

**THE NATIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS (BDSPs)
CERTIFICATION AND ACCREDITATION FRAMEWORK
THE FIRST BATCH OF NATIONALLY CERTIFIED BDSPs IN NIGERIA.**

Introduction

The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have been known, all over the world, to be engines of economic growth and contributors to employment generation, wealth creation, poverty alleviation and food security. It is, therefore, imperative to properly position and develop this all-important sub-sector in a structured and efficient manner in order to generate the much-needed employment for the teeming youth population of the country.

The first ever national survey on MSMEs was conducted by the Agency in 2010, 2013 and subsequently in 2017 in partnership with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The 2010 survey found out that there were 17.3 million MSMEs employing about 32.4 million persons and contributing 46.54% to nominal GDP. In addition, the 2013 survey discovered that there were 37 million MSMEs, employing 59.7 million persons (84.2% of labour force) and contributing 48.47% to nominal GDP and 7.27% to exports. Furthermore, the results of the 2017 survey showed that there were 41,543,028 MSMEs, employing 59,647,954 (76.5% of labour force) and contributing 49.78% to nominal GDP and 7.64% to exports.

These staggering statistics cannot be ignored in any serious economy. Properly harnessed, MSMEs can trigger an entrepreneurial revolution in industrialization, agriculture and commerce in Nigeria. In recent times, the startup ecosystem has received a lot of attention globally for their role as economic catalysts.

Relevance of the certification and accreditation framework

Based on the foregoing, the Agency worked assiduously with its development partner MAFITA, a UKAid funded intervention in Nigeria to develop the National Framework for the accreditation and certification of Business Development Service Providers (BDSPs) that

will provide professional support to MSMEs in Nigeria. This is designed to standardize the delivery of Business Development Service (BDS) to the MSMEs in Nigeria. This accreditation will set, structure and systemize standardized curriculum for the deployment of relevant business development services for all functional areas of any small business. These suites of services are the panacea for the myriad of challenges most small businesses face in the country. The program will also support the formation of a new generation of professionals that would want to make a career out of strengthening the ecosystem. The certification process will see prospective participants going through a training programme, assessment, portfolio development and interview for those who have not yet had any transactional history of working with small businesses.

The strength of any entrepreneurial ecosystem lies in the depth and breadth of business development services available to the small businesses. This process will see a new generation of skilled and certified Business Development Service Providers (BDSPs) that will help in the transformation of the ecosystem. Nationally certified BDSPs would have demonstrated a thorough understanding of the BDS provision and portrayed technical/MSMEs capacity-building skills. BDSPs assist in strategy, performance, competitiveness and facilitate access to finance therefore directly contributing to the country's economic development. A National BDSP associate will be trained and provided with tools to provide MSMEs with technical support.

Engagement of initial trainer institutions

To ensure strict compliance with the pre-certification training conditions, two (2) foremost institutions in Nigeria have been selected and certified to train and present candidates for certification. These institutions, the Enterprise Development Center (EDC), Pan Atlantic University, Lagos and the Entrepreneurship Support Center (ESC), Kaduna Business School are currently implementing the training programmes across the country. Candidates applying for certification can attend the same quality of training in either of the two institutions depending on their location.

Inauguration and Activities of the National Steering Committee (NSC)

The National Steering Committee (NSC), which is the apex body of the Framework was inaugurated by the Honorable Minister of State, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, Her Excellency, Mrs. Mariam Katagum on the 26th of November 2020. The NSC members are drawn from credible and reputable private sector institutions, public sector Institutions, Entrepreneurship Academia Ecosystem, Banks and knowledgeable individuals. The NSC, was provided term of reference, and is responsible for the credibility of the framework and its general operations.

The National Steering Committee has held several meetings. Five sub-committees were constituted to handle different areas of the Framework content. Subcommittees constituted are security & documentation, Policy Matters, Operations, Finance and sustainability and Communication.

Interview Sessions have been held for already trained BDSPs who have passed the prescribed examinations for the purpose of awarding them the practicing licenses.

The maiden license award ceremony was conducted on 7th October, 2021 by the Honourable Minister of State, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, Her Excellency, Mariam Katagum, where qualified BDSPs were awarded practicing licenses.

The first batch of nationally certified BDSPs

The following list is the first batch of nationally certified BDSPs in Nigeria. All current and potential users of BDSPs in Nigeria needing professional assistance in areas such as capacity building, access to finance and other critical resources, restructuring an existing business, business diagnosis and solution provision, mentoring, counselling, advisory services, etc should draw from this list.

