



Terms of Reference for: Consultancy Services - Development of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework

Introduction

Link Community Development International are looking to contract the services of External Evaluation specialists to develop the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework for a DFID (Department for International Development) funded, 'Girls' Education Challenge' (GEC) initiative through the 'Leave No Girl Behind' (LNGB) funding window. The 5-year project, entitled '**Transformational Empowerment of Adolescent Marginalised Girls in Malawi**' or '**TEAM Girl Malawi**', will be implemented through Link Community Development International's partners in Malawi addressing the social, cultural, economic (and other) barriers to education.

Link Community Development International

Link Community Development International is a family of not for profit organisations working together to transform education for children and communities across impoverished rural areas of Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Rwanda and Uganda.

Our **vision** is a world where every child in Sub-Saharan Africa attains the right to a quality basic education.

Our **mission** is to inspire sustainable innovations in education policy based on evidence-based grassroots experience of approaches which have the greatest positive impact on learner outcomes.

Since 1995 we have improved the learning and lives of over 2 million children in 3,000 schools. We guide governments and educators to adopt low-cost, evidence-based and sustainable solutions to improve learning and support for children, with a focus on literacy, numeracy, life skills and inclusion for the most marginalised. To ensure we support vulnerable learners without leading to segregation, we follow a 'twin track' approach to inclusive education - working towards systemic change in the equity and quality of education in schools whilst recognising the need for individualised support to learners with additional needs.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Link Community Development believes that a child, vulnerable adult or person at risk should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to work in a way that promotes the welfare of all and protects them from harm. We have a zero-tolerance approach to any harm to or exploitation of a child or vulnerable adult by any of our staff, representatives or partners. GEC LNGB grantees are

expected to ensure safeguarding and child protection standards are upheld across all project partners and contractors, this includes external evaluators.

Project Background

Link Community Development has been working in Malawi since 2006 with funding from DfID, USAID, the Scottish Government, Comic Relief, Oxford University Press amongst others. By sharing our learning, we have influenced government policy and practice and achieved significant impact through developing the first National Education Standards to be used in every primary and secondary school in the country. To strengthen accountability, we deliver a community engagement model that improves reading skills of young children and are demonstrating our school improvement model in a new district to show that it works.

The Transformational Empowerment of Adolescent Marginalised Girls in Malawi project or “TEAM Girl Malawi” will operate in 40 communities in two rural (Dedza and Mchinji) and one urban (Lilongwe) district in Malawi’s Central region. It will improve learning and life chances for girls aged 10–19 who have never been to school or who dropped out of school without gaining functional literacy and numeracy.

Implementing partners are as follows: Link Community Development Malawi (LCDM) - Lead on Complimentary Basic Education; Theatre for a Change (TfaC) – Lead on Child Protection, Safeguarding, community and Girls’ Club activities; Micro-Loan Foundation (MLF) – Lead on financial literacy training and business skills; Supreme – lead on vocational training; Charlie Goldsmith Associates (CGA) – Lead on internal M&E.

Please refer to Theory of Change document attached.

Background to the Girls Education Fund (GEC) Programme

- The Department for International Development (DFID) leads the UK’s work to end extreme poverty. DFID is tackling the global challenges of our time including poverty and disease, mass migration, insecurity and conflict. DFID’s work is building a safer, healthier, more prosperous world for people in developing countries and in the UK too.
- DFID is working to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Progress on girls’ education is critical to the achievement of these targets. SDGs 4 and 5 specifically relate to education and achieving gender parity. SDG 4 covers *‘inclusive and quality education for all and lifelong learning’*.
- Globally 31 million primary age girls, have never been to school¹. The majority of these girls come from the poorest and most marginalised communities in the most disadvantaged locations, ethnic groups etc.² Over the last 20 years primary enrolments for girls have improved along with boys but completion rates are equally low for both sexes. At the secondary level the differences between boys’ and girls’ participation rates really start to show. Significant disparities exist within countries, with the poorest girls from rural areas most severely subject to educational disadvantage - even at the primary level³.
- The Girls’ Education Challenge (GEC) is helping the world’s poorest girls improve their lives through education and supporting better ways of getting girls in school and ensuring they receive quality education to transform their future.

¹ United Nations, 2015. *The World’s Women 2015: Trends and Statistics*. New York: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division. Sales No. E.15.XVII.8.

