



C A R I B B E A N
EXPORT
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

REGIONAL PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME III

GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES FOR

 **BRIDGE**

BUILDING RESILIENT INNOVATION
FOR DIGITAL & GREEN ENTERPRISES

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION GRANT

CALL FOR PROPOSAL
Number: NDICI-DG-25-001

PUBLICATION DATE
September 24, 2025

DEADLINE
November 9, 2025 11:59 p.m. AST (Barbados time)

1.0 OBJECTIVE OF THE GRANTS PROGRAMME

The Regional Private Sector Development Programme (RPSDP III), jointly funded by the European Union and the Caribbean Export Development Agency, seeks to foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth and job creation across CARIFORUM by strengthening private sector competitiveness, diversification, and integration into global markets. With a strong emphasis on MSMEs, including women-led, youth-led, rural-based, indigenous-led, and disability-led enterprises, the programme prioritizes improving access to finance through the development of bankable projects and expanded financing options, accelerating the green and digital transition to enhance resilience and competitiveness, and expanding trade and investment flows with the European Union under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). By tackling systemic barriers such as limited access to finance, low digital adoption, and export constraints, RPSDP III is designed to position Caribbean firms as more innovative, resilient, and competitive in both regional and global value chains.

Within this framework, the Digital Transformation Grant Programme is specifically designed to catalyse the digital transformation of Caribbean MSMEs by providing targeted financial support for projects that enable businesses to adopt and integrate digital technologies, upgrade digital infrastructure and systems, and strengthen digital strategies. The programme will fund initiatives in areas such as smart production technologies, business process automation (CRM/ERP), supply chain digitalization, mobile applications, and cybersecurity, while also supporting digital literacy and skills development to ensure sustainability of investments. By promoting inclusion, particularly among women-led, youth-led, and rural-based enterprises, the Digital Transformation Grant Programme aims to raise the overall digital maturity of MSMEs, expand their market access, strengthen export potential, and help bridge the Caribbean's digital divide, thereby positioning the region to compete more effectively in the global digital economy.

2.0 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

2.1 Eligibility of Applicants: Who Can Apply

In order to be eligible for a grant, applicants **must**:

- i. Be a firm (i.e. sole proprietorship, partnership, or limited liability company) legally registered and operating in a RPSDP III beneficiary country (CARIFORUM + Cuba).
- ii. Be a firm operational for at least two (2) years, supported by financial statements for the last two years (profit and loss statements, cash flow statements, and balance sheet). **Audited financial statements are preferred; if unavailable, statements must be certified by a qualified accountant.**
- iii. Minimum of one year as a going concern.
- iv. Applicant must have an active business bank with financial activity in the past 12 months. Statements are required as evidence.
- v. In the case of a firm, applicants must either be engaged in exporting activities or demonstrate credible potential to export goods and/or services. This may be shown through existing international clients, market research, partnerships, or evidence that digital transformation will enhance competitiveness and enable access to foreign markets.
- vi. Must complete Caribbean Export Development Agency's Digital Check-Up Tool.

Applicants **NOT ELIGIBLE** to apply:

- i. Educational institutions such as Universities, Schools, Vocational Centres etc;
- ii. Non-governmental organisations, including but not limited to human rights organisations, social clubs, associations, and charities;
- iii. Business Support Organisations, Investment Promotion Agencies and Trade Promotion Organisations.

2.2 Eligible Projects

Applicants must clearly demonstrate how the proposed activities are embedded within and directly support their firm's Digital Transformation Plan, Strategy, or Implementation Roadmap. Projects should not be a collection of standalone activities but rather form part of a coherent and structured digital transformation journey that enhances competitiveness, export readiness, and long-term sustainability.

Applicants are not limited to a single eligible area. Projects may incorporate multiple activities across categories, provided they are coherent and collectively advance the firm's digital transformation.

These are the areas in which funding will be provided:

i. Business Process Digitalization

Projects that enhance operational efficiency and competitiveness through the adoption of integrated digital systems as outlined in the firm's digital transformation roadmap. Examples include:

- Implementation of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems.
- Implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and workflow automation solutions for integrated business management.
- Implementation of cloud-based accounting and financial management systems.
- Implementation of Point-of-Sale (POS) and digital inventory management systems.

ii. Cybersecurity & Data Protection

Projects that build resilience, compliance, and trust, ensuring that digital transformation initiatives meet international standards for security and data management. Examples include:

- Investment in cybersecurity tools (firewalls, anti-virus, data encryption).
- Staff training in data protection and cyber resilience.
- Adoption of GDPR-compliant data management systems.

iii. Mobile & Digital Product Development

Projects that enable firms to innovate and expand their digital offerings in line with their transformation strategy, creating new products and services for regional and international markets. Examples include:

- Development of mobile applications to support service delivery, customer engagement, or sales.
- Creation of digital products (apps, e-books, creative content, SaaS solutions).
- Platforms for digital content monetization.
- Development of innovative digital assets.

