

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS

Title of Assignment	<i>International Consultancy:</i> Feasibility assessment of the digital education landscape in Malawi in line with GIGA and reimagining education initiatives	
Requesting Section	Education and Adolescent	
Location	Place of assignment: Lilongwe	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Home Based <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Office Based: Directorate of Open and Distance Education, Ministry of Education	
Contract Duration	5 Months	
Number of working days	90 days	
Planned Start and End Date	From: 1 September 2021	To: 15 February 2022

BACKGROUND

Like other countries, the education system in Malawi was also affected significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools remained closed for over 6 months in 2020 and for about a month in 2021 interrupting learning for more than 7.7 million school-age children attending pre-primary, primary and secondary education. The school closure presented an unprecedented risk to children's education and wellbeing, especially for girls and other marginalized children. To ensure continuity of learning, the government deployed measures of distance learning through radio, online and self-study materials. UNICEF Malawi and other partners supported the government in development of materials for radio programming and internet enabled online learning in collaboration with the private sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its serious impact on children's education throughout the world has compelled countries to take a fresh look at learning process with a new openness to explore use of innovative ways and appropriate technologies. A key element of this transformation is scaling up world-class digital learning solutions (including internet supported online, offline digital education resources and services, radio, television based) to reach all children, including the most marginalized. Enabling every child in the country to access the best available learning facilitated by technology and to provide the support for them to be successful, could be the great equalizer in education. With ambitious vision, commitment, and investment, digital learning solutions can rapidly be developed, adapted and deployed at scale, even in low-resource context, and be able to reach the most marginalized learners. Education presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity for public and private sector leaders to support the 're-imagining of education' and leapfrog into the future.

In an effort to support digital learning, UNICEF has introduced its flagship initiative referred to as Reimagine Education. The Reimagine Education initiative seeks to enable every child and young person (3.5 billion by 2030) to access world-class digital learning solutions which build the skills they need to leapfrog to a brighter future. The initiative operates through five key interconnected pillars: world-class digital learning solutions, connectivity, devices, affordable data and content, and young people's engagement. Globally UNICEF has partnered with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to also launch "GIGA1", an initiative aimed to connect every school to the internet, and every young person to information, opportunity and choice.

The energy that has been put into finding innovative ways to keep children learning can be harnessed for solutions to reach out-of-school children more generally. The school closure due to Covid-19 have shown that, there is need for multipronged approaches to the various needs of children to enable them to learn, wherever they are. For this reason, digital technologies can be

¹ <https://www.unicef.org/innovation/giga>

one of the keys to these. While there are immediate issues in connecting all children, initiatives like Reimagine Education, which includes GIGA, aim to connect all schools in the near future. Beyond schools, universal community access to the internet will be a force for enhancing equity and realizing the right to life-long learning, which is the pinnacle of Sustainable Development Goal 4. ICT is not a panacea, though, and must be complemented with other modalities of learning.

Building on global experiences and resources on the Reimagine Education initiative and GIGA, UNICEF will work with relevant partners to address the challenges of the learning crisis and digital divide in Malawi by providing innovative, data-driven digital learning solutions for children and young people to develop skills (foundational, transferable/life, digital, job-specific and entrepreneurial) and be better prepared to transition to adulthood. UNICEF will also provide system level interventions to enhance the education system's digital capacity and connectivity in close partnership with the private sector.

JUSTIFICATION

The Ministry of Education in Malawi has also prioritized digital learning, by establishing a Directorate for Open, Distance and e-Learning (ODEL), among other things to ensure quality and conducive teaching and learning environments and improved equitable access to education across all levels through, among other innovations, digital learning technologies. The directorate will also conduct advocacy for innovative strategies to increase access through open schools and to revitalize Open and Distance electronic learning (ODEL) centres. The Ministry aspires for "equality of education opportunity," which it believes can be achieved through collaborative approaches to ODEL. The Ministry is espoused to idea of facilitating of a Nation-wide Digital Education Platform with linkages to online, offline, on air, and print media products and services, as well as the building of local capacity to sustain education technology. These will be achieved through close collaboration within the Ministry, with other Ministries, Departments and Agencies, as well as the private sector and development partners. Notwithstanding, different sectors and institutions will also be supported to have customized solutions, hence the need to understand the existing and potential future needs of the education subsectors.

As part of its efforts to support plans by the Government of Malawi to address the above-mentioned challenges, UNICEF in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE) is seeking to carry out a comprehensive situation analysis (feasibility assessment) of the digital learning landscape in the country in order to identify opportunities to roll out the GIGA initiative in Malawi. This effort will complement other activities including the broader digital skills gap analysis championed by the Ministry of Information, through the Digital Malawi Project.

