Terms of Reference – Global and Sri Lanka insights capturing and recommendations sharing

November 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.

The GSMA AI for Impact
Supported by 28 major operators serving over two billion connections across more than 100 countries, the GSMA's AI4I initiative is leading the transformation of the mobile industry through AI. The initiative focuses on accelerating economically viable AI implementations and developing innovative use cases, all while ensuring responsible and ethical AI practices. The GSMA AI4I also facilitates collaboration and knowledge sharing to foster an enabling policy and regulatory environment, which supports the industry's evolution with AI.

Executive summary, Context, Objectives, Project overview

Executive summary

Mobile AI is showing early indication that it could add significant value in LMICs1. Nevertheless, despite its potential for economic growth, social development, and sustainability, mobile AI2 remains under-utilised. This is driven by challenges on both the supply and demand side, including limited access to, and financing of, advanced technology; limited access to adequate infrastructure and hardware (e.g. advanced chips and GPUs), lack of skills and expertise; limited demand at scale; concerns around privacy and ethics considerations; and complexities in ecosystem collaboration.

[1] GSMA (2023) IoT for Development: Use cases delivering impact.
[2] Mobile AI can be understood in two ways: (i) where data insights are generated by mobile operators themselves by leveraging their MBD assets; (ii) where mobile phones act as a point of collection and delivery of data insights that can be processed by an AI model.

Since 2017, the GSMA has worked with MNOs and public sector partners to leverage Mobile Big Data (MBD)3 and AI to deliver insights, products and services to address global development challenges, from climate change and pollution, to better healthcare and transport. Through this initiative, the GSMA helped build local capacity, and ensured global best practices were adopted, in order to maintain high ethical standards in the use of MBD analytics and AI. Learnings and public knowledge products from this work include examples of MNO-led innovations in MBD/AI-driven solutions in LMICs4, an AI digital toolkit5, and common technical frameworks and guidance for implementation6.

The arrival of AI and GenAI solutions poses the risk to exacerbate the digital skills gap between developed economies and LMICs. One of these concerns is around the availability – or lack of – Large Language Models (LLM) in local languages, which risks leaving communities behind.

To address this issue, the GSMA proposes to collaborate with mobile operator Axiata in Asia Pacific – more specifically Dialog in Sri Lanka, to fast-track the expansion of the Ideamart for Women initiative, by developing a LLM in local language. This project has the potential to scale and the learnings from it will help inform other replicable initiatives.

Sri Lanka Context – Problem / opportunity statement (Why?)

In Sri Lanka women owned only 25% of SMEs, the Largest Contributor to the economy during 2017/18. Despite a high literacy rate among women, only around 30% were currently in the workforce. This was primarily due to cultural bias, lack of financial support for women, limited freedom, digitized support, and lack of access to technological resources. To address these challenges, Dialog Sri Lanka established the Ideamart for Women (IFW) program in 2017, with the objectives of developing the female tech community and to empower women entrepreneurship.

Across 2017-2021, the program focused on offering low-code platforms, evangelizing these platforms and making it available through a series of workshops across the country, product mentorship to women entrepreneurs and technical assistance when required. From 2022 to 2023 focus was on scaling this effort and Dialog increased their island-wide workshops, hackathons and skills development programs through a series of Strategic partnerships with establishments who were working towards the common cause of empowering women tech entrepreneurs.

The program has been very successful, with 50+ apps launched on Google PlayStore earning Revenue, 250+ workshops delivered since its inception and 10+ ecosystem partnerships established and actively working collaboratively in this space.

Now, in 2024, the advent of GenAI presents a new opportunity to broaden the reach and impact of the IFW platform. By developing a Large Language Model (LLM) in the main local languages, the goal is to greatly simplify the application creation process and thereby expand participation, particularly among women, beyond those currently familiar with using technology tools in English. The local LLM would enable individuals to interact using any local language on their product

[3] Mobile Big Data includes data such as (i) event data (logs recorded by an MNO when users connect to their network for calls, SMS, mobile internet, USSD mobile money transactions etc); (ii) network data on the telecom network itself (including the location of cell towers antennae and underground networks, infrastructure status and other logs of activities taking place on the network); and (iii) customer data which is usually collected by an MNO during the registration process and includes socio-economic and demographic information. These data assets are subject to strict regulation.

[4] GSMA (2022) Mobile Big Data and Artificial Intelligence: Towards sustainable development in Southeast Asia

[5] See GSMA Digital Toolkit.

[6] See GSMA's work on privacy principles (2018) and AI ethics principles (2022).

requirements to the platform, generate a working app within minutes, and make modifications to better suit their content delivery needs.

Importantly, if proven to be successful in Sri Lanka, this initiative has the potential to scale to other relevant markets. By focusing on LLMs in local languages, it helps address concerns about the widening digital divide exacerbated by the emergence of Generative AI technology.

Broader Objective

Generative AI can bridge the digital divide by providing opportunities for women in many industries. Empowering women via IFW through digital connectivity is crucial for achieving gender equality and societal progress. By simplifying platform usage for non-technical users, one can broaden audience and encourage the development of tailored solutions within local communities, thereby increasing platform adoption and impact.

Broader Aim

Create a language-agnostic interface for Low Code/No Code platforms, allowing users to describe app features and functionalities in their native language, which the tool will then translate into platform-specific commands, thus democratizing app development.

