

CONFIDENTIAL

Terms of Reference for the Development of Two National Strategies for the Smart Women and Girls in ICT Continental Blueprint		Project number/ cost centre: 24.2008.1-001.00
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0. List of abbreviations

AU	Africa Union
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RBM	Results-Based Monitoring
SADA	Smart Africa Digital Academy
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
SWG	The Smart Women and Girls
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
ToR	Terms of reference
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

1. Context

Africa is undergoing a profound digital transformation, with Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) reshaping the way people live, learn, work, and engage in society. The accelerating pace of technological advancement further catalysed by the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced digital technology as a core driver of economic growth, public service delivery, and social inclusion.¹ However, the benefits of this digital revolution can only be realised when all individuals; women, men, and especially young people are empowered with the access, skills, and opportunities needed to participate meaningfully in the digital ecosystem.²

Smart Africa, a pan-African initiative comprising 40 Member States and over 50 private-sector partners, leads continental efforts to create a Single Digital Market in Africa by 2030.³ Within this mandate, Smart Africa is committed to ensuring that digital transformation is inclusive and equitable. Gender equality and youth empowerment are therefore central pillars of Smart Africa's strategy, in recognition of their importance to Africa's long-term socio-economic development.

The Smart Women and Girls in ICT (SWG) Initiative developed through continent-wide consultations since 2016 serves as Smart Africa's flagship mechanism for addressing the gender digital divide. It is grounded in the acknowledgement that closing gender gaps in access, digital skills, STEM participation, and tech entrepreneurship is not just a gender issue, but a requirement for Africa to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 9 on innovation and infrastructure.⁴ The Initiative is further aligned with the African Union Digital Transformation Strategy (2020 to 2030) and Agenda 2063, both of which call for inclusive digital growth and a strengthened talent pipeline for Africa's future digital workforce.⁵

To support Member States in strengthening human capital for digital transformation, Smart Africa established the Smart Africa Digital Academy (SADA) in 2020 as the continent's primary vehicle for scalable digital skills development.⁶ SADA works through National Digital Academies to provide digital literacy, advanced ICT competencies, and policy training for youth, women, civil servants, and professionals offering a strong operational foundation upon which gender-targeted national strategies can be built.

¹ World Bank (2020). **Digital Economy for Africa Initiative (DE4A) – Digital transformation and economic growth**. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/all-africa-digital-transformation>

² UNESCO / ITU (2021). Digital Transformation and Meaningful Connectivity for All – Importance of inclusive access and digital skills. <https://www.itu.int/hub/publication/d-ind-ictd-2021/>

³ Smart Africa (2013–2024). **Smart Africa Alliance – Vision and Membership**. <https://smartafrica.org/about/>

⁴ United Nations (2015). **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5 & SDG 9)**. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

⁵ African Union (2020). **Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030) and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want**. <https://au.int/en/documents/20200518/digital-transformation-strategy>
<https://au.int/agenda2063>

⁶ Smart Africa (2020). **Smart Africa Digital Academy (SADA)**. <https://smartafrica.org/initiative/smart-africa-digital-academy/>

Despite significant advances in digitalisation across Africa, women and girls continue to face substantial barriers to accessing and benefiting from digital technologies. Across many Smart Africa Member States, women are less likely to use mobile internet and less likely to own smartphones than men, and remain underrepresented in ICT professions and STEM research. .

1.1 Beneficiary Country Context: Lesotho

Lesotho is the first beneficiary country under this assignment. The Kingdom is advancing an ambitious digital transformation agenda through its Digital Transformation Strategy (2024–2030), whose priority areas include digital government, digital business, digital skills and capacity, digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, and innovation. The National Strategic Development Plan II also recognises technology and innovation, human capital development, inclusive growth, and improved public-service delivery as national priorities. The National Strategy for Women and Girls in ICT should complement these frameworks by defining the gender-responsive actions, institutional responsibilities, investments, and accountability measures needed to ensure that women and girls participate in and benefit from Lesotho's digital transformation.

Lesotho's strong literacy base and growing science, technology, and innovation ecosystem provide an important foundation for increasing the participation of women and girls in ICT. At the same time, the country's mountainous geography and dispersed rural communities can intensify inequalities in connectivity, affordability, access to devices, relevant digital skills, and participation in innovation and employment opportunities. Women and girls may also experience intersecting barriers linked to age, disability, income, location, education, social norms, online safety, and limited representation in ICT leadership and decision-making. The assignment must establish and validate a Lesotho-specific evidence base, including gender-, age-, disability-, and location-disaggregated data wherever available, rather than relying only on continental averages.

