



The Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda

Terms of Reference

Consultancy to Integrate Digital Trade Data and Develop Policy Options

General Information

The Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate (TONRD) is one of the three Directorates of the Commonwealth Secretariat. The Directorate brings together work in Trade Policy, Trade Competitiveness, Connectivity, Hub and Spokes, and Oceans and Natural Resources. TONRD is responsible for delivering two strategic outcomes:

- Effective policy mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment and business growth; and
- Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including the blue and green economies.

A significant part of the Directorate's work is of a consultancy and advisory nature, delivered through a combination of in-house and external expertise.

Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda

At the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, the Commonwealth adopted the Declaration on the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda for Trade and Investment (CCA). The CCA is a major new member state-led initiative to grow intra-Commonwealth trade and investment to US\$2 trillion by 2030 and promote expanded investment. This is intended to support global growth, create employment and promote knowledge exchange among Commonwealth members.

The CCA focuses on five clusters of work:

- 1) Physical Connectivity to support best practice in digital infrastructure development and reduce physical barriers to trade;
- 2) Digital Connectivity to support the development of national digital trade and enable all members to take advantage of the opportunities presented by digital trade;
- 3) Regulatory Connectivity to improve regulatory regimes across the Commonwealth, enhance international regulatory cooperation and reduce regulatory barriers to trade;

- 4) Business to Business Connectivity focusing on promoting interaction between Commonwealth businesses and supporting public-private dialogue on connectivity;
- 5) Supply Side Connectivity focusing on agriculture and fisheries and aiming to encourage the participation of all members in global value chains, including through the development of smart agriculture and smart fisheries.

Throughout these areas, inclusive and sustainable trade addressing women's economic empowerment and youth unemployment, will be mainstreamed.

Background: The Commonwealth's Digital Trade Policy Tool

Digitalization is fundamentally transforming the nature, scale, scope and operation of the global economy. Rapid advances in digital technologies are creating new and innovative ways to produce goods and services, boosting productivity and facilitating the rise of e-commerce and digital trade. The resulting digital transformation - spearheaded by exponential growth in data flows and advances in information and communications technology - is fueling unprecedented growth of the digital economy. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated these movements towards a digital world.

Accelerating digitalization and the expansion of the digital economy brings both opportunities and challenges for Commonwealth countries. It can help accelerate economic growth, drive productivity improvements, generate jobs, create new ways to trade and overcome barriers to inclusive growth. However, in the presence of significant digital divides within and between countries, the growth of the digital economy can also exacerbate existing inequalities and create new ones. Moreover, the rapid rise in levels of automation and digitalization associated with the digital economy poses a threat to the jobs and livelihoods of many Commonwealth citizens.

The Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda (CCA), through its cluster work programmes, is engaging directly with these issues in the context of broader efforts to raise intra-Commonwealth trade and investment. As part of this work, the Commonwealth Secretariat is developing an interactive policy tool to assist policymakers across the Commonwealth when they are developing policies on the digital economy. The policy tool will allow policymakers to select the specific digital economy challenges and issues they wish to address, and then, through an interactive process, assist them to identify policy options. The latter will draw from the evidence base built up by the CCA team over the past 18 months, which includes a Commonwealth Repository of Digital Policies and Regulations and a compendium of case studies submitted by member states.

Using an integrated and modular format, the interactive policy tool will guide policymakers in Commonwealth countries through a series of steps to (i) identify gaps, (ii) prioritize issues that need to be addressed and (iii) select priority policy actions to support the development of their digital economies. The interactive policy tool will thus provide an additional resource to feed into existing policy development processes in Commonwealth member states, and complement the national policies and strategies already identified in their individual national development plans and priorities.

The CCA team is undertaking the development of the interactive policy tool through a phased approach. This involves:

1. Analyzing country level data and evidence on digital trade to identify gaps and prioritize issues to address;
2. Identifying discrete policy actions to address these gaps and issues and develop the digital trade data; and
3. Developing a web-based interactive policy tool available to policymakers and the wider public across the Commonwealth.

Assignment Objectives

The primary objective of this assignment is to prepare and collate the content (data, evidence and policy options) to feed into the interactive policy tool. This will involve supporting the Commonwealth Secretariat's CCA team to undertake phases 1 and 2 above.

