

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### 5-Day Workshop to Build the Digital Transformation Capacity of Caribbean MSME's

#### 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND JUSTIFICATION

##### 1.1 Relevant Background

With support from the European Union (EU), under its Regional Private Sector Development Programme (III), the Caribbean Export Development Agency is initiating efforts to support the digital transformation of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the Caribbean.

The Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) leads private sector development programmes across the Caribbean through the provision of innovative, targeted initiatives designed to increase Caribbean business growth, sustainability and job creation.

In recent years, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, digital transformation has emerged as a critical pillar for business resilience and growth worldwide. The pandemic underscored the importance of digital technology in maintaining business continuity, as businesses with digital capabilities were better able to pivot to online platforms, remote work, and digital sales channels. In fact, an October 2020 survey of business executives, conducted by McKinsey & Company<sup>1</sup>, found that just a few months into the pandemic, there was a marked acceleration in the projection of digital technology adoption. The average share of customer interactions that became digital increased by over 20 percent in 2020 with North America seeing an accelerated adoption rate of 65 percent compared to 41 percent in the previous year. This trend was echoed with similar results in the European and Asia-Pacific regions as well (53 percent and 55 percent respectively). This same survey noted that the pandemic saw a shift in the offerings of products characterised by marked increase in the average share of products and/or services that became partially or fully digitized (55 percent in 2020 as compared to 35 percent in 2019). Again, North America led the

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<sup>1</sup> McKinsey Digital and Strategy & Corporate Finance Practices. (2020). *How COVID-19 has pushed companies over the technology tipping point—and transformed business forever*. McKinsey & Company. Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/how-covid-19-has-pushed-companies-over-the-technology-tipping-point-and-transformed-business-forever>

way with 60 percent followed by Asia-Pacific and Europe with 54 percent and 50 percent, respectively.

Proactive responses to the pandemic led to global changes in areas such as increased use of advanced technologies in operations and business decision-making, with an acceleration factor of 25. The survey noted that companies expected it to take well over 600 days to respond to these changes but responded in 25 days to implement the necessary changes. The area of business that saw the highest acceleration factor was around increased remote working and/or collaboration. Globally, companies expected it to take 454 days to adjust and implement changes, however, the study revealed companies took just 10.5 days, an acceleration factor of 43.

Other areas saw significant acceleration in implementing digital technology measures to adjust to pandemic such as increased migration of assets to the cloud and increased spending on data security, both of which saw an acceleration factor of 24 and 19 respectively.

Whilst globally the pandemic has shown evidence that points to an uptake in digital inclusion, adoption and overall transformation, the Caribbean has lagged behind. ECLAC's report<sup>2</sup>, *Digital inclusion in Caribbean digital transformation frameworks and initiatives: A Review*, concluded that digital inclusion was not yet a priority in the eleven (11) Caribbean states of interest. It also noted that few countries have digital transformation frameworks in place. In fact, the research highlights that data on digital transformation in the Caribbean is severely lacking such that the true extent of Caribbean digital transformation is unclear at best. What has been noted however, is that where digital transformation has taken place in the Caribbean, it has done so at the public administration level with some Caribbean states putting emphasis on e-government. One of its recommendations, upskilling Caribbean people in ICT, noted that training is paramount to the success of any digital transformation initiative.

With the noticeable global shift favoring digital transformation and the Caribbean's inability to be early adopters of digital transformation tools and processes, there needs to be a concerted effort

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<sup>2</sup> Alexander, D., Døhl Diouf, L., & Prescod, K. (2023). *Digital inclusion in Caribbean digital transformation frameworks and initiatives: A review* (Studies and Perspectives series – ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, No. 112). Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). <https://www.cepal.org/en/publications>

to build the knowledge capacity and implementation of digital transformation in the Caribbean private sector where small and medium enterprises (SMEs) form the backbone of the economy. Even well before the pandemic, early digitization was touted to have significant impact on productivity and job creation in the Latin American and Caribbean region. According to Strategy&<sup>3</sup>, a PwC partner, digitization was estimated to provide an additional \$USD27 billion to the LAC economy and create over 600,000 new jobs in 2011.

