

Terms of reference (ToR) for the procurement of services below the EU threshold

CONFIDENTIAL

Advancing Digital Transformation and Cross-Border Cooperation between Fashion & Apparel Clusters/Associations: “Skills, Digital Solutions & Partnerships”	Project number/ cost centre: G-012132-002
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0. List of abbreviations

BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EU	European Union
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
SMEs	Small Medium Enterprises
ToR	Terms of reference
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
DPP	Digital Product Passport
IP	Intellectual Property

1. Context

The international technical cooperation project “Digital Transformation of SMEs in Eastern Partnership Countries” was launched in 2023. It’s financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

The project is aimed at strengthening the competitiveness of small and medium enterprise (SMEs) in Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries (Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan) with regards to digital transformation. Through better access to innovative technologies, skills and services across value chains, the project supports the creation of a conducive business environment for technological transformation of SMEs in competitive sectors. This will result in an increased performance of companies, in particular SMEs, to become more competitive with regard to their business/production processes, products and services by using digital technologies.

One of the project objectives is to contribute to increased cooperation among EaP actors within the digital and entrepreneurial ecosystem, addressing existing fragmentation and limited cross-border collaboration in key economic sectors. To date, the project has established a continuous dialogue among representatives of various fashion and apparel clusters and associations from EaP countries. One or two representatives from each country participate in exchange meetings and training sessions tailored to their digital needs. These activities are delivered under previous short-term expert contract and focused primarily on awareness-raising and capacity-building, cover topics such as:

- Introduction to AI in apparel and fashion sector
- Digital solutions for the apparel & fashion sector
- Digital Product Passports
- 3D design solutions
- Commercially effective use of AI and social media

Based on these exchanges, participants expressed a clear interest in receiving further support to move beyond introductory knowledge toward the practical integration of digital technologies and solutions within their clusters and associations, as well as in strengthening cooperation among EaP counterparts.

In addition, the differing levels of digital maturity among fashion and apparel clusters across EaP countries highlight the need for a more structured and coordinated support approach. A regional intervention allows digital solutions to be adapted to country-specific needs while facilitating shared learning and cross-border cooperation. In this context, the assignment goes beyond individual consultancy activities and supports the strategic development of the EaP Fashion & Apparel Consortium, contributing to the sector’s resilience and alignment with international digital standards.

2. Tasks to be performed by the contractor

The objective of the assignment is to support participants in advancing their digital transformation and strengthening cross-border cooperation across the EaP region to archive the objective the contractor is responsible for providing the following services for up to 6 associations/clusters:

T1. Inception and alignment

Presentation of the project objectives, activities, schedule, expected results and contributions from all involved sides to the clusters/associations and GIZ team (5 expert days).

T2. Development and piloting of digital solutions

Development of relevant digital solutions for each clusters/associations or their members (e.g.: product digital passports, AI agent, digital platform), with a minimum of one digital solution per country.

The list of digital solutions should be reviewed and agreed upon with each associations/clusters to ensure alignment with their needs. Subsequently, the proposed solutions must be approved by GIZ prior to the start of the introduction phase.

Clusters/associations should formally confirm (by email) their readiness to be involved in the development and preparation stages of the digital solutions, as well as in their approval. Clusters/associations may also propose local experts for on-site technical implementation of the digital solutions, who could potentially be included in the pool of short-term experts

Each digital solution shall include, as a minimum, a brief functional specification, a pilot or demonstration phase, a short user guide or training session for cluster members, and a handover note confirming readiness for use. The contractor shall ensure that the proposed solutions are feasible within the project timeframe and adapted to the operational realities of the participating clusters and associations (120 expert days)

T3. Strengthening cross-border cooperation

Foster cooperation among EaP fashion and apparel clusters and associations by:

Provide recommendations to the clusters/associations regarding possible cooperation topics between clusters/associations.

Establishing the EaP Fashion & Apparel Consortium and developing its operational strategy for the period 2026–2028 (10 expert days)

T4. Preparation of a funding application

Facilitate the preparation and submission of a project application under a relevant EU or other call.

Enabling the formed consortium to receive funding for future project. The proposed project should have a strong focus on digitalisation and cross-border cooperation.

In cases where no suitable funding call is available within the contract duration, the contractor shall prepare a mature project concept, including identified call, and next steps, to enable submission at a later stage, subject to approval by GIZ (20 expert days).

