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## **Terms of Reference** **ABC-DRC BRIDGE - Mentorship & Coaching Facility**

**January 2026**

### **A. Background:**

The DRC-BRIDGE Programme ([HERE](#)), funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) in the DRC, aims to strengthen the SME ecosystem. The programme's theory of change places a particular emphasis on mobilising diaspora participation as a driver of SME development and broader private sector growth.

Within this programme, diaspora participation is understood as a combination of technical and strategic support that enables SMEs to grow, with a specific focus on investment readiness, revenue growth through trading activities, and improved market access.

The Mentorship and Coaching Facility (MCF) is a targeted and catalytic workstream within the DRC-BRIDGE Programme. It is designed to match SMEs participating in the accelerator and incubator components of the programme with diaspora mentors who have a demonstrated track record in business leadership, investment, and/or entrepreneurship.

The success of the MCF is anchored within the programme's broader Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework, while also pursuing two distinct and complementary objectives.

- First, the MCF aims to strengthen the growth trajectory of participating SMEs by improving indicators related to investment readiness, trading income, and market access.
- Second, the Facility seeks to enhance the contextual understanding and operational insight of UK-DRC diaspora mentors, enabling them to better assess opportunities within the DRC private sector and, in doing so, to reduce perceived investment and operational risks.

Together, these outcomes are expected to contribute not only to improved SME performance during the programme, but also to the formation of sustained, productive partnerships between the DRC SMEs and UK-DRC diaspora mentors. These relationships are intended to extend beyond the duration of the programme, supporting longer-term collaboration, trade, investment, and business development.

This Terms of Reference sets out the scope, expectations, onboarding criteria, processes, and guidelines for mentors participating in the ABC-DRC BRIDGE Mentorship and Coaching Facility (MCF). It is designed to provide prospective mentors with a clear understanding of the

nature of their role, the level of commitment required, and the underlying objectives of their involvement within the programme.

## **B. Expectations of Mentors**

The diaspora has a uniquely positioned value proposition in supporting SME development. While this area remains under-researched in the DRC context, emerging evidence indicates that diaspora engagement can add significant value to private sector growth in countries of origin through a combination of impact orientation, capital mobilisation, and technical expertise.

The Mentorship and Coaching Facility (MCF) focuses specifically on the technical capacity dimension of diaspora participation. In this context, technical capacity refers to the ability of mentors to share their professional experience, sector knowledge, and practical know-how with SMEs, and to support the entrepreneurs in applying these insights effectively within their own business journeys.

A total of 20 SMEs, selected from 140 applicants, will be participating in the ABC-DRC; BRIDGE incubation and acceleration programme, commencing in January 2026. These SMEs represent a range of growth stages and operate across diverse sectors in the DRC, including climate-smart enterprises (with climate mitigation embedded in their core strategies), the green economy, digital services, fintech, agritech, and healthtech.

Of the selected SMEs, 10 are participating in the incubation track, comprising early-stage enterprises, while seven 10 are part of the acceleration track, representing more established businesses. In both cases, the programme supports SMEs to strengthen their growth pathways and equips the business leaders with the strategic, and operational tools required to succeed in their respective markets.

Each participating SME, regardless of track, will be paired with a mentor through the MCF. Where appropriate, and depending on the specific needs of the SME, multiple mentors may be assigned to a single enterprise to provide complementary expertise and maximise the value of the engagement.

A total of 15 mentors will be onboarded as part of the MCF, with mentoring activities commencing w/c 2nd February 2026.

As a mentor, you will be expected to support your assigned SME across the following four core areas of responsibility:

1. **Sounding Board:** Mentors are expected to participate in weekly mentoring sessions between 2 February 2026 and 31 March 2026, amounting to approximately 8 hours of mentoring support per SME. Sessions will be conducted virtually.

While mentors will be provided with prompts and guidance notes to support the mentoring process, the sessions are intentionally non-prescriptive. The aim is to create space for open discussion and reflection, allowing SMEs to benefit from mentors' experience rather than follow a fixed curriculum.

2. **Sharing Know-How and Experience:** Mentors are expected to share relevant professional and entrepreneurial experience, helping SMEs to reflect on strategies, frameworks, and approaches that have been effective—or ineffective—across different business contexts. This is not intended to promote a single “right way” of doing business, but rather to expose entrepreneurs to a range of options and support them in strategically adapting lessons to their own operating environment.
3. **Signposting and Ecosystem Navigation:** As mentors build a working relationship with their assigned SME, they may identify opportunities to signpost relevant contacts or support mechanisms. While mentors are under no obligation to introduce SMEs directly to their networks, they are encouraged—where appropriate—to highlight relevant institutions, ecosystem actors, potential clients, investors, or partners that may support the SME’s growth journey.
4. **Reporting and Feedback:** Mentoring sessions will be supported by light-touch monitoring and feedback mechanisms aligned with the programme’s MEAL framework. Mentoring activities, SME progression, ecosystem linkages, and key qualitative insights will be captured through the existing MEAL tools, including the Progress Tracker and the Mentor Assessment, to support monitoring, learning, and programme reporting.

Each mentor will be assigned a dedicated programme contact within the ABC-DRC; BRIDGE Programme to provide support, address questions or concerns, and gather feedback throughout the mentoring period.

Subject to availability and logistics, a select group of mentors may also be invited to participate in the in-person Demo and Policy Day in Kinshasa, a one-day flagship event taking place towards the end of March 2026, bringing together the SME cohort and key ecosystem stakeholders to showcase programme outcomes.

