

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE OF INCLUSIVE DIGITALISATION OF EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (IDEA)

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Project Overview

Inclusive Digitalization in Eastern & Southern Africa (IDEA) is a regional Multiphase Programmatic Approach (MPA) for Eastern and Southern Africa (AFE), which includes three focus areas of : (i) building the foundations for affordable and quality broadband connectivity, data hosting capability, enabling access to digital technology and digital services including (ii) interoperable and safe data platforms and trusted online transactions at national and regional level; (iii) advancing high-impact digitally-enabled applications in priority sectors (with an initial focus on social protection and financial services), digital skills and competencies to increase productive digital usage and enhance economic and social activities.

The MPA sets out an ambitious agenda towards achieving universal digital access in AFE through a programmatic approach comprising key pillars and ‘menu of options.’

1.2 Scope of Activities for COMESA

The Project Development Objective (PDO) for the COMESA operation is to enhance enabling environment for increasing access to and inclusive usage of the Internet and digitally-enabled services in Eastern and Southern Africa. This operation will monitor progress toward the overall Program Development Objective (PrDO) indicators.

Component 1: Regional Harmonization and Planning Platform (US\$4.1 million): This component aims to enhance the enabling environment for regional digital market development and integration and create a platform to inform and mobilize investments for regional digital infrastructure. Activities under this component include:

- a) **Regional TA and trainings:** developing regionally harmonized regulatory and policy frameworks, guidelines and standards to promote digital access and usage and promote private sector mobilization for digital infrastructure development and digitally enabled services, applying inclusive and climate smart approaches. It will finance technical and legal consultancies, training and capacity building, including (i) the preparation of a regional Digital Inclusion Action Plan and associated draft regulations and policies covering areas such as digital safeguards, digital literacy, digital financial services etc.; (ii) TA to enhance the implementation of a regional roaming framework and the development of a regional model to enhance spectrum management; (iii) the development of policy and regulatory guidelines as well as standards to enable and promote the safe use of AI and other emerging technologies, including for climate adaptation, mitigation; (iv) legal and TA to enable the cross-border flow of data to support cross-border e-commerce; and (v) the development of policy, regulatory frameworks and guidelines at the regional level to enable and promote private capital mobilization for digital infrastructure with recommendations for possible financing facilities and instruments to expand digital access at the regional level, which can be capitalized in future phases of the Program, and where feasible, leveraging applicable financing schemes under ASCENT.

- b) **Planning platform and models:** (i) supporting integrated infrastructure planning to cover digital infrastructure and demand for internet connectivity through TA and the development of geospatial mapping tools; (ii) support the development of least cost option to extend Internet access to cross-border areas and priority public entities, such as schools and health clinics, with energy access and climate implications in mind; which can be implemented in subsequent phases at the country or regional level.

Component 2: Regional Knowledge and Capacity Building (US\$2.4 million): This component aims to support holistic knowledge transfer throughout the program cycle, to build capacity and support institutional strengthening for participating countries in a sustainable manner and to increase the efficiency and impact of the program activities by leveraging regional synergies between countries. Activities under this component include:

- a) **Toolkits:** (i) the development of practical tools to support Member States and other countries participating in the IDEA MPA in project preparation and implementation readiness, including (i) the development of templates, draft terms of reference and project management tools for procurement, financial management, budgeting, environmental and social risk and impact management, grievance redressal mechanism; (ii) establishment of a regional monitoring and evaluation (M&E) platform, leveraging innovative data collection and evidence generation at the regional level.
- b) **Capacity building, knowledge sharing, trainings for participating countries and COMESA Member States** covering (i) TA to inform the implementation of digital safeguards and the upcoming COMESA's e-commerce framework; (ii) procurement, financial management, E&S frameworks, quality assurance, data collection and analysis, M&E. It will also support wide knowledge sharing and awareness raising about the Program with communication and results stories, leveraging the 50 million Women African Speak platform under COMESA, in particular to ensure the gender inclusion, and the COMESA Business Council, to support private sector engagement.

Component 3: Regional Project Coordination and Management (US\$3.5 million): This component will set up the IDEA's regional Program Coordination Unit (PCU) to (i) coordinate with participating countries; (ii) validate and report on the Program's results framework (described below in Table 2); and (iii) oversee the implementation of the regional grant to COMESA, including fiduciary,

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND ORGANIZATION SET UP

The activities under the IDEA program will be planned for and implemented through successive AWPBs prepared by COMESA Secretariat in collaboration with the Bank. The AWPBs will contain an implementation plan, a clear indication of the activities being implemented by the secretariat and with participating countries.