iv. Digital Trade & Supply Chain Integration

Projects that leverage technology to improve trade facilitation, market access, and integration into regional and global value chains as set out in the firm's digital roadmap. Examples include:

- Implementation of new and innovative digital technologies to support supply chain management (traceability systems, logistics platforms).
- Integration of e-procurement and e-payment systems.
- Digital platforms to connect MSMEs with regional and international buyers.

v. Capacity Building & Digital Skills

Projects that strengthen the human capital and institutional frameworks necessary to sustain digital transformation. Examples include:

- Training staff in digital literacy and ICT adoption.

vi. Inclusion/Accessibility Enablers and Accessibility Compliance

Projects may include activities to audit and improve digital platforms (websites, apps, online systems) to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA standards. This ensures that persons with disabilities, as well as other users with diverse needs, can fully access and benefit from digital solutions.

- Professional accessibility audits
- Remediation of identified issues, and re-testing to confirm compliance.

2.3 Ineligible Projects Expenses

The following types of expenses are **ineligible**:

- Administrative costs/overheads
- Individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- Travel costs (airfare, hotel and per diems)
- Acquisition of motor vehicles
- Salaries, wages and other human resource expenses
- Debts and provisions for losses or debts;
- Interest owed;
- Items already financed in another framework;
- Purchases of land or buildings, except where necessary for the direct implementation of the project, in which case ownership must be transferred to the final beneficiaries and/or local partners, at the latest by the end of the project;
- Currency exchange losses;
- VAT issued by the Government
- All government imposed custom duties regardless of jurisdiction
- Credits to third parties.
- Any costs incurred outside of the approved grant period
- Commitment Fees
- Bank charges and service charges from beneficiary, intermediary or corresponding banks
- Payments not made through financial institutions e.g. direct cash payments
- Contributions in kind

2.4 Available Funding:

Projects must have a minimum total cost of **EUR 80,000** and may not exceed a **maximum total cost of EUR 100,000**. European Union's contribution will apply only to **eligible project expenses** and is capped at **EUR 50,000 per project**.

Beneficiaries are required to contribute the balance of the project cost. Accordingly, European Union's contribution may not represent more than 60% of eligible costs, with the beneficiary's share being no less than 40%.

Disbursements will be made in three tranches over the 12-month implementation period. The first two tranches will serve as advances and the final tranche will be reimbursable at the end of the implementation period.

2.5 Duration of Grant Contract:

The period to execute the project may not exceed **twelve (12) months from the signing of the Grant Contract. All proposed project activities must be completed within the twelve (12) month-period. No extensions will be granted.**

3.0 HOW TO APPLY & DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS

3.1 Where to Access Application Form

The official Application Form and Budget template must be downloaded from Caribbean Export's website at www.carib-export.com. **THIS IS THE ONLY SOURCE FOR APPLICATION FORMS AND OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS.** All other variations of the application will be declared null and void.

3.2 How to Submit an Application

i. Applications must be submitted by email only to: **grants@carib-export.com** no later than **November 9, 2025, at 11:59 pm AST (Barbados time)**. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. This includes the required supporting documents that must accompany each copy of the application form:

ii. The subject line of the email must read:

"Application – BRIDGE Digital Transformation Grant – [Name of Company]"

iii. Applications must include the **completed, signed, and dated application form** together with the required supporting documents as scanned attachments in PDF (or Word/Excel where applicable).

iv. File size:

- If attachments do not exceed **10 MB**, they should be sent directly by email.
- If the application package is larger than 10 MB, applicants may either:
 - Send the files in multiple emails, labelled clearly (e.g., "Part 1 of 2"), or
 - Submit the package via **WeTransfer** (or a similar secure file transfer service) to the same email address.

v. Required supporting documents:

- *Notarised copy of Registration or Certificate of Incorporation.*
- *Company Bank Statements (last 12 months), certified by the applicant's bank.*
- *Copy of the applicant's (or lead organization's) latest financial statements (income statement and balance sheet), audited or unaudited, for the last two financial years.*
- *Where co-financing/cost-sharing applies:*
 - *Letter of commitment or agreement from the co-financing partner.*
 - *Proof of funds availability (e.g., bank statement).*
 - *Signed contracts or MOUs with partners (if applicable).*
- *Digital Check-Up Tool Results & Recommendation Report.*

- vi. Caribbean Export will issue an **acknowledgement of receipt email** once the application has been successfully received.
 - vii. All applications must be submitted in **ENGLISH**.
 - viii. Applicants must ensure that Section 6, entitled “Applicant Declaration”, of the Application Form is signed by the applicant and submitted. Application forms which have not been duly signed will not be considered.
- Applicants must also ensure that the Partner’s Agreement is signed, if applicable.
- ix. All information submitted by the applicant will be treated in a confidential manner.
 - x. Caribbean Export reserves the right to conduct due diligence on all applications received. This due diligence may be conducted by Caribbean Export and/or a partnering BSO (in the case of a firm) in the applicant’s country of domicile to verify the accuracy of their proposal and/or legitimacy of their business. Applications deemed to contain inaccurate/misleading information will be rejected and those applicants will be barred from re-applying to the programme for a period of five (5) years.
 - xi. Failure to submit the required supporting documentation will result in the application being rejected.

