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Terms of Reference

Short-term International Consultancy

GESCI Organizational Evaluation of Sida Core Support

1. Background and Introduction

The Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GESCI) is an international non-profit technical assistance organisation with headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. GESCI's vision is to be a global thought leader and expert organisation in supporting the utilisation of new technologies to transform learning and empower individuals and communities with competencies and skills for inclusive and sustainable development. GESCI's core mission is to advance inclusive access to education and to carry out interventions with government partners to raise the quality of teaching and learning at basic education levels. The organization consistently works with governments and development partners to design and implement innovative and scalable models for the integration of ICTs in education and training systems to achieve these goals. GESCI's leadership development programme for senior level government officials builds competencies in ICT and in effective planning for knowledge society development and the achievement of key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In consultation with Sida and relevant partners GESCI intends to carry out an independent evaluation of its operations, programmes, strategies and approaches during April – June 2017 to determine its efficiency, effectiveness (including cost-effectiveness), relevance, sustainability, accountability and impact and lessons learned that can be used to strengthen the organisation going forward and which can be shared with GESCI's donors and other partners. GESCI will invite qualified individuals or firms to submit proposals to carry out the evaluation as a consultancy in line with Sida's Evaluation Guidelines.

A reference/advisory group consisting of GESCI, Sida and beneficiary/stakeholder representatives to provide quality assurance, serve as a sounding board and provide clarity and additional information as may be required, will be constituted. The reference group will also provide direction on how the lessons learned could be packaged and disseminated for advocacy and wider application and utilisation.

2. Evaluation Purpose and objectives

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, sustainability, accountability and impact of GESCI's operations and work to derive lessons learned for GESCI's growth

and future work, and for GESCI's key donors to establish a platform to measure "return on their investment" vis a vis their development agenda as a basis for possible continued support to GESCI. It will provide a mechanism for Sida to account for development results to its stakeholders and taxpayers, and for GESCI to demonstrate the viability of its interventions to its beneficiaries, stakeholders and partners. The lessons learned from the evaluation will be shared with GESCI's donors (existing and potential), beneficiaries and partners and be available on the GESCI website. The evaluation is expected to be results-oriented following up progress made and results achieved in relation to the Results Assessment Framework which is the core of GESCI's Results Based Management approach- i.e. what was planned/ agreed with Sida vs. what was actually achieved. The evaluation will cover the period of Swedish core support to GESCI from 2013 – 2016.

3. Specifically, the evaluation will inform GESCI and its donors and other partners on:

- Progress made towards the achievement of results at the output, outcome and impact levels
- Whether the results contribute to Sida's development goals of poverty reduction, and sustainable development
- GESCI's contribution to cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality, the environment and human rights
- Efficiency: whether GESCI's results could have been achieved with fewer means in terms of resources and time and/ or whether GESCI could have produced more results with the same means within the timeframe under review
- Effectiveness: to what extent has GESCI achieved its goals and objectives as stated in its organisational strategy, the Results Assessment Framework and at the programmatic level? What is the relationship between project costs and results?
- Relevance: whether and how relevant GESCI's work is to developing country governments' needs, donors and other partners' priorities and agendas. For example, GESCI's work on gender equality and assisting equal opportunities for women and girls and reaching out to rural schools
- Sustainability: Is GESCI's work with its partners sustainable and/or does it have long term impact?
- Accountability, transparency, openness and governance: Are GESCI's management and governance structures accountable and promote transparency and openness?
- Impact: What are the intended and unintended, positive and negative effects of GESCI's work on its beneficiaries and partners?

The evaluation is also expected to document GESCI's key successes as well as its key challenges. Where necessary and appropriate, the evaluation should identify key areas that GESCI might address in its new strategy.

4. Methodology

Adopting a partnership approach and involving stakeholders is fundamental to Sida's development goals. The evaluator/consultant is expected to conduct a participatory evaluation providing for active and meaningful involvement by the development partners (Sida, in particular), beneficiaries and other interested parties through the reference/advisory group. Stakeholder participation is to be an integral component of the evaluation design and planning; data collection; reporting; and results dissemination.

