

**MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**



**REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE**

**SIERRA LEONE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION PROJECT  
IDA- E1130-SL**

**Terms of Reference**

for

**Recruitment of a Consulting Firm for the Institutional Gap Assessment for  
National Communication Authority (NatCA)**

**SL-MoF-475155-CS-QCBS**

**February 2025**

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**I. Introduction**

The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) has committed to transforming its economy based on a more inclusive and human-centric digital growth and development approach. A high-level vision for the digital economy is articulated in the new National Digital Development Policy (NDDP), which was approved by the Cabinet in December 2021 setting the GoSL’s vision to transform Sierra Leone into an inclusive digital economy and society and to leverage digital technology to support the GoSL to deliver on its national development plan effectively and efficiently. The Sierra Leone Digital Transformation Project (SLDTP) aims to expand access to broadband internet, increase digital skills and improve government capacity to deliver public services digitally. The project will support the development of a strong enabling environment for the nation’s digital transformation and digital development agenda as articulated in the National Digital Development Strategy.

**II. Project Description**

The Sierra Leone Digital Transformation Project (SLDTP) is a five-year International Development Association (IDA)-funded project supported by a US\$50 million grant. The project’s main implementing agency is the Ministry of Communication, Technology and Innovation (MoCTI). The proposed Project Development Objective (PDO) is to expand access to broadband internet, enhance digital skills and improve government capacity to deliver public services digitally.

The SLDTP proposes four integrated and mutually reinforcing components, with a fifth component dedicated to contingent response to future emergencies (*Contingent Emergency Response Component, CERC*).

- Component 1 – Expanding Digital Access and Increasing Resilience of the Digital Environment;
- Component 2 – Digital Skills Development and Innovation;
- Component 3 - Laying Key Foundations for Digital Government Services and Systems;
- Component 4 – Project Management and Implementation Support; and
- Component 5 - Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC).

The proposed activities integrated into Components 1, 2, and 3 are designed to support the Government in building resilient and inclusive policies by strengthening its legal and regulatory frameworks, scaling up the citizen-centric digital public service delivery by reinforcing the government portal and relevant Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) capacity. By

enhancing the service delivery infrastructure and platforms, the project will support ensuring the continuity of public services in times of crisis.

The Project is being implemented by a Project Coordination Unit (PCU) in MoCTI. MoCTI is the primary stakeholder of ICT-related policies and oversees the development, review, and implementation of the Government's communication, technology and innovation agenda.

The National Communications Authority (NatCA) plays a pivotal role in regulating and overseeing the rapidly evolving communications and telecommunications sector within the country. As the digital landscape continues to expand and evolve, NatCA's ability to adapt and meet the demands of this dynamic sector is of paramount importance. The SLDTP recognizes the critical role that NatCA plays in facilitating the objectives of the project, which aims to expand access to broadband internet, enhance digital skills, and improve the government's capacity to deliver public services digitally.

The institutional gap assessment for NatCA is a critical imperative, primarily driven by the fast-paced evolution of the telecommunications and communications sector. Accordingly, the institutional mandate and responsibilities of NatCA are evolving as well with the rapid changes in the sector. As technological advancements, such as Fifth Generation (5G) networks and broadband expansion, reshape the industry, NatCA must adapt its regulatory framework to ensure effectiveness. The assessment will shed light on resource allocation, strategic planning, and capacity-building needs, allowing NatCA to optimize its operations, align its strategic vision with the goals of SLDTP, and fulfil its pivotal role in supporting the digital transformation and public service delivery enhancement objectives of the nation.

The results of this assessment will not only serve to bolster NatCA's regulatory capabilities but will also enable the authority to:

- **Optimize Regulatory Frameworks:** By identifying and addressing gaps in regulatory frameworks and governance, NatCA can establish a more conducive environment for the sector, promoting competition, innovation, and quality of service.
- **Enhance Consumer Protection:** A more effective NatCA will better ensure consumer interests, protecting against fraudulent practices and ensuring the availability of quality services.
- **Foster Technical Advancements:** Improved technical infrastructure and skillsets will enable NatCA to adapt to technological advancements, ensuring that the sector remains at the forefront of innovation.
- **Facilitate Digital Transformation:** NatCA's improved capacity will directly contribute to the goals of the Sierra Leone Digital Transformation Project, by fostering the expansion of broadband access and enhancing the delivery of government services digitally.
- **Optimize Resource Allocation:** The assessment will help NatCA make informed decisions about resource allocation, thereby ensuring that the organization operates more efficiently and cost-effectively.

- **Human Resources:** The assessment will help identify existing gaps in professional and support staff based on the functional and organizational structure of NatCA, including responsibilities and required qualifications

In essence, this institutional gap assessment is a strategic step towards enabling NatCA to better serve the sector, fulfil its regulatory responsibilities, and ultimately, contribute to Sierra Leone's digital transformation and socio-economic development.