PURPOSE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

This proposed assessment intends to help UNICEF and Ministry of Education in their work to ensure equitable access to digital education for all. Through its GIGA and Reimagine Education initiatives, UNICEF aims to address gaps in digital learning by connecting every school to the internet, and every person to information, opportunity, and choice. The initiative aims to provide evidence to upgrade digital learning content and platforms and strengthen digital skills among both students and teachers. UNICEF also aims to work with MoE as other partners to enhance connectivity and digital capacity of learning systems in collaboration with the private sector. This assessment will also document information for understanding user behavior and equity gaps in digital learning to inform UNICEF programs and potential opportunities for collaboration and scale up.

The deep dive digital situation analysis will complement the comprehensive SitAn aimed at informing the development of the next UNICEF country programme for Malawi.

SCOPE OF WORK/OBJECTIVES

The study aims to carry out a comprehensive situational analysis of the digital learning landscape in Malawi. It also aims to apply an equity lens to highlight key disparities that exist among regions and socio-economic groups. It provides an overview of the access to and quality of digital learning; internet connectivity and affordability; availability of digital learning devices; relevance and content of platforms; and digital skills of students and teachers, and local capacity to develop and sustain Education Technologies and Innovation.

Specifically, the assignment aims to:

(1) Provide an analysis of the digital divide for children and young people in the country, including availability, quality and use of digital learning content and platforms, the digital literacy and skills gap for digital learning among teachers, students and other stakeholders, and accessibility and connectivity of schools, learning centres and communities to the internet connectivity. The analysis will also look into gaps and bottlenecks that would impact the quantitative and qualitative expansion of digital learning in terms of learning content and platforms, human capacity, and internet connectivity.

(2) Undertake an analysis of the policy landscape in terms of the enabling environment, including governance for digital learning or digital services provision, noting gaps and opportunities bottlenecks that would impact quantitative and qualitative expansion of digital learning in terms of learning content and platforms, human capacity, and internet connectivity. Underline any appropriate recommendations to usher the country into the digital age.

(3) Map out the government's on-going and planned initiatives and programmes in education, learning and skills development aimed at improving digital connectivity and learning. Identify on-going and planned initiatives and programmes of other partners as relevant including private sector who is accessing and where to establish equity concerns.

(4) Based on the analysis, the study will provide practical recommendations on key strategies and priorities along innovation, education and skills development to be undertaken by the government, the private sector and development partners including UNICEF to increase internet connectivity and expand and improve digital learning across the country.

(5) Provide an analysis of UNICEF's comparative advantage and added value to expand and improve digital learning in the country.

Approach

In order to ensure efficient delivery of relevant outputs, the consultant will need to work very closely with the Technical Lead Team in the Ministry of Education, through the ODeL Directorate, and with support from the Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) and the ICT Department. The assignment will involve both literature review and conducting of interviews, in order to adequately capture historical, present and future demands of the education sector and its relevance to industry in line with Malawi's Vision 2063, and the NESIP (2020-30).

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

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

The consultant will work under the overall supervision of the UNICEF's Education Specialist responsible for Secondary Age Education and the Chief of Education of Education and Adolescents. The Innovations unit will also be collaborating in terms of providing essential input into this assignment.

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

The consultant is expected to submit the inception report, a literature review including desk review report, the draft and final reports of the assignment with essential datasets.

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

The consultant will initially consult via electronic means (zoom, teams and google meet) and also physical meetings while observing COVID 19 guidelines if travel in to Malawi is possible. Reporting to UNICEF and partners will be submitted electronically.

EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

In alignment with the scope of work as described above, the consultant will be expected to perform the following activities and deliverables as per the schedule and estimated dates below:

Task/Milestone	Deliverable/Outcome (e.g. Inception, progress, final reports, training material, workshop, etc.)	Estimated # of days	Planned Completion date
Draft inception report for the assignment including proposed methodology, instruments, timeline, proposed datasets, visuals and report outline for this assignment on assessment of the digital learning landscape, with clear approaches to subthemes. (i) Early Childhood Development and Education; (ii) Primary and Complementary Basic Education; (iii) Secondary Education (iv) Teacher Education; (v) TEVET (vi) Higher Education (vii) Adult Literacy (viii) Special needs covering all the subsectors above (ix) ICT Infrastructure and services(x) Policy and financing.	Inception Report	20 days	30/09/2021
Desk review of available literature on the state of digital learning technologies and gaps on internet penetration, school connectivity, digital learning opportunities, available data on digital skills among children/young people,	Literature/desk review report on (published and literature such as NGOs and UN reports, studies and government	20 days	31/10/2021

teachers and other stakeholders in the country.	policy/programme documents). Interviews with key stakeholders		
Data collection and analysis in line with agreed methodology	Draft report including and power point presentation. First draft report for review and comments and a package of data resources. The report should address all the ten subthemes highlighted above. The most important part of the report will be the recommended Digital Education Solution Platform, Applications, Connectivity Plan, Local EdTech capacity building plan, and Sustainability Strategies, for the Ministry of Education	40 days	31/12/2021
Final report and annexes. Presentation of results and recommendations.	Presentation of final report to UNICEF and Ministry of Education (MoE) as well as relevant development partners. Also, submission of the final report	10 days	31/01/2022

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/ individual contractor and the supervisor upon contract signature.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR EVALUATION OF RESULTS

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

- Inception and Final Report, including all documentation and data sets. Structure and formats will be discussed with UNICEF and Directorate of ODEL. A report outline should be included in the inception report.
- Power point, or other format, presentations of key findings to UNICEF and Ministry of Education.
- UNICEF guidelines on ethics in research (in the link below) should be referenced and followed in the field research. <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/278/>

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

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

Travel (international and local) costs will be reimbursed on actual expenditures and upon presentation of original supporting documents. As per UNICEF operational guidelines, travel for international consultancies, will be in economy class and will use the most economical route.

#	Task	% of payment	Approximate due date
1.	Upon satisfactory submission and approval of inception report.	30%	08/10/2021
2.	Literature/desk review report on (published and literature from studies and government policy/programme documents), including interviews with key stakeholders	30%	05/11/2021
3.	Draft report including and power point presentation. First draft report for review and comments and a package of data resources.	30%	07/01/2022
4.	Presentation of final report to UNICEF and Ministry of Education (MoE)	10%	04/02/2022

DESIRED COMPETENCIES, TECHNICAL BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

Academic qualification: A Master or PhD in Educational technologies and or application of Digital technologies in learning or Information technologies.

Work experience: The consultant has at least above 10 years' extensive experience in qualitative research methods, monitoring and evaluation, implementation of monitoring systems in developing countries. High level experience in developing relevant feasibility surveys and assessments particularly in digital technologies landscape. This should include experience with digital data collection instruments, and real time data analytics. Broad experience in working with government departments, in particular highly technical departments overssing the open, distance e-learning.

Technical skills and knowledge: Sound knowledge of research design: design and plan the approaches and research methodologies, including quantitative and qualitative methods – the consultant's skill base should include skills and expertise required to design, plan and conduct the assignment, potentially using innovative, experimental or quasi-experimental techniques, such as human centered design, workshop creation.

Specific subject matter knowledge and expertise: International expertise with knowledge and experience required especially in terms of skills (including foundational, transferable/life, digital, job-specific and entrepreneurial), education across the life-cycle (children and young people), technology for development, digital platforms for low-bandwidth settings, connectivity expansion, gender and other related education issues to ensure that the design and research methods are as relevant and meaningful as possible given the aims and objectives of the project and the context in which it is being delivered.

Primary research: Design, management and implementation of primary research in potentially challenging project environments, such as remote and marginalized communities – this could include secondary data analysis, online literature reviews, in-depth interviews, etc.

Competencies: Excellent writing and presentation skills; portfolio-proven experience in print and digital media design; portfolio-proven experience in creating infographics and visualizing complex information.

Effectiveness assessment of education projects: education economics expertise to conduct cost benefit analysis and cost effectiveness analysis (Value for Money (VfM) or other approaches)

Languages: High level proficiency in English both verbal and written.

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 and individual contractors, 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 acknowledgment upon acceptance of the offer. Prior to the issuance of the official contract, the consultant is requested to complete the applicable mandatory trainings.

CONDITIONS

- 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 and will work remotely and where physical presence especially at Directorate of Open, Distance and E-Learning at Ministry of Education, pending if travel to Malawi is possible at the time due to COVID-19 restrictions and current government regulations.
- The consultant will be paid an all-inclusive fee (stationary, communication and other miscellaneous expenses) as per the stipulated deliverable 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, will be covered in accordance with UNICEF's rules and tariffs, by the consultant and reimbursed against actuals, unless otherwise agreed.
- 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.
- Consultants 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 on-site/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