The selected evaluator/ consultant is expected to provide a detailed methodology and approach to the work. However, the overall methodology should adopt a results-oriented approach taking into consideration GESCI's use of Results Based Management approaches. It should involve desk reviews of GESCI's key documents, interviews (telephone, face to face or emailed questionnaires as appropriate) and/or focus group discussions with key GESCI stakeholders (including GESCI staff, management, Board of Directors and Members; Donors, Ministry of Education Officials where GESCI works, other international organisations in the fields of ICT, Education and Innovation, etc.), and a field visit to one of the countries in which GESCI is currently active. The field visit to a Ministry in charge of education and training will also assess the issues raised under purpose and objectives.

The evaluation will be carried out in conformity with the principles, standards and practices set out in OECD/DAC's Evaluation Quality Standards (ref. Checklist for Sida's assessment of terms of reference).

5. Deliverables

The key deliverables for the assignment are:

- i) an inception report within two (2) weeks after start of the assignment with initial findings from the desk/documentation review and a detailed work plan with timelines presented to GESCI management and the Reference Group. The inception report will provide details of the proposed approach and methods specifying the issues and themes to be studied and any (potential) limitations of the evaluation.
- ii) A draft report to be presented to GESCI and the Reference Group with a copy to Sida six (6) weeks after the start of the assignment for comments and reactions.
- iii) A final report presented to GESCI and Sida two (2) weeks after receiving comments and reactions to the draft report.

6. Evaluator qualifications:

The evaluation will be carried out by a senior consultant/consultancy team who shall have/be:

- Proven ability of reliable and effective project management with extensive experience in conducting development/organisational/programmatic evaluations and a proven record in delivering professional results.
- Fully acquainted with results-based management orientation and practices, Outcomes Mapping and impact assessments
- Expert in relevant qualitative and quantitative data analysis tools
- Fluent in English with excellent communication, research, analytical and report writing skills
- Extensive evaluation experience in developing country context, particularly in ICT4E focused interventions
- Experience in working with a range of stakeholders, including government officials, development partners, beneficiaries
- Proven ability to use metrics, tools and frameworks to analyse cost effectiveness, impact and sustainability of interventions
- Broad-based experience in organizational, financial management and operational systems within the development context.

- The consultant must have carried out at least one similar assignment within the last five years.
- The consultant must have at least 10 years relevant experience with monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes, preferably at national, regional or sector-wide programmes in a developing country or region.

Consultants are therefore expected to state clearly in their proposal that they meet the above criteria and provide documentary proof where appropriate

7. Timeframe

Following a widely publicized /advertised call for tender submissions, the consultant is expected to start work in April 17 2017 and finish the assignment by May 31 2017 at the latest.

8. Final report:

The final evaluation report will not exceed 50 pages (excluding the annexes), and will be in English, containing a comprehensive analysis compliant to Sida's Evaluation Quality Standards, and international evaluation standards. The final report will be a stand-alone document with an Executive Summary, the Methodology, Findings, Analysis, Conclusions and Recommendations.

Title and opening pages: Will provide the following basic information:

- Name of the evaluation intervention
- Time frame of the evaluation and date of the report
- Name/s of evaluator/s
- Name of the organization commissioning the evaluation
- Acknowledgements
- Table of contents: Will include boxes, figures, tables and annexes with page references
- List of acronyms and abbreviations

Executive summary: A stand-alone section where the readers can rapidly become acquainted with a large body of material without having to read the whole report and will include:

- A brief and succinct description of GESCI and its activities (organisational context, projects, programmes, policies and/or other interventions) that were evaluated.
- An explanation of the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, including the audiences for the evaluation and the intended uses.
A description of the key aspect of the evaluation approach, methods and analysis.
- A summary of the principal findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Introduction: Brief description of GESCI and its activities (organisational context, projects, programmes, policies and/or other interventions) which were evaluated, an explanation of the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, including the audiences for the evaluation and the intended use, and a description of the structure and contents of the report and how the information contained in the report will meet the purposes of the evaluation and satisfy the information needs of the report's intended users.