## **II. Objectives**

The objectives will be divided into two focus areas to enable the consulting firm (“Consultant”) to deliver on the SLDT project's general and specific objectives, as below:

### **i. General Objectives**

- To conduct a comprehensive institutional gap assessment for the National Communications Authority (NatCA) to enhance its overall capacity and effectiveness in regulating the communications and telecommunications sector within Sierra Leone.
- To ensure that NatCA is well-positioned to support and align with the digital transformation goals of Sierra Leone.

### **ii. Specific Objectives**

The Specific objectives of this activity include:

- Identify and assess gaps in the organizational structure and governance of NatCA, focusing on areas that require adjustments to better meet strategic objectives.
- Evaluate the current human resource capacity within NatCA, including qualifications, skills, and expertise, and recommend strategies for recruitment, training, and skills development including reskilling and upskilling.
- Analyze the financial resources and budget allocation of NatCA to identify gaps and propose sustainable funding strategies for effective operation.
- Examine the technical infrastructure, equipment, and technology within NatCA, identifying gaps and recommending upgrades or enhancements.
- Assess the technical skill sets and expertise of NatCA's workforce and propose specific training and skill development initiatives.
- Develop a comprehensive capacity-building plan with clear objectives, recommended training programs, and timelines to strengthen NatCA's performance in regulating the communications sector.
- Proffer recommended management and functional institutional framework to enhance the organizational structure and governance at NatCA.

- Present the findings and recommendations of the institutional gap assessment to NatCA and relevant stakeholders to facilitate informed decision-making and action.

### III. Scope of Assignment

The institutional gap assessment will encompass the following key components:

#### A. Organizational Structure Assessment:

- Review and evaluate NatCA's current organizational structure and governance.
- Identify gaps in the structure and recommend improvements to align with its strategic objectives.
- Suggest any necessary changes to NatCA's mandate, roles, and responsibilities.

#### B. Human Resource Capacity Assessment:

- Analyze the current workforce of NatCA, including qualifications, skills, and expertise.
- Identify gaps in human resources and propose strategies for recruitment, training, and development.
- Assess staff retention and succession planning.

#### C. Financial Resources Assessment:

- Examine NatCA's financial resources, budget allocation, and financial management, including processes and procedures, authorization hierarchy, budgeting, and financial control procedures.
- Identify financial gaps and recommend strategies for sustainable funding.
- Explore potential revenue generation opportunities.

#### D. Technical Infrastructure and Skill Gap Assessment:

- Evaluate the technical infrastructure of NatCA, including equipment, systems, and technology.
- Identify gaps in technical resources and recommend upgrades or enhancements.
- Assess the technical skill sets within the organization and suggest training or skill development programs.

#### E. Capacity Building Recommendations:

- Propose a comprehensive capacity-building plan, outlining specific training programs and skill development initiatives.
- Identify relevant training providers and resources.
- Recommend a timeline for implementing capacity-building measures.

#### IV. Reporting, Time Schedules, and Payment Schedules

The Consultant is expected to complete the assignment in full within **12** weeks, The Consultant will regularly report to the Director General of NatCA or any Technical designated Lead on all aspects of the agreed activities and report to the SLDTP Project Coordinator.

The deliverables comprise the following:

No	Deliverable	Timeline	Indicative payment schedule
1.	<b>Inception Report and Work Plan</b>	Commencement + 1 week	10%
2.	<b>Institutional Gap Assessment Report:</b> This report provides a comprehensive evaluation of NatCA's current state, identifying gaps in its organizational structure, human resources, finances, and technical infrastructure. It offers findings, recommendations, and a roadmap for improvement.	Commencement + 7 week	40%
3.	<b>Capacity-Building Plan:</b> The plan outlines a strategy for enhancing the skills and expertise of NatCA's workforce, with defined objectives, recommended training programs, and implementation timelines to address skill gaps.	Commencement + 9 week	25%
3.	<b>Presentation of Findings and Recommendations:</b> This involves presenting the assessment results and recommendations to NatCA and stakeholders, facilitating discussions and consensus on actions needed to bolster NatCA's regulatory capacity aligned with Sierra Leone's digital transformation goals.	Commencement + 11 week	25%

## V. Qualification and Experience of Consultant

The consulting firm must meet the following requirements:

1. **Technical Experience:** Must have at least ten (10) years of expertise in the telecommunications industry and regulations for 5 years in similar projects. Must be conversant with telecommunication regulations, mobile and fibre optic cable network elements, operations, technology and the development of telecommunications businesses.
2. **Technical Experience:** Must have at least ten (10) years of expertise in the assessment of the organizational structure, human resources, technical skills telecommunication infrastructure and equipment. Must also be able to identify gaps based on the best international and regional practices and come up with recommendations.
3. Familiarity with cybersecurity best practices.
4. Strong communication and training skills.
5. An understanding of telecommunications structures, telecommunications workflows, processes, procedures and decision-making structures is crucial for management, technical and functional review. The firm should have technical expertise in all areas listed in the table below.
6. **Reputation and Excellent Standing:** Provide reviews, testimonials, or references from previous clients in the execution of at least three (3) similar assignments in the past ten (10) years, to gauge the consulting firm’s professionalism, quality of work, and ability to deliver results.
7. Must have relevant experience working in Africa and in the Telecommunications sector.