² Idem

³ Idem

- PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) and alliance partners have been contracted as the dedicated Fund Manager (FM) and are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the GEC. This includes establishing the recipient tendering process, supporting bidders, sifting and scoring proposals, monitoring Value for Money (VfM) and making project funding recommendations for DFID approval. The FM also manages the relationships with the selected projects and oversees their Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning operations.
- Through the GEC, DFID provided £355m between 2012 and 2017 to the FM to disburse to 37 individual projects in 18 countries across sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia to help girl's education.
- The Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) window is a new funding window announced in July 2016 under DFID's Girls' Education Challenge (GEC). The LNGB window aims to support interventions for highly marginalised, adolescent girls who are out of school (either because they have never attended school or have dropped out without gaining a basic education).

Purpose of the Consultancy - Developing the MEL Framework

We want to engage experienced MEL specialists to form the foundation of our MEL approach for the project duration. The MEL framework will provide the basis for the objectives and key evaluation questions of the project, as well as evaluation design, propose relevant data collection tools and plan, a detailed sampling framework, a learning strategy, a performance monitoring plan, and will consider and integrate Link's child and vulnerable adult safeguarding policies and practices throughout. It is vital we get the most appropriate MEL structure and systems in place from the outset.

The Team Girl Malawi project, (as part of the wider DFID GEC LNGB) requires and demands a rigorous approach to evaluation. The primary document relating to the design of this project-level evaluation is the project's MEL framework. This should contain all information relevant to the project's evaluation and requires approval before baseline data collection can begin (see below and attached guidelines). The MEL Framework will lay out the Evaluation strategy for the duration of the project (5 years) including baseline, midline and endline evaluations, as well as ongoing monitoring and learning. This is an integral part of project delivery, reflected in the quarterly workplan tracker where projects will report on the monitoring and delivery of activities.

Chief among the concerns of this strategy is that the evaluation is designed with the vulnerabilities of LNGB target groups in mind. The evaluations should be specific to each project's Theory of Change (ToC); the characteristics of the children targeted; the barriers to education that they need to overcome; and the intermediate outcomes that help plot the project's progress against these barriers.

Deliverables

- Draft MEL framework based on Fund Manager template by **1st October 2018**.
- Revised project logframe (to include gender-sensitive and inclusion-focused quantitative and qualitative indicators) by **1st October 2018**
- Final MEL framework based on Fund Manager's feedback by **Monday 29th October**
- Final logframe (revised based on feedback from Fund Manager) by **Monday 29th October**
- Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis (GESI), in line with Fund Manager GESI guidance by **Monday 29th October**
- A separate "Baseline plan" with key dates (e.g. tool development, data collection, etc.) by **Monday 29th October**.

Notes on Deliverables - Process and Expectations

- It is expected that this will be a cooperative and collaborative process between LCDI and the consultant; with clear roles and responsibilities, deadlines and expectations
- Work closely with the Project Coordinator and project development team ensuring project MEL captures data adhering to project indicators
- Through initial engagements, you will agree a workplan with LCDI, clarifying final submission dates of drafts and reviews (first draft due to Fund Manager from LCDI 7th October, final draft 7th November)
- The assignment is expected to be desk-based, with travel agreed where plausible and necessary
- The consultant will work under the direction of the LCDI International Programme Director and Project Coordinator. The final agreed plan should be delivered in soft copy format, for final editing and submission.
- You will have access to all required project documents and relevant contacts (Proposal, logframe, workplan, theory of change, initial needs analysis data, etc.)
- The GESI analysis should include recommendations for how the findings should inform the project's final design and Theory of Change, as well as the project's Child Safeguarding and Protection policy and risk analysis.
- The consultant should refer to the attached MEL Guidance and GESI Guidance extracts from the GEC-LNGB recipient handbook to better understand the FM's requirements. The '**10 Principles of Evaluation**' as outlined in the extract should be noted (seen on page 28 of attached handbook).
- Expected duration – maximum of 30 days throughout September/October 2018.
- Through accepting the role to develop the MEL Framework – you (or any affiliated groups) will not be compromised, should you wish to apply for the contract of External Evaluator for the project as a whole. On the contrary, we would encourage an application if the initial engagement met the required standards and outputs. However, you would be required to apply through the official tender process.

