

# Escrow-Powered Classified Marketplace

## A Practical Proposal for Safe Trade, Youth Jobs, and State Revenue

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### Executive Summary

Across Nigeria, millions of people buy and sell goods every day through platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and roadside connections. While this trade is very active, it is mostly unprotected. Buyers lose money to scams, sellers are cheated after delivery, and disputes often lead to police cases or complete loss with no solution.

This proposal introduces an **escrow-powered classified marketplace**, where money is held securely until goods or services are delivered and confirmed. The goal is simple: **make everyday buying and selling safe, traceable, and economically useful to both citizens and government**.

This is not a complicated technology idea. It is a practical system that solves problems Nigerians already face daily.

Importantly, a working **prototype of the marketplace has already been built**, demonstrating that the concept is technically feasible and ready for pilot testing, not just an idea on paper. The prototype already supports **product listings, secure payments, and an internal wallet system**, and **can be demonstrated on request**.

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### The Problem Nigerians Face Today

Online buying and selling has grown faster than trust and regulation.

Buyers complain of fake sellers, fake delivery agents, and sellers disappearing after payment. Sellers complain of buyers refusing to pay after delivery or using fake proof. When problems happen, there is usually no neutral system to resolve them.

At the same time, government loses revenue because most of these transactions happen informally, without records, tax capture, or business history.

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### Why Existing Platforms Like Jiji Are Not Enough

Platforms like **Jiji** play an important role by connecting buyers and sellers. However, their process ends at **introduction**.

- Jiji does not handle payments
- Jiji does not hold money
- Jiji does not protect buyers or sellers after contact

- Disputes happen outside the platform

Once a buyer and seller exchange phone numbers, the platform has no control over what happens next. This is where most scams occur.

Our proposal goes **one step further**.

Instead of only connecting people, the platform:

- Manages payment through escrow
- Releases money only after delivery confirmation
- Records every transaction
- Handles disputes in a structured way

This single difference changes trust completely.

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## **How the Escrow System Works (Simple Explanation)**

A seller lists a product or service.

A buyer places an order and pays into the platform, not directly to the seller.

The money is kept safely by the system.

The seller delivers the item or service.

The buyer confirms receipt.

Only then is the money released to the seller.

If there is a problem, the money is held while the issue is reviewed using evidence such as messages, delivery proof, or photos.

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## **Practical Benefits**

### **For Citizens**

Buyers feel confident paying because their money is protected.

Sellers feel safe delivering because payment is guaranteed.

Honest traders build reputation over time.

### **For Youth and Small Businesses**

Many young Nigerians already sell phones, clothes, electronics, cars, rentals, and services.

This platform helps them move from informal selling into structured businesses with transaction history and credibility, which can later support access to loans and partnerships.

## **For Government**

The platform creates visibility into real economic activity.

It enables VAT and transaction-based revenue collection.

It reduces scam-related complaints and pressure on law enforcement.

It provides data to guide policy decisions.

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## **Jobs and Economic Impact**

The platform creates direct and indirect jobs, including customer support, dispute resolution officers, verification teams, and logistics partners.

Local delivery companies and riders benefit from structured demand.

As trust increases, trade volume grows, and revenue grows with it.

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## **Role of Government**

Government does not need to run the platform.

Government involvement can be through regulation support, integration with existing systems, and pilot backing.

This public support builds trust quickly and encourages adoption by citizens.

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## **Why This Is a Strong Investment**

People are already buying and selling. The market already exists.

The missing piece is trust.

Escrow creates strong user loyalty and long-term usage.

The model scales from one city to an entire state and then nationally.

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## **Closing**

This platform does not try to change Nigerian behaviour. It simply protects it.

By making trade safer, more transparent, and structured, the state unlocks hidden economic value, empowers youth, and reduces fraud.

A small pilot within one state can prove the impact and set the foundation for national expansion.