

TERMS OF REFERENCE
for**ESTABLISHMENT OF A LONG-TERM ARRANGEMENT TO IMPLEMENT**
THE PROJECT GIGA “ACCELERATE” SCHOOL CONNECTIVITY IN SIERRA LEONE**1. BACKGROUND**

The fundamental mission of UNICEF is to promote the rights of every child, everywhere, in everything the organization does — in programs, in advocacy and in operations. The equity strategy, emphasizing the most disadvantaged and excluded children and families, translates this commitment to children’s rights into action. For UNICEF, equity means that all children have an opportunity to survive, develop and reach their full potential, without discrimination, bias or favoritism. To the degree that any child has an unequal chance in life — in its social, political, economic, civic and cultural dimensions — her or his rights are violated. There is growing evidence that investing in the health, education and protection of a society’s most disadvantaged citizens — addressing inequity — not only will give all children the opportunity to fulfill their potential but also will lead to sustained growth and stability of countries. This is why the focus on equity is so vital. It accelerates progress towards realizing the human rights of all children, which is the universal mandate of UNICEF, as outlined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, while also supporting the equitable development of nations.

Since 2014, UNICEF Sierra Leone has been championing the use of innovation and technology to help identify and address the issues that affect the children and women of Sierra Leone. Work done over the past 6 years has established UNICEF Sierra Leone as the leading agency for innovative and technology-based programming to help deliver results for children in Sierra Leone.

In 2018, the Government of Sierra Leone established a new Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI). DSTI’s mandate is to use Science, Technology and Innovation to support the Government of Sierra Leone to deliver on its national development plan effectively and efficiently; and to help transform Sierra Leone into an innovation and entrepreneurship hub. UNICEF Sierra Leone has already established a workplan with DSTI to promote and enable the use of Innovation in Sierra Leone for improved results for children.

Since 2019, the Government of Sierra Leone has been a member of Project Giga, a global UNICEF-ITU initiative to connect every school to the Internet, to enable every young person to access information, opportunity, and choice.

Project Giga aims to expand connectivity through its focus on three main pillars of work:

- 1) **Map:** Identifying the locations and connectivity status of every school and determining connectivity gaps.
- 2) **Connect:** Supporting the expansion of safe, secure, reliable, fit-for-purpose connectivity infrastructure to support future digital development needs.
- 3) **Finance:** Building affordable and sustainable country-specific models for financing school connectivity.

The Giga approach to expanding school connectivity includes consideration of the role that laws, policies and regulation have on the commercial feasibility of various connectivity approaches and options. Giga also considers how innovative uses of technology and business models can help close connectivity gaps.

Giga Accelerate is an initiative, part of the Giga partnership, that explores the provision of broadband connectivity solutions to schools to fast-track governments' universal connectivity programmes by testing the following:

- 1) high frequency data to monitor quality of connectivity service,
- 2) procurement models,
- 3) demand aggregation,
- 4) new and diverse technologies,
- 5) sustainable business models, and other approaches that will help augment and inform national connectivity programmes.

UNICEF Sierra Leone wish to contract one or more Internet Service Providers to support the implementation of pillar number 2: "Connect", as outlined above, under a long-term agreement (LTA) for a period of 2 years renewable for 1 more year subject to satisfactory performance of services.

2. OBJECTIVES, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS

The overall objective(s) of this specific service provision are:

- To enable the design, planning, and establishment of innovative, reliable and affordable solutions to provide continuous internet connectivity to schools in Sierra Leone, including all necessary related maintenance services.
- To propose sustainable business models for school connectivity.

The list of the schools and locations to connect through this service provision are in Annex A. Bidders should assess the locations of these schools and specify which schools are they able to connect, and complement the list with the following information:

- Proposed technology to use to connect each school.

- Description of the bandwidth solution for each school: Dedicated or shared.
- Proposed speed target for each school (download and upload).

Connecting rural, remote, and hard-to-reach schools is imperative for Giga and UNICEF's equity strategy; for this reason, bidders are expected to submit proposals that consider connecting schools that do not have electricity and are located ≥ 30 km from fiber optic nodes. In the bidders' submissions, UNICEF requires that at least 20% of the list of proposed schools to connect, should be schools with these hardship conditions.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to visit a few sites to understand the needs and context of these schools and propose the most appropriate technologies for affordable and meaningful connectivity.

