venture, the proposal must clearly stipulate what the working relationship will be between each of the organisations (i.e. the roles and responsibilities each organization will undertake in delivering this assignment). The proposal must also include how each member of the consortium brings value to the proposed approach, and how the consortium provides an advantage as compared to a single organisation (**Attach supporting documentation detailing the agreement between all parties for the working relationship**). **Please note that none of the organizations within a consortium shall be passive beneficiaries of the grant funds;** and
- Demonstrate that the organization has at least 10 years' proven experience in institutional experience in trade policy, governance, market access, or economic development programmes within Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, or Nigeria. In the case of consortiums, the lead partner must meet this requirement **(Attach supporting documentation)**.

Furthermore, it is the Grantee's responsibility to ensure that its experts meet the eligibility requirements as established by TMA.

a) **Sanctions:** A grantee or an individual sanctioned by TMA shall be ineligible to be awarded or benefit from a TMA-financed contract, financially or otherwise, during such period as TMA shall determine.

   Grantees debarred by the World Bank, the Public Procurement and Disposal Act (PPDA) of the **Government of all countries of TMA operation** TMA donors and/or any other international donor agency are barred from bidding.

b) **Restrictions for Government-owned Enterprises:** Government-owned enterprises or institutions in COTE D'IVOIRE, GHANA, BENIN, TOGO, NIGERIA, AND BURKINA FASO shall be eligible only if they can establish that they (i) are legally and financially autonomous, (ii) operate under commercial law, and (iii) that they are not dependent agencies of TMA.

   To establish eligibility, the government-owned enterprise or institution should provide all relevant documents (including its charter) sufficient to demonstrate that it is a legal entity separate from the government; it does not currently receive any substantial subsidies or budget support; it is not obligated to pass on its surplus to the government; it can acquire rights and liabilities, borrow funds, and can be liable for repayment of debts and be declared bankrupt; and it is not competing for a contract to be awarded by the government department or agency which, under the applicable laws or regulations, is its reporting or supervisory authority or has the ability to exercise influence or control over it.

c) **Restrictions for public employees:** Government officials and civil servants are not eligible to be included as experts in the Grantee's proposal unless such engagement does not conflict with any employment or other laws, regulations, or policies of the country, and they

i. are on leave of absence without pay, have resigned, or retired.

ii. are not being hired by the same agency they were working for before going on leave of absence without pay, resigning, or retiring.
(In case of resignation or retirement, for a period of at least six (6) months, or the period established by statutory provisions applying to civil servants or government employees whichever is longer. Experts who are employed by the government-owned universities, educational or research institutions are not eligible unless they have been full time employees of their institutions for a year or more prior to being included in Grantee's proposal); and

iii. Their hiring would not create a conflict of interest.

7. Format of Your Tender

Your tender should be set out in four (4) main parts:

- Part A – Preliminary Requirements.
- Part B – Executive Summary.
- Part C – General and Technical proposal; and
- Part D – Financial proposal.

8. Part A Preliminary Requirements

Grantees are required to submit scanned copies of the below documents:

- Signed consortia/JV agreements or letters of intent (applicable to consortia/JV) between your selected partners must be submitted; and

Failure to submit the above requirements may lead to disqualification.

Parts A, B & C may be contained in one PDF document. However, the Financial Proposal (Part D) must be submitted as a **separate PDF document** to enable the Technical and Financial proposals to be evaluated independently.

Please do not include any financial/ price information in Parts A, B or C. Inclusion of any price information in Parts A, B or C **shall lead to bid rejection**.

9. Part B Executive Summary

This should be a brief overview of your tender covering how you intend to achieve the outputs, and your assessment of the resources required.

10. Part C General and Technical Proposal

Your technical submission should contain the following:

a) Signed and stamped Technical Bid Submission Form (**Annex 2**).

b) The grantee's previous relevant experience should include the client's contact details, description of the assignment undertaken, start and end dates of Each assignment. Refer to **Annex 4** in this CFP.
c) Technical response (including method of implementation and your proposed quality assurance mechanisms).
d) A list of the names and designation of all proposed experts/key personnel who will work on this project. Please clearly indicate the positions/roles to be played by the personnel to match those requested for in the Terms of Reference (ToRs) Refer to **Annex** 5 in this CFP.
e) The Curriculum Vitae (CVs) of proposed experts with information relevant to this project to support the proposed expert for this assignment. The CV template is **Annex 3** in this CFP.
f) **Only one (1) CV** shall be submitted for Each of the proposed key expert position. If more than one CV is submitted for the same position, only the first CV will be evaluated; and
g) Grantees Must confirm that their proposed key expert will be available to provide the required services for the duration of the agreement.

