

TERMS OF REFERENCE

SHORT TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT

ICT in Education Consultant for the Solomon Islands and Republic of the Marshall Islands

BACKGROUND

The potential use of technology to improve the education system and learners' access to education has been acknowledged in various policies, plans and reports across the Pacific region in recent years. Countries acknowledge the opportunity that technology can provide but are also pragmatic about challenges and risks, including in the considerable financial investment required, equity issues, maintenance and repair, effective pedagogical uses of technology in learning, digital skills, capacity to effectively utilise collected data to inform decisions about different digital learning strategies and options. Two countries in the region, the Solomon Islands and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) are wanting to review their current enabling environments (including planning) for technology in education to make informed decisions about next steps.

Each country has their own particular context and are at different places in formulating responses both to technology infrastructure and digital learning. The Solomon Islands Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) had a 5-year (2019-23) Education ICT Master Plan as a guiding document to achieve the vision of ensuring "*children in the Solomon Islands are equipped with the skills and confidence to thrive into the 21st century*"¹ with emphasis on how ICT can support improved equity in access to quality, relevant education. MEHRD has acknowledged that the ICT in Education Master Plan was very ambitious, so a review to re-prioritize and re-structure for the next 5 years (2024-2029) is timely. This will also need to align well with whole-of-government centralised ICT systems through the Information Communication and Technology Support Unit (ICTSU) under the leadership of Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MoFT). This review will culminate with recommendations for and drafting of a revised ICT in Education Master Plan through the period 2024-2029.

RMI's interest is more emerging. The Minister of Education has spoken of how digital learning can help address both access issues, especially for students in remote areas, as well as overall quality of education. However, the strategic scoping and options for approaches to infrastructure, learning materials and integration of digital technologies into teaching/learning still needs to be undertaken.

This consultancy will engage an Education ICT consultant to undertake two related but distinct and context-specific pieces of work in the context of the needs and environments of the Solomon Islands and RMI.

OBJECTIVE / SCOPE OF WORK

As the two countries are approaching this work from different starting points, the objectives and scope for each is provided below. However, across both countries a fit for purpose approach that recognizes infrastructural, financial and human capacity for outcomes and recommendations to be actionable and sustainable for each country is required.

For both countries, the consultant is expected to work first of all toward the high-level national vision for education, with a clear eye to how ICT can be an enabler of teaching and processes that lead toward that vision, rather than an end to itself. The consultant is further expected to work in line with the national vision for ICT in education, providing authoritative technical guidance based on own experience as well as an assessment of systems and capabilities in each context, including past ICT in education plans and initiatives, drawing on all of

¹ Solomon Islands Government, ICT in Education Master Plan. Retrieved from https://www.mehrd.gov.sb/images/PDF_Files/PLAN/Endorsed%20ICT%20in%20Education%20Master%20Plan_fixed.pdf on 13th October, 2023.

the above to advise on technically solid and contextually relevant options and plans, with an emphasis on effectiveness, sustainability and relevance. The consultant is expected to also work in a collaborative and consultative fashion, drawing effectively on the many perspectives and realities in each context, providing advice – but also being advised – and ultimately work with each government in developing a plan that is relevant and fully owned locally.

For the Solomon Islands:

The objective and scope of the consultancy in the Solomon Islands is to draft a new Education ICT Master Plan for a period of five years (2024-2028) for the Solomon Islands Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development. The development of the new plan will be aligned with national education priorities (NEAP 2022-2026), the new Education Act (2023), and the fifteen-year Education Strategy Framework (ESF) 2016-2030 and whole-of-government plan of digital technology to ensure the ICT in education master plan is part of country's long-term vision and goals in technological advancement.

The consultant, for this assignment, will work with the Information Services Division (ISD) team and various departments/divisions of the MEHRD to ensure the review and updating process is consultative and inclusive with relevant government ministries and partners. The consultant will also work with other government ministries and technical team such as the ICTSU unit within the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MoFT), Ministry of Communication & Aviation in ensuring the Ministry's education ICT plan is linked with the overall Solomon Islands ICT infrastructure and strategic as part of the whole of the government ICT centralised system.

