



Government of the Republic of Malawi

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

SKILLS FOR A VIBRANT ECONOMY PROJECT

**TERMS OF REFERENCE
FOR AN INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION AGENCY (IVA) FOR SKILLS FOR A
VIBRANT ECONOMY PROJECT**

JUNE 2022

1.0 Background

The Government of Malawi with support from the World Bank is implementing the Skills for a Vibrant Economy Project (SAVE) at an estimated cost of **US\$100 million** through the International Development Association (IDA) financing. The project is expected to run over a period of five years from 2021 to 2026. Key implementing agencies are the Ministry of Education as lead and the Ministry of Labor.

The Project Development Objective (PDO) is *“to increase equitable access to market-relevant skills in priority areas of the economy, especially for females and vulnerable youth”*. This will be achieved by (a) improving access to market-relevant skills programs in priority areas of the economy; (b) enhancing equity in skills training with empowerment of women and girls and vulnerable youth through targeted skills in priority areas of the economy; and (c) creating a conducive policy environment & strengthening systems and institutional capacity for skills development. It is anticipated that the impact of the project will support Malawi’s human capital development for a vibrant economy, equitable growth, and development through improved youth skills in key areas of the economy.

The project has three main components. The first component is supporting Increased Access to Skills Development Programs in Higher Education targeting 9 higher education institutions namely: University of Malawi (UNIMA), Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (College of Medicine and Kamuzu College of Nursing) Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST), Mzuzu University (MZUNI), Malawi University of Business and Applied Science (MUBAS) Domasi College of Education (DCE), and Nalikule College of Education (NCE). which has two sub components i. Performance Agreements for Skills Development Results in Higher Education and ii. Higher Education Student Financing to Improve Equity.

The second component is Supporting Increase in Access to TEVET Skills Development targeting 7 public National Technical Colleges namely Lilongwe, Nasawa, Livingstonia, Namitete, Soche, Salima, and Mzuzu. The component has three sub components; i. Performance Agreements to Support Increased Skills Development through National Technical Colleges ii. Increased Access to Market-oriented TEVET Programs through Competitive Grants and iii Increased Equity in Formal TEVET through Scholarships.

The third component is Tertiary Education System Strengthening, Project Management, M&E and Communications. The project supports central level institutions including Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, TEVETA, Higher Education Students Loans and Grant Board, and National Council for Higher Education. This component has four sub components: i. Higher Education System Strengthening ii. TEVET System Strengthening iii. Strengthening the ODeL Directorate and Support to Continuity of Learning in Tertiary Education and iv. Project Coordination, M&E, and Communications.

The project will use Result Based Financing where achievement of results will be supported by institutional strengthening and by financing based on agreed achievements of results in Institutional Development Plans (IDP) outlined in Performance Agreements (PA) as annual targets associated with the PDO.

The project therefore requires an Independent Verification Agent (IVA) to confirm and validate project achievements across activities in Components 1 (Subcomponent 1.1 and selected 1.2 activities) and 2 (Subcomponents 2.1 and selected 2.2 activities). In case of an IVA being a consortium of firms or individuals, there will be one principal firm or individual responsible for all communication with the Project Implementation Unit (PIU). The PIU will be notified in writing about all designated entities or individuals to liaise with the PIU in on all matters relevant to the consultancy and the agent will have to seek approval in case of changes of leads or key staff.

2.0 Objective of the consultancy

The SAVE project is financed through World Bank's Investment Project Finance (IPF) arrangement whereby disbursement of funds will be triggered by several instruments including the third-party verification by the IVA of the achievement of declared results as agreed in the PAs. To confirm achievement of results and related accountability, a third-party verification process will be used along with a Geo-Enabling initiative for Monitoring and Supervision (GEMS) system to monitor progress of achievements in each institution. Overachievement of results may result in awards while penalties will be imposed on underachievement of results. Therefore, the primary objective of the consultancy is to conduct an independent third-party verification of the Implementing Entity (IE)s' achieved results as claimed by the IEs.

Specifically, the objectives of the assignment are:

- i. Assess progress against the relevant PDO indicators as agreed in the PA as signed by the respective IE;
- ii. Report all findings of the verification for each IE with recommendations for either an award or a penalty;
- iii. As required verify achievement of targets related to student financing and others if requested due to implementation concerns.