Project overview

To achieve this broader objective, we require a consultant to **capture insights on the use of LLM on a global level** that would help inform activities in Sri Lanka; and also inform potential future activities and replication to other markets. Final recommendations should be presented in a final report and should capture recommendations and lessons learn from the Global landscape and Sri Lanka project.

Deliverables and timelines for Global and Sri Lanka insights capturing and recommendations sharing

Phase	Key activities & deliverables	Timeline
Phase 1 **Initial landscape understanding on the Global and Sri Lanka level**	**Key activities** ➢ Global landscape: Conduct a global scan of how LLM is being used in emerging markets; its key building blocks, requirements and stakeholders involved ➢ Sri Lanka landscape: Conduct a Sri Lanka (SL) scan of the AI ecosystem and key stakeholders (potentially) contributing to the main aim of this project ➢ Support delivery and discussions of an in-person stakeholder workshop(s) in SL to validate and refine findings, agree on PoC / Sandbox approach, capabilities required and risks with mitigation and finally next steps. While workshop agenda is TBD, preliminary thinking is to consider 3 days long activities: 1 day to include workshop across key (internal) stakeholders: Dialog, (Axiata), GSMA, and selected consultants; 1 day to include workshop with key internal and external	Final w/c 16.12.2024

	stakeholders to further explore their potential value in the project; 1 day is proposed to include conversations with end users – key consultants to join focus group discussions and to hear directly from end users. Exact agenda is TBD and should be discussed and agreed across all key internal stakeholders.	
	Key deliverables ➢ The Global Landscape initial findings report / write up in a power point format. No more than 20 slides. ➢ Sri Lanka initial findings report / write up. In a power point format. No more than 10 slides. ➢ Facilitate workshop delivery and create final write up of findings and agreements in a power point; including high level approach to activation, key stakeholders and their roles and what success would look like. Write up should include also initial lessons learnt and should bring together all of the above documents. Other key consultants are to contribute to the report by sharing lessons learnt and recommendations	
Phase 2 **Capture lessons learnt and workshop delivery**	**Key activities** ➢ Global Landscape: complete global scan with a mix desk research and key stakeholder interviews ➢ Sri Lanka: Capture lessons learnt, potential impact areas and next steps with a mix of desk research and key stakeholder interviews (10-15 global, 5-10 for Sri Lanka; virtual and in person as part of the workshop) ➢ Conduct an in person workshop to discuss PoC / Sandbox approach to date, capture lessons learnt and collect recommendations across all key stakeholders. While workshop agenda is to be decided across key internal stakeholders (as per above), it is recommended to follow a similar approach to above; as part there would be multiple days of the workshop, focusing on the internal stakeholders; external stakeholders and conversations with end users	Preliminary 1 w/c 27.1.2025 Preliminary 2 w/c 24.2.2025 Final w/c 24.3.2025
	Deliverables ➢ Final report to be presented in a power point and should build upon the preliminary report part of Phase 1. Key areas to be included are on the global landscape, SL findings and concluded with key lessons learnt and recommendations; focusing on different stakeholders and including potential considerations for future replication. Final report is to be shared in power point, with no more than 50 slides altogether.	

Firm and proposal requirements

Looking for: *Individual consultant / Small Business*

Required experience

Essential:

- *Demonstrable track record of completing similar assignments.*
- *Understanding of the Sri Lanka landscape, its stakeholders and end customers*
- *Understanding of the Ideamart platform*
- *Clear and demonstrable experience in working with mobile network operators.*
- *Full working proficiency in English, writing to publication quality.*
- *A strong network, including potential interviewees.*

Proposals should include a separate technical and financial proposal:

Technical proposal

1. A short (1 page) statement of suitability, highlighting recent relevant experience.
2. A short (2-4 page) discussion of the proposed approach including: the analytical frameworks to be used, identified data sources, and initial proposals on case studies.
3. Any proposed changes to the ToR.
4. Details of relevant firm project experience.
5. Chart outlining major project stages and timelines
6. CVs, and location of team members.

Financial proposal

1. Level of effort (person-day) by activity.
2. Fee rates (per day in GBP).
3. Total project cost (GBP), without VAT[7].
4. The Respondent's Total Price is inclusive of all costs, insurances, fees, costs, expenses, liabilities, obligations, risks, and all financial requirements for the performance of Services and provision of Deliverables.
5. Any charge not stated in this Proposal, which extends above to the Total Price, is not permitted.

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.

Proposal assessment and selection Process

The proposal will be scored on the following set of criteria:

Criteria	**Importance**	**Weighting**
Cost	Proposal's value for money	20%

[7] GSMA Foundation Inc is a US registered 501(c)(3) charity and is exempt from VAT.

Quality	Quality of the research approach outlined	20%
Bidder's capacity to manage the project on time and on budget	Demonstrated ability to manage the project on time and on budget	30%
Relevant experience	Bidder's experience in successfully conducting similar projects	30%

- Proposals are to be submitted no later than 13.11.2024 to Mojca Cargo, AI4I Director (mcargo@gsma.com) and Operations Manager (dmacaskie@gsma.com)
- Clarification questions can be sent to *Mojca Cargo, AI4I Director* (mcargo@gsma.com) and Operations Manager (dmacaskie@gsma.com)

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