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

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

CONFIDENTIAL

PROCUREMENT OF SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ONLINE PLATFORM FOR THE RA STATE REVENUE COMMITTEE	**Project number/ cost centre:** **23.2198.2-005.00**

0. List of Abbreviation

API	Application Programming Interface
CMS	Content Management System
EaP	Eastern Partnership countries
EAEU	EAEU
EU	European Union
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HS	Harmonized System code
RDBMS	Relational Database Management System
SEO	Search engine optimisations
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SRC	State Revenue Committee
SSL	Secure Sockets Layer
SRCt	Secure Remote Commerce test
ToR	Terms of reference
UAT	User Acceptance Testing

1. Context

“Strengthening sustainable and digital trade routes and logistics concepts between Eastern Partnership countries and with the EU” Project (hereafter – EasTnT) is commissioned by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. The project targets closer economic integration of Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries with each other and the EU, leveraging strengthened cooperation among key stakeholders in trade routes and logistics. The approach is built on enhancing digital and sustainable practices within the transport and logistics sectors, aligning with EU standards and fostering regional collaboration. The strategy of the EasTnT project entails a comprehensive and multi-level approach aimed at fostering economic integration, enhancing sustainability, and driving digital transformation across the Eastern Partnership countries, through targeted actions and collaborative efforts with the key stakeholders. One of the project’s goals is to strengthen the

capacities of ministries and institutions and develop strategies for reducing transport-induced CO2 emissions by offering support for legal and regulatory adjustments needed for efficient cross border and transport management. Additionally, the project encourages cooperation between private and public sector institutions, as well as shared use of working groups to bolster sustainable and digital logistics planning and implementation. The project activities also aim to foster competence development in SMEs within the logistics and transport sector, targeting digital and sustainable transformation, specifically to draft a transformation strategy and further trains customs and border authority personnel in digital and sustainable practices. The Project fosters regional and international exchange between the five Eastern Partnership countries, with Germany and other European Union member states.

The development of **the online platform for the State Revenue Committee (indicatively named EXIM)** directly supports Output 2: Additional Elements of Digital Border Management of the EasTnT project. Specifically, the platform contributes to Output Indicator 2.1, which targets the completion of 10 digital trade facilitation measures by border agencies. The EXIM platform, by offering access to essential information for importers and exporters, will facilitate smoother customs processes. This will lead to increased operational efficiency and faster clearance times at crucial border points. Efficient and transparent customs processes are a cornerstone of modern trade and logistics systems. With the growing complexity of cross-border trade and the increased need for compliance with international standards, importers and exporters as well as customs authorities face significant challenges in managing the flow of goods while maintaining regulatory oversight. Digital platforms like EXIM play a critical role in addressing these challenges by automating and streamlining customs procedures. These platforms enhance operational efficiency, reduce the risk of errors and fraud, and foster transparency. **By providing stakeholders with access to information, such systems also contribute to compliance with international trade norms and the facilitation of legitimate trade flows.** The development of the EXIM platform aligns with the EasTnT project objectives of enhancing trade efficiency, reducing administrative burdens, and promoting transparency in customs processes.

2. Tasks to be performed by the contractor

To design and develop the online platform for the Armenian State Revenue Committee (Customs Service) to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accessibility in customs information. **The platform will serve as a key source of information for legal entities and individuals engaged in export and import activities.**

The platform shall be developed to enable users to input a product's HS code (Harmonized System code of a specific product) or description to receive detailed information on import and export procedures, declaration requirements, tariff and non-tariff regulations, and other relevant customs rules. Additionally, the platform shall provide access to historical data on similar products that have been classified and processed in the past, offering insights into previously used HS codes and their associated regulations.

The implementation of this platform aims to ensure a high level of transparency and accessibility in customs processes, enhance customs discipline, promote the development of the "Universal Customs Inspector" institution, and advance the self-declaration mechanism. By streamlining and simplifying access to regulatory and procedural information, the platform will empower legal entities, individual entrepreneurs, and citizens—as well as customs service personnel—to efficiently navigate and understand the existing rules, regulations, and processes governing import and export activities**.**

General Description of the platform and draft architecture

The platform must allow users to **input a product's HS code** (Harmonized System code) **or product name (description**) to retrieve detailed information about the specified product. The platform should differentiate between user categories, namely "Legal Entity or Individual Entrepreneur" and "Individual."