T5. Consortium gathering and sector event participation

It's also foreseen facilitation of joint participation of clusters/associations in sector event which will have digital transformation or innovative focus in one of EaP country. The event may be organised or co-organised by one of the participating clusters/associations. The

concept for the consortium gathering shall include clear objectives, a draft agenda, expected outcomes, and the roles of participating clusters and associations as overall event moderation (15 expert days).

T6. Development of country-level sector strategies

Experts should elaborate country level strategies for the fashion and apparel sector. Strategies should be prepared in consultations with local stakeholders and responsible government authorities (for 2 countries after confirmation from GIZ) (30 expert days).

T7. Communication and visibility

Experts should highlight the project activities in social media (Facebook, LinkedIn), and also create EaP consortium promo materials and identify the success stories/best practices which will describe T2, T3, T5, T6, and disseminate them different channels.

All communication materials and success stories shall be delivered in editable format, in English language may be further adapted for use by GIZ and participating clusters for dissemination beyond the project duration (15 expert days).

T8. Consultancy support

Provide specific consultancy support on request, preliminary approved by GIZ to clusters/associations (10 days).

Days allocation is indicative and could be changed without total increase of the days number.

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
T1. Introductory online meeting, activities plan presented and approved from GIZ side	1 month after contract start date, contractor
T2. Each cluster or association, or their members, received a relevant digital solution and confirmed its use. Where feasible, developed digital solutions shall be used as a basis for cross-border exchange and cooperation among participating clusters and associations.	6 months after contract start date, contractor
T3. Recommendations for the partnerships among participants (up to 10 pages) as a part/annex of signed consortium agreement among interested associations and clusters (free form)	3 months after contract start date, contractor
T4. Application for funding prepared for submission for the specific call	6 months after contract start date, contractor

T5. Cluster and Associations take part in fashion & apparel event, follow-up on further cooperation is made	6 months after contract start date, contractor
T6. Up to 2 country strategies are developed and presented to relevant stakeholders and local authorities in the field (each strategy, up to 30 pages)	6 months after contract start date, contractor
T7. At least 10 materials for social media posts developed and provided to GIZ for further dissemination EaP Consortium promo-materials developed Report on success stories and good practices summarizing all the activities is provided to GIZ (up to 10 pages)	6 months after contract start date, contractor
T8. Final report presented to GIZ, also include key lessons learned and recommendations for future cross-border digital cooperation in the fashion and apparel sector.	6 months after contract start date, contractor

Period of assignment: from End of May 2026 until 30.11.2026.

3. 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

Strategy (1.1): The tenderer is required to consider the tasks to be performed with reference to the objectives of the services put out to tender (see Chapter 1 Context) (1.1.1). Following this, the tenderer presents and justifies the explicit strategy with which it intends to provide the services for which it is responsible (see Chapter 2 Tasks to be performed) (1.1.2).

The tenderer is required to present the actors relevant for the services for which it is responsible and describe the **cooperation (1.2)** with them. Particularly, describe interaction between the relevant actors in the contractor's area of responsibility (1.2.1) and strategy for establishing cooperation and then cooperation with the relevant actors for the assignment (1.2.2)

The tenderer is required to describe the key **processes** for the services for which it is responsible and create an **operational plan** or schedule (1.4.1) that describes how the services according to Chapter 2 (Tasks to be performed by the contractor) are to be provided. In particular, the tenderer is required to describe the necessary work steps and, if applicable, take account of the milestones and **contributions** of other actors (partner contributions) in accordance with Chapter 2 (Tasks to be performed) (1.4.2).

The tenderer is required to describe its contribution to knowledge management for the partner (1.5.1) and GIZ and to promote scaling-up effects (1.5.2) under **learning and innovation**.

4. Personnel concept

The tenderer is required to provide personnel who are suited to filling the positions described, on the basis of their CVs (see Chapter 7), 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

- Overall responsibility for the comprehensive implementation of the tasks T1-T8 (Chapter 2) ensuring quality, consistency, and timely delivery of all outputs; Coordinating and ensuring communication with GIZ, clusters and associations and others involved in the project stakeholders
- Personnel management, **short-term expert pool** coordination, planning and steering of assignments and supporting overall project implementation
- Regular reporting to GIZ in accordance with agreed timelines and reporting requirements.