Description of the GESCI intervention: This section will provide the basis for report users to understand the logic and assessment of the evaluation and understand the applicability of the evaluation results. The description will:

- Describe what is being evaluated, who seeks to benefit, and the problem or issue it seeks to address.
- Explain the expected results map or results framework, implementation strategies, and the key assumptions underlying the strategy.
- Funding frameworks or strategic plan goals, or other programme or country specific plans and goals.
- Identify and describe the key partners involved in the implementation and their roles.
- Description of the GESCI scale of the intervention, such as the number of projects/programmes carried out and the size of the target population for each component.
- Description of GESCI resources
- Describe the context of the social, political, economic and institutional factors, and the geographical landscape within which the intervention operates and explain the effects (challenges and opportunities) those factors present for its implementation and outcomes.

Evaluation model and methodology: This section will provide a clear explanation of:

- Evaluation scope: Definition of the parameters of the evaluation in terms of the time period, the segments of the target population included, the geographic area included, and which components, outputs or outcomes were and were not assessed.
- Evaluation objectives: The report should spell out the types of decisions evaluation users will make, the issues they will need to consider in making those decisions, and what the evaluation will need to achieve to contribute to those decisions.
- Evaluation criteria: definition of the evaluation criteria used and the justification of the rationale for selecting the particular criteria used in the evaluation.
- Evaluation questions: Detail of the main evaluation questions addressed by the evaluation and a description how the answers to these questions address the information needs of users.

Evaluation approach and methods: This section will provide a detailed description of the selected methodological approaches, methods and analysis; the approaches and methods employed that yielded data that helped answer the evaluation questions and achieved the evaluation purposes and will provide the description of:

- Data sources: The sources of information (e.g. documents reviewed and stakeholders interviewed, questionnaires, focus group discussions)
- Sample and sampling frame: Description of the sample used (size and characteristics); the sample selection criteria, the process for selecting the sample (if applicable), how comparison and treatment groups were assigned; and the extent to which the sample is representative of the entire target population, including discussion of the limitations of the sample for generalizing results.
- Data collection procedures and instruments: Methods or procedures used to collect data, including discussion of data collection instruments (e.g., interview protocols), their appropriateness for the data source and evidence of their reliability and validity.

- Data analysis: Description of the procedures used to analyse the data collected and steps and stages of analysis that were carried out. Potential weaknesses in the data analysis and gaps or limitations of the data will be included.

Findings and conclusions: This section will present the evaluation findings based on the analysis and conclusions drawn from the findings.

- Findings: Will be presented in:
 - Secondary information: This section summarizes major findings arising from information gathered from secondary sources, and processed on the Project Database. It provides an overall understanding of GESCI partnership's activities, serving as a reference for interpreting and consolidating insights provided by other secondary and primary sources of evaluation. It summarizes partnership efforts in terms of the volume of activities and resource investment, depicting the overall concentration of activities and resources by regions, areas of technical assistance/subject matters that are found to be more cost effective.
 - Primary Information: This section aims at presenting the results obtained from interviews, survey and field visits; a consolidated vision regarding the effectiveness, relevance, outcome and sustainability of the partnership activities reflecting the positive or negative perceptions of beneficiaries.
- Analysis: This section will present the methods and tools used for analysis and provide a critical analytical review of the findings correlated and linked to the data
- Conclusions: This section will be comprehensive and balanced, and will highlight the strengths, weaknesses and outcomes of the GESCI intervention. This section will provide the responses of the key evaluation questions.
- Recommendations: This section will provide practical, feasible recommendations directed to the intended users of the report about what actions to take or decisions to make. The recommendations should be specifically supported by the evidence and linked to the findings and conclusions around key questions addressed by the evaluation.