The Lesotho strategy-development process will be led nationally by the Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation (MICSTI), working with the ministry responsible for gender and other relevant public institutions, and supported by Smart Africa and GIZ. It will engage the private sector, academia and training institutions, civil society, development partners, and women and girls themselves. Particular attention shall be given to young women and girls, women with disabilities, rural and hard-to-reach communities, women entrepreneurs, students, educators, and women already working in technology. The process shall identify existing initiatives and gaps and produce a coherent, costed, implementable, and nationally owned framework aligned with Lesotho's policy, planning, budgeting, and accountability processes.

Following completion of the Lesotho process, the same country-led methodology will be contextualised and applied in another member state. The second phase will include its own beneficiary-country context, evidence base, stakeholder mapping, co-creation process, and nationally owned strategy, while drawing appropriately on operational lessons from Lesotho without assuming that priorities or solutions are identical.

1.2 Existing Initiatives Across Africa

While numerous initiatives exist ranging from digital skills programmes and innovation hubs to women-in-tech networks and entrepreneurship accelerators many remain fragmented, short-term, or insufficiently embedded in national policy frameworks. Without coherent, national strategies, efforts risk duplication, limited sustainability, and reduced impact.

SWOT Analysis: Africa-wide Insights from the SWG Continental Blueprint

The SWG Continental Blueprint presents an Africa-wide SWOT analysis of gender digital inclusion. This ToR adopts that continental framing (rather than country-specific SWOTs) and uses it as the analytical backbone for the two national strategies to be developed.

Strengths (Africa-wide): The continent benefits from strong political momentum for digitalisation, existing ICT and gender policy frameworks, expanding broadband infrastructure, and vibrant local ecosystems including schools, youth groups, innovation hubs, and community organisations. Smart Africa's convening role and continental initiatives further strengthen these foundations by promoting policy harmonisation and coordinated approaches that can be adapted at national level.

Weaknesses (Africa-wide): The Blueprint highlights persistent constraints that limit effectiveness across countries, including insufficient implementation of gender-responsive ICT policies; inadequate and fragmented financing; limited gender-disaggregated data; weak coordination among initiatives; and continuing affordability and access barriers that disproportionately affect women and girls.

Opportunities (Africa-wide): The Blueprint identifies strong opportunities such as increased global and regional investment in gender equality, growing private-sector commitments to women-in-tech programmes, the expansion of ICT hubs and innovation spaces, and scalable digital skilling models (including SADA) that can be leveraged for national impact.

Threats (Africa-wide): Common risks include socio-cultural norms that restrict girls' participation in STEM, online safety and cybersecurity risks, political and institutional transitions that affect continuity, and digital content gaps related to language and cultural relevance.

Building on this Africa-wide SWOT, the Blueprint provides seven key recommendations for countries: strengthening gender-responsive digital policies; expanding digital skilling and literacy opportunities; increasing women's participation in STEM education and careers; fostering partnerships for scale; establishing sustainable financing mechanisms; strengthening monitoring, evaluation, and accountability systems; and enhancing collaboration through stakeholder platforms and communities of practice.

These recommendations are operationalised through three interconnected implementation pathways ("3Ps"):

- **Policy:** Creating an enabling environment by harmonising and strengthening gender-responsive ICT, digital inclusion, STEM, and cybersecurity policies.
- **People:** Expanding capacity-building, mentorship, and multi-stakeholder collaboration to support meaningful participation of women and girls in the digital economy.

- **Probing:** Ensuring robust monitoring, evaluation, learning, accountability, and gender-disaggregated data systems for evidence-based decision-making.

Together, these pathways provide the conceptual and operational backbone for the two national strategies and ensure alignment with continental frameworks such as the AU Digital Transformation Strategy, Agenda 2063, and global commitments including the SDGs.

Building on the Africa-wide SWOT analysis and the overview of existing initiatives across the continent, it is clear that while the SWG Continental Blueprint provides a strong strategic framework, its impact ultimately depends on how effectively it is translated into concrete, country-owned policies and implementation mechanisms. To move from continental guidance to practical action, there is a need to support Member States in adapting the Blueprint to their specific institutional, policy, and ecosystem contexts.

In this context, and in line with the objectives of the Smart Women and Girls in ICT (SWG) Initiative and its Continental Blueprint, two Smart Africa Member States will be selected for the development of national SWG strategies, based on strategic relevance, readiness, political interest, and potential for learning and replication. Working in two countries allows for:

- Development of two country-specific, government-owned strategies anchored in the SWG Blueprint;
- Cross-country learning and comparison of approaches, challenges, and solutions;
- Generation of practical lessons to support Smart Africa in scaling Blueprint implementation to additional Member States.

This dual-country approach ensures that the assignment not only delivers concrete national strategies, but also generates evidence, methodologies, and lessons that can inform future roll-out of the SWG Blueprint across the wider Smart Africa membership.

Accordingly, this ToR outlines the development of two National Strategies on Smart Women and Girls in ICT in Lesotho and Côte d'Ivoire, translating the SWG Continental Blueprint into country-specific, actionable, and sustainable frameworks. The consultant will work closely with national stakeholders in each selected Member State, Smart Africa, and GIZ to design coordinated, evidence-based, and multi-sectoral strategies that accelerate women's and girls' inclusion, leadership, and opportunities in the digital economy.

