

TERMS OF REFERENCE

**iDICE**

Investment in Digital and Creative
Enterprises Programme

Consultancy Services

for

**Establishment of a National Business Process
Outsourcing (BPO) for High-Value IT-Enabled Services
Industry under the Outsource to Nigeria Initiative
(OTNI)**

**Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises (iDICE)
Programme**

Sector: Technology and Creative

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1. Background and Strategic Context

The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), with financing from the African Development Bank (AfDB), Agence Française de Développement (AFD), and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), is implementing the Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises (iDICE) Programme.

The FGN hereby invites eligible Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) firms to apply for consultancy services to deliver Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO) and other high-value IT-enabled services targeting Nigerian youth under the Federal Government's Outsource to Nigeria Initiative (OTNI).

Nigeria produces more than 600,000 tertiary graduates annually — including large cohorts in accounting, law, engineering, medicine, statistics and computer science — yet captures a negligible share of the global KPO market. OTNI's ambition is to position Nigeria as Africa's premier destination for knowledge services exports. This assignment procures a consultancy to design, build and operate the national machinery required to realise that ambition: demand-side market activation with global buyers, a professional credentialing and deal-flow infrastructure, an advanced talent development academy, and a structured professional apprenticeship pathway that converts qualified graduates into billable knowledge-services professionals.

The iDICE Programme Coordination Unit (PCU) within the Bank of Industry (BOI) — the Executing Agency appointed by the FGN — will supervise the assignment under Component 1 of the Programme.¹

2. Objectives of the Assignment

The overall objective is to establish Nigeria as a credible, internationally competitive exporter of knowledge-intensive services, creating high-skill, high-wage professional employment for Nigerian graduates and measurably increasing services export earnings. The specific objectives are to:

- i. **Activate international demand:** secure committed offtake from global buyers of knowledge services — investment banks, law firms, insurers, health systems,

¹ More details about the iDICE Programme as documented in the Program Appraisal Report (PAR) can be accessed at <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/nigeria-investment-digital-and-creative-enterprises-i-dice-program-project-appraisal-report>

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engineering firms, AI labs and studios — through a structured market-entry and country-brand strategy for Nigerian KPO;

- ii. **Develop advanced talent at depth:** establish the OTNI KPO Academy delivering specialist, internationally benchmarked practitioner pathways to qualified graduates in knowledge-service verticals;
- iii. **Convert talent into billable professionals:** operate a Professional Apprenticeship (KPO Residency) that places Academy graduates into supervised, paid engagements with domestic and international knowledge-services employers; and
- iv. **Institutionalise the industry:** deliver the regulatory, fiscal-incentive, data-governance and investment-attraction framework required for KPO delivery centres and global capability centres (GCCs) to establish and scale in Nigeria.
- v. **Ensure sustainable beneficiary-level impact:** ensure that the assignment delivers measurable and durable outcomes for beneficiaries, including certification, paid placement, income progression, job retention, career advancement and continued access to employer networks beyond the consultancy period.

4. Scope of Work

The assignment is organised into five workstreams.

Workstream A — Buyer Engagement and Demand-Pipeline Conversion

Building on the demand evidence, validated launch vertical(s) and signed MoUs submitted by the Consultant as a condition of eligibility (see Section 8), this workstream converts and scales that proven demand during implementation:

- Deepen and convert the offtake relationships evidenced at proposal stage into binding service contracts across the validated launch vertical(s), and expand these relationships to additional buyers within the same vertical(s).
- Execute an ongoing buyer-engagement calendar building on the Consultant's existing country-brand and buyer relationships, including participation in at least four tier-one international sourcing events per year.
- Report quarterly to the PCU on pipeline conversion MoUs and framework agreements converted to binding contracts, seats/volumes secured, and buyer geographies served — measured against the demand evidence submitted at proposal stage.