The assignment calls for a team of at least four (4) people who possess the following qualifications, skills, and experience:

Key Position	Experience	Qualifications
Project Team Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A master's degree or higher in a relevant field, such as telecommunications, regulatory policy, or public administration.</li> <li>● Strong understanding of telecommunications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minimum of 10 years’ experience in similar assignments in the telecommunications industry, 5 years of which shall be working as a team leader on similar projects.</li> </ul>

	<p>regulatory frameworks, institutional development, and digital transformation in the context of emerging markets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Excellent communication and team leadership skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● experience in similar assignments in at least three (3) developing countries in Africa; and</li> <li>● fully conversant and knowledgeable in the conduct of management and functional review, human resource/skills gap assessment and the development of Capacity capacity-building plan in the telecommunication or related sector.</li> <li>● Conversant with mobile and e fibre optic cable network elements, operations and the development of telecommunications businesses;</li> <li>● Should have good communication, written, presenting and analytic skills.</li> </ul>
<p>Organization al Structure and Governance Expert:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A master's degree or higher in public administration, organizational development, or a related field.</li> <li>● Strong knowledge of governance principles, administrative processes, human resource skills assessment and management and functional review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minimum of 5 years' experience in similar assignments in the telecommunications industry, 3 years of which shall be working as an expert in similar projects.</li> <li>○ experience in similar assignments in at least three (3) developing countries in Africa;</li> <li>● fully conversant and knowledgeable in the conduct of management and functional review, human resource/skills gap assessment and the development of Capacity Building Plans in the telecommunication or related sectors; and</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Should have good communication, written, presenting and analytic skills.</li> </ul>
Financial Resources and Budgeting Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A master's degree or higher in finance, economics, or a related field.</li> <li>● Expertise in financial modelling, revenue generation, and cost optimization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minimum of 5 years' experience in similar assignments in the telecommunications industry, 3 years of which shall be working as an expert in similar projects.</li> <li>● experience in similar assignments in at least three (3) developing countries in Africa;</li> <li>● Proven ability to identify and address financial gaps in telecommunications or related sectors.</li> <li>● Should have good communication, written, presenting and analytic skills.</li> </ul>
Technical Infrastructure and Skill Assessment Expert:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A master's degree or higher in telecommunications engineering, IT, or a related field.</li> <li>● In-depth knowledge of telecommunications technologies, equipment, and standards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A minimum of 5 years of experience in evaluating technical infrastructure and skill sets within telecommunications or regulatory authorities.</li> <li>● experience in similar assignments in at least three (3) developing countries in Africa;</li> <li>● Conversant with mobile and fibre optic cable network elements, operations and the development of telecommunications businesses;</li> <li>● Proven track record in assessing technical gaps and recommending infrastructure improvements.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should have good communication, written, presenting and analytic skills.</li> </ul>
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**V. Facilities Data and Information to Be Provided by Client**

The National Communications Authority shall provide office space with an Air Conditioner, electricity and Internet connection for the successful consulting firm to facilitate the smooth implementation of the assignment. The following shall be provided to the Consultant by the Employer:

- i. facilitate the provision of access to relevant documents and data available which may be supportive to the Consultant, and
- ii. prepare a letter introducing the consulting firm to operators in the telecommunications sector and other relevant institutions, wherever required in performing the assignment.

The firm shall provide all the administrative, technical professional and support staff needed to carry out the assignment efficiently. The Consultants shall also be responsible for providing all other necessary facilities and logistical support for their staff/teams, including accommodation, vehicles/transportation, office equipment, field survey and investigation equipment, laboratory testing, communications, utilities, office supplies and other miscellaneous requirements wherever applicable to render their services. The firm shall nominate and make available a contact person for regular meetings with the Project Coordination Unit and MIC teams.

**VI. Working Language**

The working language for the consultancy service shall be English.

## **VII. Conflict of Interest**

The successful consulting firm shall declare any conflict of interest, especially if any or all of the consultants is/are currently carrying out consultancy work for other stakeholders including licensed operators or service providers in the telecommunications sector in Sierra Leone.

## **VIII. Confidentiality of Information**

The firm shall protect the confidentiality of the data or information received by conducting this assignment and shall sign a confidentiality agreement with MoCTI. No data, information, or deliverables from this assignment will be released to third parties without the written approval of MoCTI. The Consultant shall surrender all data and other materials to the Regulatory Authority and shall not retain any information or materials after the closure of the assignment.