

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS

Title of Assignment	<i>National Consultancy: Development of the Sector-Wide Transformative Communication Strategy for Education Sector</i>	
Requesting Section	Social and Behaviour Change	
Location	Place of assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This assignment will be based in Lilongwe with visits to Mangochi, Blantyre and Mzuzu districts. • The consultancy is not office-based; however, it will be expected for the consultant to attend related and scheduled meetings and briefing sessions at UNICEF and Ministry of Education • Consultant will also be expected to participate Taskforce, consultations, and technical working group meetings within Ministry of Education as scheduled. 	
Contract Duration in months, including a review period following the submission of the final deliverable	3.5 Months	
Estimated number of working days	45 days	
Planned Start and End Date	From: 1 September 2024	To: 15 December 2024

BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

The Government of Malawi, through the Ministry of Education, is implementing various progressive policies and programs to accelerate the transformation of the country’s education sector. As articulated in the National Education Policy of 2013 (NEP 2013) , the Government’s primary policy goals are to: (1) promote equitable access to education, (2) improve the relevance and quality of education and education services, and (3) strengthen governance and management of the education sector. The NEP 2013 aims to ensure that all learners are adequately equipped with knowledge, skills, values, expertise, and competencies to contribute to their self-development and effectively participate in national development.

The National Education Sector Investment Plan (2020-2030), serving as the Ministry’s strategic vehicle for achieving the goals of the NEP 2013, guides the planning and implementation of all education programs, projects and activities at national, regional and district levels. Its development was guided by the principles of lifelong learning and inclusivity, in line with Sustainable Development Goal number 4.

The NESIP (2020-2030) is strategically aligned with the Human Capital Development aspirations outlined in the First 10-Year Implementation Plan (MIP-1, 2021-2030) of Malawi’s long-term development vision, Malawi 2063 (MW2063), and the African Union’s Agenda 2063. The NESIP (2020-2030) promotes a multidisciplinary approach to science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) education, emphasising literacy and numeracy, livelihood knowledge and skills, scientific literacy and application, digital skills, and research, development and innovation. This alignment aims to establish a knowledge-based, technology-driven and innovation-led economy by developing a globally competitive and highly skilled workforce capable of propelling the nation into the 21st century. It also catalyses the creation of knowledge, information, and technologies vital for the country’s accelerated socio-economic growth and development.

Achieving the goals set for the education sector in Malawi demands a comprehensive and holistic approach. To catalyse the transformation of Malawi's education sector, it is imperative to foster enhanced communication, coordination and cooperation among diverse stakeholders. These include the Ministry of Education (MoE), various line ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs), local decentralized bodies, development partners, and other relevant parties. Building the necessary capacity for facilitating strategic and transformative communication among all stakeholders within the education sector and with external partners is also crucial.

Sharing information and data about the priorities, activities, programs, and projects outlined in the NESIP (2020-2030) and Malawi 2063's MIP-1 (2021-2030) with stakeholders will significantly improve their understanding of the National Education Policy (NEP). This will underscore its alignment with the MW2063's MIP-1 education-related deliverables and, most importantly, its implementation. This is integral to fulfilling the objectives of the Ministry's Reform Area #9 on Transformative Communication, which aims to foster a deeper understanding and encourage active participation and ownership of the sectoral transformation process among stakeholders.

Addressing barriers to equitable access to education, enhancing the quality and relevance of education and education services, and strengthening education management and governance require strong collaboration with learners, teachers, communities, and cultural institutions at the institutional level. Effective communication with stakeholders at the district level regarding NESIP priorities and MIP-1 education-related deliverables is equally vital to accelerating improvements in teaching and learning outcomes across all education levels.

It is expected that this high level engagement of stakeholders at national and sub-national levels will create an enabling environment for the provision of equitable and sustainable access to education and education services, and the rapid transformation of the education sector.

The Ministry recognises that stakeholders have diverse needs, roles, responsibilities, attitudes and priorities, driven by their understanding of the value of education and the services provided. To effectively achieve the desired support and promote positive participation, therefore, it is essential to provide proper guidance to all stakeholders in the education sector on the effective communication of national education policies, priorities and strategies. This necessitates the development and subsequent implementation of a Transformative Communication Strategy for the Education Sector covering the period 2025-2030.