### **C. Mentor Eligibility and Selection Criteria**

Mentors participating in the MCF are expected to meet the following criteria:

- **Relevant Professional Experience** - Mentors should demonstrate business leadership, investment, and/or entrepreneurship experience.
  - *Business leadership* refers to experience in a senior or managerial role within a private sector enterprise, with responsibility for strategic, operational, or financial decision-making.
  - *Investment experience* refers to deploying capital into SMEs and participating in processes such as due diligence, business assessment, or investment decision-making. This includes professionals working within financial institutions who make investment or financing decisions on behalf of others, not

solely those investing personal capital.

- *Entrepreneurship experience* refers to founding and scaling a business to the point where it is revenue-generating and delivers value within its market.
- **African Diaspora Affiliation** - Mentors must identify as part of the African diaspora. While mentors do not need to be of DRC origin, they should demonstrate a clear connection to Africa and an interest in engaging with the DRC private sector.
- **French Language Proficiency** - As the majority of participating SMEs operate in French, mentors must be able to communicate effectively in French to ensure productive mentoring relationships.
- **Availability and Commitment** - Mentors are not expected to engage on a full-time basis - the mentorship is expected to be light touch targeted support that you can manage alongside other professional commitments. However, a high level of commitment is required for the duration of the mentoring period. Mentoring hours will be agreed in advance between the mentor and SME, based on mutual availability. Mentors are expected to participate in all 8 one-hour mentoring sessions over the eight-week period and to proactively communicate with the programme team if any scheduling challenges arise.

While not mandatory, preference may be given to mentors who have professional experience or sectoral expertise in Africa and one or more of the programme's priority sectors, including:

- Climate-smart enterprises, where climate mitigation is embedded within core business strategies
- Green economy and sustainability-focused business models
- Digital services and technology-enabled enterprises
- Fintech (fintech)
- Agritech and agribusiness
- Health technology and health-focused enterprises (healthtech)

Sector-specific experience will be used to inform mentor–SME matching where relevant, but the absence of such experience will not preclude otherwise qualified candidates from participating in the MCF.

#### **D. Onboarding Process and Mentorship Journey**

To be considered as a mentor, prospective candidates are required to complete a short online [application form](#) (approximately 5 minutes) by 25 January 2026. Applicants will be contacted shortly thereafter regarding the outcome of their application.

Once selected, mentors will be asked to sign a short Mentorship Commitment Form and to participate in a one-hour induction session (scheduled for 30th January 2026). The induction will provide an overview of the ABC-DRC BRIDGE Programme, introduce mentors to the wider programme team, and confirm their designated programme contact point.

During the induction, mentors will be provided with mentorship guidance materials, which outline expectations, good practice, and suggested approaches to mentoring. These materials will be shared for reference and can be used throughout the mentoring period.

Following induction, mentors will be formally matched with their assigned SME, and supported to agree a mentoring schedule that aligns with both parties' availability.

Throughout the mentoring period, the programme team will remain available to provide support as needed. Monitoring, learning, and programme improvement will be supported through the existing MEAL tools, with mentors providing structured inputs via the Progress Tracker and Mentor Assessment, in line with the programme's MEAL framework.

Mentors will receive a total honorarium of £800, payable upon the successful completion of all 8 mentoring sessions and submission of all required feedback forms.

The total time commitment over the mentoring period is expected to be approximately 10 hours, comprising:

- 8 hours of direct mentoring support (delivered across 8 weeks), and
- Approximately 2 hours for induction, coordination, feedback activities, and any necessary follow-up or check-ins.
- If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the ABC-DRC BRIDGE team on [abc-drc@afford-uk.org](mailto:abc-drc@afford-uk.org) or [Joevas.Asare@arkgroupint.com](mailto:Joevas.Asare@arkgroupint.com)
- Interested candidates wishing to become a mentor as part of this programme should submit a short application using the link [HERE](#).

#### **E. About AFFORD and MDF (*Consortium Partners for ABC-DRC;BRIDGE*)**

##### **African Foundation for Development (AFFORD-UK)**

The African Foundation for Development ([AFFORD](#)) was established in 1994, with a mission "to expand and enhance the contributions Africans in the diaspora make to African development". AFFORD's innovative approach mobilises the financial, intellectual, and political assets of the African diaspora and channels them to drive economic growth and social development in Africa. AFFORD also enhances the capacity of actual and potential investors and actively influences international policies to ensure that they address the real needs and root causes of underdevelopment and poverty on the continent. AFFORD's mission is achieved through programmes and projects undertaken solely or in collaboration with partners in Africa, the U.K, EU and other parts of the world. These projects and programmes fall within the following overlapping themes: Enterprise, Investment and Employment; Diaspora Engagement and Capacity Building; & Action-Research, Policy and Practice.

##### **Management for Development Foundation Limited (MDF)**

Management for Development Foundation Limited (MDF) is a global management consultancy and training firm with operations across 10 regional offices worldwide. With over 40 years of experience in international cooperation, MDF has been serving clients in the DRC since 2007, providing local and international support throughout the country. MDF combines

international expertise with deep local understanding to deliver contextually appropriate solutions that build lasting organizational capacity. Our results-oriented approach ensures measurable, sustainable outcomes using adaptive methodologies tailored to each unique context. As a partner, we leverage our global network to bring best practices while ensuring solutions work effectively in local environments, building enduring relationships that support your evolving needs over time