The MEL framework should include the contents in Table 4 on the page 31 of the handbook. In addition, we would like the framework to cover the following:

- Methodologies to measure the indicators within the logframe and to track and report progress against approved targets.
- Mechanisms for ensuring sex, age, and disability disaggregated data is collected and analysed at baseline and subsequent evaluation points.
- A proposal for ensuring disability data differentiates between the type and severity of disability of beneficiaries.
- Robust internal monitoring systems to track and report on activities and outputs against the agreed workplan, linking to the logframe.
- The project monitoring plan should include internal systems to flag and respond to any delays and issues arising during implementation.
- Data management system recommendation: i.e. advice on how LCDI and implementing partners should collect, verify, store, and report on a wide range of data including secure data

(for individual data protection and GDPR adherence) so that data is controlled and easy to access for audit and review purposes throughout the lifetime of the project

Consultant Profile & Experience

The ideal candidate to undertake this evaluation will have:

- High-quality, specialist evaluation and research expertise and experience
- Proven experience of MEL design for projects of a similar scale
- Strong experience in rigorous quantitative and qualitative methods and analysis
- Experience in use of control / comparison groups
- Experience in use of household surveys and learner tests
- Experience in design of complex sampling approaches
- Experience in designing digitised systems for data collection, collation and analysis
- Experience in rural sub-Saharan Africa; Malawian experience an advantage
- Experience working within the education sector.
- Experience using EGRA/EGMA Learning tests
- Experience of working with and designing MEL systems to work inclusively with vulnerable, marginalised target groups - having an appreciation of their complex needs and the sensitivities required in working with these individuals.
- Familiarity with UK Department for International Development (DFID) monitoring and reporting processes
- Knowledge and working experience with the 'Washington Group Questions' with young individuals considered an advantage
- Ability to work with whole staff team and variety of stakeholders
- Experience in high-quality report-writing based on accurate and precise analysis and findings.
- Excellent knowledge base, conceptual and analytical skills, and communication skills

Selection of Consultant

Interested candidates should submit an expression of interest including proposed methodology, along with curriculum vitae, and an expected costing for the attention of Graham Niven, TEAM Project Coordinator; E-mail Address: graham@lcd.org.uk

The proposal from the Consultant must include:

- A detailed track record, including details of other organisations for whom work has been completed
- Two examples of relevant previous work
- Outline of availability and capacity over the proposed period of contract
- Two references (names will suffice at proposal stage; references may be sought prior to contracting)
- An outline of the proposed methodology to deliver the outcomes
- Confirmation of proposed timeframe and key milestones
- Outline of proposed costs and a suggested schedule for payment, all to be inclusive of VAT
- Full proposal to be emailed. 10 page maximum, please!

Comments on the proposed approach are welcome. Applicants may be requested to submit additional information.

Terms and Conditions

When tendering for this piece of work the following criteria should be adhered to:

- Adherence to strict child protection and safeguarding standards and procedures.
- Proposals must include sufficient detail to enable LCDI to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the proposal.
- Consultants intending to submit a proposal in response to this Invitation to Tender should ensure that their proposal addresses in full the requirements set out in this document and that all information requested is supplied.
- LCDI reserves the right not to award a contract in the event that no proposal is deemed suitable or in the event that funding for the strategic review is not approved.
- LCDI will not be liable in respect of any costs incurred in the preparation or presentation of tenders.
- It is expected that the successful bidder will be in a position to commence work shortly after the contract is awarded and that the work will be completed within the agreed specific time frame.
- Tenders should clearly and individually time/cost each element of the work outlined in the proposal and the sum should include all costs including VAT.

Criteria for Selection and Award of Contract

Eligibility will be determined in accordance with the criteria set out in Table 5 of page 36 of the attached GEC LNGB Recipient Handbook pertaining to evaluation criteria and weighting.

Confidentiality and Ownership

All documents provided and research outcomes are strictly private and confidential and will remain at all times the property of LCDI.

Application Deadline

Proposals should be addressed “Tender for LCDI LNGB MEL Framework Development” and marked “Private and Confidential – Addressee Only” and sent for the attention of Graham Niven, TEAM Project Coordinator, by latest **5pm on Monday 3rd September 2018**.

E-mail Address: graham@lcd.org.uk

We will review all proposals on 4th and 5th September and we hope to hold a one-hour interview/discussion with successful shortlisted candidates on 6th and 7th September 2018. We hope to be able to notify the final successful candidate by close of business on Friday 7th September, and to complete contracting by 10th September 2018.