In this work for the Solomon Islands, the consultant is expected to provide the following technical support:

- Review the previous MEHRD ICT Master Plan(2019-2023) and draft a new ICT in Education Master Plan for the period 2024-2029and align to the NEAP and changes required by the new Education Act (2023) and assess current ICT resources and infrastructure, including budget, support services and allocation, and infrastructure (including maintenance, repair and replacement) to meet the plan's expectations.
- Analyze and identify critical ICT gaps in the education sector, including available capacities within the Ministry and capacity to roll out to the provinces
- Identify overall strengths and challenges in the implementation and achievement of targets, including the enabling environment at both national and provincial levels
- Identify and develop contextualised strategies/interventions to address the findings of the review with recommendations for prioritised actions within the current NEAP and related recommendations for the new NEAP (2027-30) ensuring issues of equity and capacity are addressed within the recommendations. Develop an ICT roadmap plan to guide MEHRD in implementing, monitoring and reporting the new education ICT master plan (2024 -2028)
- Assess the viability and potential expansion of the four critical components of the ICT master plan, including the iResource platform, which has been under review and development for the past two years, to expand and make it an interactive teaching and learning platform. The I-resources should be considered with reference to the iconnect, iresources, iteach and imanage modules with recommendations to strengthen and improve. Assess data security, safety, and privacy compliance of the new ICT plan and its relationship with Solomon Islands Education Management Information System (SIEMIS) and the broader Ministry's data policy and plan
- Draft a revised ICT in Education Master Plan for the period 2024-2028

For RMI

The objective of this consultancy for RMI is to draft, validate and finalise a scoping paper on ICT infrastructure and Digital learning, with options and recommendations for taking ICT in education forward.

The scoping report should particularly outline the infrastructural, financial and human resource requirements and options in consideration of the use of technology to:

- Enhance access to education
- Improve learning outcomes through the effective uses of technology in learning

- Support equity and inclusion
- Facilitate teacher professional development
- Promote digital literacy across all stakeholders

The consultant will deliver the following specific deliverables through this contract:

1. Inception Report

- a. Develop a single inception report to cover approaches, programme timelines, risks and mitigations for both RMI and the Solomon Islands. The inception report should include the findings on an initial desk review of relevant data and documents for both the Solomon Islands and RMI on education ICT and digital as appropriate to the identified scope of work for both countries. The inception report can be broken up into a preliminary (pre-travel) planning and sharing of initial thoughts and timelines and a later version that reflects a complete view of background, approach and proposed consultations/meetings

2. For the Solomon Islands:

- a. **Stakeholder Consultation**
 - i. Consult with focal points in the MEHRD and other key SIG Ministries, stakeholders including the Private Sector ((Telekom, B-Mobile), NGO, CSO and teachers' training providers to understand the ICT plan and its essential components and desired outcomes, as well as practical options for reviewing the master plan, cognizant of of the day-to-day realities in education infrastructure, available resources and gaps in education digital learning, and ongoing reforms and efforts, in line with the Ministry's current vision towards improving capabilities in education technology
 - ii. Facilitate the stakeholder consultations and field visits as relevant, to ensure the review process is inclusive and consultive to provide voices and views from teachers, learners, school leaders and education providers are heard and featured in the new ICT master plan
 - iii. During the consultation, carefully consider how the proposed activities and changes in the ICT master plan are resourced and what training and capacity-building support are required to implement and ensure capacity and sustainability successfully.
 - iv. Provide a brief synthesis in the form of a Consultation Report
- b. **Drafting a new education ICT Master Plan (2024-2028)**
 - i. Based on the feedback from the stakeholder consultation workshop and in ongoing collaboration with the MEHRD ISD team and relevant divisions, review and develop a new ICT master plan (2024-2028)
- c. **ICT Master Plan (2024-2028) validation**
 - i. Once the new ICT plan is drafted, convene a validation workshop with partners to validate the proposed component, priorities and platform included in the latest ICT master plan and provide feedback and comments regarding the new ICT master plan
 - ii. Integrate proposed changes and feedback received from the validation workshop and share with the MEHRD Senior Management Team (SMT) for review and endorsement.
- d. **Submission, finalisation, and endorsement**
 - i. Support MEHRD through the process of finalisation and endorsement of the final ICT master plan (2024-2028)

3. For RMI

- a. **Stakeholder Consultation**
 - i. Consult with focal points PSS, schools and other stakeholders including relevant government agencies, development partners and the NTA to understand the current landscape and enabling environment for technology supported learning and education

- support in line with the PSS's current vision towards improving capabilities in education technology
- II. Facilitate the stakeholder consultations and field visits as relevant, to ensure the review process is inclusive and consultative to provide voices and views from teachers, learners, school leaders and education providers are heard and featured in the report
 - III. During the consultation, carefully consider how the proposed options and recommendations could be sustainably resourced and what training and capacity-building support are required to implement and ensure capacity and sustainability successfully.
- b. Drafting the Report**
- I. Based on the feedback from the stakeholder consultation and in ongoing collaboration with the relevant PSS team members draft the scoping report with findings, options and recommendations.
- c. Report validation, finalisation and submission**
- I. Once the scoping report is drafted, convene a validation workshop with PSS and relevant stakeholders to review the findings.
 - II. Integrate proposed changes and feedback received from the validation workshop
 - III. Submit the final report.