The target stakeholder group of the strategies will include ministries, parliamentarians, regulators, policy makers, industry, entrepreneurship support organisations, NGOs, international organisations active in the, academia, think tanks, civil society organisations, young women, students in tertiary and high school, among others.

Beneficiary Institution, Contracting Authority, and Funding

The beneficiary institution for this assignment is Smart Africa, a multi-stakeholder alliance of 42 African Member States committed to accelerating socio-economic development through ICT, with the overarching vision of transforming Africa into a Single Digital Market by 2030. Smart Africa's mandate includes driving continental digital transformation, strengthening institutional capacities, and promoting inclusive participation in the digital economy particularly for women and girls. The Smart Women and Girls in ICT (SWG) Initiative and the Smart Africa Digital Academy (SADA) serve as Smart Africa's flagship mechanisms for

advancing gender-responsive digital inclusion, and this consultancy contributes directly to operationalising these continental priorities at national level.

The contracting partner for this assignment is the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, which provides technical collaboration under the regional project “Smart Africa – Accelerating the Digital Transformation in Africa.”⁷ Through this partnership, GIZ supports Smart Africa in strengthening organisational systems, enhancing digital governance, delivering cross-border digital services, and mainstreaming gender inclusion across digital transformation agendas. GIZ’s support also extends to Member States, ensuring that digital transformation programmes are inclusive, sustainable, and aligned with regional and continental frameworks.

GIZ and Smart Africa collaborate through three interlinked project components:

- a. **Implementation of Cross-Border Digital Services:** Supporting Member States in deploying scalable, interoperable digital solutions and common digital instruments.
- b. **Supporting Organisational Development:** Strengthening the institutional systems, coordination mechanisms, and implementation capacity of the Smart Africa Secretariat.
- c. **Mobilisation of Partnerships and Resources:** Facilitating strategic dialogue, private-sector engagement, and coordinated resource mobilisation across the digital development ecosystem.

This consultancy is fully aligned with Components 1 and 2 and falls under Smart Africa’s broader mandate to promote gender-inclusive digital innovation. Funding for this assignment is provided within the GIZ–Smart Africa cooperation framework, supporting the development of two robust, evidence-based National Strategies on Smart Women and Girls in ICT in Lesotho and a selected member state.

2. Objectives of the Consultancy

Main Objective

The primary objective of this consultancy is to develop two comprehensive National Strategies on Smart Women and Girls in ICT for Lesotho and a selected Member state, grounded in the Smart Women and Girls in ICT Continental Blueprint and informed by inclusive, multi-stakeholder consultations. The strategies shall provide clear, actionable, and sustainable framework to advance the participation, leadership, and empowerment of women and girls in each country’s digital economy.

⁷ GIZ (2023). **Smart Africa – Accelerating the Digital Transformation in Africa (Regional Project Overview)**. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.
<https://www.giz.de/en/projects/smart-africa-accelerating-digital-transformation-africa>

Specific Objectives

To achieve this, the consultancy will aim to:

- Adapt the SWG Continental Blueprint to the national contexts of Lesotho and a selected member state by translating continental recommendations, principles, and implementation pathways (Policy, People, Probing) into a national framework.
- Conduct evidence-based research and situational analyses in each selected Member State covering legal, institutional, socio-economic, and ecosystem dimensions.
- Undertake a comprehensive stakeholder mapping covering government, regulators, private sector, academia, civil society, youth groups, and development partners.
- Facilitate inclusive national consultations and workshops to gather perspectives, validate findings, and co-design priority interventions (ensuring at least 50% female representation).
- Develop two national strategies with clear policy priorities, implementation pathways, institutional arrangements, financing considerations, and monitoring and evaluation framework.
- Support political validation and consensus through strategic engagement of parliamentarians, ministries, regulators, and other senior decision-makers in each countries
- Design Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) framework for ongoing tracking of progress and outcomes in each country.
- Produce comparative learning and “lessons learned” materials to support Smart Africa in scaling the SWG Blueprint to additional Member States.

3. Tasks to be performed by the contractor

Based on the SWG Continental Blueprint, the contractor shall be responsible for delivering the following core tasks across both selected Member States:

- Conduct preparatory background analysis, including data-based assessment, policy and ecosystem mapping, and preparation of materials required to inform national consultations in each country
- Facilitate stakeholder engagement including co-creation workshop
- Design and develop two National Strategies on Smart Women and Girls in ICT, ensuring alignment with the Blueprint, national priorities, and the ambition for formal governmental endorsement, including parliamentarian approval/ratification.
- Support an inclusive national consultation and validation process, ensuring that stakeholder inputs; technical, institutional, and political are integrated throughout the strategy’s development and finalisation.

