

Terms of Reference – *Assessing the Impact of Digital Utilities Study: Qualitative data collection (Nigeria)*

2 July 2026

Introduction

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.

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 (M4D) 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 260 million people.

Background and overview

The GSMA Mobile for Development (M4D) Foundation, through its Innovation Fund, supports digital innovation across Asia and Africa that aim to improve access to essential services and create better livelihood opportunities for low-income and climate-vulnerable communities.

Assessing the Impact of Digital Utilities study will explore how access to and use of these digital solutions create meaningful changes for end users: from more reliable access to basic services and reduced time or cost burden, to a better ability to use services for daily and productive activities, and ultimately improved livelihood opportunities and environmental impact.

Focus of this assignment: In-country qualitative fieldwork (KIs and FGDs) with Koolboks end users (small-business) in Nigeria.

Grantee	Country & sector	Solution and end-user impact pathway
Koolboks	Nigeria – Cooling / energy	Solar-powered refrigeration, frequently sold via PAYGO or lease-to-own to small businesses. The solution enables reliable refrigeration without dependence on an unreliable grid or diesel generators.

Guiding questions:

- To what extent, and through what pathways, do grantees' digital solutions improve end users' access to, and the reliability of, essential services (clean cooking energy, water, and refrigeration/cooling)?
- How do the solutions affect end users' livelihoods - including time and cost savings, financial security, productivity, and income-generating opportunities?
- What environmental and climate-resilience outcomes are associated with the solutions (e.g. reduced emissions, reduced reliance on biomass or diesel, improved resource efficiency), where relevant?
- Are the benefits accessible to, and experienced by, low-income, economically vulnerable, and women users, and what enables or constrains their meaningful use of the solutions?
- Where solutions reach end users through businesses or utilities, how do improvements at the business or utility level translate into changes for end users?

Scope of work

Division of responsibilities. GSMA leads the overall research: research design, methodology, sampling, development of the qualitative data collection tools (KII and FGD guides), the literature review of grantee-supplied documents, data cleaning and analysis, and writing of the final grantee impact reports. GSMA will also be conducting quantitative phone surveys with large samples of end users to triangulate qualitative data collected.

The selected consultant should be Nigeria-based and is expected to sense-check and provide feedback on data collection tools before fieldwork. The consultant is also responsible for qualitative fieldwork - conducting KIIs and FGDs, transcribing and translating, and handing over high-quality materials to GSMA.

Koolboks sells solar-powered refrigeration mainly to small businesses, frequently on PAYGO or lease-to-own terms. Because many customers are small-business owners who use refrigeration commercially, the fieldwork should engage both household and business-owner end users, alongside Koolboks personnel and, where relevant, distribution / sales partners.

Specifically, the consultant will:

- Review background materials provided by GSMA and Koolboks, and sense-check / provide written feedback on the GSMA-developed KII and FGD guides (clarity, cultural appropriateness, sequencing, and feasibility).
- Translate and adapt the guides into the relevant local language(s) eg. Pidgin, Yourba, Hausa.
- Plan fieldwork logistics and recruit respondents with support from Koolboks, applying the participant criteria agreed with GSMA and ensuring the inclusion of women and economically vulnerable participants.
- Conduct 12 - 15 KIIs with end users
- At least 2 FGDs with end users, segmented to capture relevant differences – for example small-business users selling meat-based products versus those selling soft drinks, and/or by gender, with attention to women and economically vulnerable customers.
- Facilitate FGDs and conduct KIIs in a gender-sensitive manner (e.g. women-only groups facilitated by a female moderator where appropriate).
- Audio-record sessions with informed consent; produce verbatim transcripts and translate them into English.
- Obtain informed consent and uphold participant confidentiality and data protection in line with GSMA requirements and applicable national law; all materials are transferred to GSMA.

The consultant's engagement concludes with the handover of fieldwork materials and a short fieldwork summary, followed by a debrief with GSMA.

Outputs and deliverables

- Inception note with a fieldwork and recruitment plan, including translated KII and FGD guides and the participant sampling / quota plan.
- Completed fieldwork: 12 - 15 KIIs and at least 2 FGDs for Koolboks, per the agreed respondent mix.
- Audio recordings of all sessions (collected with informed consent).
- Verbatim transcripts in the original language and accurate English translations.
- Field notes capturing context, group dynamics, and emerging observations.
- A short fieldwork summary (process, participation, and any issues or limitations), and a debrief session with GSMA.

Indicative timeline

The supplier's active engagement runs from onboarding through to data handover; subsequent cleaning, analysis, and reporting are undertaken by GSMA.

Activity	Indicative timing
Contracting, onboarding and inception meeting with GSMA and grantee	August 2026
Sense-check and feedback on GSMA KII / FGD guides; translation and adaptation	August 2026
Respondent recruitment and scheduling (with Koolboks support)	September 2026
Fieldwork: 12 - 15 KIIs and at least 2 FGDs	September - December 2026
Transcription and English translation	September - December 2026
Handover of recordings, transcripts, field notes and fieldwork summary; debrief with GSMA	End of December 2026

Required experience and qualifications

- Based in Nigeria, with the right to work and conduct fieldwork locally.
- Demonstrated qualitative fieldwork experience (KIIs and FGDs) in Nigeria, ideally in off-grid solar, cold-chain, energy access, or micro-enterprise research.
- Strong local-language facilitation and verbatim transcription / translation capacity.
- Experience engaging low-income, mainly urban, and women respondents, with strong gender-sensitive facilitation skills.

- Sound research-ethics and data-protection practice, including informed consent and secure handling and transfer of personal data.
- Ability to deliver high-quality, accurate transcripts and translations to agreed deadlines

Proposals should include a separate technical and financial proposal:

Technical proposal

1. A short (1 page) statement of suitability and highlight recent relevant and in-country experience.
2. A short (1-2 page) discussion of the approach to KIIs and FGDs (with Koolboks support) transcription and translation approach, quality control and risk mitigation measures.
3. Detailed CV of the lead consultant and team members (if any) involved in the project.

Financial proposal

1. Detailed fieldwork costs.
2. Professional fees rates (per day in GBP).
3. Total project cost (GBP), without VAT¹.
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.

Total estimated days required: 25-30

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%
Quality	Quality of the KII/FGD approach and gender sensitive facilitation outlined in the proposal, including degree to which it addresses key risks anticipated and data quality.	35%
Bidder's capacity to manage the project on time and on budget	Demonstrated experience of running in-country KIIs and FGDs ideally in the relevant sector, and ability to manage the project on time and on budget.	30%

¹ GSMA Foundation Inc is a US registered 501(c)(3) charity and is exempt from VAT.

Relevant experience	Bidder's experience in successfully conducting similar projects	15%
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- Proposals are to be submitted no later than 29 July 2026 to Daisy Macaskie (dmacaskie@gsma.com) and James Karanja (jkaranja@gsma.com)
- Please send clarification questions to James Karanja and Daisy Macaskie by 18 July. Responses to clarification questions will be shared by 22 July. If you would like to be included on this mailing list, please confirm your interest before this date.

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