

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Technical assistance for evaluating digital skills programs, and developing requisite digital skills framework and interventions

A. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Rwanda has distinguished itself as a country that is deeply committed to leveraging digital transformation as a means to accelerate growth and reduce poverty. The Government of Rwanda has therefore prioritised using digitally enabled solutions, wherever possible, to leapfrog traditional approaches and support innovation in service delivery. Beginning as early as 2000, Rwanda began charting an ambitious course for achieving rapid digitization, through a series of five-year plans – culminating in the SMART Rwanda Master Plan. These policies have resulted in the progressive roll-out of digital infrastructure, impressive public e-services expansion (though from a very low base), as well as initiatives to support digital skills and to position Rwanda as a regional ICT hub, underpinned by government institutions and leadership committed to this agenda. Today, Rwanda continues to articulate ambitious strategies in relation to many of these areas.

The Government of Rwanda is set to receive funding from the World Bank (WB) and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to accelerate country-wide digital transformation, as well as facilitate Rwanda's integration in the emerging regional digital market. The proposed "Rwanda Digital Acceleration Project" project (henceforth referred to as the 'the Project') will expand digital adoption, bringing more Rwandans online by addressing the major barriers that dampen demand for digital services and spearheading a series of interventions that promote digital inclusion. The Project will also enable Rwanda to leverage critical enabling digital platforms and data-driven solutions to improve the efficiency of public service delivery and expand the adoption of digitally enabled services. Finally, the Project will also increase Rwanda's capacity to support digital innovation and productivity gains, by strengthening the local digital innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem, supporting tech firms to move from start-ups to growth and the adoption of digital technology in key sectors.

The Project will be coordinated through the Ministry of ICT and Innovation (MINICT), with Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA) as the lead Project implementing institution. A dedicated Single Project Implementation Unit (SPIU) is thus being set up and operationalized at RISA that will have overall responsibility for supporting project preparation and implementation.

The Project will seek to tackle Rwanda's digital skills gaps across the entire spectrum including basic, intermediate and advanced digital skills. It will help expand the national coverage of Rwanda's flagship Digital Ambassador's Program (DAP) at cell-level, with the aim of training at least 3 million individuals in 5 years in basic digital literacy across all 2,148 cells to support wider adoption of basic digital tools and data-based services. A revamped iteration of the DAP scheme (version 2.0) will be scaled, building in more sustainability, inclusion and performance-based management elements, including task-based and tailored training approaches sensitive to gender, persons with disabilities (PWD). The introduction of a National Digital Skills Framework

will be supported to allow for consistent benchmarking of programs, evaluation of delivery and tracking of learning outcomes and skills attainment. The Project will also aim to equip Rwandans with intermediate and advanced 21st-century digital skills, boosting local capacity to contribute to digital entrepreneurship and innovation. A two-pronged approach will be adopted; on the one hand supporting wider access to digital skills within traditional TVET and tertiary education through scale-up of the Rwanda Coding Academy and supporting business-models for advanced digital skills provision on the other, through support for performance-based contracting of bootcamps. By building the local digital talent pipeline and equipping Rwandans with skills for jobs of the future, the Project will actively help stem the rise in unemployment expected on account of COVID-19 and fuel the local digital entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem.

B. PURPOSE OF ASSIGNMENT

RISA is seeking the services of a qualified firm to evaluate Rwanda's current digital skills ecosystem and programs, develop a National Digital Skills Framework, and support the re-design and preparation of the revamped DAP (version 2.0).

The purpose of the assignment is to support Rwanda in its quest to develop a highly skilled and digital-savvy local human capital that leverages the opportunities presented by digital technologies, that is able to effectively consume digital technologies and transform them into solutions that help address Rwanda's socio-economic challenges, increase employment, boost productivity and economic diversification.

The scope of services, consulting team profiles, reporting requirements and other particulars of the assignment are indicated below.

C. SCOPE OF WORK

The consulting firm will adopt an ecosystem-wide approach and begin with a comprehensive evaluation of the existing digital skills ecosystem, including digital skills programs in place, before proceeding to develop a national digital skills framework and implementation plan, aligned with global standards that will frame future digital skills programs. Finally, the consulting firm will help refine the digital skills interventions that the Project is due to invest, focusing on the flagship DAP scheme, developing a detailed implementation plan, budget, robust M&E framework, and supporting the preparation on any needed procurement documentation.