3.3 Deadline for Receipt of Applications

The deadline for this Call is November 9, 2025 @ 11:59 p.m. AST (Barbados Time).

Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.

3.4 Further information About Applications

Further information can be obtained by contacting Caribbean Export at grants@carib-export.com, all questions must be addressed to this email. Queries made over the telephone or directed outside of the official channel established herein will not be considered.

Questions may be sent by e-mail to grants@carib-export.com no later than ten (10) working days before the deadline for the submission of applications.

Caribbean Export has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date. Replies will be given no later than six (6) working days before the deadline for the submission of applications.

Frequently Asked Questions, together with the answers, will be published on Caribbean Export’s website at www.carib-export.com. It is, therefore, advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly to be informed of the questions and answers published.

4.0 EVALUATION & SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

4.1 Duration of the Evaluation Process

The duration of the evaluation process is thirty (30) working days and commences the next working day after the date of deadline of the Call for Proposals.

4.2 Stages in the Evaluation Process

4.2.1 Receipt and Registration

All applications received for the Call for Proposals will be registered, checked, and assigned a number. Applications having met the deadline are then subjected to an administrative check, which will assess whether they have duly satisfied the Eligibility Criteria for the Call.

4.2.2 Evaluation of Application

The applications will be evaluated by Members of an Evaluation Committee based on the evaluation grid below.

The Evaluation Committee consists of Caribbean Export staff and selected external experts. The assessment of each application is based on the scores obtained under each section of the evaluation grid. The final score is the arithmetic average of the scores given by each member of the Evaluation Committee.

Applications receiving an average score of 70% or more will be ranked according to their average score. **All ranked applications, though eligible, may not be awarded a grant due to the pre-assigned value of the financial envelope allocated for the Call for Proposals.**

PROPOSAL EVALUATION		MAXIMUM SCORE
1. Financial Capacity		10
1.1	Do bank statements show consistent financial activity (not dormant)?	2
1.2	Is there an upward trend in revenue?	2
1.3	Is profitability improving?	2
1.4	Do current assets exceed current liabilities (positive working capital)?	2
1.5	Is debt reduced or manageable relative to revenue?	2
2. Relevance of the project		40
2.1	Does the project focus on priority digital areas (e-commerce, digital marketing, CRM, cloud systems, cybersecurity, e-payments, digital skills training)?	10
2.2	Does the project directly address firm-specific challenges and sector priorities (creative industries, agribusiness, manufacturing, services, retail)?	8
2.3	Does the proposal support competitiveness, digital adoption, resilience, productivity, and export readiness?	7
2.4	Does the proposal address cross-cutting priorities such as gender equality, youth-led businesses, rural MSMEs, creative industries, or climate resilience?	5
2.5	Does the proposal involve partnership with the EU private sector or academia?	5
2.6	Does the proposal involve cost sharing through third party financing (such as banks, investors or other financial institutions)?	5
3. Effectiveness & Feasibility		25
3.1	Are the proposed activities appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objective of the project?	10
3.2	Is there a realistic, time-bound plan with milestones and responsibilities?	5
3.3	Does the MSME demonstrate sufficient technical expertise, management capacity, and staff resources?	5
3.4	Are outputs and outcomes specific, realistic, and measurable (e.g., % online sales, CRM implemented, staff trained, payment system live)?	5

4. Sustainability of the project		15
4.1	Will results strengthen competitiveness, efficiency, or market access beyond the grant period?	5
4.2	Is there a clear plan for maintaining and upgrading digital tools post-grant (e.g., budgeting for renewals, vendor support, staff training)?	5
4.3	Can the initiative be replicated or scaled to new products, services, or markets? Does it create demonstration effects for other MSMEs?	5
5. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the project		10
5.1	Is the budget template fully completed, with all required supporting documents submitted?	3
5.2	Are proposed expenses eligible under programme rules, and are they reasonable for the market context?	3
5.3	Does the MSME clearly demonstrate the required contribution (cash) with verifiable documentation?	2
5.4	Are expected outcomes proportionate to total costs?	2
Maximum Total Score		100

4.3 Notification of Caribbean Export's Decision

Applicants will be informed in writing of Caribbean Export's decision to award a grant or their non-selection. **Caribbean Export's decision is final.**

4.4 Award of Grant Contract

Caribbean Export will officially inform applicants that they have been awarded a Grant Contract under the Building Resilient Innovation for Digital & Green Enterprises (BRIDGE) Grant Programme. Following official notification, successful candidates may be contacted directly by Caribbean Export to clarify items listed in their budget before the Grant Contracts are finalised for signature. All grant contracts will then be issued electronically via DocuSign.