PURPOSE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The purpose of the assignment is to develop a Transformative Communication Strategy for the Education Sector (2025-2030) to:

- a) Guide the development and implementation of new approaches to communication, information packaging and knowledge management in a manner that adds value to the Ministry, the education sector, targeted stakeholders and the citizenry, transforming those working within and benefiting from the education sector;
- b) Facilitate the creation of sustainable platforms and enabling environments for strengthening collaboration and relationships between the MoE and sector players in the planning, implementation and review of national education sector plans and priorities;
- c) Identify data-informed evidence-based solutions to increase citizenry participation in the transformation and advancement of education in Malawi; and
- d) Assist the MoE and education institutions to garner necessary stakeholder support and buy-in regarding the value, function and benefits of education to Malawians, and the specific roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the transformation and advancement of education in Malawi.

SCOPE OF WORK/OBJECTIVES

Objectives of the assignment

- To conduct a comprehensive analysis of the current communication landscape within the education sector.
- To develop a costed, data-informed, evidence-based and results-oriented Transformative Communications Strategy for the Education Sector (2025-2030) to improve communication of MoE's education transformation agenda at national and sub-national levels, in alignment with the Ministry's NESIP (2020-2030) and MIP-1 (2021-2030) education-specific deliverables.
- To recommend innovative and practical communication tactics, technologies, channels, tools and platforms for effective information dissemination and stakeholder engagement at national and sub-

Key Tasks and Responsibilities

- Conduct a secondary data review of relevant education and communication legislative instruments, education policies, guidelines, strategies, journals, communication materials, digital and traditional communication platforms, and relevant studies.
- Understand the communication needs, interests, concerns, capacities and limitations related to each stakeholder at national and sub-national level.
- Understand the communication and political context, stakeholder perceptions, the education sector's reputation, and prevailing crisis communication and issue management approaches and protocols.
- Conduct an in-depth assessment of the current communication practices (including field consultations in Mangochi, Blantyre and Mzuzu), trends and benchmarks at national and sub national levels of the education sector, including comparative advantages, current communication efforts, available communication platforms, gaps and challenges, stakeholder analysis, target audience analysis, channel analysis, content analysis and SWOT analysis.
- Conduct key analyses relevant to communication and specific to the Ministry and education sector, i.e. Situation Analysis, Political Analysis, Behavioural Analysis, Competitive Analysis, Perception and Reputation Analysis, and Crisis Communication and Issue Management Analysis.
- Validate data/information collected from different primary and secondary sources.
- Drawing on data obtained from the Ministry's Education Management Information System (EMIS), the 2023 Education Sector Report (ESR), NESIP, National Education Policy and other related strategic policy documents, develop a data-informed, evidence-based and results-oriented Transformative Communications Strategy for the Education Sector (2025-2030) with clearly defined goals; segmented target audiences; key messages; positioning statements and overall narrative; and strategies for stakeholder engagement, crisis communication and issue management, including all related supporting materials (i.e. designs, templates, audiovisuals, etc.).
- Develop a detailed and actionable Strategy Implementation Plan with timelines, responsibilities, resource allocations and budget projections.

- Recommend appropriate communication strategies for identifying, assessing and mitigating risks.
- Establish a robust Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework for measuring and tracking the impact of the communication strategy, detailing key performance indicators, data collection methods, and mechanisms for incorporation and application of stakeholder feedback on communication activities.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

To whom will the consultant report (supervisory and any other reporting/communication lines):

- The consultant will report to the UNICEF SBC Specialist, with regular consultation involving the SBC Manager, Chief of Education and Adolescent Development and Participation, and Chief of Communication Advocacy and Partnership. The Ministry of Education, as the education sector policy holder, will collaborate closely with the consultant to provide guidance and technical support to ensure the strategy aligns with sector goals and priorities. Oversight and technical leadership will be provided by the Deputy Director of Education Planning and the Ministry’s Strategic Communications Advisor to the Minister throughout the strategy development process.
- Additionally, the consultant will interact with and seek guidance from the Task Force on the development of the Education Sector-Wide Transformative Communication Strategy. This Task Force, constituted by the Ministry of Education, includes members from all relevant directorates to guide the strategy's development.