The consultant will, in consultation with the SPIU and other public, private, and civil society stakeholders, be required to carry out the following:

1. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of Rwanda's digital skills ecosystem and an evaluation of existing flagship programs

- Assessing the status of Rwanda's existing digital skills base. The firm will take stock and build on partial analyses that have been undertaken to compile a more comprehensive and forward-looking assessment of the demand and supply of digital skills in Rwanda.

- Mapping future digital skills need across the digital skills continuum, ranging from basic, intermediate to advanced, which factors in the country's vision and the ecosystem analysis undertaken.
- Mapping existing policies, programs, partners, and digital skills providers.
- Assessing the enabling conditions for digital skills development in Rwanda and making recommendations.
- Conducting a baseline survey of existing digital skills initiatives and proposing areas for improvement (e.g. upgrading, strengthening, and scaling), benchmarking initiatives against other digital skills programs to assess their adequacy and best practice approaches. A more in-depth assessment of the DAP is expected (see below).
- Analysis should consider the inclusion agenda, when taking stock of the existing digital skills ecosystem and existing schemes (looking at gender, PWD, urban-rural divide, income, elderly, geographic aspects).

2. Develop the National Digital Skills Framework and Implementation Plan

- Reviewing existing digital skills frameworks, policies and strategies in place and recommending appropriate actions to strengthen and streamline these into a comprehensive National Digital Skills Framework that covers all digital skills, complete with a digital skills coordination mechanism.
- Developing a National Digital Skills Framework for Rwanda encompassing all levels of digital skills and adapting international approaches to the local context in terms of defining competencies, domains and proficiency levels, by referencing local uses and examples and through discussions with relevant local stakeholders from the public sector (digital and education authorities), private sector (employers, and private digital skills providers), civil society organisations involved in digital skills, and academia (public digital skills providers, teachers, students, etc). Stakeholder consultations should be documented.
- Recommending how this framework could be aligned or linked with the overall skills framework for Rwanda to ensure synergy and avoid duplication.
- Proposing sustainable models and strategies to crowd in different actors – public, private and civil society to implement different facets of the National Digital Skills Framework, and to address any digital inclusion related barriers.
- Providing guidance on the operationalization of the framework to enable public and private education and training providers to develop curricula, training methods, and assessments for different user groups (including for out of school youth, informal sector workers, current workforce) and integrated relevant usage of content, devices, connectivity etc that all go into skilling.
- Developing a general M&E framework for the National Digital Skills Framework, including performance indicators to be used and suggesting means for collecting and tracking them.
- Drafting accreditation guidelines to enable compliance with the digital skills framework. This will need to be done in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) and its affiliated agencies.

3. Evaluate the DAP, develop a refined DAP 2.0 and a related operationalization plan

- Evaluating the Digital Ambassadors Program (DAP) - its impact, challenges, and opportunities. The evaluation should benchmark the DAP against other Digital Skills programs globally. It should consider how to maximise public and private sector interest and participation in the scheme, and how to maximise inclusion (gender, PWD, urban-rural divide, income, elderly).
- Developing a refined DAP 2.0 program, based on the evaluation conducted. The firm will take stock of what has been rolled out so far and global lessons learnt related to what works in terms of digital literacy programming to develop a high-impact and sustainable scheme.
- Assessing and advising how the revamped DAP 2.0 can also include training that is attuned to the needs of different user groups, whom may have diverse training needs, and employ task-based learning for end-users in order to stimulate continued usage
- Assessing and advising how the revamped DAP 2.0 can build in more sustainability, inclusion and performance-based management elements, including tailored training approaches sensitive to gender and PWD.
- Identifying possible digital tools that could be used to enhance operationalisation (e.g. through digital training material), track progress (e.g. training delivery and skills attainment) in real time and management of digital ambassadors.
- Developing a detailed and clear implementation roadmap and program manual to launch a revamped and evidenced-based DAP 2.0. This roadmap should include a detailed project budget, human resources and M&E framework (complete with baselines, targets, indicators and means of continuous evaluation), including any other supporting documents needed to ensure swift operationalisation. It should also provide a detailed overview of the skills to be provided as part of the program, number of people to be trained, how public and private institutions are to be involved, and the required resources to achieve these targets (e.g. human, digital resources). The firm should consider available funding under the Project, when developing this roadmap. The plan should map the roles and responsibilities of key parties involved in implementation, including the relationship between MINICT and RISA, as well as other Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) such as MINEDUC, Rwanda Development Board (RDB) Chief Skills Office, Ministry of Public Sector and Labour (MIFOTRA), Rwanda TVET Board, etc as well as how best to collaborate with other Development Partners supporting the digital skills areas.