The technical proposal shall not include any financial information. The Inclusion of any financial information shall lead to the proposal being declared non-responsive.

Grantees are advised to respond in line with or in reference to the scoring criteria as indicated in the **Technical Evaluation** section of this CFP document.

11. Part D Financial Proposal

a) Contents: The financial proposal should contain the following information:
- Signed and stamped Financial Bid Submission Form (**Annex 6**); and
- Budget details using the enclosed template. (**See Annex 7 for Templates**).
- The financial proposal should not be combined with the technical proposal but should be submitted as a separate document.
- The financial proposal **MUST be in PDF and password protected.**

b) **Currency of Proposal:** The financial proposal shall be stated in ***United States Dollars ($)***.
c) **Taxes:**
- The financial proposal should clearly estimate, as a separate amount, the different applicable taxes, duties, fees, levies, and other charges imposed in **the TMA countries where the assignments will be implemented** under the Applicable law, on the Grantees, the sub-Grantees, and their experts (other than nationals or permanent residents of the country).
- The Grantee, its sub-Grantees and experts are responsible for meeting all tax liabilities arising out of the contract unless stated otherwise in this CFP. The Grantee is required to obtain information on taxes in the country where the contract is to be implemented.
- TMA funds shall not be used to meet the cost of any recoverable Value Added Tax (VAT).

12. Confirmation of grantee Experience Letters / References

References of potential Grantees which have been given by a current TMA employee shall not be accepted in support of a submission of a proposal as part of a procurement process. For the avoidance of doubt, only TMA's confirmation of grantee experience letter / references signed by the Head of Procurement are acceptable in support of applications, bids, proposals, or submissions.

13. Sustainability Considerations

TMA has adopted the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF). Grantees are required to demonstrate how the implementation of their proposed solution shall address/enhance sustainability.

14. Evaluation Criteria and Process

In assessing the proposals submitted, the evaluation panel will use the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) as specified in this CFP.

15. Technical Evaluation

The technical submissions will be evaluated in two main stages as follows:

Section A: Preliminary requirements

To implement the project the implementing organization /consortium would need a robust combination of expertise and experience as below.

- Local organisations must demonstrate a solid presence in Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, **or** Nigeria and should be able to demonstrate a strategy on how to implement in Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, **and** Nigeria, either as a not for profit (ASBL), a cooperative or a business (Attach supporting documentation e.g. Company statute, Ministerial registration letter, Commercial registry and TIN, as applicable);
- **International organisations,** in addition to the proof of their registration in their country of origin, must be registered and have presence (office) in either Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, or Nigeria and able to implement in the other countries Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, and Nigeria as at the time of the application. (Attach supporting document);

For consortium/JV submissions, each consortium/JV member must satisfy the applicable registration and legal authorisation requirements above and provide the relevant supporting documentation.

- Organisations must have a mandate in at least one of the following areas: trade policy, governance, market access, or economic development programmes, or women economic empowerment, with a preference for the last area.
- International organisations will have to have clear plans to partner with local organisations with a mandate and on the ground experience in either trade policy, governance, market access, or economic development programmes, or women economic empowerment.
- In the case of a consortium or joint venture, the proposal must clearly stipulate what the working relationship will be between each of the organisations (i.e. the roles and responsibilities each organization will undertake in delivering this assignment). The proposal must also include how each member in the consortium brings value to the proposed approach, and how the consortium provides an advantage as compared to a single organisation (Attach supporting

documentation detailing the agreement between all parties for the working relationship). Please note that none of the organizations within a consortium shall be passive beneficiaries of the grant funds; and

- Demonstrate that the organization has at least 10 years of experience in in institutional experience in trade policy, governance, market access, or economic development programmes within Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo. In the case of consortiums, the lead partner must meet this requirement (Attach supporting documentation).
- The applicant must demonstrate a good understanding of the geo-political, cultural sensitivity and business environment/context in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo

NB: To proceed to Section B, a grantee MUST be compliant in the stated criteria under Section A.

iv. **Section B:** Technical Proposal

Evaluation for **Section B** will be based on a scoring system marked out of a maximum score of **100 Marks**. Only proposals that score a minimum of **70 marks out of possible 100 marks** will be deemed to be "technically responsive".

Evaluation Criteria

Step 1: Mandatory requirements

Section / Criteria	**Max Score**
Section A – Registration	Compliant / Non-Compliant
Does the firm have registration in one or more of the countries along the Abidjan-Lagos or Abidjan-Ouagadougou Corridors (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo) **In the case of a consortium/JV:** Each consortium/JV member shall provide evidence of registration and legal authorisation to operate in West Africa, as applicable	C / NC
Total	**C / NC**

Note: Firms that <u>**fail**</u> to Comply with step 1 shall not be evaluated on step 2 and the financial evaluations.