This platform must provide the following information:

1. HS code
2. HS code description, based on the HS classification title and actual product declaration descriptions
3. Explanatory Notes related to the HS code
4. EAEU Collegium opinions on the HS code
5. Preliminary classification decisions for products
6. Import and/or export prohibitions applicable to the goods
7. Quantitative restrictions on the import and/or export of goods
8. Exclusive rights related to the import and/or export of goods
9. Automatic licensing (control) requirements for the import and/or export of goods
10. Permit-based procedures for the import and/or export of goods
11. Dual-use items, including procedures and a list of authorized organizations
12. Types of customs duties, rates, and calculation methods, including value-added tax (distinguishing between general and special taxation systems), customs duties, unified customs payments, environmental tax, excise tax, state duty, and anti-dumping duties
13. Treasury accounts designated for tax and customs payments
14. Available payment methods

The platform shall include interactive support features to enhance user engagement and accessibility. It should provide **video and audio guides offering step-by-step tutorials** on key processes, such as declaration submission and obtaining a username-password.

Additionally, the platform should incorporate a **discussion forum** where declarants can exchange insights, seek clarifications, and discuss HS classifications and related regulations, fostering a collaborative knowledge-sharing environment.

Other Key Features

- Clean design
- Advanced user friendliness / enhanced user experience
- Excellent search engine properties on the site incl. incorporated search engine optimization (SEO) to assure high rankings in search engines
- Excellent navigation system / intuitive navigation
- Optimized for all existing types of mobile devices
- Security measures in place
- Optimized to fast-load pages (4 seconds or less on an average computer)
- The platform should allow data to be entered and viewed in **three languages**. Changing the language on the website should automatically update the corresponding fields and content on the platform in the selected language

Note:

Technical Solutions:

• The platform's technical architecture must allow for the inclusion of relevant links and the flexibility to add or modify sections as needed, beyond those initially specified. It should support the entry of identical data for multiple HS codes in a single operation. For instance, if multiple HS codes share a duty rate of 10 %, the system must enable users to select all applicable codes and apply the 10 % duty rate collectively. Additionally, the platform should provide users with the capability to introduce new sections that may become necessary over time.

• The technical structure of the platform should allow for testing its functionality and content appearance before integrating it into the main website (going live)

Integration with Other Systems: The platform must be designed to seamlessly integrate with the online platforms (e. g. the State Revenue Committee and other relevant platforms), ensuring interoperability and adaptability to future connectivity requirements. The platform should have the capability to provide access to other stakeholders via API.

User Types

The platform should be designed to accommodate two distinct user roles: Administrator and User.

The Administrator (internal) will have full authorization to manage the portal, including inputting and modifying content, as well as creating and managing user accounts and roles. **The User** role will grant individuals access to view the information available on the portal. User registration should be automated, requiring no manual approval or intervention.

Note:

The specific details regarding access permissions for each user role will be defined in later stages of implementation.

3. Scope of Work

- The Contractor will be responsible for designing and developing the web platform. The work will include information architecture, user interface design, user experience mapping and execution.

- The project shall be implemented within a period of about 7 (seven) months.

- The Contractor should prepare users, design & technical manuals and other documents for the developed web platform in an easy to understandable and user-friendly language with proper diagram, screenshots and charts wherever required.

- **The web portal structure and design shall be proposed by Contractor and approved by the State Revenue Committee**. It should be attractive, responsive, latest technology based and should facilitate availability of content of interest preferably with not more than 3 clicks with logical and intuitive flow.

- The website should be fully responsive and ready for retina displays. Visitors should get best user experience of website looks on tablets and mobile devices adapting to the screen size layout. To improve the experience on mobile devices and other handheld devices like iPad, tablets etc., the platform needs to be developed user friendly, responsive, adaptive for all devices, making, as far as is reasonable, the same information and services available to users irrespective of the device they are using.

- All menus / sub menus / headings etc. should have an icon and the same should be without any copyright issue.

- Website layout is to be browser independent (Safari, Chrome, Firefox, and Microsoft edge), website elements should display well on all devices.

- Website should have advanced search functionality with ability to search entire site and content, it should:

    a. Perform SEO Keyword Searches

    b. Perform Misspelled Search terms/ Spelling mistake recognition.

    c. Eliminate unavailable Page results.

    d. Show last search query in Search Box.

    e. Keyword-based and full text search on all content within the website.