Caribbean SMEs face several barriers to digital transformation, including limited digital literacy, lack of access to affordable digital tools, inadequate connectivity in some regions, and difficulties in financing technology investments. Moreover, regulatory frameworks in the region have struggled to keep pace with the rapid evolution of digital technologies, further complicating the path to digital adoption for many businesses. The **Caribbean Digital Transformation Masterclass** directly addresses these challenges by providing businesses with practical skills and insights to navigate the digital landscape.

However, Caribbean Export understands that digital transformation is not a one-time process but a continuous journey. This is why the masterclass works in conjunction with other strategic initiatives, such as the **Caribbean Digital Transformation Institute (CDTI) Check-Up Project**. As a requirement, all participants of the masterclass must complete the CDTI Check-Up, a diagnostic tool that assesses their digital readiness and identifies key areas for improvement. This check-up ensures that businesses entering the masterclass have a clear understanding of their digital gaps and are prepared to work on specific solutions during the workshop.

Hence, the initiative aims to enhance the resilience and competitiveness of Caribbean MSMEs, in the post-COVID digital economy. By leveraging its expertise and extensive network, Caribbean Export is committed to ensuring that the objectives are achieved, thereby fostering sustainable digital transformation across the Caribbean.

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<sup>3</sup> Strategy&. (2013). *Digitization for economic growth and job creation: Regional and industry perspectives*. Booz & Company.

## **1.2 Contracting Authority**

The contracting authority for this assignment is the Caribbean Export Development Agency (*hereinafter* Caribbean Export/the Agency).

## **1.3 Beneficiary Countries**

The primary beneficiary of this project is Trinidad & Tobago.

# **2. OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE AND EXPECTED RESULTS**

## **2.1 Overall Objectives**

The overall objective of this initiative is to empower Caribbean SMEs with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to actively participate in the digital transformation process, enabling them to enhance their operational efficiency, competitiveness, and achieve long-term sustainability in the global market. This initiative aims to increase the number of SMEs that successfully adopt and implement digital strategies, fostering innovation, growth, and resilience across the Caribbean region measured by an increase in their digital maturity scored using Caribbean Export's Digital Maturity Check-Up Tool.

## **2.2 Specific Objectives and Scope of Work**

The specific objectives of the Consultancy are:

- Assess and improve the digital maturity of participating SMEs using the Caribbean Digital Transformation Institute (CDTI) Check-Up Tool as a baseline and post-program measurement instrument.
- Deliver targeted, practical training and mentorship through the Caribbean Digital Transformation Masterclass to enhance participants' skills in digital tools, platforms, and strategic frameworks for transformation.
- Facilitate awareness and access to cost-effective digital solutions, technologies, and service providers that support MSMEs in implementing e-commerce, cloud computing, cybersecurity, and data-driven decision-making.
- Identify and provide guidance on overcoming key barriers such as limited digital literacy, connectivity issues, and financing constraints affecting SMEs in beneficiary countries.

- Encourage a long-term approach to digital transformation through linkages with other Caribbean Export initiatives, particularly the CDTI, to ensure SMEs remain competitive and innovative in the evolving digital economy.

The scope of works for this consultancy are:

- **Programme Development and Planning** - Design and structure the Caribbean Digital Transformation Masterclass curriculum tailored to address MSMEs' digital transformation challenges across multiple sectors. Integrate findings from the CDTI Digital Maturity Check-Up Tool to customize content and learning outcomes. Develop supporting resources such as toolkits, templates, case studies, and self-assessment guides.
- **Programme Delivery** - Facilitate and deliver the Masterclass sessions, which must include: in-person workshops across key thematic areas including but not limited to: Cloud Tools for Business Efficiency, Digital Payments, AI and Data Analytics for Decision Making E-Commerce, Digital Marketing, Digital Sales Strategies, Improved Customer Experience using Digital Tools, Cybersecurity and Digital Risk Management. Develop individual digital transformation gap analysis and implantation roadmap for each participating SME.
- **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting** – Develop a databank of relevant metrics via the Collect and analyze pre- and post-intervention data using the Digital Maturity Check-Up Tool to assess the impact of the Masterclass. Report on key performance indicators, including: Number of SMEs participating and completing the programme. Improvement in digital maturity scores. Implementation rate of digital strategies post-masterclass. Deliver a comprehensive final report including recommendations for scaling and future programme iterations.

