

Issue Date: July 04, 2022

Response Date: 5:00 PM East African Time (EAT), July 18, 2022

Subject: Request for Information (RFI) ATI-003 for Digital Trade Services Activity

Dear Prospective Partner:

The USAID Africa Trade and Investment (ATI) program 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 program 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.

Driven by market demand, ATI embraces innovative approaches to achieve its goals. ATI is designed as a small, core set of centrally coordinated technical and institutional support activities, and a large, flexible performance-based subcontracting and grants under contract facility designed to support the needs and opportunities that USAID Missions and the private sector identify.

BACKGROUND

There are significant opportunities for increasing two-way trade between the U.S. and Africa and intra-Africa trade by addressing the concrete challenges facing the buyer and supplier sides of trade transactions through digital platforms. These opportunities exist across many industries and in many African countries, making them well suited for a continental digital trade approach. Additionally, many of these sectors involve large numbers of women as owners, managers, and employees, which elevates the possibilities for positive development impacts on social and gender issues. The widespread opportunities at a continental level make this area stand out as a priority for Prosper Africa support.

There is a need for credible and comprehensive digital trade platforms to enhance buyer-supplier linkages while crowding in other ecosystem players that offer value-added trade services such as logistics, trade finance, shipment, insurance, etc. ATI will focus on partnering with a set of e-commerce and digital trade platforms to deepen their role as sources of market intelligence and platforms for increasing exports. In line with the program's demand-driven approach and informed by the needs of U.S. and African firms, the program will work with both U.S. and African e-commerce and digital trade platforms to identify buyers' requirements of large and expanding U.S. and African brands and match those with export firm-level responses to meet the expected buyers' quality and quantity standards.

ATI can play a catalytic role in unlocking the latent potential of digital trade and e-commerce platforms to increase trade by supporting a range of players with the provision of:

- 1) matching grants to support the further refinement of e-commerce and digital trade platforms;
- 2) grants to support the operational costs of scaling e-commerce and digital trade platforms;
- 3) technical assistance to export firms to utilize e-commerce and digital trade platforms; and/or,
- 4) technical assistance to build the capacity of export firms to utilize e-commerce and digital trade platforms.

DIGITAL TRADE SERVICES ACTIVITY

Objective and Activities

The utilization of e-commerce and digital trade platforms can leverage buyer-seller linkages and lower the cost threshold to mutual benefit while enhancing export opportunities for firms and lowering the sourcing costs for the U.S. and African buyers and exporters.

ATI's work in digital trade actively supports the Administration's digital priorities; for example, helping expand digital infrastructure, building capacity and skills in the digital economy, and improving the enabling environment to foster increased trade and investment and digital innovation.

In advancing this digital trade services priority, ATI seeks to partner with credible e-commerce and digital trade platform service providers to create high-level awareness of export market opportunities to lower the buyer discovery costs and promote significant exports (intra-Africa and the U.S. and U.S. to Africa) from African and U.S. export firms.

ATI seeks to partner with credible e-commerce and digital trade platform service providers to:

- Create high-level awareness of export market opportunities to lower the buyer discovery costs.
- Identify buyers' requirements of large and expanding U.S. and African brands and match those with export firm-level responses to meet the expected buyers' quality and quantity standards.
- Promote significant exports (intra-Africa and the U.S. and U.S. to Africa) from African and U.S. export firms.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

In support of this activity, ATI seeks information from an interested party or a consortium of parties to help inform the design and structure of this activity, with the objective of collaborating with ATI to deepen their role as sources of market intelligence and platforms for increasing exports. Note, ATI is open to hearing from organizations that may not have explicit prior experience working with USAID that have an interest in expanding their e-commerce and trade platforms to increase trade within Africa, with the U.S. and from the U.S. to Africa. Details on the information requested can be found in **APPENDIX A**.

Issuance of this RFI does not constitute a solicitation, commitment, award, or engagement on the part of DAI nor does it commit DAI to any future commitment, award, or engagement. However, we will use responses submitted to assess whether a procurement for technical services is appropriate to meet USAID's needs. Please note that responding to this RFI will not give any advantage to or preclude any organization or individual from any solicitation that may be subsequently issued as any/all comments received will be strictly for information gathering purposes only.

Interested parties should submit a response to this RFI no later than **5:00 PM East African Time (EAT) on July 18, 2022**.

Responses and questions should be submitted via email to ATI_Procurement@dai.com copying Brian Wanyagi (Brian_Wanyagi@dai.com) , Mike Wayamba (Mike_Wayamba@dai.com) and Edwin Muli (Edwin_Muli@dai.com)no later than the date and time shown above, with the subject line: “Response to RFI ATI-003: Digital Trade Services Activity.” Please limit the responses to 5 pages/slides using 11-point font size.

Sincerely,

ATI Procurement and Partnerships Team

APPENDIX A: RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS

We are seeking the following information from interested organizations or consortia:

1. A brief synopsis of your organization's capabilities and previous experience that highlight its capacity and expertise to support the activity as described above. Please note experience using digital platforms to support trade and enhance export opportunities for firms. Experience should at a minimum include number of registered buyers and export firms, sectors covered, number and value of export transactions recorded via the platform, etc.
2. Responses to the following questions that highlight your organization's interest, expertise, and creativity in shaping and undertaking this type of technical work. Please provide answers to some or all the following based on your experience and expertise:
 - a. What value do you attribute to engaging with ATI's Digital Trade Services Activity? What incentives, if any, would be required for your organization to support trade and enhance export opportunities for firms?
 - b. What are the critical elements required to advance exports and support export firms?
 - c. What are the indicative results and metrics ATI should use to measure success of e-commerce and trade platforms effectiveness in enhancing intra-Africa, trade with U.S. and U.S. to Africa trade?
 - d. Please note if you would propose alternative approaches and/or additional activities to achieve the stated objectives than what is outlined in the RFI.
 - e. Do you have any other feedback or recommendations on what is outlined for this activity in the RFI? Please reference the specific section in the response.
 - f. Illustrative non-binding ideas for activities that the respondent might consider doing in partnership with ATI.
 - g. The name and address of the organization; and Primary Point of Contact, Phone Number and email address.