Content Management System (CMS) requirements:

a. CMS solution should provide high security and covering SEO requirements.

b. CMS should have multilingual support and future scalability and have the option to add other features/modules/workflows in future and accommodate changing organizational needs.

c. CMS system must support non-IT literate users to operate the contents within the overall rules and workflow laid down.

d. The CMS should create SEO-friendly URL's for each page. If pages are later moved or renamed, CMS should configure an HTTP 301 Permanent Redirect to notify search engines.

e. The proposed CMS should have built-in support for SEO like Meta tags, Canonical URLs, extension less URLs. Data submitted by the public to the website must be held securely (SSL standard)

Testing Requirements:

a. **During the preparation stage,** the Contractor shall develop a testing and acceptance plan and submit the same for the State Revenue Committee's approval.

b. System testing and acceptance plan shall include testing scenarios. Website must be beta tested to SRCt's satisfaction before final go live. The Contractor shall share the link of website in testing mode on the third phase after finishing of development phase and before launch of the website. In the case of revealed discrepancy between functional requirements specifications and UAT testing, the Contractor shall identify the revealed bugs and appropriately fix them. This process shall go on until all the requirements in the checklists are tested and identified as correct by the State Revenue Committee and approved in compliance with the final functional requirements.

Security Requirements:

a. The system must have full compatibility to be used with Website Security Services (CloudFlare, Sucuri, etc.) and implementation/activation of such service on the website. Website must be SSL Certificated.

Database Requirements:

a. The data storage of web-portal must be based on RDBMS. Upon the selection of the database management system, the Contractor should propose the latest version of the RDBMS available now. It should have the features of database replication, database clustering, database mirroring,

b. Database partitioning must enable implementation of the query optimization, must offer automated and regular database backup, database optimization and reorganization and rebuilding indexes, must avail transaction isolation.

4. Implementation Schedule

Period of assignment: **from June 2025 until January2026.**

The proposed schedule of the main phases is presented in the table below:

Milestones/process steps/partial services	**Deadline**	**Criteria for acceptance**
Phase 1 - Preparation	Months 1 -2	-Action plan, web-portal, visual and experience design, site map detailing. -Report for the first stage
Phase 2 - Development	Months 2-5	-Initial version of the website (demo link) and make it available for the end-user testing. -Report on the second phase deliverable
Phase 3 - Testing	Months 5-6	-Testing in Beta mode according to testing requirements. -Demo link for the final result of the development. -Report on the third phase deliverable
Phase 4 - Launch	Months 6-7	- System administrator's manual and other documentation as described in the ToR -Relevant training of content managers and system administrators -The final version of the web portal, software package (including all source codes), all sub-systems, installer packages, configuration files. -The website live -The final report

Further, after signing the contract, the Contractor, within the **first phase** of the implementation, shall develop a detailed action plan based upon the initial plan outlining all the phases of the implementation and investigation during the first stage. Contractor should organize kick-off meeting and workshops to discuss Client's requirements and approaches. During the **second phase,** the Contractor shall develop the initial version of the website and make it available for the end-user testing.

In the **third phase,** the testing of the platform in Beta mode should be done according to Testing Requirements.
In the **fourth phase**, the Contractor shall perform the final implementation of the web platform and run the platform in a live mode.

NOTE: In case of any deviations from the proposed schedule tenderer should describe the reason of such deviation.

5. Concept

In the tender, the tenderer is required to show *how* the objectives defined in Chapter 2 (Tasks to be performed) and Chapter 3 (Scope of Work) 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.

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 (1.1.2) (see Chapter 2 Tasks to be performed and Chapter 3 Scope of Work).

During the bidding phase, the tenderer shall submit an initial plan of the project implementation within its proposal outlining the requirements (1.4.1). 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) and Chapter 3 (Scope of Work) 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).

Project management of the contractor (1.6)

The tenderer is required to explain its approach for coordination with the GIZ project. In particular, the project management requirements specified in Chapter 2 (Tasks to be performed by the contractor) must be explained in detail (1.6.1).

The tenderer is required to draw up a **personnel assignment plan** with explanatory notes that lists all the experts proposed in the tender; the plan includes information on assignment dates (duration and expert days) and locations of the individual members of the team complete with the allocation of work steps as set out in the schedule (1.6.2).