COMESA shall implement the activities as per the arrangements stipulated in the Grant Agreement. The Project shall be implemented through the IDEA Project coordinating Unit (PCU).

To guarantee ownership, adequate coordination and management of the programme activities by the key stakeholders, the programme governance structure will be composed of the following:

- a) **Project Steering Committee;** The PSC will be in charge of project oversight, guidance and monitoring of implementation. The PSC will also be responsible for development of synergies and complementarities with other actions to ensure attainment of the project objectives.

- b) **Project Technical Working (TWG);** The TWG will also be set up, responsible for management and monitoring of programme activities and coordination of administrative, financial and human resources at technical level to ensure smooth programme implementation. The TWG will provide information and advice to the PSC
- c) **Project Coordinating Unit (PCU);** The PCU shall be responsible for the day today management of the programme activities. Long term and short-term staff shall be recruited to assist in the programme implementation management.

3. PROGRAMME STEERING COMMITTEE

The Programme Steering Committee (PSC) comprising of the COMESA secretariat, Member States representatives, and other beneficiaries and relevant stakeholders will be setup. The PSC will be in charge, among others, programme oversight, monitoring of implementation, development of synergies and complementarities with other relevant regional initiatives and strategic guidance to ensure attainment of the objectives.

3.1 Functions

The specific functions of the PSC are to:

- a) Set a strategic direction, to reinforce leadership of the programme and coordinate interventions;
- b) Review and approve the Annual Work Plan and Budget under the COMESA operation;
- c) Provide strategic and technical advice to create synergy, complementarities and uniformity between supported activities, policies and aligned programmes.
- d) Provide guidance and agreeing on possible countermeasures/management actions to address specific programme related risks;
- e) Receive program performance and results.

3.2 Membership/ Observers

The PSC will bring together all the participating countries and regional entities. The Programme Steering Committee shall consist of the following members: -

- a) Representatives of member states from the COMESA Bureau, member states and non-member/Partner states participating in the IDEA project. The Representative should be at level of Director from a Ministry Responsible for Communications /ICT.
- b) Representatives from COMESA Secretariat comprising of the Director of Infrastructure together with the Sector Technical Expert, Director of Information and Networking and Director Gender and Social Affairs
- c) COMESA Secretariat PCU shall be the Secretary of the PSC

The following other stakeholders will be standing invitees as observers.

- a) **Representatives of Identified States for IDEA project;** One representative from identified Member and non-Member States with intention of joining the IDEA project. The Representative should be at level of Director from a Ministry Responsible for Communications /ICT

- b) **Representatives of beneficiary REC Secretariats**; whose members are participating in IDEA project. These shall comprise of Director and sector Technical Expert for each REC.
- c) **Association of Regional ICT Regulators**; One representative from Association of Regulators of Information and Communications Services for Eastern and Southern Africa (ARICEA), One representative from the Communications Regulators Association of Southern Africa (CRASA), One Representative from East Africa Communications Organisation (EACO)
- d) **Continental Bodies**; One ne representative from the African Union (AU), African Telecommunications Union (ATU) and Pan African Postal Union (PAPU) respectively
- e) **International Bodies**; International Telecommunications Union (ITU)
- f) **Private Sector**; One representative from Private Sector associations from each REC one representing consumer groups and one representing Operators respectively

The PSC shall formulate its own rules and procedures.

3.3 Chairpersonship

The PSC shall be chaired by the COMESA Bureau chairman in the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson will Chair the meeting. The Committee shall elect a Chairperson from among the Member/Partner States present at the meeting should both the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson be not in attendance.

3.4 Frequency of PSC of Meetings

COMESA shall convene the PSC meeting Once in year. However, extraordinary meetings may be convened, as and when necessary.

3.5 Funding and Participation

The Programme shall support participation of all PSC Members to the meetings. Should this not be possible, PSC Members are encouraged to finance their participation. Observers shall, in all cases fund their participation unless they are specifically invited to address a key issue or otherwise.

3.6 Tenure of Office

The PSC shall subsist for the entire duration of the Programme.

3.7 Revision of Terms of Reference

The PSC may revise its terms of references as and when necessary.