# Terms of Reference

# Rebuilding Local Economies and Community-based e-Commerce platform development

**Task**: Identify digital business needs of the MSMEs in the Northern, Eastern and Southern Regions and develop an E-commerce platform. This includes setting up the necessary digital infrastructures and supportive mechanisms for Afghan MSMEs to sell goods via an E-Commerce marketplace both domestically and cross-border. (NCA defines E-Commerce as the purchase or sale of goods or services online although payment and the ultimate delivery of the goods or services do not necessarily have to be conducted online).

**Activity period:** 18 to 30 November 23

**Locations:** Afghanistan Multiple provinces (details in Table 01)

**Service type:** Deliverables-based contract

**Required experience:** 3-5 years.

* + Demonstrated experience in developing E-commerce platforms/ digital market and financial payment platforms, preferably for small businesses or MSMEs.
  + Expertise in user experience design, secure payment gateway integration, and scalable platform development.
  + Proven success in providing training and ongoing support to end-users.
  + Knowledge of the regulatory environment related to E-commerce in Afghanistan

**Background**

NCA is one of the largest aid organizations in the Nordic region, with 21 country offices in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East, including four joint country offices and other partner organizations. The mandate of the NCA is to save lives and seek justice. We achieve this by working with long-term development programmes, humanitarian interventions, and advocacy towards decision-makers to address the root causes of injustice, poverty, and power imbalance. Most of our work is cooperated with local civil society partners and other NGOs.

NCA is partnering with UNDP on the Area-Based Approach to Development Emergency Initiative (ABADEI 2.0), implementing the Rebuilding Local Economies and Community-based Horticulture (REACH) project in the Southern and Eastern regions of Afghanistan. REACH aims to support highly vulnerable groups, i.e., marginalized farmers, women, and girls using an integrated and environmentally sustainable intervention to strengthen socioeconomic recovery and resilience under two intervention strategies:

Outcome 1: Enhancing local farmers’ capacities through climate-smart agriculture.

Outcome 2: Building local businesses' resilience with access to finance and market linkages.

## **Purpose & Objectives**

Under this assignment, corresponding to outcome 2, NCA will provide business marketing support services to local enterprises with interventions that target to support scaling up, quality, branding, processing, packaging, and link selected value chain to markets through development and setting up an e-Commerce platform. In accordance with this output, it will: a) Support MSMEs the majority of which will be women-led businesses, with growing their market reach through the establishment of an e-Commerce platform b) Provide funding for setting up the necessary infrastructure for digital marketing including supporting for the qualifying women MSMEs with tools to engage in e-commerce such as smart phones and credit to enable beneficiaries to access platform) ; c) Invest in training of qualifying women entrepreneurs to ensure the beneficiaries are able to use the e-commerce (cost estimate includes consultancy fees for training beneficiaries) For the above purpose and objectives, NCA intends to employ the services of a consulting firm specialized in digital marketing to develop an e-Commerce platform for 50 women based MSMEs and provide training and equipment to enable the beneficiaries to engage in e-trading. The firm hosts and maintains the e-commerce platform in the two Southern and Eastern regions. The consultant will also develop a business plan, strategy and road map for the roll-out and scaling up the use of the e-commerce platform. In addition to this, the consultancy will support in addressing the the value addition needs of MSMEs in each region such as processing, packaging, branding and marketing etc.

The consultant should have experience and understand MSMEs and women entrepreneurship in the Afghanistan context.

The outcome of the e-Commerce support services is to improve the marketing of women led MSMEs by providing a marketing platform, technical capacity building and equipment to use to connect to platform in targeted areas of the South and East Regions.

The specific objectives of the assignment are:

* + Conducting a thorough analysis of the current e-Commerce landscape for small MSMEs in Afghanistan.
  + Proposing and implementing tailored e-Commerce solutions that align with the specific needs, challenges and capacities of Afghan MSMEs.
  + Enhancing existing platforms or building new ones, incorporating user-friendly interfaces, secure payment gateways, and efficient inventory/logistics management systems.
  + Providing training and on-going support to MSMEs on using and maintaining e-Commerce platforms.
  + Propose and recommend collaborations with relevant services providers such as domestic and international logistics providers, e-Payment providers, packaging companies, cloud computing providers and domestic IT-developers for sustainability.

## **Scope of the Assignment**

The incumbent firm will be responsible for performing several key tasks and activities as detailed under each of the following sections.

1. Conduct a thorough analysis of the current e-Commerce landscape for small MSMEs in Afghanistan.

The policy and legislative environment for setting up a digital marketing platform will be explored to access to feasibility of setting up such a system.

This will help in identifying the needs of the e-commerce needs of the MSMEs in Afghanistan and inform the type of platform that suits them.

Identification of relevant stakeholders to collaborate with in setting up the e-commerce platform

1. Setting up digital infrastructure to support the e-Commerce platform

Ensure that all the necessary digital and physical infrastructure including licenses are put in place to enable the MSMES to use the e-Commerce platform

Equip the beneficiary MSMEs with the necessary equipment to access and use the platform

Set up a prototype of an E-Commerce marketplace for domestic and cross-border trade

1. Train and provide ongoing support to the e-Commerce beneficiaries

The consultancy will provide training to ensure the target MSMEs are able to access and use e-Commerce

The consultancy will provide on-going support to the beneficiaries including technical support

Develop a roll-out and scale-up strategy to enable more MSMEs to access and utilize the e-Commerce platform

The consultancy will help link the platform relevant stakeholders to ensure sustainability

**Table 04 – E-Commece Target Areas**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Region** | **Target Province** | **Target Districts** |
| Southern | Helmand | Nad Ali  Musa Qala  Garmseer  Marja |
| Uruzgan | Tarinkot  Khas Uruzgan  Chora  Dehrawood |
| Eastern | Kunar | Chawki  Khas Kunar |
| Laghman | Mehterlam  Alishang |
| Nuristan | Parun  Kamdesh |
| Nangarhar | Kama  Goshta |
| North | Samanga  Balkh |  |

## **Deliverables & Timelines**

1. **Plan of Action**

An inception report will be provided containing the framework of proposed assignment, methods analysis, and data acquisition for the needs assessments (including additional studies and surveys), a workplan and a timeline.

1. A baseline report on the current e-Commerce landscape for small MSMEs in Afghanistan.
2. Fully functional e-Commerce platform establishes for the two regions.
3. E-commerce capacity building for the MSMEs completed.
4. Women entrepreneurs provided with tools to engage in e-commerce.
5. On-going support provided for MSME to enable them to fully utilize the platform.
6. A Road map /strategy to roll-out and scale-up the use of the e-Commerce platform is developed.

***Table 06 – Summary of Deliverables***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Deliverables of the assignment** | | **Timeline** |
| Plan of Action | Final document, both in word and PDF | November 2023 |
| A baseline report on the current e-Commerce landscape for small MSMEs in Afghanistan | Final document, both in word and PDF | 30 Nov 2023 |
| Fully functional e-Commerce platforms establish for the two regions | Physical and digital infrastructure in place for the e-Commerce platform to run | 25 November 2023 |
| E-commerce capacity building for the MSMEs completed | Training of the MSMEs on how to access and use the platform for marketing their products domestically and internationally | 28-30 November 23 |
| On-going e-Commerce support provided MSMEs to enable them to fully utilize the platform | On-going technical support | ongoing |
| A road map /strategy to roll-out and scale-up the use of the e-Commerce platform is developed | Strategy outlining the roadmap for rolling out and scaling up e-Commerce | 30 November |

## 2023