

Issue Date: March 6, 2024

Issued by: Procurement and Partnerships Team, USAID Africa Trade and Investment Project (ATI)

Submission of Questions: March 13, 2024, 5:00PM East Africa Time (EAT)

Response Date: March 26, 2024, 5:00PM East Africa Time (EAT)

Subject: Expression of Interest (EOI): EOI-ATI-003 – Trade Promotion Service Provider Partners Continental Expansion

Dear Prospective Respondent:

Through this Request for Expression of Interest (EOI), ATI aims to identify potential private sector trade promotion service providers that have extensive knowledge and skills in the trade space, particularly private sector players with existing buyer-supplier business models supporting African export firms to reach the U.S. market or expanding U.S. buyers' sourcing engagement on the African continent.

- I. Submission of Questions – Questions regarding this EOI may be submitted no later than March 13, 2024, 5:00PM East Africa Time (EAT). ATI will endeavor to respond by March 18, 2024, 5:00PM East Africa Time (EAT). DAI will only respond to written questions regarding this EOI through the email address: ATI_Procurement@dai.com copying ATI_Partnershipteam@atiprogram.com. Please use the subject line:

“Response to EOI ATI-003 Africa Trade Promotion Service Providers: Questions.”

- II. Submission of EOIs – EOIs must be submitted no later than 5PM EAT on March 26, 2024, via email to ATI_Procurement@dai.com, copying ATI_Partnershipteam@atiprogram.com. The subject line of the email should be “[Organization Name] EOI ATI-003 Africa Trade Promotion Service Providers”. Please limit file submissions to 10 megabytes or less.
- III. EOI Conference – On or about March 15, 2024.

DAI will not be responsible for the omission of any wrongly titled submissions. All information provided by vendors in response to this EOI will be treated confidentially. DAI will not reveal details to other parties.

INTRODUCTION

The USAID Africa Trade and Investment (ATI) activity, scheduled to run through 2026, is designed to bolster the U.S. Government's ability to boost trade and investment to, from, and within the African continent. The continent-wide activity is USAID's flagship effort in support of the Prosper Africa initiative and will expand and accelerate two-way trade and investment between African nations and the United States. Prosper Africa is a Presidential-level national security initiative aimed at strengthening the strategic and economic partnership between the U.S. and Africa by catalyzing transformative two-way trade and investment flows.

Driven by market demand, the USAID ATI activity seeks to mobilize enterprise-driven solutions that increase trade and investment in Africa; strengthens Africa's markets by developing new trade and investment relationships, particularly between the U.S. and Africa; and achieve development outcomes across all sectors in line with USAID's Private Sector Engagement Policy and the U.S. Government's (USG) Prosper Africa initiative.

OBJECTIVES OF THE EOI

The purpose of this Expression of Interest (EOI) is to identify specialized Trade Promotion Service Providers (TPSPs) who have experience providing the services specified herein and are interested in working with other private sector actors and Prosper Africa to develop innovative solutions that scale potential exports of goods and services from Africa to the U.S and vice versa. USAID and Prosper Africa seeks to address the fundamental question on how to scale export efforts to close multi-million dollar deals between African exporters and U.S. buyers and US exporters and African buyers. Trade promotion service providers will be expected to articulate their requirements and capacity requirements in carrying out necessary processes to facilitate two-way trade. It is anticipated that Africa and US based trade promotion service providers may enter into teaming relationships to deliver on this activity to ensure that complementary capabilities are maximized.

USAID and Prosper Africa are specifically interested in identifying private sector organizations with existing trade platforms, exporters' aggregation services, or services that work toward overarching objectives and related target outcomes outlined below. The examples of interventions and outcomes are illustrative, and other approaches will also be considered in support of the overarching objectives.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Objective 1. | Increasing trade among African and U.S. enterprises |
| Objective 2. | Creating decent, full-time jobs |
| Objective 3. | Improving access to market information, including market linkages that lead to closed trade deals |

TPSPs selected pursuant to this EOI will be included on distribution lists for upcoming related procurement opportunities anticipated by ATI. In accordance with ATI procurement policies, ATI is required to promote and provide for competition for all procurement opportunities, to the maximum extent practicable.

Illustrative Elements Required (as aggregate service offerings)

- Payment systems or platforms that allow increased awareness and access to U.S. market opportunities for African companies seeking buyers.
- Aggregation/value addition services to African companies to meet export demand, specifically that of US buyers.
- Products and/or platforms that address the logistical challenges that impact African companies in exporting goods or services.

- Products and/or platforms that enhance market intelligence and pricing so that African companies can identify quality buyers and get the best prices for their products and enhance their enterprise activities.
- Provision of relevant training, technical assistance, and matchmaking services connecting U.S. buyers to Africa suppliers.