Depending on the robustness of their technical proposition in terms of viability, speeds, and quality of service, as well as cost proposition, UNICEF will award schools in sets to bidders. Further, UNICEF may, later, choose to expand the contract to include more schools.

The expected result(s) of this initial phase shall be to develop and deploy innovative and affordable solutions to provide high-speed internet connectivity to schools in Annex A for an initial 12 months.

Additionally, UNICEF is interested to explore how different operating set-ups and business models could help to connect schools sustainably. In this area, Giga has been exploring the implementation of business models and commercial solutions for schools that are technically and legally feasible to implement in Sierra Leone to offset connectivity service/operational fees. Requests for further information on examples of what these business models may look like can be made to UNICEF.

It is further noted that UNICEF will extract insights from the newly installed connectivity services, procurement processes and business models, that will inform further collaboration and further school connectivity with the Government of Sierra Leone.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The contractor must provide internet connectivity services with the below parameters for a minimum duration of 12 months, subject to further extensions for the period of the LTA.

- Ensure the provision of reliable and continuous high-speed internet connectivity services, including backhauling and internal provisioning through at least one access point per school and servicing with unlimited data volume. The bandwidth must be a minimum of 10 Megabits per second (Mbps) of download speed and 10 Mbps of upload speed, per school.

- Install at least one vendor-neutral internet access point with a minimum of 100-meter coverage radius for at least 200 concurrent users, per school.
- Deploy adequate power supply and protection equipment for all active connectivity equipment, per school.
- Centrally manage administration of the installed network, including filtering of content, with particular note to for child online protection (as a reference providers can access the ITU Guidelines on Child Online Protection here: <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Cybersecurity/Pages/COP.aspx>).
- Provide and share with UNICEF real-time monitoring of all access points and networks at individual school level via an API. (KPIs include, but not limited to connectivity status, upload and download speeds, latency, packet loss, up and down time, etc.).
- Ensure maximum availability of connectivity by ensuring availability of required vendor neutral connectivity equipment and through the maintenance or replacement of the equipment for a minimum duration of the LTA.
- Provide proven basic training on the installed connectivity solution to at least two designated focal points, per school.
- Provide dedicated technical support through a central point of contact to address technical issues within agreed SLAs.
- Propose a commercially sustainable business model for participating schools to generate the resources needed to continue paying for their connectivity service fees after the first 12 months of provision.
- Support the implementation of the proposed business model in an agreed subset of the preidentified schools (optional).

UNICEF will only pay for the last-mile equipment necessary to connect schools and monthly service fees. Backhaul costs should be built into the monthly service provision cost. In case solution providers do not own backhaul infrastructure, they must clearly demonstrate they have established partnership(s) with backhaul infrastructure owners which specific agreed upon usage rates which can accommodate the project requirements.

4. DELIVERABLES

- Implementation plan: Submission of a detailed plan for the rollout of the connectivity solution for each school in their proposal. The plan should include:
 - Clear timelines for when each school shall be connected,
 - Details of the technologies to be used for each school, including hardware.
 - Listing of a dedicated fixed IP address per school.

- Specification of API (or otherwise) details for the provision of the real-time monitoring of all access points and networks at individual school level. (KPIs include, but not limited to, connectivity status, upload and download speeds, latency, packet loss, up and down time, etc.).
- Planned basic training agenda on the installed connectivity solution for school level focal points.
- Detailed rollout strategy for proposed commercially sustainable business model to monetize the connectivity in order to fund the sustainability of the connectivity services.
- Equipment Procurement: Procurement and designation of all required equipment to fully complete the project.
- Installation and Deployment of connectivity:
 - Installation and provisioning of the connectivity equipment and testing of connectivity services at school level.
 - Deployment of training for school level focal points.
- Monthly Connectivity service 1
 - Service charges for bandwidth (Month1 – Month6)
- Monthly Connectivity service 2
 - Service charges for bandwidth (Month7 – Month12)

5. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Below are the minimum required reporting mechanisms for the project:

- Implementation plan – as detailed in deliverables. Soft and hard copy.
- Equipment Procurement report. Soft and hard copy.
- API level real time monitoring access.
- Final Project Report. Soft and hard copy.

6. LOCATION AND DURATION

Location: Attached in Annex A is the list of schools (120) to be connected.

Duration: The duration of the LTA is for a minimum period of 2 years with a possibility of extension of 1 more year based on positive evaluation.

7. QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

A successful bidder should fulfill the minimum requirements below:

- ✓ Bidders for this project should have a minimum of 5 years of experience in the delivery of reliable and continuous internet connectivity services and be authorized to legally operate and provide Internet connectivity services in Sierra Leone.
- ✓ Bidders for this project should have proven technical skills and experience of implementing projects of a similar national scale and complexity. Samples of work and information on the implementation of similar projects in proposal is required.
- ✓ The solution provider should own or have access to middle mile telecommunications infrastructure (backhaul) and have the ability to extend it to all the school locations listed in the Annex A.
- ✓

To be compliant the successful bidder must submit:

- ✓ **The Business Registration**
- ✓ **The valid NRA and NASSIT**
- ✓ **Proof of Legal Authorization to provide connectivity related services in SL**

In case of the award the service provider will have to submit in addition of the above:

- ✓ **UNGM Number**
- ✓ **Financial statements (audited if possible) for the last 2 years**

8. EVALUATION PROCESS AND METHODS

Bidders are expected to submit both Technical and Financial proposals (separately). The criteria for evaluation are summarized below and will be scored using a ratio between the technical and the commercial criteria of 70:30 (technical/commercial). Sum of technical and commercial will equal to 100 points.

Example for Technical Criteria

Item	Technical Evaluation Criteria	Max. Points
1	Overall Response <i>e.g. the understanding of the assignment by the proposer and the alignment of the proposal submitted with the ToR</i>	<u>5</u>
1.1	Completeness of response	2.5
1.2	Overall concord between RFP requirements and proposal	2.5
2	Company and Key Personnel	<u>20</u>

2.1	Range and depth of organizational experience with similar projects	5
2.2	Samples of previous work	8
2.3	Key personnel: relevant experience and qualifications of the proposed team for the assignment	7
3	Proposed Methodology and Approach e.g. Work plan showing detail sampling methods, project implementation plan in line with the project	45
3.1	Proposed work plan and approach of implementation of the tasks as per the ToR	20
3.2	Implementation strategies, monitoring and evaluation, quality control mechanism	15
3.3	Innovative approach	10
	TOTAL TECHNICAL SCORES	70

8.1 Technical Evaluation Criteria

Technical offers will be scored out of **70 points**. Offers with scores less than 49/70 will be disqualified. A reference check and site visit will be conducted on companies meeting the minimum technical requirements.

8.2 Financial Proposal Structure

Bidders are expected to submit their estimated costs for each school in their proposal. The break down should include:

- Capital Costs:
 - Connectivity infrastructure – hardware.
 - Connectivity infrastructure – power supply (if any).
- Installation and set up cost.
- Training costs (if any).
- Operational costs:
 - Bandwidth provision costs – total annual rate.
 - Maintenance, training and support costs (if any).
- Other associated costs (if any).

A financial template with the above detail is provided in Annex B.

Financial offers will be scored out of **30 points**. 30 points will be allocated to the lowest offers among the technical acceptable offers. All other price proposals receive scores in inverse proportion according to the following formula:

$$\text{Score for price A} = (30 * \text{Price of lowest priced proposal}) / \text{Price of proposal A}$$

8.3 Final recommendation

9. ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

- All administrative/travel and custom charges should be borne by the service provider;
- Bidder should provide an all-inclusive cost in the financial proposal, factoring in all cost implications, materials, equipment and others for the required service / assignment, with details of budget line items
- The selected service provider will assign a dedicated Account Representative available to interface directly with authorized staff to address and/or resolve account issues
- The provider shall meet periodically with the (Contract Manager or Service Level Manager), to discuss issues of mutual concern, to review the vendor's performance and to discuss improvements which the provider should make in order to achieve more effective services and support.
- References from other clients must include contact person for reference check.

10. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The contract will be supervised by the Innovation Specialist at UNICEF Sierra Leone, or by another designated officer of UNICEF Sierra Leone.

11. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

- Implementation plan & Equipment Procurement: Payment for approved, vendor neutral, hardware along with approved implementation plan.
- Installation and Deployment of connectivity: Payment of setup/installation charges after confirmed connectivity initialization (subject to API level access point monitoring).
- Monthly connectivity/service 1 : Payment of connectivity/service charge after 6 months of service delivery.
- Monthly connectivity/service 2 : Payment of connectivity/service charge after 6 months of service delivery.