TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS

Title: Digital Public Goods (DPG) Technical Consultant	**Funding Code:** **WBS:** **Grant:** **Grant Expiry Date:**	**Type of Engagement:** ☒ National Consultant	**Duty Station:** Freetown (hybrid) – with travel to the district sites

Purpose of Activity/Assignment:

The **Accelerating Digital Public Goods (DPGs) in Sierra Leone 2025** initiative aims to drive the country's digital transformation by fostering local expertise, supporting innovative startups, and establishing strong governance frameworks. With a proposed budget of $300,000, the project focuses on creating an inclusive digital ecosystem where youth and underserved communities can thrive in the digital economy.

Building on the United Nations' recognition of digital transformation as a catalyst for sustainable development and aligned with key frameworks like the **Summit of the Future 2024** and **UNICEF's Global Innovation Strategy 2.0**, this initiative seeks to bridge digital divides through universal connectivity, ethical technology governance, and economic empowerment.

Sierra Leone faces significant digital inclusion challenges, with limited access to reliable electricity, low digital literacy, and connectivity gaps, particularly in rural areas. In response, the Government of Sierra Leone, through the **Salone Digital L.E.A.D.E.R.S. strategy** led by the Ministry of Communication, Technology, and Innovation (MoCTI), is advancing a bold digital transformation roadmap. This strategy, supported by UNICEF, focuses on leadership, equity of access, human capital development, economic growth, regulatory reforms, and sustainability.

At the core of this transformation are **Digital Public Goods (DPGs)**—open-source, scalable technologies designed to promote innovation and expand access to essential digital services. The 2025 initiative will:

- Establish a **DPG Community of Practice** and integrate DPG modules into the Learning Passport and university curricula, reaching over 500 students.
- Launch a **DPG Accelerator Lab**, providing mentorship and $50,000 in seed funding to nurture startups.
- Develop a **DPG Bounty Platform MVP** to foster continuous innovation and participation.
- Collaborate with MoCTI to create enabling open-source policies and a centralized DPG platform.

This initiative will build on past successes, including awareness campaigns and governance structures established in 2023-2024. It leverages UNICEF's key programs like **GIGA Connectivity**, the **Learning Passport**, and **Digital Learning Hubs** (DLHs) to promote DPG adoption. By embedding DPGs across sectors—education, governance, and the economy—this project aims to create a self-sustaining digital ecosystem, ensuring that Sierra Leone's youth are empowered to innovate, compete globally, and contribute to national development goals.

Purpose and objective of the assignment:

As part of Sierra Leone's role as a co-champion of the DPGA, and to strengthen the existing collaboration between UNICEF and DSTI on DPGs, this assignment aims to:

A) **Advance Sierra Leone's Digital Public Goods (DPG) Ecosystem:** Provide technical expertise to support the development, governance, and sustainability of DPGs through capacity building, policy development, and strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, including MoCTI and UNICEF.

B) **Foster Inclusive Digital Transformation:** Promote digital inclusion by integrating DPGs into education, supporting startups through the DPG Accelerator Lab, and developing sustainable platforms like the DPG Bounty Platform, ensuring broad participation, especially among youth and marginalized communities.

The Digital Public Goods (DPG) Technical Consultant reports to the Innovation Specialist for general guidance and direction.

Scope of Work:

Under the general guidance and supervision of the Innovation Specialist, the post has the following key responsibilities including, but are not limited to:

- Support the Acceleration of DPGs: Provide technical expertise to advance the Accelerating Digital Public Goods (DPGs) in Sierra Leone 2025 initiative, focusing on digital inclusion, capacity building, and governance frameworks.
- Strengthen DPG Ecosystem: Facilitate the development of a robust DPG ecosystem through the establishment of a DPG Community of Practice, technical working groups, and multi-stakeholder collaborations with the Ministry of Communication, Technology, and Innovation (MoCTI) and other key partners.
- Policy Development & Advocacy: Advise on the creation and implementation of open-source policies and regulatory frameworks that promote the adoption and sustainability of DPGs, aligning with Sierra Leone's Salone Digital L.E.A.D.E.R.S. strategy and national development plans.
- Capacity Building: Design and deliver training programs, workshops, and mentorship sessions to build local capacity in DPG development, targeting government institutions, academic entities, startups, and youth.
- Educational Integration: Support the integration of DPG-focused modules into university curricula and the Learning Passport, enhancing digital literacy and fostering a pipeline of skilled professionals.
- Innovation Support: Provide technical guidance for the establishment of the DPG Accelerator Lab, including the design of mentorship programs, startup incubation models, and the management of seed funding ($50,000) for innovative projects.
- Foster Sustainable Innovation: Oversee the development of a DPG Bounty Platform MVP to incentivize continuous participation, innovation, and the development of open-source solutions addressing local challenges.
- Monitoring & Evaluation: Develop and implement a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework to track progress, measure impact, and ensure accountability across all DPG-related activities.
- Leverage UNICEF Initiatives: Align DPG-related activities with existing UNICEF programs such as GIGA Connectivity, Digital Learning Hubs, and Generation Unlimited, maximizing synergies and resource efficiency.
- Promote Inclusivity: Ensure that DPG initiatives are inclusive, with a focus on gender equity, youth empowerment, and the participation of marginalized communities, bridging the digital divide in both urban and rural areas.

Contribute to Global DPG Advocacy: Position Sierra Leone as a regional leader in DPG adoption by sharing best practices, contributing to global digital public goods discussions, and aligning with international frameworks like the UN Global Digital Compact.

Stakeholders:

Government

- Directorate of Science, Technology, and Innovation
- Ministry of Communication Technology & Innovation
- Ministry of Health and Sanitation
- MBSSE
- MTHE

Academia

- Eastern Technical University
- Ernest Bai Koroma University
- University of Sierra Leone
- Njala University

- Limkokwing University of Technology and Innovation (In-kind) Carnegie Mellon University Africa (To be explored)
- Carnegie Mellon University (To be explored)

Innovation Hub

- Innovation SL (in-kind and connection to other private partners)
- Kamara Yokie Innovation Hub (In-kind)
- NGOs

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Management, Organization and Timeframe:
This is a 12-month consultancy based in Freetown. The consultant will be required to undertake up to four provincial field missions, each lasting 2-3 days, amounting to approximately 8-10 travel days over the duration of the contract. These missions will support key activities, including stakeholder consolations, capacity building sessions at Digital Learning Hubs, university engagements, policy discussions, and follow-up with the Accelerator Lab.

The Consultant will be required to work a total of 215 days as follows:
From the UNICEF Office for 80 days (approximately 1.5 days a week), from MoCTI office at the Youyi building for 25 days (approximately 1 day every two weeks) and at the Implementing Partners DPG Accelerator for 100 days (approximately 2 days a week). All these sites are located in Freetown.
There will be approximately 10 days travel to provincial locations over the course of the contract.

Consultants are expected to provide their own work tools including laptop and other communication tools required.

Mode of Submission of Applications
Candidates will be required to submit a technical proposal and a financial proposal.
The financial proposal must quote a lump-sum inclusive of **fees, all travel costs and communication costs. Financial proposals may be negotiated.**

Child Safeguarding
Is this project/assignment considered as "Elevated Risk Role" from a child safeguarding perspective?

☐ YES ☒ NO If YES, check all that apply:

Direct contact role ☐ YES ☒ NO
If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of direct interpersonal contact with children, or work in their immediately physical proximity, with limited supervision by a more senior member of personnel:

Child data role ☐ YES ☒ NO
If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of manipulating or transmitting personal-identifiable information of children (name, national ID, location data, photos):

More information is available in the Child Safeguarding SharePoint and Child Safeguarding FAQs and Updates