These tasks are elaborated in detail under Work Package 1, Work Package 2, Work Package 3, and Work Package 4

Work package 1: Research, mapping and workshop development

The objective of this work package is to establish a comprehensive evidence base, map key ecosystem actors, and prepare tailored workshop materials that will inform national

consultations and support the development of the selected member states' National Strategy on Smart Women and Girls in ICT.

Key activities

The key activities that the consultant will carry out under this work package are as follows:

- Assess the status of women and girls across key thematic areas, including access to technology and infrastructure, digital literacy and advanced skills, STEM education and career pathways, women's digital entrepreneurship and innovation, and emerging issues such as AI impacts, online safety, and affordability.
- Conduct a detailed review of national and regional ICT and gender policies, strategies, laws, and governance frameworks, including identification of policy gaps and opportunities for gender-responsive digital transformation.
- Analyse existing programmes and initiatives in each country; governmental, private-sector, academic, NGO, and innovation-ecosystem driven and benchmark them against continental best practices and case studies from the SWG Blueprint. Develop a comprehensive ecosystem stakeholder map identifying all actors who should be consulted in the strategy development process, including: relevant ministries, parliamentarians, regulators, telecom operators, private-sector associations, universities, TVET institutions, innovation hubs, accelerators, entrepreneurship support organisations, NGOs, civil society networks, youth groups, women's organisations, community leaders, international organisations, and digital development partners.
- This mapping should clearly outline each actor's roles, mandates, influence, and potential contribution to shaping the strategy.
- Identify potential funding and implementation partners, including development partners), donor agencies, foundations, and private-sector actors that may support the roll-out of the strategy's recommendations.
- Prepare all content for Workshop 1 (Stakeholder Brainstorm), including presentation materials, briefing notes, discussion frameworks, and contextual summaries of the SWG Blueprint pillars and the 3Ps (Policy, People, Probing).
- Develop a proposed participant list for Workshop 1, ensuring gender-responsive participation and meeting the benchmark that women and girls represent at least 50% of attendees.
- Ensure all content and preparatory materials are gender-sensitive, accessible, and grounded in gender-disaggregated data, with clear alignment to the SWG Blueprint.

Deliverables

The main deliverables expected from the consultant under this work package are:

- Comprehensive Situational Analysis Report
- Stakeholder Mapping Report, including ecosystem actors and potential funding/implementation partners
- Workshop 1 Materials (slides, briefing notes, concept note, discussion frameworks)

Work Package 2: Participatory Co-Creation Workshops

Main Objective

To enable stakeholders in each beneficiary country especially women and girls from diverse backgrounds to jointly interpret the evidence, define the national vision and priorities, and co-design the strategic interventions and implementation arrangements that will form the

foundation of the respective National Strategy for Women and Girls in ICT. The Lesotho co-creation process will be undertaken first, followed by another member state's creation process.

Key Activities

- Develop country-specific co-creation methodologies, agendas and facilitation tools.
- Prepare accessible country-specific pre-read, evidence summaries, presentations and discussion materials representing the landscape assessment, stakeholder mapping, key policy and program gaps.
- Plan and facilitate one national co-creation workshop per country, (Lesotho and a selected Member State) using participatory methods.
- Guide the co-design of the national vision, priorities, interventions and implementation arrangements.
- Ensure meaningful representation of women and girls in ICT including young women, students, women entrepreneurs and ICT professionals, women with disabilities, and participants from rural or underserved communities.
- Create safe and accessible channels for participation, including small-group and anonymous feedback mechanisms, so that young women and girls and stakeholders with less institutional power can influence decisions meaningfully.
- Document areas of consensus, unresolved issues, commitments, and recommendations, and prepare a transparent response matrix showing how stakeholder contributions will inform the first draft of each national strategy.
- Validate the co-created strategic framework and prioritised actions with the lead national ministry, Smart Africa, and GIZ before full strategy drafting begins.

Deliverables

- Two Country-Specific Co-Creation and Facilitation Plans (including methodology, agenda, session flow, facilitation tools, accessibility and safeguarding measures.)
- Two Country-Specific Workshop Material Packages (Evidence summaries, presentations, discussion guides, templates and feedback tools etc)
- Two Co-Creation Workshop Rapporteur Reports (Meeting summaries, discussions, decisions, areas of consensus, recommendations and outstanding issues.)

Work Package 3: Strategy Design and Development

Main Objective

The objective of this work package is to design and develop a comprehensive, evidence-based, and multi-sectoral National Strategies on Smart Women and Girls in ICT, fully aligned with the SWG Continental Blueprint and national priorities.

Key Activities

The key tasks that the consultant will carry out under this work package are as follows:

- Translate evidence from Work Package 1 into a full strategic framework outlining national vision, guiding principles, strategic objectives, and intervention pillars (Access, Digital Skills, STEM, Women in Tech Entrepreneurship).