The content to be prepared is expected to cover:

- Quantitative and Qualitative Data measuring country progress and performance in specific areas relevant to digital trade.
- Evidence and insights from existing research and best practices.
- Discrete policy actions that can help address challenges and gaps and support the development of digital trade in Commonwealth countries.

Tasks and Expected Output

The consultant, or team of consultants, will be engaged to undertake the task of developing the content for the interactive policy tool under the direction of the CCA section. The consultant is expected to undertake the following outputs:

Output 1: Quantitative and Qualitative Data on Country Progress and Performance

- ❖ **Build a dataset with comparable country-level qualitative and quantitative data on the status of digital trade for all 54 Commonwealth member states.** The dataset - to be compiled in Microsoft Excel format - must include specific indicators to measure country progress and performance in the areas of:
 - digital trade;
 - digital manufacturing;
 - digital agriculture;
 - digital fisheries;
 - digital skills;
 - digital infrastructure; and
 - inclusivity and digital divides.
- ❖ **Review the evidence base contained in knowledge products produced by the international and regional organizations and identify and collate relevant country-level evidence on progress and performance in relation to digital trade.** The review should include the CCA's report on *The State of the Digital Economy in*

the Commonwealth, CCA Meeting papers and relevant case studies submitted by member states. The information should be organized and categorized into the same areas listed above and presented in Microsoft Excel.

The final selection of data sources and indicators in each of these areas will be determined in consultation with the CCA team. The expectation is that this dataset will be drawn from international and regional sources where available. Data gaps will exist for some members, and where such gaps exist, the review is expected to develop an approach that will allow cross-country comparisons around the gap.

Output 2: Country Policy Options

- ❖ **Develop a detailed list of discrete policy options available to address specific gaps and challenges to develop digital trade in Commonwealth countries.** To do so, the consultant will be required to review the international policy literature as well as existing country, regional and multinational digital trade policy studies and frameworks in order to identify best practice policy measures. The consultant should also review the Repository of Digital Policies and Regulations in the Commonwealth to identify discrete policy actions contained in individual Commonwealth countries' national policies and regulations related to digitalization. The discrete policy actions should be mapped to the relevant indicators in Output 1. Critically, the policy actions should also be coded to countries by economic characteristic or level of development (for eg small island developing state) so that the recommended policy options are appropriate to the type of economy. This information should be compiled in Microsoft Excel.
- ❖ **Devise a mapping typology to link the progress and performance data in Output 1 to the to the specific policy options available to address them above.** This mapping will be used as the basis for the policy tools' functionality providing relevant policy options to address individual challenges or priorities. The typology must be able to recommend options that are appropriate to the level of development based on economic characteristics (for e.g. LDC or small island developing state).

Consultant(s) Specification

- A post-graduate degree in Trade, Economics (Masters or PhD preferred) or related discipline.
- At least 5 years of experience working on policy-oriented research and analysis related to digitalization, digital transformation, digital trade and the digital economy.
- Demonstrable knowledge of international datasets and resources on digitalization, digital trade and the digital economy.
- Previous experience working with regional or international organizations is a distinct advantage.

Proposal

Consultants should submit a proposal elaborating their proposed approach to undertaking this assignment along with the CVs of the expert(s) which will undertake this assignment.

Payment Milestones

Payments are to be made in accordance with the schedule below. The consultant or team of consultants will be engaged for 100 working days at a rate of £300 per day. The total cost of the consultancy will be £30,000. Final payment will not be made until all comments and feedback from the Commonwealth Secretariat have been addressed by the consultant and the final versions of all deliverables have been submitted to the Secretariat in Microsoft Excel format.

Milestone	Due Date*	Schedule of Payments
Consultant signs the contract	October	-
Consultant submits draft of output 1	November	15%
Secretariat provides comments on draft	December	-
Revised output 1 submitted	December	25%
Consultant submits draft of Output 2	January 2021	30%
Consultant facilitates member state validation exercise for Outputs 1 and 2	February 2021	10%
Consultant submits final versions of Outputs 1 and 2	March 2021	20%

***Specific dates within delivery month to be confirmed at contract signature stage.**