6. Personnel concept

The tenderer should possess and make available a good mix of experts and sufficient resources for the provision of the service with effectiveness, efficiency, quality, and

professionalism. The team should comprise an appropriate number of professionals with adequate experience and professional qualifications for the assignment.

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 (2.1)

Tasks of the team leader

- Overall responsibility for the implementation of contract (quality and deadlines)
- Coordinating and ensuring communication with GIZ, SRC and others involved in the project
- Personnel management, as well as planning and steering assignments and implementation
- Regular reporting in accordance with deadlines

Qualifications of the team leader

- Education/training (2.1.1): University degree in Computer Science, Information Systems, Business Administration, Economics, or a related field.
- Language (2.1.2): Strong business proficiency in English language (spoken and written) is required.
- General professional experience (2.1.3): **7 years** of professional experience in IT systems development, digitalization and related spheres.
- Specific professional experience (2.1.4): **5 years** in IT project and product development.
- Leadership/management experience (2.1.5): **3 years** of proven experience in project management/leadership as project team leader or manager in a company.
- Development cooperation experience (2.17) Previous experience in international donor-funded projects related to digitalization, IT solutions, or technical modernization.

Key expert list

Key Expert 1- UX Specialist (2.2)

Tasks of the UX Specialist

- Design a user-centric interface for the EXIM platform
- Develop user personas, journey maps, and workflows to ensure a seamless user experience.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to gather and incorporate feedback into the design process

Qualifications of the UX Specialist

- Education/training (2.2.1): Bachelor's or Master's degree in UX Design, Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), Graphic Design, or a related field.
- General professional experience (2.2.3): **4 years** of professional experience.
- Specific professional experience (2.2.4) **2 years of** experience in standard UX design tools such as Sketch, OmniGraffle, Axure, InVision, UXPin, Balsamiq, Framer, and similar software.

Key Expert 2- UI (Graphic) Designer (2.3)

Tasks of the UI Designer

- Develop visually appealing UI designs for the EXIM platform, ensuring alignment with user needs and accessibility standards.
- Create wireframes, mockups, and prototypes to illustrate design concepts before development.
- Ensure a coherent visual identity, including typography, color schemes, and UI components.
- Apply ergonomic and human-computer interaction (HCI) principles to enhance user experience.

Qualifications of the UI Designer

- Education/training (2.3.1): Bachelor's or Master's degree in UX Design, Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), Graphic Design, or a related field.
- General professional experience (2.3.3): 4 **years** of professional experience.
- Specific professional experience (2.3.4) **2 years of** experience in working with the international standards such as W3C, WAI, and IPG.

Key Expert 3- Front-end developer (2.4)

Tasks of the Front-end developer

- Develop and implement responsive, user-friendly web interfaces for EXIM Platform
- Develop reusable and maintainable HTML, CSS, and JavaScript components.
- Optimize application performance for fast load times and seamless user experience.
- Ensure compatibility across multiple browsers and devices (cross-browser testing).
- Work closely with the back-end development team to ensure proper data flow, security, and API functionality.
- Ensure compliance with relevant cybersecurity and data protection standards
- Conduct integration testing to ensure reliability and functionality.

Qualifications of the Front-end developer

- Education/training (2.4.1): Bachelor's or Master's degree in IT, Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), or a related field.
- General professional experience (2.4.3): 4 **years** of professional experience in front-end development
- Specific professional experience (2.4.4): **2 years** of proficiency in HTML, CSS, JavaScript, jQuery, and other relevant technologies.

Key Expert 4- Back-end developer (2.5)

Tasks of the Back-end developer

- Design and develop the back-end architecture of the EXIM platform
- Ensure seamless integration with front-end components and third-party systems.
- Optimize server-side performance to handle high loads and large datasets efficiently.
- Develop database structures, ensuring data integrity and security.
- Implement efficient data storage and retrieval mechanisms to optimize performance.
- Ensure compliance with data protection regulations and industry standards.

Qualifications of the Back -end developer

- Education/training (2.5.1): Bachelor's or Master's degree in IT, Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), or a related field.