Qualifications of the team leader

- Education/training (2.1.1): university degree '(Diplom'/Master) in a relevant field (Economics, Business Administration or Social Sciences, IT, Engineering)
- Language (2.1.2): C1-level language proficiency in English
- General professional experience (2.1.3): 5 years of professional experience in the supporting clusters and associations operating in the field of fashion and apparel
- Specific professional experience (2.1.4): 3 years in consulting on digital transformation topic (introduction of digital solutions and services to SMEs)
- Leadership/management experience (2.1.5): 3 years of management/leadership experience as project team leader or manager in a company
- Regional experience (2.1.6): 2 years of experience in projects in EaP countries, Western Balkans, Baltics, Southeast- or Eastern-EU countries.

Short-term expert pool with minimum 5, maximum 10 members

which must include one national expert per each country (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine).

Tasks of the short-term expert pool

- Planning and implementation of the tasks T1-T8 (item 2)
- Ensure regular information exchange and response on GIZ and all involved in the project actor's requests

Qualifications of the short-term expert pool

- Education/training (2.6.1) all experts with university qualification (Diplom'/Master) in Economics, Business Administration or Social Sciences, IT, Engineering, Communications)
- Language (2.6.2): all experts with B2-level language proficiency in English
- General professional experience (2.6.3): all experts with up to 3 years of professional experience in the private sector development,
- Specific professional experience (2.6.4): all experts with 1 year of professional experience in digital transformation topic.

5. Costing requirements

Assignment of personnel and travel expenses

Per diem allowances are reimbursed as a lump sum up to the maximum amounts permissible under tax law for each country as set out in the country table in the circular from the German Federal Ministry of Finance on travel expense remuneration (downloadable from the [German Federal Ministry of Finance – tax treatment of travel expenses and allowances for international business travel as of 1 January 2026 \(GERMAN ONLY\)](#)).

Accommodation allowances are reimbursed as detailed in the specification of inputs below.

With special justification, additional Accommodation costs up to a reasonable amount can be reimbursed against evidence.

All business travel must be agreed in advance by the officer responsible for the project

Sustainability aspects for travel

GIZ would like to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂ emissions) caused by travel. When preparing your tender, please incorporate options for reducing emissions, such as selecting the lowest-emission booking class (economy) and using means of transport, airlines and flight routes with a higher CO₂ efficiency. For short distances, travel by train (second class) or e-mobility should be the preferred option.

If they cannot be avoided, CO₂ emissions caused by air travel should be offset. GIZ specifies a budget for this, through which the carbon offsets can be settled against evidence.

There are many different providers in the market for emissions certificates, and they have different climate impact ambitions. The [Development and Climate Alliance \(German only\)](#) has published a [list of standards \(German only\)](#). GIZ recommends using the standards specified there.

Specification of inputs

Fee days	Number of experts	Number of days per expert	Total	Comments
Team Leader	1	95	95	
Short-term expert pool	5-10	130	130	
Travel expenses	Quantity	Number per expert	Total	Comments
CO ₂ compensation for air travel	10	50,00	500,00	A fixed budget of EUR 500,00 is earmarked for settling carbon offsets against evidence.
Fixed travel budget	1	8.632,00	8.632,00	<p>A budget is earmarked for travel to the following countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine (in case of peace in the country) and EU.</p> <p>A fixed budget of EUR 8.632,00 EUR is earmarked for settling travel expenses against evidence for the next items:</p> <p>5 round flights (or trains, buses or other travel options in case if flights are absent or not time efficient)</p> <p>20 per-diems</p> <p>20 overnights</p> <p>5 transportations (airport transfer and transportation within country of assignment)</p>
Flexible remuneration	1	1	12.000,00	<p>A budget of EUR 12.000,00 is foreseen for flexible remuneration. Please incorporate this budget into the price schedule.</p> <p>Use of the flexible remuneration item requires prior written approval from GIZ.</p>

6. Requirements on the format of the tender

The structure of the tender must correspond to the structure of the ToR. In particular, the detailed structure of the concept (Chapter 3) should be organised in accordance with the positively weighted criteria in the assessment grid (not with zero). The tender must be legible (font size 11 or larger) and clearly formulated. It must be drawn up in English (language).

The complete tender must not exceed 10 pages (excluding CVs). If one of the maximum page lengths is exceeded, the content appearing after the cut-off point will not be included in the assessment. External content (e.g. links to websites) will also not be considered.'

The CVs of the personnel proposed in accordance with Chapter 4 of the ToRs must be submitted using the format specified in the terms and conditions for application. The CVs shall not exceed 3 pages each. They must clearly show the position and job the proposed person held in the reference project and for how long. The CVs can also be submitted in English (language).

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, trips, workshops or budgets in full. The number of days, trips and workshops and the budgets will be contractually agreed as maximum limits. The specifications for pricing are defined in the price schedule.