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Work Assignment Overview

Tasks	Deliverables/Outputs	Deliverable Deadline	% of Contract Value	AMOUNT (SLE)
Train 250 participants in DLHs. · Develop course content and training materials. · Deliver/facilitate 3 trainings	250 participants trained across 5 hubs (50 each), covering DPG basics, open-source licensing, content curation, reporting. ≥ 40% women.	31 December 2025	4% of total contract sum	
Train DLH managers. · Develop course content and training materials. · Deliver/facilitate 3 trainings	5 Hub managers trained in facilitation, moderation, analytics, and monthly reporting SOPs.	31 January 2026	4% of total contract sum	
Conduct feasibility study for DPG Accelerator Labs.	Submitted report covering model, governance, criteria, budget, M&E; with validation notes annexed.	31 January 2026	8% of total contract sum	
Launch DPG Bounty Platform MVP	MVP live; ≥ 10 bounties; ≥ 50 users; ≥ 30 submissions; ≥ 2 awarded; uptime ≥ 99%; admin guide delivered.	28 February 2026	4% of total contract sum	
DPG pipeline Minimum Viable Product (MVP): Develop and launch DPG pipeline to deliver a functional first version of the national DPG registry/platform (with ≥30 entries, 6 partners onboarded, analytics view and basic SOPs in place)	Platform live; ≥ 30 DPG entries; 6 partners onboarded; analytics dashboard; SLA/backup SOPs.	31 March 2026	4% of total contract sum	
Train 250 participants in DLHs. · Develop course content and training materials. · Deliver/facilitate 3 trainings	250 participants trained across 5 hubs (50 each), covering DPG basics, open-source licensing, content curation, reporting. ≥ 40% women.	30 April 2026	4% of total contract sum	
Develop DPG modules for Learning Passport	3 modules live; ≥ 300 completions; feedback rating ≥ 4/5.	30 April 2026	4% of total contract sum	
Launch DPG Bounty Platform MVP	MVP live; ≥ 10 bounties; ≥ 50 users; ≥ 30 submissions; ≥ 2 awarded; uptime ≥ 99%; admin guide delivered.	30 April 2026	4% of total contract sum	
Build framework for Accelerator Lab operations	Governance charter; mentor roster; call-for-proposals; selection panel; SOPs delivered.	31 May 2026	12% of total contract sum	
Deliver 4 CoP events targeting 300 participants to establish thematic sub-groups	≥ 4 events; ≥ 75 attendees/event; post-event satisfaction ≥ 80%; at least 2 thematic sub-groups formed.	30 June 2026	5% of total contract sum	
• Develop and validate DPG curriculum. · Integrate DPG into national higher education curriculum.	Curriculum pack + TA; integrated in 2 universities; 500 students reached.	30 June 2026	4% of total contract sum	
Promote DPG content	Campaign plan + ≥ 6 assets deployed; ≥ 500 new LP users; CTR and reach reported.	31 August 2026	2% of total contract sum	
Support cycle for early-stage DPGs	≥ 3 startups supported; 6 to 8-week plan, 2 mentor sessions completed, demo day pitch deck available; 2 products reach MVP.	31 August 2026	8% of total contract sum	

Design mentorship programme	Programme design; mentor/mentee matching (≥ 10/15); code of conduct; 2 cycles completed; feedback ≥ 4/5.	30 September 2026	6% of total contract sum	
Develop and validate investor-readiness materials	Data room templates, one-pagers for ≥ 2 startups, 10–15 funders listed.	30 September 2026	4% of total contract sum	
Develop DPG-related workshop package for MoCTI use	Toolkit (agenda, slides, facilitator notes, comms copy); handover brief completed.	30 September 2026	4% of total contract sum	
Grow and sustain the DPG Community of Practice (CoP) · Develop relevant activity briefs and events. · Post events and activities to facilitate/moderate CoP discourse.	At least 500 active members (active = engaged within 30 days), across Discourse/WhatsApp. Platforms actively moderated and updated.	31 October 2026	10% of total contract sum	
Deliver 4 CoP events targeting 300 participants to establish thematic sub-groups	≥ 4 events; ≥ 75 attendees/event; post-event satisfaction ≥ 80%; at least 2 thematic sub-groups formed.	31 October 2026	5% of total contract sum	
Promote DPG content	Campaign plan + ≥ 6 assets deployed; ≥ 500 new LP users; CTR and reach reported.	31 October 2026	4% of total contract sum	
Draft Open-Source Policy	Policy draft v1.0 + roadmap + annex; validation session minutes; v1.1 submitted to MoCTI.			
Review, consolidate, and submit final report	Uptake evidence & recommendations consolidated into final report.			
TOTAL			**100%**	

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Budget Year:	Requesting Section/Issuing Office:	Reasons why consultancy cannot be done by staff:
2025/26	Innovation	Digital Public Goods are a part of the Innovation portfolio and can be considered Frontier technology work. Given the technical nature of the work being outlined in the ToR, where there is a focus on Open-Source Software Development, and a clear need for experience in the area of managing Open-Source Software Development projects and communities a consultancy is required. This skill set is not readily available in UNICEF in general, as yet. Worth noting that this is a skill set (software development & computer programming) which is not necessarily academic in nature and best served with experience.