- Adapt the SWG Blueprint's seven recommendations and the 3Ps (Policy, People, Probing) to the selected member states' national context, ensuring alignment with local capacities, priorities, and institutional structures.
- Develop detailed policy actions, programmatic interventions, and implementation mechanisms across government, private sector, academia, innovation hubs, and civil society.
- Define institutional arrangements, mapping roles and responsibilities for relevant ministries, regulators, agencies, and ecosystem actors, including coordination and accountability mechanisms.
- Prepare a financing and sustainability model, identifying funding sources, partnership opportunities, and long-term support structures.
- Develop a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework with measurable gender-responsive indicators, data sources, reporting requirements, and responsibilities.
- Facilitate targeted technical review sessions, as required, with the lead ministries and relevant thematic and institutional stakeholders to test the feasibility, costing, sequencing, and accountability provisions of each draft strategy.
- Revise and refine the draft strategies based on the approved co-created frameworks, technical review inputs, and documented stakeholder feedback.
- Prepare the strategy for political validation in coordination with Smart Africa and national authorities.

Deliverables

The main deliverables expected from the consultant under this work package are:

- First draft versions of two national strategy
- Two M&E Frameworks
- Two Strategy Implementation Roadmaps (roles, financing, partnerships, timeline)
- Two Workshop 2 Materials (slides, concept note,)
- Capacity building plan

Work Package 4: Validation, Political Endorsement, and Impact Evaluation

Purpose

The objective of this work package is to facilitate national political validation of the strategy, ensure stakeholder endorsement, and produce an impact evaluation and lessons-learned product to support future scale-up across Smart Africa Member States.

Key Activities

The key activities that the consultant will carry out under this work package are as follows:

- Plan and deliver Workshop 3 (National Validation Session) involving political leaders, parliamentarians, ministry officials, regulators, private sector actors, civil society groups, and development partners.
- Facilitate discussion on institutional commitments, timelines, policy implications, and implementation readiness, ensuring political feasibility and alignment with national priorities.
- Finalise the National Strategy, incorporating all political and technical feedback from the validation session.

- Design and implement an impact evaluation framework capturing workshop effectiveness, stakeholder engagement, evidence of political commitment, and potential policy shifts.
- Produce a lessons-learned report highlighting insights, best practices, and recommendations that will support Smart Africa in scaling the SWG Blueprint to other Member States.
- Provide a concise “Blueprint Implementation Guidance” outlining how Member States operationalise Smart Africa Blueprints, including required steps, institutional roles, sequencing, coordination mechanisms, and integration into national planning processes.
- Develop a one-page visual process flow (PowerPoint deck) illustrating the end-to-end implementation pathway for the Smart Women and Girls in ICT Blueprint at national level, supporting the two member states’ adoption and enabling replication in other Smart Africa Member States.
- Deliver final documentation to Smart Africa, GIZ, and national stakeholders, ensuring that all outputs are clear, accessible, and ready for institutional use.

Deliverables

The main deliverables expected from the consultant under this work package are:

- Workshop 3 Concept Note, , and facilitation materials.
- Two Final Politically Validated National Strategy.
- Lessons Learned Report.
- Two National Strategy Implementation Guidance Note (process explanation).
- One-Page National Strategy Implementation Process Flow / Delivery Model Deck.
- Communication Outputs (summaries, articles, briefs, or blogs as appropriate).

Period of assignment: from October 2026 until 30th August 2027.

Certain milestones, as laid out in the table below, are to be achieved during the contract term:

Milestones/process steps/partial services	Deadline/place/person responsible
Inception meeting between Smart Africa, GIZ, and the contractor to confirm scope, methodology, work plan, and stakeholder engagement approach	2-3 days after contract starts
Completion of research phase, including Situational Analysis, Legal & Policy Review, Stakeholder Mapping, and Workshop 1 Preparatory Materials	October 2026 – November 2026
Implementation of Multi-Stakeholder Consultations (Workshop 1 & Workshop 2)	November 2026– February 2027
Drafting and Finalisation of the National Strategy, integrating research findings, workshop insights, and political feedback	March - May 2027
Multi-stakeholder Session (National Validation workshop)	May/June 2027

Development of Impact Evaluation and Lessons Learned Report to support scale-up to other Member States	July 2027
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4. Concept

In the tender, the tenderer is required to show *how* the objectives defined in Chapter 2 (Tasks to be performed) are to be achieved, if applicable under consideration of further method-related requirements (technical-methodological concept). In addition, the tenderer must describe the project management system for service provision.

Note: The numbers in parentheses correspond to the lines of the technical assessment grid.

