

# Terms of Reference – *Baselining Innovation Fund Round: AI and Emergent Technology*

04/10/2024

## Introduction

### *The GSMA*

The GSMA is a global organisation unifying the mobile ecosystem to discover, develop and deliver innovation foundational to positive business environments and societal change. Our vision is to unlock the full power of connectivity so that people, industry and society thrive. Representing mobile operators and organisations across the mobile ecosystem and adjacent industries, the GSMA delivers for its members across three broad pillars: Connectivity for Good, Industry Solutions and Events.

### *The GSMA Mobile for Development Foundation*

The GSMA Mobile for Development Foundation, Inc. (“GSMA”) is a U.S. 501(c)(3) charitable organisation. The Mobile for Development team (GSMA) operates at the intersection of the mobile ecosystem and the development sector. Our aim is to stimulate digital innovation and deliver both sustainable business and large-scale socio-economic impact. Our research and insights platform, in-market expertise and community of partners push forward digital innovations and implementations that empower underserved populations. To date, we have impacted the lives of over 220 million people.

## Context

For over a decade, the GSMA Mobile for Development programme has been singularly positioned at the intersection of the mobile ecosystem and the development sector, stimulating digital innovation that can deliver both sustainable businesses and large-scale socio-economic impact of the underserved. One of the programmes fostering digital innovation is the GSMA Innovation Fund, which provides equity-free grant funding and technical assistance as a means to de-risk innovation and attract follow-on funding. The Innovation Fund has supported 54 start-ups across Africa and Asia, fostering solutions aimed at improving the lives of vulnerable communities. Simultaneously, GSMA’s Central Insights Unit has conducted pioneering research on the application of AI and big data for social impact, providing critical insights into emerging opportunities within digital development. This work has been instrumental in helping international donors build capacity and expertise in advancing digitalisation efforts in low- and middle-income countries.

## Project overview and Objectives

This project, managed by the Mobile for Development Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) team and funded by the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, will be a baseline for GSMA’s upcoming innovation programming.

With AI and emerging technologies set to play a central role in GSMA's upcoming programming, through new Innovation Fund rounds and public-private partnerships, this baseline study will draw on GSMA's learnings to date to identify key areas for both social and commercial impact, establish metrics to measure this progress, and outline potential risk factors. Additionally, the study will highlight the necessary support structures, resourcing, and due diligence processes required to ensure the success of innovation funding initiatives.

### **Baseline objectives**

1. Assess GSMA's existing applications of AI through Innovation Fund grantees and broader insights work to understand the challenges in applying different forms of AI, the due diligence for Innovation Fund rounds required, and the opportunities that funding different forms of AI can create for commercial scale and social impact
2. Identify the social impact areas where GSMA can add value through the support and funding of different applications of AI through Innovation Funding (e.g. climate resilience and inclusivity and accessibility of digital technology and mobile internet)
3. Understand the potential for impact from and challenges to creating meaningful public and private partnerships (PPP), and bringing these partnerships to sustainability
4. Develop benchmarks and metrics for social and commercial impact for GSMA's upcoming AI Innovation Fund rounds

Given that different programmes within GSMA have taken different approaches to interventions, this evaluation could look at the following questions:

### **Potential baseline questions:**

- What AI applications are high risk for Innovation Fund support? What questions must be considered during due diligence and grantee application that can determine risk factors? This should include relevant ethical and regulatory frameworks.
- Based on the experiences of grantees that are already working with AI, what value can GSMA add to AI application and use through Innovation Fund support?
- What resourcing, team, and support does GSMA need to have in place to support the development and application of AI for grantees?
- Based on both the experiences of grantees that are already working with AI and external partners' experiences, what are the social and commercial impact cases AI can have for grantees? What is the scope of this impact?
- What are the best use cases for public and private partnerships in developing and applying AI and other emergent technology, and what support do public and private sector partners need to develop and sustain these applications?
- What are the metrics for social and commercial impact for the upcoming AI and emerging tech focused rounds of the Innovation Fund and the private and public partnership efforts?

## **Methodology**

Prospective bidders should propose a robust approach that can best answer the evaluation questions listed above. We would envision the following key components but would welcome suggestions:

- In-depth interviews with Innovation Fund grantees that have piloted AI and other emergent technology through their grant funding
- In-depth interviews with previous public and private sector partners that have brought innovative AI and emergent technology for social impact use cases
- Review of existing insights, reports, and data

- Interviews with other key stakeholders (GSMA staff, MNOs, partners, etc.)