### 2.3 Purpose of consultancy

The purpose of this consultancy is to support digital transformation throughout the Caribbean private sector through building the knowledge capacity of Caribbean MSMEs. It is envisioned that, at the end of this Masterclass series, companies will have a comprehensive digital transformation roadmap which will guide their unique digital transformation strategy aimed at achieving business growth and development. The consultancy seeks to address the current challenges/

misunderstandings that hinder digital technology adoption and innovation by Caribbean MSMEs along with providing practical solutions to such.

This Masterclass will work in conjunction with other digital transformation initiatives currently under the purview of Caribbean Export, such as the Caribbean Digital Transformation Institute (CDTI) and Digital Transformation Grants to maximize the benefits to all participants. This will help to ensure that participants further build capacity by allowing providing access to more technical and financial resources.

### **3. ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS AND MITIGATION**

#### **3.1 Assumptions**

1. Private Sector Willingness to Participate: It is assumed that a sufficient amount of Caribbean private sector firms will be interested in digital transformation and see value in participating in this Masterclass session.
2. Institutional Support: Key organizations, business support agencies and policy makers see the value of digital transformation Masterclass.
3. Digital Readiness of the Caribbean Private Sector: It is assumed that all participants will have a baseline level of digital literacy to engage meaningfully with the content of the Masterclass.
4. Relevance of Content: The consultant will tailor the Masterclass content to the business environment of the Caribbean taking into account local challenges, regulations and digital infrastructure limitations.

#### **3.2 Risks**

1. Low Participation: Lack of interest or scheduling conflicts may result in low attendance.

2. Resistance to Change: Caribbean private sector may be skeptical about digital transformation due to cost concerns, cultural inertia or the lack of immediate return on investment.
3. Lack of Adequate Digital Infrastructure: Existing technological infrastructure in some Caribbean regions may not be adequate to support the proposed digital transformation initiatives.

### **3.3 Mitigation**

1. Targeted Outreach & Engagement: Develop a comprehensive engagement plan to ensure full participation collaboration from across all levels of the private sector. This includes collaboration with business associations, government agencies and business support organizations.
2. Strategic Financial Partnerships: Developing partnerships to provide access to finance for participants to implement customized digital transformation roadmaps.
3. Curate Caribbean Specific Masterclass Content: Content should include case studies of Caribbean private sector firms integrating digital technologies and their successes. This encourage participants to follow suite.

## **4. DELIVERABLES**

### **4.1 Deliverables**

The consulting firm will be responsible for the delivery of the following:

- Deliverable 1: Inception Report and Draft Work Plan within 2 weeks of contract signing
- Deliverable 2:
  - a. Consultant to provide a course outline and training materials for, but not limited to, the following:
    - i. Overview of Digital Transformation

- ii. Cloud Tools for Business Efficiency
  - iii. AI and Data Analytics for Decision Making
  - iv. E-Commerce, Digital Marketing, Digital Sales Strategies & Improved Customer Experience using Digital Tools
  - v. Cybersecurity and Digital Risk Management
  - b. Develop programme structure
  - c. Develop gap analysis methodology and template
  - d. Develop implementation roadmap template
  - e. Develop post Masterclass monitoring and evaluation framework
- Deliverable 3: Execution of 5-Day Digital Masterclass Event. This entails, but is not limited to the following:
    - a. Execution of Masterclass sessions as guided by the course outlines from deliverable 1
    - b. Execution of digital transformation gap analysis for participating companies
    - c. Development of individual company roadmaps for digital transformation for each participating company
    - d. Completion of participant feedback forms.
  - Deliverable 4: Submission of Post-Masterclass Analysis Report to include, but not limited to the following:
    - a. Breakdown of participant characteristics such as sector, revenue size, employment, current digital maturity, main digital transformation challenges, recommendations for subsequent masterclass sessions etc.
    - b. Presentation of analysis.