While this list is not exhaustive, we are looking to hear from potential partners that have existing service offerings and/or technology-based solutions that can be scaled to close export deals between \$250 million to \$500 million per year to increase African exports into the U.S. market and vice versa. ATI is particularly looking for high-level results and impact areas that a private sector solution will be offering. Service providers are welcome to indicate their regional coverage (North, East, West, and Southern Africa) or continental (all of Africa) coverage depending on their capabilities as well as their capabilities in both Africa and the U.S. through partnerships or joint ventures.

Anticipated Outcomes

ATI will be specifically looking to identify approaches that:

- Increase the number of African export firms that access the U.S. and/or African markets with USG assistance
- Increase the value of export sales achieved between Africa and the U.S. as a result of USG assistance
- Increase profitability and self-sufficiency (cross-cutting) of firms supported by USG resources
- Creation of private sector jobs

WHO MAY RESPOND

The USAID ATI activity invites stakeholders providing trade promotion and linkage services to boost trade from Africa to U.S., Intra-Africa regional trade and U.S. to Africa trade. Illustrative innovative solutions may include conducting B2B linkages between buyers and sellers (including trade shows) leading to exports, creating awareness on U.S. market opportunities and mobilizing U.S. buyers to source from the continent; planning and executing market entry strategies meeting significant export targets; linkages resulting in U.S. investment in African firms for product processing that leads to exports to the U.S. ; aggregation of several African export firms' products for further processing and exporting to the U.S.; trade finance and logistics support as embedded services to enhance end to end buyer-supplier linkages leading to trade deals.

ATI invites trade promotion service providers, working in partnership with financial institutions, investors, exporters, business service organizations, industry/sector organizations, trade, or other private sector associations to collectively address the challenges and opportunities to offering private sector solutions to scale exports and to submit EOIs. Respondents may, but are not limited to, submit EOIs with ideas for partnership with other organizations. Respondents will be allowed to submit in partnership with one or more organizations based in Africa and the U.S.

ATI intends to conduct an **EOI Conference** to address any questions potential respondents may have about the EOI. The conference will also provide the opportunity for open conversations to develop a richer, shared understanding about opportunities, challenges, barriers, and gaps to increasing African exports to the U.S. Participants are welcome to share their own insights and perspectives, offer constructive input to other stakeholders, and can use the constructive feedback and ideas to develop their EOI submission. By bringing the trade ecosystem players together, ATI looks to foster innovative, market-driven models, products, or services, and identify new models for partnership between USAID, Prosper Africa and the private-sector that address the objectives discussed herein.

The following type of firms may submit an EOI:

- African private sector companies or trade promotion service providers
- U.S. private sector firms or trade promotion service providers
- Regional, U.S., and international firms (ONLY if partnering with local African organizations with key consideration being provided to leveraging complementary capabilities that lead to export deals at scale)

Funding Restrictions: Funding restrictions will be specified in up-coming procurement opportunities anticipated to be released by ATI.

Prior experience with USAID or other USG entities is not required. ATI encourages submissions from potential new partners and those with experience in closing Africa to U.S. exports on commercial terms.

Ineligible Organizations:

- Any organization not legally organized under the laws of the country in which it has its principal place of business or operations in;
- Any entity excluded in the USG System for Award Management;
- Any Government Entity;
- Any Public International Organization (PIO);
- Any entity affiliated with DAI or ATI directors, officers, or employees;
- Any projects involving involuntary resettlement, child labor, significant environmental impacts;
- Any military organization;
- Any political party organization;
- Any entity focused solely on religious activities;
- Any labor unions; and,
- Any individuals.

NOTE: The selected organizations would be required to obtain a Unique Entity ID (UEID) and SAM registration. Guidance provided in this link <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-01/Registering-to-Work-Module-MAIN-GUIDE-508.pdf>

Submission and Formatting Instructions

EOI should illustrate the submitting organization's interest, capabilities, and/or experience in providing solutions to the objectives above. Submissions should highlight an organization's approach to achieving the objective(s) within a country or countries and the sector(s) of focus, and the organization's capabilities and qualifications to implement the proposed activity(ies). Submissions should:

- Be in English;
- Be no more than six (6) PowerPoint slides in length with 12-point Times New Roman font
- Include a title slide (not counted against slide limit) with the following information: Respondent Name/Group; Contact Information; and Response Title;
- Include two submissions attachments in email, one in PowerPoint and one in PDF format.