Step 2: Technical requirements

Section / Criteria	Max Score
Section A – Methodology & Technical Approach	
Demonstrated understanding of the assignment with a clear, practical, and coherent approach for undertaking **each scope area of the assignment**. The methodology should clearly articulate the tools, techniques, processes, sequencing of activities, stakeholder engagement approaches, and mechanisms that the grantee will utilise to translate dialogue outcomes into actionable reforms and measurable results.	20
b. Detailed and logical work plan showing sequencing, deliverables, and realistic timelines for each corridor	3
c. Proposal incorporates contextual creativity, and practical value addition in undertaking the assignment.	2
Subtotal – Section A	**25**
Section B – Firm Experience & Technical Expertise	
a. Minimum of 10 years' proven experience in institutional experience in trade policy, governance, or economic development programmes, including experience in facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue processes involving government, civil society, private sector, and regional institutions	2
b. Experience working with regional bodies (ECOWAS, UEMOA, AfCFTA), multi-lateral organisations or similar institutions in Africa. Submit two reference letters from any RECs (ECOWAS, AFCFTA, WAEMU) for Similar assignments completed	2
c. Experience working with CSOs, trader associations, or community-based organisations, with experience in designing and implementing advocacy programmes or campaigns. Assignments undertaken in West Africa will be an added advantage.	3
Evidence of at least two (2) comparable assignments successfully completed within the last five (5) years must be provided – one on dialogue facilitation and the other on advocacy. These should include details of the client, assignment scope, contract value, implementation period, and reference letters indicating completion of assignment. Assignments undertaken in West Africa will be an added advantage.	8
Subtotal – Section B	**15**
Section C – Team Composition	

Team Lead / Governance Specialist	
Master degree in Public Policy, Governance, Economics, Development Studies, or related field. ***Certificate must be submitted.***	1
Minimum 10 years of professional experience managing complex multi-stakeholder and multi-country programmes involving government, private sector, civil society, and development partners. Assignments completed in West Africa are an added advantage.	4
Demonstrable experience facilitating high-level policy dialogue involving government institutions, regional organisations, and non-state actors in the areas of trade/trade facilitation, private sector and civil society development. References for at least two (2) previous assignments must be attached.	5
Subtotal – Team Lead	10
Trade Policy Expert	
Master's degree in International Trade, Economics, Law, Regional Integration or related field. Certificate must be attached	1
Minimum 7 years of experience working in assignments related to trade policy, trade facilitation, regional integration, customs and border management preferably acquired through working with RECs, Government or multi-lateral organisation.	4
Experience supporting trade related reforms involving public institutions and private sector stakeholders, particularly on issues affecting small-scale cross-border traders. References for at least two (2) previous assignments must be attached.	5
Subtotal – Trade policy Expert	10
Advocacy and Civil Society Engagement Specialist	
Master degree in, Development Studies, Public Policy, Political Science, or related field Social Science field. Certificate must be attached	1
At least 5 years of experience working with CSOs, cooperatives, trader associations, or community-based organisations.	4
Proven experience designing and implementing advocacy strategies, policy engagement initiatives, or dialogue platforms, especially those targeted at facilitating trade. References for at least two (2) previous assignments must be attached.	5
Subtotal – Advocacy Specialist	10

Training and Capacity Development Lead	
Master degree in Education, Social Sciences, or related field	1
At least 5 years of experience in training, facilitation, and capacity development programmes, with proven experience in designing training curricula and learning materials, particularly on advocacy, governance, or trade. Ability to design practical, results-oriented learning approaches (workshops, coaching, peer learning)	4
Proven experience facilitating workshops, coaching programmes, including adult learning methods. Assignments related to trade capacity building are an added advantage. References letters for at least two (2) previous assignments must be attached	5
Subtotal – Capacity development lead	10
M&E Expert	
Master's degree in M&E, Statistics, Economics or a relevant social science field. Certificates must be attached.	1
Minimum 5 years of experience in leading monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL) and knowledge management functions for large scale institutional capacity building programmes.	4
Demonstrated experience designing monitoring frameworks, collecting and analysing qualitative and quantitative data, and tracking programme results for advocacy programmes. References letters for at least two (2) previous assignments must be attached.	5
Subtotal – M&E Expert	**10**
Market Systems Development Expert	
Master's degree in economics, Development Studies, Agribusiness, or related field	**2**
Demonstrate at least 5 years of experience in market systems development (MSD) or value chain programming.	**4**
Proven experience applying MSD approaches (e.g. facilitation models, systemic change, private sector engagement). ***Must submit at least one certificate of completion***	**2**
Ability to work in French and in English.	**2**
Subtotal – Market Systems Development Expert	**10**

Subtotal Section C	**60**
TOTAL (A + B + C)	**100**

NB: Bidders who achieve the minimum technical score of 70 marks out of 100 marks will qualify for the financial evaluation.