Technical-methodological concept

4.1 Strategy (Assessment Grid 1.1)

The tenderer must demonstrate a clear understanding of the Smart Women and Girls in ICT (SWG) Blueprint, its seven recommendations, its 3Ps implementation pathways, and the contextual realities of two member states' digital transformation, ecosystem actors, gender digital divide, and institutional landscape. The strategy should show how the tenderer will translate the Blueprint into a national, actionable, evidence-based strategy through the three work packages:

- Work Package 1: Research, Stakeholder Mapping & Preparatory Content Development
- Work Package 2: Participatory Co-Creation Workshops
- Work Package 3: Strategy Design and Development
- Work Package 4: Validation, Impact Assessment & Lessons Learned

4.2 Cooperation with Key Actors (Assessment Grid 1.2)

The tenderer must clearly identify relevant stakeholders and describe how cooperative engagement will be established and sustained throughout the assignment. Stakeholders will include government ministries, regulators, parliamentarians, private sector actors, NGOs, universities, innovation hubs, women and youth groups, as well as Smart Africa and GIZ as steering partners.

A strong cooperation approach should outline:

- Engagement modalities such as bilateral meetings, technical sessions, co-creation workshops, validation sessions, and continuous dialogue during strategy drafting.
- Mechanisms for ensuring stakeholder ownership, including participatory approaches, structured consultations, and early involvement of political institutions.
- Inclusive participation strategies, ensuring gender balance, regional representation, and the engagement of underserved groups.
- Coordination with Smart Africa and GIZ, demonstrating how the tenderer will align with continental guidance and steering inputs.

- The cooperation approach must show how the contractor will build a cohesive, cross-sectoral coalition to support adoption and future implementation of the national strategy.

4.3 Steering and Monitoring (Assessment Grid 1.3)

4.3.1 Steering of Measures

The tenderer must describe how the consultancy will be steered in close collaboration with Smart Africa and GIZ. This includes outlining a governance structure for decision-making, reporting, and coordination.

The steering approach should specify:

- Joint planning and review mechanisms.
- Weekly or bi-weekly coordination meetings with Smart Africa and GIZ.
- Procedures for handling risks, delays, and emerging challenges.
- Methods for ensuring all work stages remain aligned with the ToR and stakeholder expectations.

4.3.2 Contribution to Results-Based Monitoring

The tenderer must present a clear approach for results-based monitoring (RBM), aligned with GIZ's RBM standards. This should include:

- Proposed indicators for measuring workshop effectiveness, strategy quality, political buy-in, stakeholder engagement, and feasibility.
- Monitoring tools such as surveys, structured interviews, pre/post assessments, and synthesis templates.
- Feedback loops to improve quality between each work package.
- A system to document lessons learned, policy shifts, and progress towards long-term outcomes.

4.4 Processes and Operational Planning (Assessment Grid 1.4)

4.4.1 Key Processes

The tenderer must outline the key processes that will guide delivery of the assignment. These should cover:

- The methodology for research, data collection, stakeholder mapping, and synthesis.
- The process for designing and delivering workshops, including development of training and facilitation materials.
- The drafting process for the national strategy, including iterative consultation, expert review, and political validation.
- Quality assurance processes ensuring gender responsiveness, safeguarding, accessibility, and methodological rigor.

Data protection, ethical protocols, and risk management mechanisms.

4.4.2 Operational Plan and Schedule

The tenderer must provide a detailed operational plan that aligns with the ToR timeline. This plan should outline:

- Sequencing of activities across all work packages.
- Clear milestones, dependencies, and critical paths.
- Integration with Smart Africa's and GIZ's steering processes.
- The schedule for research, consultations, co-creation, validation, and finalisation of deliverables.

4.5 Learning, Knowledge Management, and Innovation (Assessment Grid 1.5)

The tenderer must describe how knowledge, insights, and lessons learned will be captured throughout the consultancy. This includes documenting workshop outcomes, stakeholder feedback, and analytical findings to strengthen the national strategies and support institutional learning for Smart Africa and the member states.

The approach should show how the tenderer will support continuous improvement during implementation and generate actionable insights that can be scaled to other Member States. The tenderer should also outline how innovative approaches such as participatory methods, evidence-driven policy design, or gender-sensitive analytical tools will improve the quality and sustainability of results.

4.6 Project Management of the Contractor (Assessment Grid 1.6)

The tenderer must propose a project team capable of delivering the assignment, including a Team Leader and key experts in gender, digital policy, ICT, and strategy development. The tenderer should outline how responsibilities will be allocated across work packages and how staffing will be organised to ensure timely delivery.

The tenderer must demonstrate how coordination with Smart Africa and GIZ will be managed through structured communication, reporting, and review mechanisms. The proposal should include an internal quality assurance system, a backstopping approach that ensures continuity and expert support, and clear procedures for managing risks, timelines, and deliverables. The project management approach must ensure effective oversight, technical rigor, and consistent delivery throughout the consultancy period.

5. Personnel concept

The tenderer is required to provide personnel who are suited to filling the positions described, on the basis of their CVs, the range of tasks involved and the required qualifications.

The below specified qualifications represent the requirements to reach the maximum number of points in the technical assessment.

