

TERM OF REFERENCE (TOR)
(CONSULTING SERVICES – INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT)

Finance Officer to support the financial management of EthERNet’s activities related to the Ethiopia Digital Foundations Project.

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
DIGITAL ETHIOPIA FOUNDATIONS PROJECT

Position: Finance officer
Ref. No: ET-MINT-234123-CS-INDV
Organization: Ethiopian Education and Research Network (EthERNet)
Project: Ethiopia Digital Foundations Project
Location: Addis Ababa
Duration: 12 months, with a possible extension
Salary: Attractive/Negotiable
Expected Start Date: JUNE 2021

1. Background

In May 2021, the Government of Ethiopia and the World Bank Group signed the financial agreement for the *Ethiopia Digital Foundations Project* (Digital Foundations). Digital Foundations is a USD 200 million, five-year initiative (2021-2026) focused on laying the building blocks for Ethiopia’s transition to a digital economy. The project pursues a holistic and multi-sectoral approach to digital development through five components. EthERNet is the leading implementing partner for *Sub-component 2.3 – Connecting targeted educational institutions to broadband*, valued at USD\$ 18 million.

2. Context and objectives

The objective of this assignment is to support EthERNet with the proper financial management for all activities under *Sub-component 2.3 - Connecting targeted educational institutions to broadband*, which is valued at USD\$ 18 million.

Launched in 2001, EthERNet delivers Internet connectivity and information and communication technology (ICT) solutions to educational and research bodies in Ethiopia, including universities, and colleges of teachers’ education (CTE) and technical and vocational training (TVET) institutions. Under the scope of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, EthERNet promotes innovative research, collaboration and thought leadership by ensuring public education institutions are digitally interconnected amongst themselves, and with similar organizations regionally and internationally. Today, EthERNet connects 36 out of 200 public universities with 10 Gigabits (Gbps) of fiber and a 40 Gbps access ring. The network connection is channeled through EthERNet’s data center, which consolidates, centralizes and hosts a range of resources, including a national digital library and repository.

As part of *Sub-component 2.3*, the World Bank Group will fund EthERNet’s participation in the European Union (EU) Africa Connect 3 Program, which unlocks access to low-cost international connectivity. Through this support, EthERNet will upgrade its network, extend

connectivity to an additional 30 universities and 40 TVETs, and gain access to open educational resources (OER), online content and training.¹

The selected Finance Officer will maintain the agreed financial management arrangements under *Sub-component 2.3*, ensure compliance with World Bank procedures, including the Project's financial planning and annual budget preparation and execution. The Financial Officer will establish and operate the adequate and reliable financial management system for the Project, ensure that the financial management systems and procedures include adequate internal control systems to provide reasonable assurance that (a) operations are being conducted effectively and efficiently; (b) financial and operational reporting are reliable; (c) applicable laws and regulations are being complied with; and (d) assets and records are safeguarded; and the flow of funds under the Project are managed with adequate controls.

3. Scope of Services, Tasks, and Expected Deliverables

In supporting all financial management activities under Sub-component 2.3, the Finance Officer will work directly with the EthERNet team, and in close cooperation and collaboration with the Digital Foundations Project Implementation Unit (PIU), housed at the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MIInt). The Finance Officer must conduct their business with confidentiality and impartiality. The work will be conducted locally, in Addis Ababa.

Specific tasks to be carried out by the individual consultant include but are not limited to the following components:

Overall Management

- Be responsible for the overall financial management for Sub-component 2.3, and will ensure the maintenance of sound arrangements throughout the lifecycle of the Digital Foundations Project consistent with agreements, manuals and project documents;
- Coordinate with relevant beneficiaries and implementing entities in regard to the set up and maintenance of financial management arrangements including budgeting, accounting, internal controls, fund flows, reporting, and audit reporting.

Budgeting and planning

- Lead and manage the preparation of all budgets, including annual accounting, in consultation with relevant stakeholders;
- Ensure that the project budget is proclaimed in the government budget;
- Ensure that budgets are disseminated to all relevant stakeholders on time;
- Maintain budget discipline; Report to management on variances from the established budget, and the reasons for those variances;
- Submit budget and secure the 'No Objection' of the development partners as appropriate;

Accounting and Reporting

- Design and implement adequate financial management systems and procedures to govern implementation of the project;

¹ In a second phase of the project, coverage will be extended to 200 public secondary institutions subject to additional funding.

- Ensure that books of accounts are maintained; Maintain up to date and documented accounting system and policies and procedures;
- Ensure the existence of adequate and capable financial management staffing;
- Produce periodic financial reports for development partners as well as for the government as per reporting requirements and formats. Follow up on the preparation of acceptable financial reports from implementing entities; Ensure that unaudited financial reports are sent to the financiers on time and up to standards;
- Ensure that audited financial statements of the project are sent to development partners on time.

Funds Management

- Ensure that sufficient funds are available to meet ongoing project and operational requirements; Ensure that resources are available to beneficiaries/implementing entities; Forecast cash flow positions;
- Mitigate financial risks and maintain close liaison with key government counterparts involved in the project;
- Understand and implement development partners disbursement procedures for the project as per agreements/requirements; Follow up on disbursement issues timely with the development partners; Ensure fund requests are made as per procedures and agreements;
- Manage project bank accounts; Conduct bank reconciliations on time.

Internal controls

- Ensure internal control arrangements are maintained consistently throughout the life of the program/project including proper controls in regard to approval and authorization; segregation of duties; cash and bank management; safeguarding of assets and properties (including fixed assets and inventories); payroll management; taxes obligations; contract management; advances and prepayments; payables are in place; reconciliations, etc.

External and internal Audit

- Ensure that internal and external audits are arranged as per the agreements; ensure relevant accounting information is made available to them; Address their queries.

Financial Analysis

- Review financial performance of the program/project and report on key issues to EIC management and project/program stakeholders;
- Review administrative bottlenecks and recommend changes to improve efficiency Create additional analyses and reports as requested by management.

4. Required Qualifications

- The candidate should have a minimum qualification of an advanced Masters degree in finance or accounting, and a minimum of 5+ years of progressively responsible experience for a major company, government or non-government institution.
- The candidates should have prior experience in implementing World Bank funded project/programs for at least 2 years.
- Preference will be given to candidates with the Chartered Certified Public Accountant

or Certified Management Accountant designations.

- Excellent communication skills are essential, particularly in regard to presenting results of analyses to management.
- Proficient use and knowledge of electronic spreadsheets and database.
- Fluency in English and Amharic languages.
- The candidate must have the highest levels of personal integrity, and a reputation for a transparent and systematic work style; and
- The candidate must be able to work under pressure situations, in order to meet demanding deadlines.

5. Duration of the Services

The duration of the consultancy will initially be 12 months, with an expected start date of June 1, 2021, and with possibility for extension based on satisfactory performance and business needs.