Bidders with the highest scores (Technical & Financial) may be invited to make oral presentation of their proposals to the evaluation committee.

The weight given to the technical proposal shall be **70%** and the weight given to the financial proposal shall be **30%**.

16. Financial Evaluation

All substantially responsive proposals that score **70 marks or more** from the ***technical evaluation*** shall have their financial proposals evaluated.

The formula for determining the financial score (SF) shall be as follows:

Criteria	Description	Max Score
1. Budget Accuracy & Completeness	Budget covers all planned activities, detailed breakdown of costs, clear justifications provided.	**10**
2. Cost Reasonableness	Costs align with market rates, overhead within donor thresholds, unit costs realistic.	**10**
3. Cost-Effectiveness & Value for Money	Budget prioritizes direct activity costs, shows cost-sharing/leverage where applicable	**10**
Total score (P)		**30**

T is the weight given to the technical proposal (in this case **70%)** and
P is the weight given to the financial proposal (in this case **30%)**

Note P + T will be equal to **100%.**

The bidder who has achieved the highest combined technical and financial score shall be declared successful and subsequently invited for clarifications.

17. Packaging, Submission, and Delivery of Tenders

17.1 All submissions must be submitted via TMA's Grants mailbox using the email address grants@trademarkafrica.com , on or before **1st September 2026 *No Later Than* 1200 hrs (Ghana Time).**

Please note that the maximum size of the email with attachments must not exceed **10MB**. The Technical and Financial proposal MUST be submitted **as two separate documents in PDF format**, in the same email or separate mails. **Both Technical and Financial proposals MUST be password protected.**

17.2 Late tenders will not be accepted. No special pleadings will be accepted. Faxed or hard-copy proposals/samples shall be rejected.

18. Complaints

Any questions, queries, or concerns about the call for proposal process should be raised directly with the Grants Manager in the first instance via grants@trademarkafrica.com, who will address the matters raised.

If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, the complainant is encouraged to write to **complaints@trademarkafrica.com** .

19. Deviations, Reservations, and Omissions

During the evaluation of bids, the following definitions apply:

- "Deviation" is a departure from the requirements specified in the Bidding Document.
- "Reservation" is the setting of limiting conditions or withholding from complete acceptance of the requirements specified in the Bidding Document; and
- "Omission" is the failure to submit part, or all the information or documentation required in the Bidding Document.

20. Determination of Responsiveness

TMA's determination of a bid's responsiveness is to be based on the contents of the bid itself. A substantially responsive bid is one that meets the requirements of the Bidding Document without material deviation, reservation, or omission. A material deviation, reservation, or omission is one that,

- if accepted, would: -
  - Affect in any substantial way the scope, quality, or performance of the Works specified in the Contract; or
  - Limit in any substantial way, inconsistent with the Bidding Document, the Employer's rights, or the Bidder's obligations under the proposed Contract; or

- If rectified, would unfairly affect the competitive position of other Bidders presenting substantially responsive bids:
- The Employer shall examine the technical aspects of the bid submitted in accordance with evaluation criteria cited under (16), Technical Proposal in particular, to confirm that all requirements have been met without any material deviation, reservation, or omission; and
- If a bid is not substantially responsive to the requirements of the Bidding Document, it shall be rejected by the Employer and may not subsequently be made responsive by correction of the material deviation, reservation, or omission.

21. Nonconformities, Errors, and Omissions

- Provided that a bid is substantially responsive, the Employer may waive any non-conformity in the bid.

- Provided that a bid is substantially responsive, the Employer may request that the Bidder submit the necessary information or documentation, within a reasonable period, to rectify nonmaterial nonconformities in the bid related to documentation requirements. Requesting information or documentation on such nonconformities shall not be related to any aspect of the price of the bid. Failure of the Bidder to comply with the request may result in the rejection of its bid.
- Provided that a bid is substantially responsive, the Employer shall rectify quantifiable nonmaterial nonconformities related to the Bid Price. To this effect, the Bid Price may be adjusted, for comparison purposes only, to reflect the price of a missing or non-conforming item or component.

22. TERMS OF REFERENCE

PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO STRENGTHEN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS TO LEAD TRADE POLICY DIALOGUE, ACCESS TO MARKET TRANSFORMATION, AND EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY FOR WOMEN SMALL-SCALE CROSS-BORDER TRADERS ALONG THE ABIDJAN-LAGOS AND ABIDJAN-OUAGADOUGOU CORRIDORS

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, Cote d'Ivoire, 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.