Workstream B — OTNI KPO Academy: Advanced Talent Development

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The Consultant shall establish and operate the OTNI KPO Academy, delivering advanced practitioner pathways — not foundational digital literacy — to an intake of 1,000 qualified beneficiaries, structured as follows:

- **Eligibility:** admission restricted to holders of a first degree, Higher National Diploma or equivalent professional qualification in a discipline relevant to the prioritised launch verticals, admitted through competitive assessment of domain knowledge, analytical reasoning and English proficiency.
- **Advanced Practitioner Track (70% of intake):** Specialist programmes per vertical, each culminating in recognised certification.
- **Specialist Leadership Track (30% of intake):** advanced modules for experienced professionals covering engagement management, quality assurance, client communication and team leadership, building the supervisory layer required for Nigerian firms to win and manage multi-seat international engagements.
- **Delivery model:** blended delivery anchored on partner institutions across the six geopolitical zones, with live client-simulation labs and mandatory portfolio assessment.
- **Quality assurance:** all curricula independently validated against international occupational standards; per-cohort completion, certification and assessment data reported to the PCU.

Workstream C — Professional Apprenticeship: The KPO Residency

The KPO Residency is the structured bridge from certification to billable professional practice, deliberately modelled on professional articling and residency systems rather than generic internship schemes:

- **Placement:** at least 80% of certified Academy graduates placed within six months of certification into verifiable, paid, high-skill roles — direct employment, KPO Residency placements, or contracted engagements.
- **Residency structure:** A percentage of residency seats per year with domestic delivery firms, global capability centres and international remote-first employers; each residency runs for a minimum of three (3) months under a named professional supervisor, with a structured competency logbook and exit assessment.
- **Remuneration floor:** all placements and residencies must carry remuneration, verified through payroll evidence — establishing job quality, not merely job counts, as the accountability standard.

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- **Counterpart funding:** residency stipends may operate on a 50/50 counterpart model between OTNI (via the Consultant, funded by iDICE) and the host employer, converting to full employer-funded compensation upon confirmation.
- **Employer obligations:** host employers must provide clear, accessible privacy notices at the point of data collection and comply with applicable data protection law (Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023, GDPR where applicable), alongside supervision and assessment commitments codified in a standard residency agreement.

Workstream D — Industry Institutionalisation and Investment Attraction

- Prepare an investment-attraction strategy and investor-grade prospectus for the Nigerian KPO industry, and support the PCU and relevant federal agencies in engaging at least ten qualified international operators or anchor investors.
- Produce model technical, regulatory and operational documentation for state governments and institutions establishing knowledge-services delivery centres, with pathways for creative-sector production facilities.
- Deliver a three-year industry scaling roadmap with costed options for the post-programme institutional home of OTNI's KPO mandate.

Workstream E - Cross-Cutting Requirements — Sustainability, Beneficiary Impact and Accountability

The Consultant shall design and implement all workstreams to deliver sustainable beneficiary-level impact, not only training outputs. The assignment shall establish a clear pathway from beneficiary selection to training, certification, residency, paid placement, job retention and career progression. The Consultant shall submit, as part of the inception report, a Sustainability and Beneficiary Impact Plan setting out how the Academy, curricula, employer partnerships, placement systems, data systems, grievance channels and institutional arrangements will continue beyond the consultancy period.

- **Demand-led implementation:** Training shall not commence at scale until the Consultant has demonstrated credible employer demand through signed or advanced-stage offtake agreements, residency commitments, placement pipelines or equivalent evidence acceptable to the PCU.
- **Job quality and retention:** Placements shall be counted only where they are paid, skills-relevant, supervised and verifiable. The Consultant shall track remuneration, contract duration, working conditions, retention at 6 and 12 months, and progression from residency to employer-funded engagement or employment.
- **Post-placement support:** The Consultant shall provide structured post-placement support for at least 3 months, including mentoring, workplace readiness support,

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career coaching, employer feedback loops and referral support for beneficiaries requiring remediation or re-placement.