What type of reporting will be expected from the consultant and in what format/style will the submissions of reports/outputs be done:

The consultant will be requested to submit the following reports

1. In Inception Report: Report dealing the proposed approach, methodology and workplan.
2. A comprehensive Transformative Communication Strategy for the Education Sector (2025-2030) including all proposed prototyped communication materials.
3. A Strategy Implementation Plan with specific action steps, timelines, responsibilities, resource allocations and budget projections.
4. A Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework, including key performance indicators, data collection methods, and mechanisms for incorporation and application of stakeholder feedback on communication activities.
5. A Consultancy Close-Out Report documenting a summary of consultancy achievements and outcomes; lessons learned; recommendations; feedback/testimonials from engaged national and sub-national level stakeholders; Taskforce members, ministry officials and partners engaged; financial summary; closure activities; and appendices (e.g. documentation, data and or/supporting materials).

How will consultant consult and deliver work and when will reporting be done:

The consultant will consult through physical meetings where necessary and in other cases they will be allowed to consult virtually. The reports will be submitted electronically to the UNICEF staff member supervising the consultancy, copied to the Ministry’s focal point.

EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

In alignment with the scope of work described above, the consultant will be expected to perform the following activities and deliverables per the schedule and estimated dates below as well as any other activities as deemed necessary and related to the successful delivery of the assignment. Due to the nature of this assignment, the consultant will carry out activities which are mostly similar in output across the months, for which there will be monthly payments be based on satisfactory performance-service delivery.

Table 1: Expected Deliverables against Task and Milestones`

Task/Milestone	Deliverable/Outcome (e.g. Inception, progress, final reports, training material, workshop, etc.)	Planned Completion date	Estimated cost-percentage payable
Submit Inception Report with detailed work plan	Inception report with detailed Workplan	9 Sept 2024	15%
Conduct inception workshop with the Ministry-constituted Strategy Development technical working group and produce report	Workshop Report	16 Sept 2024	
Conduct consultations with key identified stakeholders at national and sub-national levels focus districts being Mangochi, Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu	Consultation agenda, methodologies (tools for different stakeholders) and detailed plan	26 Sept 2024	20%
Conduct consultation on findings and validation meeting with the Strategy Development technical working group	Meeting agenda, methodologies and detailed plan	30 Sept 2024	
Submit a final consultations report	Consultations report	3 October 2024	
Produce a draft Transformative Communication Strategy for the Education Sector (2025-2030), including a costed implementation plan, prototyped communication materials, and monitoring, evaluation and learning plan, and present to Taskforce for finalisation	Draft Transformative Communication Strategy for the Education Sector (2025-2030), costed implementation plan, prototyped communication materials and MEL Plan	19 November 2024	35%
Conduct a validation workshop	Workshop report	26 November 2024	30%
Final Transformative Communication Strategy for the Education Sector (2025-2030), Strategy Implementation Plan, communication materials, and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework	Final documents	2 December 2024	

Submit Consultancy Close-Out Report	Transformative Communication Strategy for the Education Sector (2025-2030)	5 December 2024	
TOTAL			100%

However, as the actual starting date may impact the dates estimated in the TOR, a detailed workplan with exact timeframes and actual delivery dates will be jointly agreed upon between the consultant and the supervisor upon contract signature and which will be updated on a regular basis as needed.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR EVALUATION OF RESULTS

The performance of work will be evaluated based on the following indicators:

- Completion of tasks specified in TOR.
- Compliance with the established deadlines for submission of deliverables
- Quality of work
- Demonstrating high standards in cooperation and communication with UNICEF and counterparts
- Adherence to UNICEF’s child safeguarding policy

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

All payments, without exception, will be made upon certification from the supervisor of the contract of the satisfactory and quality completion and submission of deliverables and upon receipt of the respective and approved invoice. 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.

The consultancy cost will be based on an all-inclusive fee basis which will include all cost related to this assignment including, professional fee, travel and living cost, transportation cost (fuel, car hire, etc), stationary, communications etc. No other costs are payable under this consultancy.