Background

The Abidjan–Lagos and Abidjan–Ouagadougou corridors are among West Africa's most strategic trade and transport corridors, linking major economic centres, ports, production zones, and consumer markets across Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso. Together, the corridors play a critical role in advancing regional integration, facilitating implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and supporting the ECOWAS vision of increased intra-regional trade and economic development. However, despite their economic significance, cross-border trade along these corridors continues to be constrained by non-tariff barriers, cumbersome border procedures, inconsistent implementation of regional trade instruments, limited access to trade information, and weak mechanisms for structured public-private dialogue. These challenges disproportionately affect small-scale cross-border traders, particularly women, who constitute a significant share of informal and small-scale trade in the region.

The European Union under its strategic Global Gateway Support Project seeks to address these challenges. Along the Abidjan–Lagos and Abidjan–Ouagadougou corridors, and through TradeMark Africa, the project will implement a suite of trade facilitation interventions, which seeks to improve trade coordination, reduce trade barriers, and facilitate cross-border trade for small-scale traders. Recognising that improving the operating environment for small-scale cross-border traders requires more than physical infrastructure and regulatory reforms, the project aims at strengthening inclusive mechanisms through which traders can articulate challenges, access information, and influence policy and operational decisions affecting their businesses.

Women small-scale cross-border traders face additional constraints including limited representation in policy processes, inadequate access to timely trade information, exposure to harassment and informal payments at border crossings, and limited capacity to effectively advocate for reforms affecting their businesses. To address these challenges, the project will establish structured multi-stakeholder dialogue and evidence-based advocacy mechanisms that enable women traders, public institutions, civil society organisations, and private sector actors to jointly identify, prioritise, and advocate for reforms that improve the cross-border trading environment. This assignment will contribute to creating a more inclusive, responsive, and trader-centred trade facilitation ecosystem along these corridors, thereby enhancing economic opportunities for women traders and supporting the broader objectives of regional integration and inclusive corridor development.

Strategic Objective

The strategic objective of this assignment is to strengthen an inclusive, evidence-driven civil society ecosystem across Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso that can effectively lead trade policy dialogue, drive market access transformation, and advance evidence-based advocacy for women small-scale cross-border traders along the Abidjan–Lagos and Abidjan–Ouagadougou corridors at scale.

Specific Objectives

Objective 1: Identify, assess, and select credible civil society organisations, trader associations, and women-led or women-focused institutions in the programme countries with demonstrated mandates and presence in trade policy dialogue, market access, women's economic empowerment, and evidence-based advocacy for small-scale cross-border traders.

Objective 2: Capacitate selected civil society organisations to design, facilitate, and sustain structured trade policy dialogue platforms that bring together women traders, public institutions, border agencies, private sector actors, and regional bodies to identify priority trade barriers and advance practical, gender-responsive policy and operational reforms.

Objective 3: Strengthen the capacity of selected civil society organisations to identify and work with at least two cooperatives or associations of women traders in each programme country, and support them to improve aggregation, product readiness, market linkages, and collective selling of women-produced goods in order to increase trade volumes and trade values along the targeted corridors.

Detailed Scope of Work / Key Activities by Objective

Objective 1 Scope: Identification, Assessment, and Selection of Civil Society Organisations and Trader Institutions

The implementing partner shall undertake a comprehensive country-by-country mapping and institutional assessment in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso to identify civil society organisations, trader associations, women-led or women-focused organisations, cooperatives, business membership organisations, and community-based structures with relevant mandates and practical experience in trade policy dialogue, market access, women's economic empowerment, and evidence-based advocacy for small-scale cross-border traders.

- Develop and apply a standard mapping and diagnostic framework across all six programme countries, covering organisational mandate, legal status, geographic presence, membership base, women trader representation, advocacy experience, market access work, governance systems, safeguarding standards, financial management capacity, and ability to operate at corridor scale.
- Map at least one national-level and corridor-relevant pool of CSOs, trader associations, women trader networks, border-community organisations, and private sector platforms in each programme country: Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso.
- Identify and document existing public institutions, border agencies, chambers of commerce, market authorities, customs administrations, transport and logistics actors, regional bodies, and development partners relevant to women small-scale cross-border trade in each country.
- Conduct consultations with women small-scale cross-border traders and relevant stakeholders along both corridors to understand priority trade barriers, existing representation mechanisms, market access constraints, and potential CSO roles in addressing them.
- Assess existing dialogue, advocacy, and trader support mechanisms in each country and identify gaps in inclusiveness, functionality, evidence use, follow-up, and responsiveness to women traders' priorities.
- Prepare a transparent selection framework and shortlist qualified CSOs and trader institutions for capacity strengthening, ensuring balanced coverage of anglophone and francophone countries and representation across the Abidjan–Lagos and Abidjan–Ouagadougou corridors.
- Validate the mapping findings and proposed CSO selection with TMA and relevant national stakeholders before finalisation.