- General professional experience (2.5.3): 4 **years** of professional experience in back-end development
- Specific professional experience (2.5.4): **2 years** of proficiency in HTML, CSS, JavaScript, jQuery, PostgreSQL, MySQ, and other relevant technologies L, MongoDB, or similar

Key Expert 5- QA/ Testing Specialist (2.6)

Tasks of the QA/ Testing Specialist

- Develop a comprehensive testing strategy
- Create test plan based on functional and non-functional requirements.
- Identify key risk areas in the system and prioritize testing activities accordingly.
- Conduct functional testing to ensure compliance with user requirements and system specifications.
- Verify data accuracy, integrity, and system calculations within EXIM platform
- Conduct cross-browser and cross-platform testing to ensure system compatibility.
- Identify, document, and track defects in a bug-tracking system.

Qualifications of the QA/ Testing Specialist

- Education/training (2.6.1): Bachelor's or Master's degree in IT, Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), or a related field.
- General professional experience (2.6.3): **4 years** of professional experience in software testing, QA, or a related field.
- Specific professional experience (2.6.4): **2 years** of experience with automated testing tools (e.g., Selenium, JMeter, Postman). Knowledge of database testing (SQL, data validation techniques). Familiarity with performance testing, security testing, and compliance testing.

7. Costing requirements

The following basic calculations for the contract for works are a reference value based on the acceptance criteria for each partial work/milestone specified in Chapter 2 (Tasks to be performed by the contractor) and Chapter 3 (Scope of Work).

Since the contract to be concluded is a contract for works, we would ask you to offer your services at a lump sum price.

In addition, the assessment of the financial bid is also based on the underlying daily rate. Please also provide the underlying daily rate.

Milestones/partial works	**Estimated expert days for orientation**	**Deadline/place/person responsible**
Preparation phase 1. Detailed Action Plan including detailed implementation schedule and activity plan, testing and acceptance plan, installation and implementation plan and training plan. 2. Final technical requirements of the web-portal, visual and experience design, site map detailing Report on the first phase deliverables	**50 days,** out of which **Team Lead** (15 days) **UX Specialist** (10 days) **UI Designer** (10 days) **Front-end Developer** (5 days) **Back-end Developer** (5 days) **QA/Testing Specialist** (5 days)	1st and 2nd months
Implementation phase 1. Demo link for the results of the development. Report on the second phase deliverable	**80 days, out of which** **Team Lead** (10 days) **UX Specialist** (10 days) **UI Designer** (10 days) **Front-end Developer** (20 days) **Back-end Developer** (20 days) **QA/Testing Specialist** (5 days)	3rd to 4th months
Testing phase 1. Demo link for the result of the development. 2. System testing and acceptance according to the plan and Testing Requirement. Report on the third phase deliverable	**60 days, out of which** **Team Lead** (5 days) **UX Specialist** (5days) **UI Designer** (5 days) **Front-end Developer** (15 days) **Back-end Developer** (15 days) **QA/Testing Specialist** (15 days)	5th to 6th months
1. Deployment of the website 2. System administrator's manual and other documentation as described in the documentation requirements 3. Relevant training of content managers and system administrators	**60 days, out of which** **Team Lead** (5 days) **UX Specialist** (10 days)	6th to 7th months

4. The final version of the web portal, software package (including all source codes), all sub-systems, installer packages, configuration files, and all those components which are necessary for the system installation and operation (final tested and corrected version) to be handed over to the Client. 5. Provision of Full access to website for the Client. Report on the fourth phase deliverable	**UI Designer** (5 days) **Front-end Developer** (15 days) **Back-end Developer** (15 days) **QA/Testing Specialist** (15 days)	
Total	250	

8. Inputs of GIZ or other actors

The GIZ is expected to make the following available:

Hosting the Kick-off meeting, Presentation of the DRAFT Set of the Reports and Q&A session in GIZ premises (59 Hanrapetutyan street , Vernissage Business Center (5th floor), Yerevan, Armenia) in case of agreement between the Contractor and GIZ to hold offline or hybrid meetings.

9. 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 Scope of Work (Chapter 3) should be organised in accordance with the positively weighted criteria in the assessment grid (not with zero). The tender must be drawn up in English language.

The CVs of the personnel proposed in accordance with Personnel concept (Chapter 6) of the ToRs .The CVs shall not exceed 4 pages each. They must clearly show the position and job the proposed person held in the reference project and for how long.

Please calculate your financial tender based exactly on the parameters specified in Chapter 7 Costing 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.