3.0 Scope of Consultancy

The IVA shall be required to carry out the following activities:

- a. desk-based verification of all relevant documents provided by the institutions,
- b. Conduct verification inspections of the SAVE result based interventions and confirm PDO data such as enrolment through records and inclusive of sample verification of students enrolled, student assessment results and industry engagement related indicators
- c. Reporting of IVA report according to agreed upon timeframes and templates

Upon inception, the IVA is required to:

- a. Review project documents, including the performance analysis of the result framework.
- b. Review and assess all the required performance achievement indicators and where necessary other indicators that will be deemed necessary by the client or other stakeholders.
- c. Verify consistency, accuracy and undertaking checks on the data provided by the PIU from the implementing institutions
- d. Provide recommendation on actual achievements of results against what was presented in the implementing institutions PA and the result framework.

The assignment will necessitate the IVA to travel to implementing institutions. The IVA shall be liable for taxation under the laws and regulations of Malawi.

4.0 Methodology

The detailed methodology for work with the institutions shall be developed by the IVA and approved by the PIU. It is expected to include the following at minimum:

- a. A detailed methodology for assessing the results against the results specified in the PA and based on a verification protocol prescribed in these ToRS.
- b. Verification of relevant baseline data in the Result Framework individually for each institution and confirm whether there are statistical variations with the indicators reported.
- c. Assessment of progress made for each relevant indicator against the agreed targets.
- d. An independent calculation of the level of result achievements to provide a basis for performance-based financing.
- e. An annual concept note outlining how they will undertake the verification in a specific year including lessons from previous year's work.
- f. A submission schedule of annual reports to the PIU in accordance with the agreed template.
- g. Presentation schedule of findings to key stakeholders annually.
- h. Statement or expression of undertaking to comply with rules on intellectual property rights and also general independence, confidentiality and professional integrity code of conduct.

6.0. Verification of PDO Indicators

The verification by the IVA will be done against the planned PDO targets in the result framework. In addition to the PDO indicators, the IVA will also verify the beneficiaries of students' loans and grants; competitive grants and TEVET bursaries provided by SAVE. The following table presents the PDO result indicators (detailed methodology will be developed by the IVA) to be verified:

Indicator Name	Baseline	Intermediate Targets				End Target
	2020	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
Access						
Enrolment in degree, diploma, and certificate programs in priority areas (Number)	31,975	37,967	43,313	49,159	54,481	58,388
Female (Percentage)	38	41	43	45	46	47
ODEL and Blended Instruction (Percentage)	22	25	29	33	43	56
Students who pass the annual assessment (Percentage)	71	72	73	75	77	78
Female (Percentage)	70	73	75	76	78	79
ODEL and Blended Instruction (Percentage)	41	40	72	73	75	76
Market Relevance						
Industry Engagement Index ¹ (Percentage)	5	20	47	66	81	100

7.0 Deliverables of the assignment

The IVA shall achieve the following deliverables:

S/N	Deliverable for the first year period	Duration
a.	An inception report presented to stakeholders	Two weeks from commencement
b.	Pilot assessment report which will benchmark subsequent reports	One month after acceptance of Inception Report
c.	Submission of annual report	Annual verification reports during the contractual period. The IVA may take not more than one month to collect, verify and submit data for report.
d.	Conduct and facilitate a stakeholders' workshop	Two weeks after submission of the annual report
e	Submission of an annual concept note for verification in the	Three months before commencement of the next verification cycle

¹ Composite index based on (i) student participation in industry attachment/apprenticeships, (ii) At least one MoUs/framework developed with industry for each skills development program at institutional level (iii) programs developed or updated with industry involvement and (iv) tracer study targets achieved.

	following year based on lessons from year 1	
--	---	--

8. PROFILE OF THE CONSULTING FIRM/AGENCY

The Consulting Firm (the IVA) shall have the following attributes:

- i. Be a registered agency/firm operating under either international laws or the laws of the Government of Malawi.
- ii. Have a minimum of five (5) assignments' experience in evaluating projects and related services with extensive experience in developing countries.
- iii. Proven experience in conducting verification exercises of similar nature.
- iv. Be financially sound, well reputed and soundtrack record of successful implementation of assignments with the World Bank or similar international organisations.
- v. Excellent technical knowledge on Education and Skills Development.
- vi. Significant professional background in conducting qualitative and quantitative studies and data analysis.
- vii. Proven previous working experience consisting of substantial involvement in assessments, evaluations and/or reviews in related areas.
- viii. Proven capacity to supervise and coordinate all administrative and technical aspects of the consultancy.
- ix. A considerable experience in the technical, vocational and higher education systems in Malawi or the region.