Team leader

Tasks of the team leader

- Provide overall leadership, strategic oversight, and quality assurance for all work packages.

- Ensure timely delivery of all outputs, including the situational analysis, workshop content, draft strategy, and final validated National Strategy on Smart Women and Girls in ICT.
- Coordinate and maintain communication with Smart Africa, GIZ, government institutions, and all stakeholders throughout the assignment.
- Lead the political engagement process, including convening political actors and supporting consensus-building for the national strategy and validation process.
- Facilitate and moderate high-level stakeholder workshops, consultations, and the validation session.
- Present findings of the research, situational analysis, and strategic options to national partners and workshop participants.
- Guide the drafting of the draft and final versions of the national strategy, ensuring political relevance, feasibility, and alignment with the SWG Blueprint.
- Oversee the development of workshop materials, briefing notes, and strategic communication content.
- Provide quality assurance on all written outputs, including the research report, workshop synthesis reports, and strategy drafts.
- Manage project personnel, short-term experts, and backstopping resources to ensure coherence and alignment with the ToR.
- Report regularly to Smart Africa and GIZ, including progress updates, milestone submissions, and structured documentation.
- Evaluate effectiveness of capacity-building and consultation processes, integrating feedback into strategy iterations..

Qualifications of the team leader

- **Education/training (2.1.1):** Master's degree in Governance, Economics, Policy, Law, political science with a focus on technology, Gender Studies, or another relevant field.
- **Language (2.1.2):** Proficiency in English and French language at C1 level.
- **General professional experience (2.1.3):** 5 years in high-level stakeholder engagement, advisory work in governance or policymaking, ideally at the intersection of gender, ICT, and public policy.
- **Specific professional experience (2.1.4):** 5 years in digital policy, ICT governance, gender and technology, or strategy development, including facilitation of high-level workshops in Africa.
- **Leadership/management experience (2.1.5):** 5 years as team leader, project manager, or head of unit.
- **Regional experience (2.1.6):** 3 years experience on projects in Africa

Key expert 1: Digital Economy and Gender Expert

Tasks of key expert 1

- Facilitate thematic sessions and technical workshops under the supervision of the Team Leader.
- Present portions of the situational analysis and thematic findings to stakeholders.
- Contribute to the drafting of the national strategy, especially sections related to gender, digital inclusion, digital skills, STEM, and entrepreneurship.
- Develop workshop content, training materials, and thematic briefs tailored to women and girls in ICT.

- Provide technical advice on gender-responsive digital policy and programmatic interventions.
- Engage closely with national stakeholders to contextualize strategic priorities and validate findings.
- Provide mentorship and technical support during workshop sessions.
- Conduct rapid assessments or desk reviews as requested by the Team Leader.
- Support monitoring of participation and gender inclusion during workshops.
- Suggest improvements to training and workshop methodologies based on participant feedback..

Qualifications of key expert 1

- **Education/training (2.2.1):** Master's degree in Governance, Economics, Policy, Law, political science with a focus on technology, Gender Studies, or another relevant field.
- **Language (2.2.2):** Proficiency in English and French language at C1 level.
- **General professional experience (2.2.3):** 5 years in gender-responsive policy, ICT governance, or digital skilling initiatives.
- **Specific professional experience (2.2.4):** 3 years in digital policy analysis, gender mainstreaming, facilitation, or workshop/training design.
- **Regional experience (2.2.6):** 2 years of experience in projects in Africa

Key Expert 2: Digital policy technical expert

Tasks of key expert 2

- Conduct structured note-taking during consultations, workshops, and bilateral stakeholder engagements.
- Produce high-quality summaries, synthesis documents, and workshop reports.
- Draft sections of the strategy, including policy analysis, implementation mechanisms, and recommendations.
- Support the translation of stakeholder discussions into actionable strategic content.
- Ensure accuracy and consistency of terminology related to digital policy, gender, ICT governance, and the selected member states' legal context.
- Work closely with the Team Leader and Expert 1 to refine the draft and final national strategy.
- Support the development of communication materials for political engagement and strategy validation.
- Assist with survey tools, feedback forms, and documentation required for the impact evaluation.
- Ensure timely dissemination of draft documents to Smart Africa, GIZ, and national stakeholders..