Objective 2 Scope: Capacity Development for Trade Policy Dialogue and Reform Engagement

The implementing partner shall design and deliver a structured capacity development, coaching, and institutional support programme enabling selected CSOs and trader institutions in all six countries to convene, facilitate, and sustain inclusive trade policy dialogue platforms that respond to the priorities of women small-scale cross-border traders.

- Conduct capacity needs assessments for selected CSOs in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso, identifying institutional, technical, facilitation, advocacy, governance, and monitoring capacity gaps.

- Develop a bilingual capacity building curriculum and practical toolkits in English and French covering trade policy and regional trade instruments, corridor governance, non-tariff barrier identification, stakeholder engagement, dialogue facilitation, gender-responsive advocacy, policy negotiation, evidence use, monitoring, safeguarding, and accountability to women traders.
- Deliver country-level training workshops and follow-up coaching for selected CSOs in each programme country, ensuring that all participating organisations can understand national trade priorities and corridor-level reform processes.
- Support selected CSOs to establish or strengthen national multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms in each country involving women traders, border agencies, customs, trade ministries, local authorities, market actors, transporters, private sector organisations, and relevant civil society actors.
- Facilitate corridor-level coordination between national platforms along the Abidjan–Lagos corridor covering Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, and Nigeria, and along the Abidjan–Ouagadougou corridor covering Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso.
- Organise national dialogue sessions in each country to identify priority operational and policy bottlenecks affecting women traders, agree reform actions, assign responsible institutions, and establish issue-tracking mechanisms.
- Organise regional or corridor-level high-level dialogue forums bringing together national authorities, regional institutions, CSOs, trader representatives, private sector actors, and development partners to escalate cross-border and regional policy issues.
- Support CSOs to document commitments, monitor implementation of agreed actions, and provide regular feedback to women trader constituencies in border communities and markets.

The Objective 3 Scope: Identification and Capacity Strengthening of Two Women Trader Cooperatives or Associations per Country for Aggregation and Market Sales Growth

The implementing partner shall support selected CSOs and trader institutions to identify, assess, and work directly with at least two cooperatives or associations of women traders in each programme country—Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso—representing a minimum of twelve cooperatives or associations across the assignment. The support shall strengthen their capacity to aggregate women-produced goods, meet product and buyer requirements, access markets, negotiate collectively, and increase the volume and value of cross-border trade along the Abidjan–Lagos and Abidjan–Ouagadougou corridors.

- Develop and apply a standard identification and selection framework to enable selected CSOs to identify at least two eligible cooperatives or associations of women traders in each programme country: Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso.
- Prepare country-level profiles for a minimum of twelve cooperatives or associations in total, documenting their legal status where applicable, membership base, leadership structure, women trader representation, product focus, production or trading volumes, aggregation practices, market reach, governance systems, and support needs.
- Assess the capacity of the selected cooperatives or associations in each country to aggregate women-produced goods, manage stock, assure product quality, maintain records, negotiate

with buyers, access finance, comply with trade requirements, and participate in cross-border market opportunities.

- Support CSOs to develop tailored capacity strengthening plans for the two selected cooperatives or associations in each country, including clear actions, timelines, coaching arrangements, and measurable targets for aggregation volumes and sales values.
- Train and mentor the selected cooperatives or associations on aggregation models, group governance, business planning, record keeping, costing and pricing, product standardisation, packaging, quality assurance, inventory management, contract negotiation, collective selling, and basic compliance requirements.
- Support CSOs and the selected cooperatives or associations to map priority women-produced goods, buyers, processors, aggregators, wholesalers, retailers, logistics providers, transporters, financial service providers, and market information channels in each country.
- Facilitate the design and piloting of practical aggregation and collective marketing models for the selected cooperatives or associations, helping them consolidate products, reduce transaction costs, improve bargaining power, meet buyer requirements, and supply markets more consistently.
- Support each selected cooperative or association to develop a market readiness plan covering product quality, volumes, delivery schedules, packaging, costing, pricing, trade documentation, compliance requirements, buyer engagement, and transaction follow-up.
- Facilitate buyer–seller forums, business matchmaking sessions, and commercial linkage meetings involving the selected cooperatives or associations from all six countries, with emphasis on cross-border product flows along the Abidjan–Lagos and Abidjan–Ouagadougou corridors.
- Support CSOs to establish simple performance tracking systems for each cooperative or association, capturing aggregation volumes, sales values, buyer agreements, repeat transactions, market linkages created, women traders reached, and changes in trade volumes and values.
- Document scalable lessons, operational tools, and good practices from working with the two cooperatives or associations per country, with guidance on how CSOs can replicate successful aggregation and collective selling models with additional women trader groups beyond the project period.