4. Draft relevant inputs to support procurement of equipment, goods and services related to the DAP

- Identifying procurement to be undertaken.
- Preparing detailed description, technical specification, qualification etc. needed to operationalize the revamped DAP, including all the goods, consulting services, works, information systems and non-consulting services.

5. Conduct a validation workshop

- Preparing and a conducting a validation workshop where all draft deliverables will be validated by key stakeholders.

D. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES & SCHEDULE OF COMPLETION

The firm is expected to complete the assignment in full within 5 months or 20 weeks. It will be required to submit the following deliverables, based on the indicative timelines detailed below:

- An inception report detailing methodology and work plan.
- A comprehensive assessment of Rwanda's digital skills ecosystem and an evaluation of existing flagship programs, including an in-depth evaluation of the DAP
- A National Digital Skills Framework and Implementation plan
- A detailed implementation/operationalization plan for DAP 2.0
- Procurement documents for the DAP 2.0
- A validation workshop and final report, including final versions of all deliverables above.

S/No	Milestone/deliverable	Timeline	Indicative payment Schedule
D1.	Submission of an Inception report	Within 2 weeks from effectiveness of the contract	10% of the total contract amount
D2.	Submission of a draft assessment of Rwanda's digital skills ecosystem and an evaluation of existing flagship programs, including an in-depth evaluation of the DAP	Within 4 weeks after approval of Inception report	20% of the total contract amount
D3.	A draft National Digital Skills Framework and Implementation plan	Within 4 weeks after preliminary approval of the draft assessment report.	20% of the total contract amount
D4.	Submission of draft implementation/operationalization plan for DAP 2.0	Within 3 weeks after preliminary approval of National Digital Skills Framework	20% of the total contract amount
D5.	Submission of draft procurement documents for the DAP 2.0	Within 1 week after preliminary approval of DAP 2.0 implementation/operationalization plan	10% of the total contract amount
D6.	A validation workshop and submission of final report	Within 1 week after preliminary approval of bidding documents for identified programs	20% of the total contract amount after validation workshop to present and validate the draft

			deliverables (as mentioned above)
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E. PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING

All reports should be submitted to the SPIU Coordinator at the RISA. As requested, the consultant may also be responsible for presenting to a team including RISA, the MINICT, MINEDUC, RDB Chief Skills Office, MIFOTRA, Rwanda TVET Board and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and other relevant stakeholders.

The RISA SPIU team will reserve one week to validate each draft deliverable/report.

F. CLIENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

RISA shall provide the following to the firm to the best of their ability:

- All available data and literature considered relevant for accomplishing identified tasks.
- Access to key officials within the relevant Ministries and other relevant official entities, as applicable.
- Ensure cooperation from other organizations, whose activities and programs may be considered relevant to this project, to enable the consultants to have access to the information necessary to carry out their work program.

G. LOCATION

The firm selected must be available to work in Rwanda (e.g. through in-field missions). However, given the current status of travel, due to Covid-19, part of the assignment can be delivered remotely.

Having at least one local expert be based in Rwanda for the duration of the assignment, is strongly encourage, as this will also facilitate collection of requisite inputs, knowledge of local context and support knowledge transfer.

H. REQUIRED EXPERIENCE & SKILLS: FIRM & CORE TEAM

The Firm will need to demonstrate the following:

- A track record of successfully completing at least three similar assignments.
- Extensive experience in conducting digital skills assessments at national level.
- Extensive experience in designing, implementing, and evaluating digital skills programs in formal and non-formal education and training setting at national level.
- Extensive experience in developing national digital skills frameworks.
- Strong understanding of the dynamics of promoting national digital skills programs.
- Strong knowledge and understanding of issues and trends regarding the design, delivery, and evaluation of national digital skills programs, including best practice.
- Experience in building toolkits to support policy makers and in developing detailed operational, communication and M&E plans for major digital skills programs.