Included in Annual/Rolling Workplan: ☐ Yes ☒ No, please justify:

Consultant sourcing:	Request for:
☒ National ☐ International ☐ Both **Competitive Selection:** ☒ Advertisement ☐ ☐ Roster **Single Source Selection** ☐ (Emergency - Director's approval)	☒ Individual Consultant ☐ Extension/ Amendment

Supervisor:	Start Date:	End Date:
Innovation Manager	1st November 2025	31st October 2026

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Estimated Consultancy fee			
Travel Local– **estimated 10 days of local travel at the rate of SLE 3,000** (to be paid based on actuals)			
Total estimated consultancy costs[i]			

Minimum Qualifications required*:	**Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required *:**
☒ Bachelors ☐ Masters ☐ PhD ☐ Other Enter Disciplines A university degree in Technology, Computer Science, Information Technology, Engineering or related field plus 3 years in a relevant field e.g. software development *Minimum requirements to consider candidates for competitive process	A minimum of 3 years of experience working in: • The social innovation ecosystem engagement, mapping, entrepreneurship support programs, open-source development and working with and mentoring tech entrepreneurs • Knowledge of frontier technology, open-source technology and digital public goods are highly valued. • Familiarity with Sierra Leone's developer community organizations/landscape. • Experience in programming languages including Java, Python, and Golang and familiarity with different frameworks such as Java/ Spring & Python/ Django are an asset. • Previous experience developing projects in the open and the ability to demonstrate an active GitHub or Gitlab profile is an asset. • Ability to work with a diverse team in a rapidly changing work environment and adapt to unforeseen changes. • Experience working in the social impact space, international development or equivalent. • Fluency in English is required, strong written and verbal competency is necessary. • Experience working in a developing country required, working in the West African region is considered as an asset *Listed requirements will be used for technical evaluation in the competitive process

Evaluation Criteria (This will be used for the Selection Report (for clarification see Guidance)

A) Technical Evaluation (e.g. maximum 75 Points)
- Educational Background – 15 pts
- Relevant Work Experience – 20 pts
- Technical Skills and Approach – 30 pts
- Other (e.g. Interview / Presentation / Written Test) – 10 pts

B) Financial Proposal (e.g. maximum of 25 Points)
- Fee Proposal - 25 pts

Administrative details:	
Visa assistance required: ☐ ☐ Home Based ☐ Office Based ☒ Hybrid	**If office based,** seating arrangement identified: ☐ IT and Communication equipment required: ☐ Internet access required: ☐

[1] Costs indicated are estimated. Final rate shall follow the "best value for money" principle, i.e., achieving the desired outcome at the lowest possible fee. Consultants will be asked to stipulate all-inclusive fees, including lump sum travel and subsistence costs, as applicable.

Payment of professional fees will be based on submission of agreed deliverables. UNICEF reserves the right to withhold payment in case the deliverables submitted are not up to the required standard or in case of delays in submitting the deliverables on the part of the consultant.

Individuals engaged under a consultancy will not be considered “staff members” under the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and UNICEF’s policies and procedures and will not be entitled to benefits provided therein (such as leave entitlements and medical insurance coverage). Their conditions of service will be governed by their contract and the General Conditions of Contracts for the Services of Consultants. Consultants are responsible for determining their tax liabilities and for the payment of any taxes and/or duties, in accordance with local or other applicable laws.

The selected consultant is solely responsible to ensure that the visa (applicable) and health insurance required to perform the duties of the contract are valid for the entire period of the contract. Selected consultant are subject to confirmation of fully-vaccinated status against SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) with a World Health Organization (WHO)-endorsed vaccine, which must be met prior to taking up the assignment. The vaccine mandate, does not apply to consultants who will work remotely and are not expected to work on or visit UNICEF premises, programme delivery locations or directly interact with communities UNICEF works with, nor to travel to perform functions for UNICEF for the duration of their consultancy contracts.

UNICEF offers reasonable accommodation for consultants with disabilities. This may include, for example, accessible software, travel assistance for missions or personal attendants. We encourage you to disclose your disability during your application in case you need reasonable accommodation during the selection process and afterwards in your assignment.