Qualifications of expert 2

- **Education/training (2.3.1):** Master's degree in Governance, Law, Public Policy, Digital Policy, Social Sciences, Data Science, or related field.
- **Language (2.3.2):** Proficiency in French and English language at B2/C1 level.
- **General professional experience (2.3.3):** 3 years working experience in the context of laws and policymaking, preferably in the context of technology policy

- **Specific professional experience (2.3.4):** Experience in drafting political documents like policy briefs or national strategies, with an emphasis on high-quality written communication and stakeholder engagement.
- **Regional experience (2.3.6):** 2 years of experience in projects in Africa,

Soft skills of all team members

In addition to their specialist qualifications, the following qualifications are required of all team members:

- Strong Communication & Interpersonal Skills Initiative
- Facilitation & Inclusive Engagement
- Cultural, Gender & Political Sensitivity
- Analytical & Critical Thinking
- Adaptability, Problem-Solving & Team Collaboration

6. Costing requirements

Fee days	Number of experts	Number of days per expert	Total	Comments
Designation of Team Leader	1	50	50	
Designation of key expert 1	1	26	26	
Designation of key expert 2	1	32	32	
Fixed travel budget	1		25.722 EUR	A budget is earmarked for travel to the countries of assignment . A fixed budget of EUR 25722 is earmarked for settling travel expenses against evidence. This includes: - Flights (9 flights for the three consultants to travel to the two countries of assignment and 1 other country for the validation workshop) - Visa Costs

				- Transport Costs around in the countries of assignment - Per-diem allowance in country of assignment - Overnight allowance in country of assignment
compensation of CO₂ emissions	1		2.880 EUR	A fixed budget of EUR 2,880 is earmarked for Carbon offset costs estimated in line with GIZ mandatory flight offset guidance using lump-sum maximum allowances per one-way flight (Economy class). As the origin of travel is unknown, the highest applicable economy rate is applied. Estimate covers 9 round-trip international flights (18 one-way flights) for three participants. All this is against evidence.
Other costs	Number	Price	Total	Comments
Workshops	3	10.000	30.000	A fixed budget of EUR 30.000 is earmarked for the workshops. The budget covers the following costs: venue, catering, preparation, and facilitation, and will be remunerated against evidence.
Subcontract	3	2.500	7.500	A fixed budget of EUR 7.500 is earmarked for subcontracts. The budget covers the following costs: communication and media costs for the two in-person workshops, and will be remunerated against evidence.

Flexible remuneration	1	4.000	4.000	A fixed budget of EUR 4,000 is earmarked for flexible remuneration and will be allocated based on evidence. Against evidence
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7. Workshops, events and trainings

The contractor implements the following workshops:

- **Workshop 1 — Stakeholder Brainstorm & Problem Framing (Work Package 1):**

Its purpose is to gather initial insights, validate the situational analysis, and ensure that national stakeholders shape the early direction and priorities of the strategy.

- **Workshop 2 — Technical Co-Creation & Strategy Design (Work Package 2):**

Its purpose is to refine, co-design, and validate the draft strategy framework, ensuring that proposed interventions and implementation pathways are technically sound, realistic, and context-appropriate.

- **Workshop 3 — National Validation & Political Endorsement (Work Package 3):**

Its purpose is to secure political approval and institutional endorsement, and to formalise government commitment to adopting and implementing the National Strategy.

8. Inputs of GIZ or other actors

Smart Africa and/or GIZ are expected to make the following inputs available to support the successful implementation of this consultancy:

- Access to relevant documentation, including the Smart Women and Girls in ICT Continental Blueprint, SADA materials, previous country assessments, and any existing national reports or datasets relevant to gender and digital transformation.
- Facilitation of introductions to key stakeholders such as ministries, regulators, parliamentarians, development partners, universities, innovation hubs, telecom operators, private-sector actors, and civil society networks to support stakeholder mapping, consultations, and validation processes.
- Participation in and co-steering of key meetings and workshops, including the inception meeting, technical consultations, and the national validation session.
- Technical guidance throughout the assignment, ensuring alignment with Smart Africa's continental frameworks, GIZ's digital governance priorities, and country-specific policy processes.
- Coordination support with national authorities, including ministries and implementing partners, to ensure timely engagement and strong political participation in the consultation and validation phases.
- Provision of logistical support where appropriate, such as coordinating official communication with government institutions, and supporting communications around key milestones.

9. Requirements on the format of the tender

The technical and financial tender must conform to the following format and submission requirements:

- The tender must follow the structure of the ToR, be clearly written, and use a minimum font size of 11, submitted in English.
- The technical-methodological concept (Section 4 of the tender) must not exceed 10 pages, excluding cover page, table of contents, and annexes.
- CVs of the proposed team members (Team Leader, Digital Economy & Gender Expert, Digital Policy Technical Writer) must not exceed 5 pages each and must clearly indicate:
 - Educational background
 - Language proficiency
 - Relevant professional experience
 - Exact roles and responsibilities in reference projects
 - Duration of each assignment
- Statements of availability for each expert must be included as an annex.
- The consulting firm must attach business registration documents, tax clearance (where applicable), and three references demonstrating prior experience in comparable assignments (digital policy, gender, ICT strategy, or national framework development).
- **Please calculate your financial tender based exactly on the parameters specified in Chapter 5 Quantitative requirements. The contractor is not contractually entitled to use up the days or budgets in full. The number of days and the budgets will be contractually agreed as maximum limits. The specifications for pricing are defined in the price schedule.**