In your submission, please describe your organization's idea/approach to how USAID can use its resources to catalyze trade and investment activities that will increase two-way trade between the U.S. and Africa, including:

- Your organization's reason(s) as to why USAID's support is critical to achieve the goals of this EOI.
- Your organization's approach to supporting the objectives of USAID.
- Your organization's expected development outcomes or impact through the proposed activity.
- Whom your organization targets and geographic coverage in Africa.
- How your organization could partner with USAID and/or other private sector actors to amplify your work and catalyze additional activities.
- How your approach will be sustainable beyond USAID funding.
- How you will monitor and evaluate development impact in your approach.
- Your organization's talent and other resources you are willing to dedicate to this activity.
- Your organization's unique knowledge, capabilities, and expertise in the sectors relevant to your proposed idea.

Budget: EOI submissions should include a total budget estimate to accomplish the proposed work, as well as an expected leverage ratio (i.e., the amount of financing and investment leveraged by the work as it relates to the budget amount requested). ATI recommends that EOI submissions in response to one or more of the objectives above remain within a \$250,000-\$400,000 range. Offerors are encouraged to propose the range that best fits their technical approach. A sample budget template is provided as a guide.

Timeframe: EOI submissions should present proposed work with an implementation timeframe of no longer than 24 months or less preferably. Convincing concept activities that entail a timeline of 12 months (or less) to achieve results will attract more attention.

Clarification of Submissions

ATI may require a respondent to submit additional information in order to better judge a response.

Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be applied to all EOIs. Submissions are not evaluated against other submissions, but solely against the evaluation criteria outlined below.

1. **Idea(s) for partnering with USAID:** Fresh, informed, and realistic thinking about how USAID can work with the private sector to unlock and catalyze activities to scale export solutions that will uniquely benefit African markets.
2. **Approach to supporting USAID and Prosper Africa objectives:** Comprehensive approach based on experience in the trade sector in Africa, or a particular region of focus in Africa. Identification of how the proposed approach advances or augments the objectives and priorities illustrated in this EOI, primarily how the approach addresses or advances African exports to the U.S.
3. **Qualifications and experience:** Strengths of your organization as a partner, including your ability to make a unique contribution to achieving the objectives of this activity.
4. **Timeline for results:** Ability of your organization to leverage USAID funding to catalyze private sector co-investment and scale your organization's platform, product, or service.

Selection and Notification

ATI will review and select EOIs submitted in accordance with the guidelines and criteria set forth in this EOI. TPSPs selected pursuant to this EOI will be included on the distribution list for upcoming procurement opportunities anticipated by ATI. ATI will notify those respondents, if any, that have been selected hereunder.

ATI reserves the right not to review any EOIs that do not meet the guidelines. Due to the expected large number of responses to this EOI, ATI is unable to provide detailed information to those respondents that do not meet the guidelines.

Obligations

ATI will not reimburse respondents for the costs incurred associated with preparing a response or attending EOI Conference. Nor does issuance of this EOI obligate ATI to award a subcontract or purchase order under an upcoming procurement opportunity. If a respondent is found to have made false or misleading claims or statements, obtains confidential information, or receives improper assistance, DAI reserves the right to reject an EOI submitted by or on behalf of a vendor. The EOI process in no way obligates DAI to select or award a contract, nor does it commit DAI to pay any costs incurred by the organization in preparing and submitting the application documents.

In accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation 15.209 (c), the following clause is incorporated by reference into this EOI:

FAR 52.215-3 – REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OR SOLICITATION FOR PLANNING PURPOSES (OCT 1997)

- (a) The Government does not intend to award a contract on the basis of this solicitation or to otherwise pay for the information solicited except as an allowable cost under other contracts as provided in subsection 31.205-18, Bid and proposal costs, of the Federal Acquisition Regulation.
- (b) Although “proposal” and “offeror” are used in this Request for Information, your response will be treated as information only. It shall not be used as a proposal.
- (c) This solicitation is issued for the purpose of obtaining information from interested parties regarding the purposes described above and below in Appendix A.

This EOI will not be construed as a commitment by DAI or USAID to award any contract or pay for any information voluntarily submitted as a result of this request. Responders are solely responsible for bearing all expenses associated with preparation and submission of the response to this EOI. This EOI does not restrict approaches to future Solicitations or Notices of Funding Opportunity.

In accordance with FAR 15.201(e), responses to this notice are not offers or proposals and will not be accepted to form a binding contract. Further information may be requested as a result of submissions received.

Thank you,
ATI Procurement and Partnerships Team
ATI_Procurement@dai.com

Appendix A: Response Requirements

We are seeking the following information from interested firms:

1. The name and address of the organization, and Primary Point of Contact, Phone Number and email address.
2. A well-thought out and clearly presented response to the information requested in the EOI.