

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Costing of the Radical Inclusion Policy Implementation Plan in Sierra Leone

Assignment: National costing expert to cost the Implementation Plan for the National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools

Duration of work: June – August 2022

1. About Education Partnerships Group

The Education Partnerships Group (EPG) is a non-profit consultancy that supports governments in low- and middle-income countries to shape and strengthen their education systems. At the heart of our approach is the belief that governments are best placed to make decisions about their country. Our role is to enable those decisions by generating and using research to ensure the policy is informed by evidence, facilitating the design and effective implementation of policy, and advising on the piloting and scaling of new policy reforms.

Since 2015, EPG has worked in partnership with governments in 9 low- and middle-income countries and is currently working in partnership with 5 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

2. Background/context

On April 8th, 2021, Cabinet approved the National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools. First of its kind in Sierra Leone, the policy seeks to ensure that schools throughout Sierra Leone are accessible to, and inclusive of, all children – especially those groups that are typically marginalised or excluded. The policy focuses on four specific excluded/marginalised groups:

1. Girls, especially girls who are pregnant or have been pregnant and are parent learners;
2. Children with disabilities;
3. Children in rural and underserved areas; and
4. Children from low-income families.

Following the approval of the policy, the MBSSE commissioned EPG to support the development of an implementation plan for the policy spanning 2021 to 2026. After multiple rounds of consultations and the MBSSE's sign-off, the implementation plan was finalized and validated by all relevant stakeholders in March 2022.

| Overview of the Implementation Plan | |
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| Purpose | To provide a roadmap for stakeholders on the sequence of activities needed to fulfil the four policy statements and equip them with the knowledge and resources necessary to implement the policy. |
| Audience | The primary audience is the MBSSE, who are ultimately accountable for policy implementation and will ensure leadership and oversight of the implementation process. The plan is also intended for stakeholders throughout the education system, as well as health and child protection actors that support children to join and stay in school including other relevant Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs), education, sexual reproductive health and child protection professionals, development and implementing partners, and civil society organizations. |

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| Structure | <p>The implementation plan is structured into four sections:</p> <p>Section 1 lays the background information and connects the implementation plan with the National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools.</p> <p>Section 2 sets out activity-based workplans for each policy statement, which have been developed in consultation with multiple stakeholders.</p> <p>Section 3 describes the governance and coordination arrangements needed to lead, coordinate, and implement the policy.</p> <p>Section 4 details the monitoring, evaluation and learning approach to be used throughout implementation.</p> |
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While the MBSSE is the lead on policy implementation, several other MDAs have overlapping mandates and will support the implementation process – these MDAs are all outlined in the implementation plan. Given this overlapping mandate, it is the expectation that the costing of the implementation plan considers how other MDAs will contribute to the financing of some of the implementation activities through current or future budgets. In addition to MDAs, the MBSSE expects its development partners to contribute funding to support the implementation activities outlined in the implementation plan. For these stakeholders to confirm their expected contributions, they will require the MBSSE to provide them with a costed implementation plan.

The costing of the implementation plan, therefore, will support the roll-out of the National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools and should be informed by several existing education documents and MDA budgets. These include the MBSSE’s most recent Education Sector Plan: Learning for All 2022-2027, as well as relevant MBSSE/MDAs’ budgets and activity plans that can support implementation.

3. Purpose

This assignment is to cost Year 1 of the implementation plan for the National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools. The scope is limited to Year 1 given that it has the most detailed activities. For the remaining years, activities are indicative and still high-level, meaning it will be difficult to cost the full duration of the plan. It is the expectation that the workplans for the remaining years (2-5), will use the same methodology and template as Year 1. To complete the assignment, the Consultant(s) will need to:

- Agree with the MBSSE on an approach/ methodology to costing the activity-based workplans for Year 1 in section 2 of the implementation plan;
- Outline what Year 1 of policy implementation is expected to cost, how it will be financed and highlight gaps in funding;
- Ensure that existing budgets from the MBSSE and other MDAs, alongside proposed contributions from development partners, are considered in the costing and financing of the implementation plan.

The preference is for the costing expert to be based in Sierra Leone in order to lead in-person consultations with stakeholders. If the expert is based internationally, s/he should factor in a trip to Sierra Leone to successfully complete this assignment.

4. Approach/ methodology

The assignment will entail the following main stages:

- a. **Briefing:** this will be carried out by the EPG team and will entail an overview of the assignment at hand; the expected approach and consultation process to be used to deliver the costing; timelines; key background information and considerations; EPG's ways of working with the MBSSE; and individual tasks to be delivered.
- b. **Document review:** the Consultant will complete a review of background documents provided by the EPG team. Documents will include, but are not limited to, the National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools, the Implementation Plan and accompanying annex and the costed MBSSE's Education Sector Plan: Learning for All 2022-2027.
- c. **Meeting with the MBSSE to agree on the costing approach:** the Consultant will facilitate a discussion with relevant MBSSE stakeholders to determine the approach to costing (e.g., activity-based costing or thematic costing such as the one used in the Education Sector Plan); as well as information needed from the MBSSE and other MDAs.
- d. **Inception report outlining costing methodology:** following consultations with relevant Government officials, the consultant will develop an inception report outlining the proposed approach to costing Year 1 of implementation and confirm the timelines for completion of the assignment. The content and structure of the report will be discussed and agreed with EPG as part of the briefing.
- e. **Meeting with EPG to discuss additional information/ consultations needed to complete the costing:** this should be informed by the Consultant's document review, initial consultations with Government officials, and his/her understanding of the type of data required to complete the assignment. EPG will work alongside the MBSSE to support the Consultant in obtaining the necessary documents/information.
- f. **Review of materials and consultations with relevant stakeholders:** the Consultant will review the documents available and where relevant hold follow up discussions with relevant officials of the MBSSE, Ministry of Finance and other relevant MDAs, and development partners to gather relevant outstanding financial information (e.g., budgets, workplans, etc).
- g. **First draft of costed implementation plan:** the Consult will submit a first draft of the costing of Year 1 implementation plan.
- h. **Response to comments on first draft and submission of second draft of the costed implementation plan:** the Consultant will adapt the Year 1 costed plan and respond to comments and feedback on the first draft from EPG and the MBSSE (this may include conducting further consultations). The second draft should respond to all comments and feedback and the version sent should detail tracked changes/ responses to comments.
- i. **Response to comments on second draft and submission of finalised plan to EPG:** The Consultant will submit a final draft of the Year 1 costed plan, which should respond to all comments and feedback. The version sent should detail tracked changes/ responses to comments.

5. Timelines and activities

The costing of the implementation plan should take place between June and August 2022 as outlined below. The exact timelines will be confirmed upon contracting.

| # | Activities | Deadline |
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| 1 | Briefing meeting | End- June |

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| 2 | Document review | Early-July |
| 3 | Meeting with the MBSSE to agree on the costing approach a. Meet with EPG to agree on meeting objectives and participants b. Facilitate the meeting with government | Mid-July |
| 4 | Submission of inception report as per the outline agreed with EPG | Mid-July |
| 5 | Meeting with EPG to discuss additional information/ consultations needed to complete costing exercise | Mid-July |
| 6 | Review of materials and consultations with relevant stakeholders a. Consultation meetings with relevant officials at the MBSSE, Ministry of Finance, other relevant MDAs and development partners | End-July |
| 7 | Submission of first draft of Year 1 costed implementation plan | Early-August |
| 8 | Review and respond to comments from EPG and the MBSSE on first draft (including additional consultations as needed) and submission of second draft | Mid - August |
| 9 | Finalisation and submission of Year 1 costed implementation plan, including a version detailing tracked changes/ responses to comments | End-August |

6. Funding

The budget allocated for this assignment is **up to 10,000 USD** (approximately 8000 GBP) depending on skills and experience.

7. Deliverables and Payment Schedule

This contract will use a milestone payment schedule as follows:

| # | Milestones | Payment Schedule |
|---|--|------------------|
| 1 | Inception report is submitted and approved by EPG | 15% |
| 2 | First draft of Year 1 costed implementation plan is submitted and validated by EPG | 20% |
| 3 | Second draft of Year 1 costed implementation plan is submitted and validated by EPG | 20% |
| 4 | Final version of Year 1 costed implementation plan is submitted and validated by EPG and the MBSSE | 45% |

8. Costing Expert Responsibilities

The consultant will lead the costing of the Year 1 Radical Inclusion implementation plan. Specific responsibilities include:

1. Liaising with EPG to ensure that ways of engaging with the MBSSE and other stakeholders are appropriate;
2. Conducting in-person consultations with stakeholders and updating EPG on the outcomes and agreements from these consultations;
3. Ensuring that the costing methodology used draws on relevant practices regionally and internationally and is suited for the Sierra Leone context;

4. Liaising with and providing regular updates to the EPG Programme Manager, including progress against the deliverables, and identifying and flagging risks and delays as early as possible; and
5. Preparing and submitting a costed implementation plan to EPG

9. EPG Responsibilities

1. Assist in coordination with relevant stakeholders.
2. Identification of interviewees and validation of consultation approach.
3. Review progress of the work and provide feedback as necessary.
4. Quality assurance of deliverables.
5. Any other tasks/supports as required and agreed by EPG.

10. Required qualification and expertise

EPG will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

Academic qualification:

- A post-graduate degree in the relevant field (Economics/ Finance/ Accounting/Public Policy/ International Development/ Planning)

Experience:

- At least 5 years of experience dealing with budgets and costing, preferably with government budgets or costing of policies and programmes.
- Technical expertise in understanding budget management systems and processes in ministries
- Knowledge and understanding of the Sierra Leone education sector and ability to lead MDA coordination.
- Experience working with government on costing and budgeting processes

Competencies:

- Excellent knowledge and skills of reading, writing and speaking in English
- Ability to work in a multi-cultural environment and team
- Displays high standards of ethical conduct and exhibit honesty and integrity

11. Submission of materials

Interested individuals must submit the following documents/information:

- **Personal CV:** indicating all past experience for similar assignments, as well as the contact details (email and telephone numbers) of the candidate and 3 professional references.
- **One page concept note on the assigned task,** specifying the methodology to conduct the assignment, candidate's qualifications and relevant experiences, and preferably sample(s) of written work.
- **Evidence of relevant work undertaking similar assignments.** Submission of a sample report related to the costing of activities will be an added advantage.

Interested individuals must submit the aforementioned documents to EPG through email (abdulai.conteh@epg.org.uk) by 5 PM GMT on Thursday, May 26th, 2022. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.