- **Independent verification:** All reported results shall be supported by verifiable evidence, including attendance records, assessment results, certificates, signed employer confirmations, payroll or payment records, residency logbooks, beneficiary surveys and tracer-study data. The PCU may require independent verification before accepting reported outcomes.
- **Beneficiary feedback and grievance redress:** The Consultant shall establish and publicise accessible channels for beneficiaries to report concerns related to selection, training quality, placement conditions, non-payment, discrimination, harassment, data misuse or other grievances, with clear timelines for response, escalation and resolution.

5. Coverage

This consultancy covers five defined components to be costed by the consultant:

1. **Market Development** — ongoing buyer engagement, country-brand activity, and MoU-to-contract conversion support, building on the demand evidence submitted at proposal stage (Workstream A);
2. **Advanced Talent Development** — curriculum development and international validation, faculty and assessor fees, certification and examination fees, learning-management licensing, delivery infrastructure and logistics for 1,000 beneficiaries (Workstream B);
3. **KPO Residency** — the OTNI share of the 50/50 counterpart stipend for 200 residency seats per year, supervision quality assurance and exit assessment (Workstream C); and
4. **Industry Framework** — regulatory, incentive and investment-attraction advisory outputs (Workstream D).

6. Deliverables and Time Frame

Workstream / Activity	Key Deliverables	Time Frame
A. Buyer engagement & demand-pipeline conversion	Buyer-engagement calendar executed; MoU/framework-agreement-to-contract conversion report; country-brand activity report	Week 1-4

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B. OTNI KPO Academy	Curricula validated per vertical; Cohort 1 admitted; 1,000 beneficiaries certified across Advanced Practitioner and Specialist Leadership tracks	Week 4-12
C. KPO Residency and Placement	≥80% of certified graduates in verified high-skill roles within 6 months of certification; 200 residency seats; payroll-verified remuneration	Week 12-30
D. Industry Institutionalization	Investment prospectus; ≥10 qualified operator/investor engagements; three-year scaling roadmap	Week 30-44
E. Cross-cutting sustainability and beneficiary impact	Sustainability and Beneficiary Impact Plan; verified beneficiary database; grievance and feedback log; 6- and 12-month retention report; institutional handover and capacity-building report	Inception to Week 50
F. Final Report	Consolidated final report with all annexes, datasets, models and transition plan	Week 58

7. Duration and Reporting

The duration of the consultancy shall be for 16 months. Any need for extension shall be communicated to the PCU in writing with stated justification.

The Consultant shall report to the iDICE PCU and shall submit: (i) an inception report within four weeks of contract signature; (ii) quarterly progress reports presenting certification, placement, remuneration-verification and export-earnings data against agreed results indicators; (iii) annual cohort outcome report incorporating independent tracer-study evidence; and (iv) a consolidated final report. All reports shall be well-organised, data-driven and presented in a clear, easily understandable format, with underlying datasets submitted in machine-readable form.

8. Minimum Qualifications and Experience

Mandatory Eligibility — Demonstrated Demand Pipeline: As a condition of eligibility to bid, prospective Consultants (or, for consortia, the lead firm) must submit signed Memoranda of Understanding, framework offtake agreements, or other verifiable agreements with industry partners evidencing a credible demand pipeline including indicative volumes/seats and validity period for the specific launch vertical(s) proposed. Bids not

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accompanied by such evidence shall be deemed non-responsive and shall not proceed to technical or financial evaluation.