Lessons learned: As appropriate, the report should include discussion of lessons learned from the evaluation, that is, new knowledge gained from the particular circumstance (intervention, context outcomes, even about evaluation methods) that are applicable to a similar context. Lessons should be concise and based on specific evidence presented in the report.

Annexes: the following suggested annexes will be included to provide the report user with supplemental background and methodological details:

- ToR for the evaluation
- Methodology-related documentation and data collection instruments (questionnaires, interview guides, observation protocols, etc.)
- List of individuals or groups interviewed or consulted and sites visited
- List of supporting documents reviewed
- Summary tables of findings, such as tables displaying progress towards outputs, targets, and goals relative to established indicators
- Reference documents

9. Payment

Payment will be made based on deliverables, 10% upon satisfactory completion, submission and approval by GESCI of inception report, 50% upon satisfactory completion, submission and approval by GESCI of the draft report and 40% upon satisfactory completion, submission and approval by GESCI of the final report.

Where travel is required, GESCI will make all travel arrangement and pay on behalf of the Consultant in line with GESCI travel Policy.

10. Contracting and management of consultants

GESCI will be responsible for procurement, contracting and management of the consultant. GESCI will also pay the consultant as per this ToR and the final contract signed between the parties.

GESCI will provide all required documentation to the selected consultant at the start of the assignment including: (a) the Result Assessment Framework (RAF) for Sida (b) the annual result oriented reports & and audited financial reports for the period under review (c) the draft of the new GESCI strategy (d) one previous GESCI evaluation in 2012. GESCI will also make its staff and management available for consultation or interview and facilitate the consultant in arranging meetings or interviews with other stakeholder where necessary. GESCI management will also review the draft report and make comments.

GESCI's donors will endorse the final selected consultant, be available for interviews with the consultants, review and provide feedback on the draft report and may request for other meetings with the evaluator.

11. Selection of consultants

The assignment may be carried out by one or more independent consultants working together or by a consulting firm. The consultant(s) will be selected in an open competition with due regard to technical and financial considerations. Consultants that meet these two criteria will have their proposals evaluated. The evaluation criteria are based on technical and financial factors.

The technical factors considered in the selection of consultants are:

- i) Experience of consultants
 - a. Experience with monitoring and evaluation of Education or ICT or ICT in Education projects (10%)
 - b. Experience with organisational development and assessment (10%)
 - c. Experience evaluating donor projects in developing countries which should include demonstrable knowledge of Knowledge Society development (10%)
- ii) Proposed quality of methodology which is clear and demonstrates an understanding of the scope and objectives of the assignment (20%)
- iii) Qualifications and experience of key proposed staff
 - a. Master's degree or higher in relevant field (20%)
 - b. Professional or academic certification in monitoring and evaluation (10%)
 - c. Demonstrated understanding of education, ICTs in a development context (10%)
 - d. Proven ability to write clear, focused and succinct reports in English (10%)

Consultants should score at least 80% in the technical evaluation. Of the consultants that score 80%, the one with the least cost will be selected. **Consultancy fee attracts 20% withholding Tax for**

non-resident consultants and 5% for residents.

12. **Confidentiality and Copyright:** The consultant will be required to sign a confidentiality clause whereby information accessed through the GESCI independent organisational evaluation of Sida core support can only be disclosed and shared with authorized members of the organisation. GESCI will have ownership over any Intellectual Property developed for or derived from this consultancy engagement.

13. Submission of Proposals

Interested applicants should submit proposals to GESCI by email under the heading “**GESCI Independent Evaluation 2017**” to procurement@gesci.org on or before March 31 2017, 5 pm East Africa Time (GMT+3).

GESCI reserves the right without prejudice to reject all proposals or to cancel this procurement at any time.

*Only consultants meeting the academic and experience requirements need apply. Only shortlisted consultants will be contacted. For further information on the consultancy, you can contact **Rachel Wambua** at rachel.wambua@gesci.org.*