

# **ATTACHMENT A**

## **Scope of Work- Strengthening and Scaling Access to Trade Preferences Information and Innovative Tools**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The USAID Africa Trade and Investment (ATI) activity 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.

### **PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND**

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. The USAID Africa Trade and Investment Activity aims to generate higher levels of export sales between Africa and the U.S. in line with the Prosper Africa objectives.

There are significant opportunities for increasing US-Africa trade by taking advantage of available trade preferences. For example, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) is a nonreciprocal trade preference program that provides duty-free treatment of U.S. imports of certain products from eligible Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries.

Congress first authorized AGOA in 2000 to encourage export-led growth, economic development in SSA, and to improve U.S. economic relations with the region. Not all countries are eligible for AGOA. In 2023, there were 35 SSA countries that were eligible for the trade preference benefits, although this list is expected to shift based on annual revisions of eligibility<sup>1</sup>.

In addition to AGOA, there is the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), which provides opportunities for many of the world’s poorest countries to use trade to grow their economies and climb out of poverty. GSP is the largest and oldest U.S. trade preference program. Established by the Trade Act of 1974, GSP promotes economic development by eliminating duties on thousands of products when imported from one of 50 designated beneficiary African countries and territories.

Traditional country and regionally based demand for AGOA and GSP related information and support has evolved. With Africa itself integrating under the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Prosper Africa’s continental approach to trade support for preferential trade, AGOA and GSP support would benefit from a more agile and cost-effective team of AGOA and GSP experts to provide on-

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<sup>1</sup> [AGOA.info/about-agoa/country-eligibility.html](https://www.agoa.info/about-agoa/country-eligibility.html); Uganda, Niger, Gabon, and Central African Republic will lose eligibility on 01/01/2024.

demand counsel to private sector firms, regional organizations, and respond to inquiries received by USAID Regional and Bilateral Missions and U.S. Embassies on the continent.

To address these shifts, in Year 2, ATI tested different models of providing AGOA support to buyers and suppliers. Under those models, there were two dominant features: 1) AGOA support as an embedded service offered by Trade Promotion Service Providers, and 2) AGOA support as a public good offered through a centralized AGOA platform.

The models tested in Year 2 demonstrated that partnering with existing online platforms that offer a variety of services, such as virtual trainings, guides on how to use AGOA or GSP, along with other digital services, was an effective means of enhancing access to critical trade preferences information.

Engaging with existing trade preferences platforms that serve as repositories of information and frequently asked questions brings significant knowledge management benefits for Prosper Africa, Missions, the private sector, and government counterparts. Additionally, there is still a strong interest in enhancing AGOA platforms or tools to improve usability, ease of access, and relevance of the tools for businesses.

With these objectives in mind, ATI and Prosper Africa will work with AGOA and GSP experts with existing tools to harmonize messaging, ensure greater consistency in the information provided, strengthen usability and work toward a more organized and systematic repository of AGOA/GSP content, making that information accessible and easily applicable.

## **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

The intervention vision is to maintain and scale the ongoing efforts of AGOA and GSP experts to develop and disseminate critical information relevant for African export firms and US buyers to fully utilize the identified trade preference programs in an interactive and user-friendly platform.

The Strengthening and Scaling Access to Trade Preferences activity will strengthen access and deepen the sustainability of existing tools. To achieve this, ATI seeks a partner(s) with existing platform(s) and resources focused on AGOA and GSP to further enhance the user experience and repository of frequently asked questions content and other relevant trade preferences information, develop updates and share current trends related to AGOA and GSP, and further disseminate this information to US buyers and African exporters. This activity seeks to create economies of scale and scope on the U.S. buyer end and among African business membership organizations and export firms.

Indicative activities for Strengthening and Scaling Access to Trade Preferences may include:

1. On-demand AGOA awareness and uptake support: hold at least six bespoke AGOA webinars in response to requests from various sectors and regions (a mix of in-person and virtual) covering English, French and Portuguese languages, with the language to be confirmed based on request.
2. Conduct usability testing to ensure that the platform is easy to use, inclusive, and meets the needs of the target audience.
3. On the basis of the usability analysis, the offeror should propose ways to strengthen their existing platforms or resources by performing ongoing maintenance and making enhancements to the existing platform to ensure integrity, positive user experience, inclusive access, and continued functionality. This includes management and updates of software and coding to enhance content, layout, and

functionality of the site. Enhancements will be identified and shared with ATI during an inception phase. Enhancements *may* include:

- a. Re-organization of existing content.
  - b. Revise components of the existing platform, making it more visually appealing, easy to navigate, and efficient for users incorporating intuitive and user-friendly user interface (UI) and user experience (UX).
  - c. Development of further enhancements to existing tools to better serve stakeholders and to ensure enhanced transparency and information flow to users, including expanding the tool(s) with prominent and direct links from other relevant sources (such as a website home page).
  - d. Host and manage previously developed assets such as FAQs documents, webinar recordings, etc.
  - e. Translate existing AGOA material into French and Portuguese to enhance outreach to less covered regions of the African continent. Ensure platform is accessible in English, French, and Portuguese.
  - f. Develop curated interactive content and guidance based on user information inputs.
  - g. Integration of innovative tools within the platform, such as an AI-enabled International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) compliant buyer-supplier contract generation tool, integrating International Commercial Terms (INCOTERMS).
4. Develop monthly or quarterly reports on tool/platform usage to share with ATI. Reports should include key metrics such as user numbers and their distribution, page visits, demographics, linkage to actual trade transactions, and analyses of surveys of user experience and satisfaction.
  5. Continuously update current AGOA content and produce new content on the platform on a significant number of stand-alone AGOA toolkit resources and guides that help time-constrained traders and other stakeholders clarify important AGOA-related topics.
  6. Monitor AGOA-related data, news, and developments, and publish them on the platform to keep it updated with the most relevant and useful AGOA information. Update AGOA or GSP relevant content to include recent developments.
  7. Enhance search engine optimization and develop a social media marketing and promotion plan to drive users to the website.

## **GENERAL IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE**

ATI will work closely with the subcontractor to adhere to final timelines, deliverables, and associated costs. Additionally, ATI and USAID will also work closely with the Subcontractor on the overall learning agenda, including the appropriate cadence for reporting, communications, and other general ongoing project management activities, as well as be a resource to help the awardee achieve overall objectives.

## **MONITORING, EVALUATION & LEARNING (MEL)**

DAI will work closely with the subcontractor to define appropriate indicators for the overall interventions based on applicable MEL indicators identified by ATI and the USAID stakeholders. ATI will work with the subcontractor to develop the Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) plan at the kick-off, edit it as needed during implementation and collect and review data from the subcontractor for requisite reporting to USAID throughout the life of the activity. The subcontractor will be required to reasonably maintain

and report on relevant data as part of the periodic check-in process. DAI will conduct data quality assessments as necessary. In many cases, the subcontractor must be willing to share results for at least a six-month period following the completion of their subcontract for ATI and USAID to accurately capture results.

### **PLACE OF PERFORMANCE**

The place of performance will be in Africa or the US (and virtually in Africa and the US where appropriate). The subcontractor will report to ATI team members based in Africa and/or Washington D.C.

### **IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME**

The activities outlined above are estimated to take place over a twelve-month period starting around May 2024, and coming to completion around end-April 2025. An additional twelve-month extension option based on performance, needs of the project and available budget will be considered for top performing partners.