## Deliverables and timelines

Key activities	Timeline
Kick off meeting	11 <sup>th</sup> November
Co-creation of baseline scope, evaluation plan with analytical framework, and tool design confirmed in short inception report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Submitted in a Word doc, between 7-10 pages in length</li> </ul>	22 <sup>nd</sup> November
Data collection and analysis	December – February 2025
Sense-making workshop of interim findings	17 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
Draft report and Powerpoint presentation of the results submitted to GSMA contract manager for review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Report should include a summary of the approach used, results of the baseline, key findings, recommendations. Maximum of 25 pages, excluding annexes</li> <li>- Powerpoint presentation should be a maximum of 25 slides</li> </ul>	25 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
Final report and Powerpoint presentation (abiding by requirements listed above and incorporating all of the GSMA's comments) submitted to GSMA contract manager for review and approval	7 <sup>th</sup> March 2025

## Firm and proposal requirements

The GSMA is searching for a consultant who can deliver in response to the outlined objectives. Ideally, they will have:

- A background in AI and / or emergent tech within the social impact and international development context
- Advanced qualitative data analysis skills (we anticipate data collection focusing on qualitative, however please include relevant quantitative experience)
- Experience conducting data collection and evaluations with private sector partners in LMICs
- A strong knowledge of existing research and insights related to the field of AI and emergent technology, digital inclusion, innovation
- Proven ability to identify, assess, and effectively respond to emerging challenges and opportunities, particularly those faced in the field. And in the face of such challenges, the ability to take pragmatic decisions about evaluation design, with a good understanding of the implications for rigour

GSMA requires the appointed supplier to be fully transparent about subcontractors they intend to use and GSMA has the power to veto selection. The supplier is expected to comply with GDPR in data collection and processing. The supplier will need to have and adhere to research approvals, as required. They are also expected to establish and review assessment risks, challenges and limitations and recommend how these will be managed. This should include:

- Methodology limitations
- Insufficient capacity/availability/interest in the chosen scope
- Reputational risk for the GSMA (in the event of damaging findings)

### **Proposals requirements:**

Suppliers wishing to be considered should submit a proposal by **17:30 GMT, Wednesday, 23rd October 2024** for this work to Daisy Macaskie ([dmacaskie@gsma.com](mailto:dmacaskie@gsma.com)) and Ruth Orbach ([rorbach@gsma.com](mailto:rorbach@gsma.com)).

Evaluations of proposals will take into account the following elements. It is unlikely the GSMA will consider proposals that do not include all elements listed. We ask that proposals be concise, to speed up the selection process.

- 1) Understanding of the brief and intended approach:** Suppliers should outline their understanding of the requirements, as well as how they intend to deliver the project objectives as specified above. This should include:
  - a) How you intend to meet the requirements of this document;
  - b) Proposed analytical framework for conducting the study
  - c) Considerations/limitations in response to objectives;
  - d) Any suggestions for alternative/supplementary approaches to address the central objectives;
  - e) An indicative timeline for delivery and demonstration of capacity to meet this; and.
  - f) State any dependencies on GSMA staff.
- 2) Team and responsibilities:** The proposed team should be included with a short bio alongside the proposed roles.
- 3) Quality assurance and risks/mitigation strategies:** All RFQ responses should include how any potential risks may be mitigated, e.g. security risks, COVID-19, etc.
- 4) Data storage and confidentiality plan:** We expect all our suppliers to comply with the EU General Data Protection Regulation. The selected supplier will be responsible for obtaining appropriate consent from all interview and survey participants.
- 5) Itemized quote:** Suppliers should provide a fully itemized quote, a template can be found at the bottom of this document. The GSMA default currency requirement for all proposals is 'UK Pounds Sterling'.
  - a) All costs should clearly demonstrate breakdowns in terms of staff time, travel, direct costs, and other expenses.
  - b) Suppliers are also asked to provide costs for any alternative or supplementary approaches suggested in your proposal.
  - c) We suggest suppliers provide scalable costs that enable GSMA to commission work at a relevant size (i.e. cost per additional interview).

Due to GSMA compliance requirements, exact project budgets cannot be provided at this stage. You are, however, able to provide a few implementation/budget options that can help us assess value for

money and we can align our project scope to the relevant budget after a consultant has been selected.

Total estimated days required: 42

## Budget Template

Please provide the total price and the breakdown by unit cost using the table below as a template. Please quote all rates in GBP, excluding VAT, and highlight cost savings.

Name	Role	Delivery stage/ activity	Volume/ Item	Standard rate/ Cost (Daily rate)	Total Charge
<i>e.g. Peter James</i>	<i>e.g. Senior Adviser</i>	<i>e.g. Inception stage: Desk research</i>	<i>e.g. 5 days</i>	£	£xx
					£xx
					£xx
					£xx

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