The consultancy firm will establish a team with key experts appropriate for the tasks outlined in the consultancy work plan and budget. All the CVs of experts including that of the team leader will have to be vetted but only the team leaders will be used in the process of selection. Foreign-based firms should be encouraged to partner with local firms and/or experts. The organizational structure and skill mix of the firm fit for this assignment shall include the following key staff:

8.1. Team Leader

The Team Leader should meet the following minimum qualifications and experience requirements:

- i. At least a PhD obtained not less than five (5) years ago in either education, economics, project management, or equivalent field.
- ii. He/she must have 10 years of relevant working experience in Tertiary Education.
- iii. Must provide evidence of having executed 3 similar assignments in the last 10 years in Malawi or in the SADC region.
- iv. Must have extensive knowledge of internal and external quality assurance in tertiary education.

- v. Proven experience with donor funded projects is essential while experience with World Bank is a distinct advantage.
- vi. Proactive problem solver, self-starter and results-oriented.
- vii. Strong communication and analytical skills.

8.2.Higher Education Expert

The Higher Education Expert should meet the following minimum qualifications and experience requirements:

- i. At least a Master's degree holder obtained not less than 5 years in education Curriculum development, education standards, pedagogical approaches or related field.
- ii. A minimum of 5 years of relevant working experience in Education at a senior/managerial level. Those with experience in higher education will have an added advantage.
- iii. Must provide evidence of having executed at least three (3) similar assignments in the last 5 years.
- iv. Proven experience with donor-funded projects is essential while experience with World Bank is a distinct advantage.
- v. Must have extensive knowledge of internal and external quality assurance in tertiary education.
- vi. Proactive problem solver, self-starter and results-oriented.
- vii. Good information and communication technology skills including familiarity with Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and MS Excel.
- viii. Excellent report writing and oral communication and presentation skills are essential.

8.3.Technical and Vocational Education and Training Expert

The Technical and Vocational Education Training Expert should meet the following minimum qualifications and experience requirements:

- i. At least a Master's degree obtained not less than 5years ago in Technical Education, vocational training or any related field.
- ii. He/she must have 5 years of relevant working experience in the TEVET sector.
- iii. Must provide evidence of having executed at least three (3) similar assignments in the last 5 years.
- iv. Experience with donor funded projects is essential while experience with the World Bank is a distinct advantage.
- v. Must have extensive knowledge of internal and external quality assurance in tertiary education.
- vi. Proactive problem solver, self-starter and results-oriented.

- vii. Excellent Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills including familiarity with Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, MS Excel and other statistical packages.
- viii. Proven knowledge of quantitative and qualitative data analysis protocols.
- ix. Excellent report writing and oral communication and presentation skills are essential.

8.4. Monitoring and Evaluation Expert

The Monitoring and Evaluation Expert should meet the following minimum qualifications and experience requirements:

- i. At least a Master's Degree in Statistics, Economics, or any field that is related to Economics and Statistics.
- ii. Work experience with donor funded projects implemented by the Government is desirable.
- iii. Must provide evidence of having executed at least three (3) similar assignments in the last 5 years in Malawi or in the SADC region.
- iv. Strong skills in data analysis using MS Excel, SPSS and equivalent packages.
- v. The M&E expert should possess excellent technical skills in socio-economic research and program and project performance assessment.
- vi. Demonstrated experience in monitoring and evaluation of development project activities.

9. REPORTING MECHANISM

The consultant will sign a contract with the Ministry of Education through the SAVE PIU. Coordination of its activities shall be done by the PIU; therefore, the consultant shall be reporting to the Project Manager at the PIU.

10. DURATION OF THE CONSULTANCY

The consultancy contract will be undertaken within a total duration of 4 years resulting from one (1) year contracts renewable annually subject to satisfactory performance and continued eligibility status of the firm.

7.0 OBLIGATIONS OF THE CLIENT

7.1 Data and Reports:

The Client will assist on the following:

- a) Information on customs, taxes and import duties and restrictions to be imposed by Government of Malawi (GoM);
- b) Provision of Copies of available relevant documents, IEs will provide institutional based data relevant records.
- c) Facilitation of consultation with relevant stakeholders (Ministries / Departments, Implementation Entities and other institutions);
- d) Processing of visas and/or TIPs for key foreign consultants where necessary.

7.2 Liaison

The Client will provide a liaison officer from the PIU to work with and coordinate the activities of the IVA on a frequent basis. The M and E representatives from IEs will work with the IVA on institutional specific issues.