Deliverables

The implementing partner will deliver three key objective-aligned deliverables, with supporting outputs as detailed below:

1. **Objective 1 Deliverable: CSO and Trader Institution Mapping, Assessment, and Selection Package**
    - Inception report and detailed implementation workplan covering methodology, country coverage, stakeholder engagement, timelines, risk management, reporting, and quality assurance across Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso.
    - Country-by-country mapping and assessment report identifying relevant civil society organisations, trader associations, women-led or women-focused institutions,

cooperatives, and public and private stakeholders active in trade policy dialogue, market access, women's economic empowerment, and evidence-based advocacy.
   - Transparent CSO selection framework and validated shortlist of credible CSOs and trader institutions to be capacitated, ensuring balanced coverage of all six programme countries and the Abidjan–Lagos and Abidjan–Ouagadougou corridors.

2. **Objective 2 Deliverable: CSO Capacity Strengthening and Trade Policy Dialogue Package**
   - Capacity needs assessment report for selected CSOs, covering institutional, technical, facilitation, advocacy, governance, monitoring, safeguarding, and accountability gaps in each programme country.
   - Bilingual English and French CSO capacity building curriculum, facilitation guides, coaching tools, and templates covering trade policy, corridor governance, non-tariff barriers, dialogue facilitation, stakeholder engagement, gender-responsive advocacy, evidence use, and accountability to women traders.
   - Training, coaching, and mentorship reports documenting capacity strengthening activities, participant profiles, learning outcomes, capacity improvements, and follow-up actions across the six programme countries.
   - Operational national and corridor-level trade policy dialogue platforms, including terms of reference, membership lists, meeting schedules, issue-tracking tools, dialogue session reports, reform commitments, responsible institutions, timelines, and progress updates.

3. **Objective 3 Deliverable: Women Trader Cooperative and Association Aggregation and Market Growth Package**
   - Country reports identifying and profiling at least two cooperatives or associations of women traders in each programme country, representing a minimum of twelve cooperatives or associations across Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso.
   - Capacity assessment reports and tailored strengthening plans for the two selected cooperatives or associations per country, covering aggregation systems, governance, product readiness, quality assurance, stock management, record keeping, costing, pricing, negotiation, buyer engagement, and sales growth targets.
   - Aggregation and market readiness support reports documenting training, coaching, and practical support on aggregation models, product standardisation, packaging, quality control, inventory management, collective selling, and market readiness.
   - Market linkage and buyer engagement report documenting mapped buyers, processors, aggregators, wholesalers, logistics providers, financial service providers, buyer–seller forums, matchmaking sessions, commercial linkages, agreements, and transaction opportunities for women-produced goods.
   - Performance, learning, and sustainability report tracking CSO capacity improvements, dialogue outcomes, reform commitments, aggregation volumes, sales values, buyer agreements, repeat transactions, women traders reached, changes in trade volumes and values, lessons learned, tools, replication opportunities, and sustainability recommendations.

Duration

Total Duration: **24 months**

Start: **October 2026**
End: **September 2028**

Budget

The maximum budget for this assignment is **USD 620,000** inclusive of all operational costs and applicable taxes. Bidders will be expected to provide a detailed financial proposal that comprehensively costs all activities provided in their workplan

The budget will cover:

- stakeholder mapping
- dialogue facilitation
- CSO training and mentorship
- regional and national dialogue sessions
- monitoring and reporting
- policy documentation
- Administrative costs
- Applicable taxes

Experience and Qualifications of the Firm to Undertake Assignment
The implementing partner shall be a legally registered organisation, consultancy firm, civil society organisation, or consortium, registered and operating in one of the project corridor member states. They must demonstrate experience in trade facilitation, policy dialogue, and advocacy in West Africa.

Specifically, they must demonstrate:

1. **MUST BE** a Trade Facilitation organization in West Africa based in one of the programme countries with demonstrable regional footprint in the programme countries.
2. At least seven (7) years of experience in the design and implementation of large-scale **trade facilitation programmes targeted at enhancing trade environment (policy), trade volumes and values (access to market and finance), and application of SPS measures**.
3. Experience designing and implementing capacity building programmes for civil society organisations, trader associations, business membership organisations, or similar stakeholder groups.
4. Previous experience delivering similar assignments in West Africa, with a bias for countries located along the Abidjan–Lagos and/or Abidjan–Ouagadougou corridors. This must be supported with details of at least two (2) comparable assignments successfully completed within the last five (5) years, including client name, assignment scope, contract value, implementation period, and references.

