



PEACE, PROSPERITY AND  
REGIONAL INTEGRATION



AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP

## Horn of Africa Digital Market Integration Project

### CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

#### Regional Training of Trainers for Gender Champions on Gender-Sensitive Digital Trade, Using GALs Methodology

June 15-17, 2026 | Nairobi, Kenya

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The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (*IGAD*), through the Horn of Africa Digital Market Integration (*HDMI*) Project – Phase I, invites applications from qualified candidates across the IGAD Member States, to participate in a **Regional Training of Trainers (ToTs) on Gender-Sensitive Digital Trade, using the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) methodology.**

#### Background

The HDMI Project – Phase I, is a multinational intervention based under the Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Division (*ECRID*) of the IGAD's Secretariat. The project's interventions are implemented in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan, executed by the Project Implementation Unit (*PIU*) under ECRID, located in Djibouti.

The objective of the first phase of the HDMI project is to strengthen economic integration in the IGAD region, by unlocking market opportunities, thus enhancing creation of a single digital market. With ratification of the African Continental Free Trade Area (*AfCFTA*), complimented by the IGAD's Vision 2050 and the recently validated IGAD strategy 2026-2030, the possibility of new markets will open new avenues for businesses and new jobs, especially for youth and women. Thus, the use of digital solutions will support implementation of the AfCFTA, which is a key policy instrument available to the African economies.

Specifically, the project seeks to implement robust, secure and reliable digital trade and e-commerce enablers, promote digital economy and trust substrates and fill gaps with regards to digital ecosystem (*cybersecurity, data protection & exchanges and digital transactions*). With this phased operation, the gradual development of an integrated regional market in the digital sector will allow the IGAD region population to trade more easily. This will facilitate competitiveness and expansion of the local industry that will meet these new needs (*manufacturing, in particular*), thanks to the middleclass widening and maintaining value creation and jobs for youth on site by improving subregional competitiveness, which will attract more capital to support innovation and digital entrepreneurship.

Despite the growing potential of digital trade, gender inequalities continue to limit women's access to digital technologies, financial services and market opportunities. This training seeks to address these gaps, by building a pool of **Gender Champions**, who

will promote gender-responsive digital trade and support women and youth-led enterprises across the IGAD region.

The trained champions will subsequently spearhead delivery of in-country trainings and mentorship to women and youth MSMEs, to strengthen their participation in digital trade and markets. The trainings will enable women and youth MSMEs to gain access to digital financial services, market information in a timely and cost-effective way, participate more effectively in e-commerce business transactions, digital services in cross border trade, gain increased access to the African Continental Free Trade Area (*AfCFTA*) and global markets.

## Training Objectives

The training aims to strengthen gender-responsive digital trade ecosystems in the IGAD region, by building capacity of national Gender Champions, to train and mentor women and youth MSMEs using the GALS methodology. Specifically, the training will:

- a) Build capacity of 21 gender champions from the IGAD region, on gender-responsive digital trade, anchored on digital technology/platforms packaged to meet the needs for men, women and youth MSMEs.
- b) Equip the regional gender champions with practical skills to apply the GALS methodology, to transform socio-cultural barriers affecting women's participation in digital markets.
- c) Develop a pool of national trainers, capable to provide in-country trainings and mentorship to women and youth MSMEs.
- d) Strengthen knowledge on digital financial services, e-commerce and digital market access.

## Training Overview

The three-day training will be in **hybrid** format, conducted in two sessions.

- The first session will be **in-person three-day regional training workshop**, delivered by trained Gender Champions using the **GALS methodology**. This is to allow participants to fully engage, practice and receive immediate feedback. The intensive in-person session is key for enabling trainees to gain hands-on experience, which is needed for training others in their home country.
- Follow-up **online** sessions will be conducted through IGAD social platforms, to share further knowledge and offer a space for enriching continuous conversations on gender sensitive digital trade. Furthermore, the online sessions will enable sustaining the gains achieved during the in-person session.

## Training Details

- **Dates:** Monday 15<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2026
- **Location:** Nairobi, Kenya
- **Duration:** Three (3) full days (*intensive residential training*)

### **Important Note:**

This is a highly intensive Training of Trainers (*ToTs*). Participants will be expected to fully commit for the entire duration.

- **Use of mobile phones during training sessions will not be permitted**, to ensure full engagement.
- Participants must be ready to actively participate in all sessions and practical exercises.

## **Eligibility Criteria**

Applicants must:

- Be a national of an IGAD Member State
- Be actively running a small or medium enterprise (*MSME*), with potential for digital or cross-border trade
- Possess a valid business license
- Have at least a certificate of secondary education
- Demonstrate interest or experience in digital trade, e-commerce or entrepreneurship
- Have capacity and willingness to train and mentor others after the training (*as this is a ToTs program*)
- Be committed to promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment across the IGAD region.

## **Expected Role of Selected Participants**

Successful applicants will be recognized as **Gender Champions** and will:

- Conduct in-country trainings for women and youth MSMEs,
- Provide mentorship on digital trade and financial inclusion,
- Support expansion of inclusive digital market participation.

## **How to Apply**

Interested candidates should submit:

- A completed online application form, available at <https://igad.int/hdmicallforapplication/>
- Attach a copy of his/her **business license**
- A brief motivation statement of not more than 300 words, explaining why he/she thinks he/she is the best candidate for the training
- A short description of the business you do, of not more than 100 words.

**Application Deadline; Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2026**

## **Additional Information**

Due to anticipated large number of applications, only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. IGAD will cover training-related costs for selected participants, in line with its policies.