Every deliverable must be presented to and reviewed by the Caribbean Export team, and recommendations made need to be addressed to the satisfaction of the parties before payment of the deliverable.



## 5. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

### 5.1 Management structure

The Manager – Technical Programmes will retain overall responsibility for the overall project. Day-to-day supervision of this project is the responsibility of the Innovation, Digital Business Officer, who will communicate progress to the Manager – Technical Programmes.

### 5.2 Reporting

A monthly written progress report outlining key activities undertaken, progress made, and results achieved, must be submitted to Innovation & Digital Business Officer.

## 6. Payment timeline:

Payments will be made upon delivery and acceptance by the Advisory Committee of the DTI based on the following deliverables.

Payment plan	
<i><b>Deliverables</b></i>	<b>%</b>
Deliverable 1	10%
Deliverable 2	20%
Deliverable 3	40%
Deliverable 4	30%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%

## **7. REQUIREMENTS**

### **7.1 Qualifications and Work Experience**

A qualified firm with the project team following qualifications and experience:

- A Postgraduate Degree in Digital Transformation Social Sciences, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Computer Science or a related field.
- A minimum of five (5) years' experience in supporting private sector firms in the areas of digital business, e-commerce adoption, technology adoption, innovation or digitization.
- Strong project management skills – A certification in project management will be an asset.
- Experience working with enterprises and with national trade promotion organizations and/or other business support organizations.
- Experience and a track record in digital transformation.
- Proven relationship management skills.
- Fluent in English.
- Proficiency in the use of Microsoft Office programmes especially Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Project and Microsoft PowerPoint.

### **7.3 Contract Duration**

Six months, with payment based on deliverables.

### **7.4 Location**

Trinidad & Tobago

## **8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The Consultancy will be monitored and evaluated by Caribbean Export over the duration of the project. Performance on the project will be measured by satisfactory completion and timely submission of the deliverables outlined in Sections 4, and as outlined within the work plan submitted. Feedback, other than acceptance, on each submitted deliverable is not a requirement

for the continuation of the project. However, in some instances the Consultant may need to integrate any feedback into the subsequent deliverables. The Contracting Authority will provide feedback to the consultant within ten (10) working days of receipt of the final report.

## **9. PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION**

To participate in any activity executed or supported by Caribbean Export, you hereby agree that any information and personal data that you share and is collected by the Agency will be processed for the purpose of reporting the outcomes and impact of your projects and/or participation. Please note that Caribbean Export reserves the right to publish the Contractor's/Participant's name and address, the purpose and nature of the activity, and financial arrangements, in accordance with Caribbean Export's Personal Data Protection Policy. [Personal Data Protection Policy](https://content.carib-export.com/download/personal-data-protection-policy/). (<https://content.carib-export.com/download/personal-data-protection-policy/>). Derogation from publication of this information may be granted if it could endanger the Contractor/Participant or harm his/her commercial interests.

## **10. DECLARATION**

To participate in any procurement undertaken by Caribbean Export, all applicants must complete and submit to the agency the Applicant Declaration Form. <https://content.carib-export.com/download/applicant-declaration-form/>

To apply, please download the full Terms of Reference (TOR) and submit the required documentation, including the:

- Technical Proposal (inclusive of a list of references for project undertaken of a similar nature)
- Financial Proposal
- Applicant Declaration Form

Submit these documents to Jonathan Seecharan, Innovation and Digital Business Officer at [jseecharan@carib-export.com](mailto:jseecharan@carib-export.com), copied to Wayne Elliott, Manager - Technical Programmes, at [welliott@carib-export.com](mailto:welliott@carib-export.com).

The submission deadline is **11:59PM (AST) (GMT-4) on 4 August 2025**.