- i. A minimum of ten (10) years of demonstrated professional experience in knowledge process outsourcing, professional services delivery, or high-value IT-enabled services, evidenced by a verifiable international clientele list with references.
- ii. Demonstrated experience designing or operating advanced professional talent programmes (graduate academies, professional certification pathways, or apprenticeship/articling schemes) in at least two of the six launch verticals.
- iii. Demonstrated experience in international market development for services exports, including verifiable buyer relationships in North America, Europe, the Middle East or Asia-Pacific.
- iv. Proven capability in designing and operating large-scale digital marketplace, credentialing or workforce platforms, with references from at least one deployment at national or multi-country scale.
- v. Availability of experienced technical and operational staff with requisite professional and vertical-specific certifications, including a designated team leader with senior KPO industry experience.
- vi. Detailed knowledge of Nigeria's technology, professional-services and creative sectors and their exportable capabilities.
- vii. Evidence of successfully converting trained professionals into verifiable high-skill employment, with documented placement and retention outcomes.
- viii. Established partnerships with reputable international knowledge-services buyers, global capability centres or professional bodies sufficient to guarantee residency and placement absorption.
- ix. Ability to manage multiple, simultaneous and shifting priorities under tight timelines across a wide range of public and private partners.
- x. Demonstrated compliance with all applicable safety and environmental protection regulations.
- xi. Evidence of an existing, credible demand pipeline for Nigerian KPO services, including buyer geographies, contract archetypes and indicative deal sizes, comparable in analytical depth to a global KPO demand study and benchmarked against comparator markets such as India, the Philippines, Poland, Kenya, Egypt and South Africa.

- xii. A clear proposal identifying and prioritising the launch vertical(s), for example: (a) financial research, analytics and actuarial services; (b) legal process and contract intelligence services; (c) data science, AI engineering and machine-learning operations; (d) health information management and clinical informatics; (e) engineering, architectural and geospatial design services; and (f) premium creative production — the bidder is positioned to serve, supported by the MoUs submitted under the mandatory eligibility requirement above.
- xiii. Demonstrated prior experience designing and executing 'country-brand' or buyer-engagement campaigns for services exports, including participation in tier-one international sourcing events.
- xiv. A track record of buyer roadshows or comparable buyer-engagement activity that has resulted in signed offtake or framework agreements.

Consortia combining international BPO operators with Nigerian delivery, training or platform firms are strongly encouraged. For joint ventures, the lead partner must hold the power of attorney.

9. Legal and Compliance Requirements

For a consortium of firms or single firms domiciled in Nigeria, the lead firm **MUST** provide:

1. Evidence of legal registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) in line with the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) 2020, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria;
2. Submission of Memorandum and Articles of Association, Form CAC07 (Particulars of Board of Directors) and Form CAC02 (Particulars of Shareholders); and
3. An affidavit indicating that all documents submitted are genuine and verifiable.

Firms registered outside Nigeria shall submit the equivalent legal and compliance documents applicable in their countries of jurisdiction.

Financial and Tax Requirements

1. Confirmation of the financial capacity of the company (three years of audited statements of accounts and a financial summary); and
2. Evidence of VAT registration and Company Tax Clearance Certificates for the last three years.

10. Data Protection

All data and information obtained during the consultancy shall be treated as confidential and used solely for the purposes of this assignment.

11. Gender and Inclusion

The iDICE Programme is committed to promoting gender equity and social inclusion in all aspects of its operations. The programme aims to ensure equal opportunities for men, women, and marginalized groups, and to promote inclusive and equitable access to digital and creative enterprise development. All partners, contractors, and stakeholders are expected to adhere to this commitment, ensuring that all activities and services are designed and delivered in a way that is fair, respectful, non-discriminatory and inclusive regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, religion, Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET Youths)

12. Conflict of Interest

Consultant(s) shall highlight any areas of potential conflict of interest and propose mechanisms to resolve or manage them. Disclosure will not be regarded as a negative feature of an application, provided the BOI iDICE PCU is satisfied that any conflicts will be handled in a manner consistent with the interests of the project. Wherever possible, prospective Consultant(s) should follow technical, operational and commercial best practice in managing potential conflicts. Failure to disclose any material conflict of interest subsequently identified in the assessment process will be regarded as a significant negative feature.