**Cover letter**

**Organizations applying to the Call for Expression of Interest (CEOI) for *Amplifying Digital Opportunities in Cross-Border Trade (ADO-CBT)***

**Project Title:** *Amplifying Digital Opportunities in Cross-Border Trade (ADO-CBT)*

**Project objectives:** The present Call for Expression of Interest (CEOI) is focused on identifying a national non-governmental organization (NGO) that will contribute to the implementation of the ADO-CBT program at the communities level in border districts, with a specific focus on: (i) capacity-building for SSCBTs; (ii) providing general economic, financial and cooperative management support to SSCBTs and CBT Cooperatives; and (ii) providing direct social, psycho-social, and protection support for SSCBTs, and empowering the most vulnerable, including youth.

**Project background:** Cross-border trade (CBT), particularly under the African Free Trade Continental Agreement (AfCFTA), stands as a pivotal driver for Africa’s economic transformation and regional integration. At the same time, Rwanda has made strides in digital inclusion, which according to the Ministry of ITC (MINICT) rose from 46% to 66% between 2016 and 2020, largely driven by mobile money access. However, small scale cross-border traders (SSCBTs) are at risk of being left behind from national progress made on trade and digitalization, due to gaps in existing policies and regulatory frameworks, barriers in accessing and utilizing finance, digital tools, and services, and the various socio-economic disadvantages they face. These challenges are particularly acute for women SSCBTs, who constitute around 74% of all cross-border traders in Rwanda, among whom 90% rely on CBT as their only source of income.[[1]](#footnote-1) In fact, research has shown that while external trade has increased in recent years, this has not translated into improved every-day livelihood for SSCBTs, with most traders (90% in Rusizi II) earning less than US$ 50 dollars a week[[2]](#footnote-2).

In this context, the International Organization for Migration in Rwanda (IOM), through the support of the Joint SDG Fund, is implementing a three-year project entitled Amplifying Digital Opportunities for Cross-Border Trade (ADO-CBT), together with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the International Trade Center (ITC), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The Joint Programme (JP) aims to improve the livelihoods, economic opportunities, and overall well-being of small-scale cross-border traders (SSCBTs) in Rwanda, the majority of whom are women in the informal sector. It will do so by leveraging digital technology to enable better connections to resources, new markets, and existing services, and supporting efforts to ensure that regional and national policies and governance frameworks related to cross-border trade and digitalization translate into tangible outcomes for traders on the ground. The JP aims to use digitalization as a lever to support formalization and enhance the competitiveness, resilience, and inclusion (digital, financial, and socio-economic) of SSCBTs in Rwanda, with particular attention paid to women, as well as youth and persons with disabilities.

**Project requirements:** The successful candidate organization will be expected to demonstrate programmatic experience and provide records of successful performance in previous intervention, as well as to capacities to provide logistical and organizational support for activities implemented in border districts in Rwanda.

**Detailed proposal documents:** Organizations responding to this CEOI must submit a cover letter, duly accomplished application documentation as outlined within the CEI signed on all pages by the prospective applicant’s Authorized Representative, and Annexes A-H (see enclosed). These include: Annex A (Terms of Reference); Annex B (IP References Checklist); Annex C (IP General information questionnaire); Annex D (Concept Note Template); Annex E (Financial and Narrative Reporting Template); Annex F (Project Implementation Agreement Template); Annex G (Declaration of Conformity for Partners); and Annex H (Data Protection Principles).

**Implementation start date:** August 2025

**Implementation end date:** July 2027

**Submission deadlines:** 11 July 2025

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| **CEI Reference number** | CBT LR 2025 |
| **Posted (date)** | 20 June 2025 |
| **Clarification Request Deadline** | 27 June 2025 |
| **Application Deadline** | 11 July 2025 |
| **Notification of Results** | 21 July 2025 |
| **Implementation Start Date** | August 2025 |
| **Implementation End Date** | February 2027 |

**Notification dates:** 21 July 2025

1. [position\_paper\_to\_adress\_issues\_of\_women\_cross\_border\_traders\_in\_rwanda-1.pdf (rcsprwanda.org)](https://e-ihuriro.rcsprwanda.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/position_paper_to_adress_issues_of_women_cross_border_traders_in_rwanda-1.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [CBT-Report\_Final.pdf](https://documents.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CBT-Report_Final.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)