5. Experience in facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue and engagement processes involving government institutions, regional organisations, private sector actors, civil society organisations, and development partners.
6. Proven experience undertaking policy research, institutional assessments, stakeholder mapping, evidence generation, and development of policy or advocacy recommendations.
7. Experience supporting women's economic empowerment, gender-responsive trade initiatives, small-scale cross-border trade programmes, or related inclusion-focused interventions.

Experience and Qualifications of Key Experts to Undertake Assignment

The implementing partner shall be required to provide a set of key technical resource persons with speciality in the following areas.

1. Team Leader/Governance Specialist

a. Master's degree in Public Policy, Governance, Economics, Development Studies, or related field.
b. Minimum 10 years of professional experience managing complex multi-stakeholder programmes involving government, private sector, civil society, and development partners.
c. Demonstrable experience facilitating high-level policy dialogue involving government institutions, regional organisations, and non-state actors in the areas of trade/trade facilitation, private sector and civil society development.
d. Demonstrated experience managing multi-country assignments in Africa, preferably in West Africa.
e. Excellent stakeholder engagement, coordination, and report-writing skills.
f. Professional working proficiency in both English and French.

2. Trade Policy Expert

a. Master's degree in Economics, International Trade, Law, Regional Integration, or a related field.
b. Minimum 7 years of experience working in assignments related to trade policy, trade facilitation, regional integration, customs and border management preferably acquired through working with RECs, Government or multi-lateral organisation.
c. Experience supporting trade related reforms involving public institutions and private sector stakeholders, particularly on issues affecting small-scale cross-border traders.
d. Professional working proficiency in both English and French.

3. Advocacy and Civil Society Engagement Specialist

a. Master's degree in Development Studies, Public Policy, Political Science, Law or a related social science field.
b. Minimum 7 years' experience working with civil society organisations, trader associations, business membership organisations, co-operatives or community-based organisations.
c. Proven experience designing and implementing advocacy strategies, policy engagement initiatives, or dialogue platforms.
d. Experience supporting women's economic empowerment, gender-responsive policy, or small-scale trader initiatives.
e. Strong facilitation and communication skills.

f. Professional working proficiency in both English and French.

4. Training and Capacity Development Lead

a. Master's degree in Education, Social Sciences or a related field.
b. Minimum 5 years of experience in training, facilitation, and capacity development programmes, with proven experience in designing training curricula and learning materials, particularly on advocacy, governance, or trade.
c. Proven experience facilitating workshops, coaching programmes, and stakeholder learning processes especially those related to trade capacity building.
d. Professional working proficiency in both English and French.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist

a. Master's degree in Monitoring and Evaluation, Economics, Statistics, or a related Social Sciences field.
b. Minimum 5 years of experience in leading monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL) and knowledge management functions for large scale institutional capacity building programmes.
c. Demonstrated experience designing monitoring frameworks, collecting and analysing qualitative and quantitative data, and tracking programme results for advocacy programmes.
d. Strong analytical, writing, and data management skills.
e. Professional working proficiency in both English and French.

6. Market Systems Development Expert

f. Master’s degree in economics, Development Studies, Agribusiness, or related field.
g. Demonstrate at least 5 years of experience in market systems development (MSD) or value chain programming
h. Proven experience applying MSD approaches (e.g. facilitation models, systemic change, private sector engagement).
i. Professional working proficiency in both English and French.

Required Supporting Documents

Applicants must submit:

- **Organizational Documentation**

- Certificate of incorporation
- Tax compliance certificate
- Organizational profile
- For consortium/JV submissions;
    - each consortium/JV member must submit its applicable registration/incorporation, tax and legal authorisation documents.
    - a copy of the JV agreement entered by all members or

- a letter of intent to execute a JV agreement, signed by all members together with a copy of the agreement proposal.

– **Evidence of Experience**

- Examples of dialogue facilitation reports
- Stakeholder mapping studies
- Policy briefs or advocacy reports

– **Capacity Building Experience**

- Training materials and reports
- mentorship programme documentation

– **Team CVs**

(max 3 pages each)

- Team Leader / Governance Specialist
- Trade Policy Expert
- Advocacy and Civil Society Engagement Specialist
- Training and Capacity Development Lead
- Monitoring and Documentation Specialist
- Market Systems Development Expert