ACTIVITIES, DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINES, PLUS PAYMENT SCHEDULE PER DELIVERABLE
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ACTIVITY	DELIVERABLES	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE	PAYMENT (%)
1. Inception	Inception report		
2. Facilitate a stakeholder consultation workshop with MEHRD in the Solomon Islands, PSS in RMI and relevant government Ministries and partners, including private sector and NGOs in both countries	Consultation Reports (one report will be considered as long as approach and outcomes are clearly identified for each country – this can be confirmed during the inception phase).		
3. For the Solomon Islands: Support the development and drafting of a new ICT master plan, including budget and M&E framework	Draft ICT in Education Master Plan (2024-28)		
4. For the Solomon Islands: Conduct an ICT master plan validation workshop 5. Support finalisation, submission and	Validation workshop New ICT master plan (2024-2028) endorsed		

endorsement of the plan			
6. For RMI: Draft the Scoping paper with options and recommendations ensuring regular feedback with relevant PSS staff and specific identified stakeholders	Draft report		
7. For RMI: Validation and finalisation – workshop and integration of feedback.	Final report		
		90 days	TOTAL 100%

QUALIFICATIONS, SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE AND ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES

Bachelors Masters PhD Other

Provide details of the expected educational qualifications.

A master's degree in a relevant field, such as computer science, information systems, or education technology, is typically required. However, a first degree with a combination of relevant other postgraduate certificates/diplomas and experience would also be considered.

- Minimum of 8 years of professional work experience in educational technology, digital learning, ICT planning.
- IT Skills: Proficiency in relevant technologies and tools used in educational settings.
- Analytical Mindset: Ability to analyse data and make informed decisions
- Experience in research and analysis including previous experience of supporting education ICT plans
- Proven ability to be innovative, think differently and engage others in transformation
- Experience working with Ministries of Education and development partners
- Proven ability to produce high-quality and strategically oriented education ICT plans and accompanied implementation plan, , monitoring and reporting progress
- Familiarity with Pacific education systems, contexts and cultures is highly desirable
- High level interpersonal and relationship-building skills
- Ability to communicate effectively with persons of various cultures and disciplines
- Ability to determine and review priorities and meet deadlines
- Diplomatic skills to liaise with counterparts and different stakeholders
- Good analytical, negotiating, and advocacy skills

CONDITIONS OF WORK AND CLARIFICATION ON SUPERVISION

The consultant will be supervised on a day-to-day basis by the UNICEF Education Specialist (Solomon Islands/North Pacific as relevant), in coordination with relevant department staff and team of the Ministry/PSS. Final approval of deliverables for payment will be done by the UNICEF Education Specialist in consultation with the Pacific Chief of Education in Suva, and Chief of Office based in Honiara, Solomon Islands and Chief of Office North Pacific based in Pohnpei, FSM, as relevant.

The consultant is expected to travel to the country for in-person work (estimated 15 days in Honiara, 10 days in Majuro) including in-person engagement and consultation meetings with Ministry staff, different government ministries, and partners to develop and review the intended deliverables of the contract. When working

remotely, the consultant is expected to be available for discussions as required during working hours in the country. All costs associated with the travel are to be included in the total contract value.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

- Individuals engaged under a consultancy contract will not be considered “staff members” under the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and UNICEF’s policies and procedures. They 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 candidate is solely responsible for ensuring 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 candidates 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. It 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 during your assignment.
- No contract may commence unless the contract is signed by both UNICEF and the consultant.
- Consultant will be required to complete mandatory online courses (e.g. Ethics, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Security) upon receipt of offer and before the signature of contract.

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

- This consultant is for individual consultants only. Candidates are requested to submit a brief technical proposal and CV.
- Candidates are asked to submit a **separate financial offer** along with their application. The financial proposal should be a **lump sum amount for all the deliverables** and should show a breakdown for the following as applicable:
 - Monthly / Daily fees: based on the deliverables in the Terms of Reference above
 - Travel: economy air ticket where applicable to take up assignment and field mission travel
 - Living allowance: where travel is required
 - Miscellaneous: to cover visa, health insurance (including medical evacuation for international consultants), travel insurance, communications, and other costs