DESIRED COMPETENCIES, TECHNICAL BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

Academic qualification:

Master’s degree in communication, Social Science or other related field. Candidates with a PhD will have an added advantage.

Work experience:

- Minimum of 5 years of professional experience in developing communication strategies for public and multinational private sector institutions.

Technical skills, knowledge and strength areas:

- Demonstrable track record and proven work experience in the field of strategic communication.
- Proven expertise in sectoral analyses, stakeholder engagement and communication planning.
- Relevant and demonstrated knowledge of effective communication tools, technologies, and practices.

- Expertise and experience in qualitative and quantitative research, designing communication and behavioural change strategies, operational plans, and MEL Frameworks.
- Solid understanding of Malawi's education sector, context and communication landscape will have an added advantage.
- Strong oral and written communication skills to present complex material in an easily understandable way.
- Excellent analytical and writing capacity in English.
- Ability to work flexibly in sometimes challenging situations and to establish good working cooperation with Government and development partners.
- Excellent workshop facilitation skills.

Languages: English

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

UNICEF will regularly communicate with the consultant and provide feedback and guidance and necessary support so to achieve objectives of the work, as well as remain aware of any upcoming issues related to the performance and quality of work.

As per policy on consultants, the individual will be expected to complete a list of mandatory training, including policies on Prohibiting and Combatting Fraud and Corruption, Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority and other relevant policies for their information and acknowledgement upon acceptance of the offer.

Before the issuance of the official contract, the individual consultant is requested to:

- complete the applicable mandatory trainings.
- ensure that the visa (where applicable) and health insurance required to perform the duties of the contract are valid for the entire period of the contract. The consultant is solely responsible for both the visa and own health insurance.
- the selected consultant is 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 candidates to disclose their disability during their application in case they need reasonable accommodation during the selection process and afterwards in their assignment.

Consultants must have their own equipment, tools and materials needed to perform their services. They will use their own laptops/computers, any application or system needed to complete the assignment.

The access to UNICEF email and system is restricted to UNICEF staff therefore consultants should not be granted access unless it is imperative to complete assignment. The need for email access will be determined in consultation with the contract supervisor and will require approval from management.

CONDITIONS

- The consultancy will be on a short-term arrangement basis over a period of 3 months; however, the consultant will only work for 45 working days during this contract period.
- The candidate selected will be governed by and subject to UNICEF’s General Terms and Conditions for individual contracts.
- No contract may commence unless the contract is signed by both UNICEF and the consultant.
- The consultant will be based in Lilongwe, Malawi, with travel to the field for consultations.
- The consultant will be paid an all-inclusive fee (professional fees, stationery, communication, transport, Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) and other miscellaneous expenses) as per the stipulated deliverables and payment schedule.
- The consultant is not entitled to payment for overtime, weekends, or public holidays.
- Travel expenses for official in-country trips, including living costs, are included as part of the overall consultancy costs, and will be paid together with the consultancy fees as per the payment schedule.
- Transport will be provided to the consultant during in-country field travel, if planned and approved.
- No travel should take place without an email travel authorization from section prior to the commencement of the journey from the duty station.
- Standard UNICEF procedures will apply for invoicing and all other financial management requirements set out in the contract.
- Standard penalty clauses will also apply for late and poor-quality deliverables. The supervisor of the contract will provide the consultant with the criteria for the evaluation of the quality of each deliverable.
- Additional details of UNICEF rules, regulations and conditions will be attached to the contract.
- The consultant will not have supervisory responsibilities or authority on UNICEF budget.
- Individuals engaged under a consultancy or individual contract 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 and Individual Contractors. Consultants and individual contractors 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 assignment is an off-site support.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested consultants should provide the following:

1. Curriculum Vitae
2. Brief technical proposal (no longer than five pages) demonstrating the consultant’s understanding of the assignment and approach/methodology to the assignment.
3. Financial proposal including a breakdown of their all-inclusive fees (including professional fees, travel, living cost, visa and other costs). Complete the attached form.



Financial
Proposal.xlsx

4. References details from at least 3 supervisors, including the current supervisor.