- Experience in a developing country context.
- Previous experience in dissemination and outreach strategies for similar programs.
- Demonstrated familiarity with Rwandan context and development objectives is considered an advantage.

The firm shall propose a team comprising of at minimum one team leader, four technical experts, plus any additional support staff the consultancy deems necessary to deliver the assignment. As noted above, the consulting firm is encouraged to utilize local staff, where appropriate.

Team Leader

The team leader will be a high calibre professional possessing the following international experience and qualifications:

- A seasoned professional with at least 7 years of relevant professional experience, focused designing, implementing and/or evaluating digital skills programs, preferably at a national scale
- A postgraduate degree in Education, ICT, Engineering, Economics, Management, Trade or related field
- Experience as a team leader in at least five engagements of a similar nature
- Experience of working with leaders from the public and private sectors to facilitate national digital skills development
- Extensive knowledge and experience of current issues relating to digital skills development
- Strong analytical skills, a demonstrated ability to conduct interviews with a range of stakeholders, and experience in pulling together analysis and data into reports
- Knowledge and experience in formulation of Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks for digital skills
- Knowledge and experience in international project design, focused on digital skills
- Proven ability to engage effectively with different stakeholders, including government and public sector officials as well as civil society actors
- Proven experience working with local counterparts including skills and knowledge transfer, coaching and mentoring
- Should demonstrate a high degree of professionalism and integrity
- Prior experience in Rwanda and/or Africa is considered to be highly advantageous
- Fluency in English

Technical expert 1: Digital Skills, focused on digital literacy development

- At least 5 years of relevant professional experience, focused on digital skills development
- A proven track record of undertaking at least three assignments, focused on assessing and developing basic digital literacy programs, preferable at national scale.
- A postgraduate degree in education, ICT, engineering, economics, management, trade or related field
- Extensive knowledge and experience of current issues relating to digital literacy development and related best practice, including links to the digital inclusion and access agenda, and players active in this space.

- Extensive experience in evaluating, designing, and implementing digital skills programs.
- Experience of conducting national digital skills assessments.
- Strong analytical skills and experience of pulling together analysis and data into reports
- Strong stakeholder engagement skills, and prior experience of advising policy makers preferred.
- Fluency in English
- Prior experience in Rwanda and/or Africa is highly advantageous

Technical expert 2: Digital Skills, focused on intermediate and advanced digital skills development

- At least 5 years of relevant professional experience, focused on digital skills development
- A proven track record of undertaking at least three similar assignments, focused on assessing and developing advanced digital skills programs
- A postgraduate degree in education, ICT, engineering, economics, management, trade or related field
- Extensive knowledge and experience of current issues relating to digital skills development (particularly advanced digital skills) and related best practice
- Extensive experience in evaluating, designing, and implementing digital skills programs
- Experience of conducting national digital skills assessments
- Fluency in English
- Prior experience in Rwanda and/or Africa is highly advantageous

Technical expert 3: Digital Skills, focused on education frameworks

- At least 5 years of relevant professional experience, focused on digital skills development
- A proven track record of undertaking at least three similar assignments, focused on national education and qualification framework development and implementation.
- A postgraduate degree in education, ICT, engineering, economics, management, trade or related field
- Extensive knowledge and experience of current issues relating to digital skills development (covering basic, intermediate, advanced to highly specialised digital skills) and related best practice
- Understanding of national education systems, including curriculum development
- Experience in evaluating, designing, and implementing digital skills programs
- Experience of conducting national digital skills assessments
- Fluency in English
- Prior experience in Rwanda and/or Africa is highly advantageous

Technical expert 4: ICT and Digital Innovation Expert, with digital skills development experience

- At least 5 years of relevant professional experience in the ICT and digital innovation industry, working in Rwanda.
- In-depth knowledge of the links between the digital innovation agenda and digital skills development, demonstrated through work on at least 1 similar assignment
- A postgraduate degree in education, ICT, engineering, economics, management, trade or related field
- Strong analytical skills and experience of pulling together analysis and data into reports

- Strong stakeholder engagement skills, and prior experience of advising policy makers preferred.
- Experience of evaluation, designing and implementing digital innovation and skills programs
- Prior work experience in Africa, on the digital innovation agenda as it pertains to digital skills is preferred
- Detailed understanding of Rwanda's ICT and Innovation ecosystem is required
- Fluency in English