

Terms of Reference for the Baseline Research on the Availability of Transparency and Accountability Standards and Guidelines within Oyo State Education Sector Plans and Policies as Well as Knowledge Gap among Stakeholders in Oyo State

1. Background

The Joint Action Grant (JAG) is an initiative by the Malala Fund aimed at supporting collective advocacy efforts among Education Champion organizations. This grant is designed to foster collaboration between multiple organizations, ensuring a unified approach to advancing girls' access to twelve years of free, safe, and quality education in Nigeria. The JAG program encourages partnerships that align with Malala Fund's strategic priorities, enabling the pooling of resources, expertise, and influence to tackle systemic barriers in education.

The overarching goal of JAG is to drive impactful change through collective advocacy, focusing on Gender-Responsive Education Sector Planning, and Transparency and Accountability in the education sector. By leveraging the strengths and capabilities of each participating organization, JAG-funded projects aim to create sustainable improvements in girls' education, ensuring that more girls can enroll, stay in school, and complete their education.

2. About the Research Assignment

Under the JAG, Aid for Rural Education Access Initiative (AREAi) seeks to deliver a series of advocacy and research responsibilities as earmarked towards promoting Policy Development and Reform, Transparency and Accountability, Community Engagement and Advocacy.

In this project, Aid for Rural Education Access Initiative (AREAi) is to work through a consortium with two organizations namely Youth Hub Africa and Education as a Vaccine.

3. Objectives, Purpose, and Scope of the Baseline Assessment

3.1 Purpose

This baseline research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of transparency and accountability in the education sector of Oyo State. By identifying knowledge gaps and challenges, this research will inform the development of targeted interventions to enhance transparency and accountability practices. This will ultimately contribute to improving educational outcomes and ensuring that resources are effectively utilized.

3.2 Objectives

1. Assess Current Transparency and Accountability Practices by evaluating existing policies and practices related to transparency and accountability in the education sector in Oyo State.
2. Identify Knowledge Gaps in the level of awareness and understanding of transparency and accountability guidelines among various stakeholders; such as citizens, including government officials, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students.
3. Identify the level of Citizens' inclusion and participation in the development of education -public frameworks, policies, and budgets.
4. Explore Stakeholder Perceptions and Attitudes on transparency and accountability in the education system.
5. Identify barriers and challenges faced by stakeholders in implementing transparency and accountability measures.

4. Rationale/ Justification of the Research

The rationale for conducting baseline research on transparency and accountability guidelines, as well as addressing the knowledge gap among stakeholders in Oyo State, is multifaceted and grounded in the need for improved policies within the education sector.

Firstly, transparency and accountability are fundamental principles of good governance, essential for the effective functioning of any public sector, including education. In Oyo State, there have been ongoing challenges related to the equitable distribution of educational resources, the implementation of educational policies, and the overall management of educational institutions. Without a clear understanding of the existing transparency and accountability mechanisms, it is difficult to identify specific areas requiring intervention and improvement.

Secondly, the involvement, understanding, and participation of all relevant stakeholders, including citizens is pivotal in the successful implementation of any policy. Government officials, school administrators, teachers, parents, community members, and students each play a crucial role in the education system and should be involved in its policy development. However, the level of citizens' participation in the development of education policies remains unknown; and there is a significant knowledge gap regarding transparency and accountability guidelines within the Oyo State Education sector planning. This gap hinders the ability of citizens to effectively participate in and contribute to the educational sector planning process.

Additionally, this research is crucial for the design of targeted interventions. Without baseline data, it is challenging to develop and implement effective strategies to improve transparency and accountability. The findings from this research will provide evidence-based outcomes that can inform policy decisions, enhance the design and implementation of educational sector planning, and ultimately lead to better educational outcomes for all students in Oyo State.

5. Scope

The scope of the baseline research on transparency and accountability guidelines, as well as the knowledge gap among stakeholders in Oyo State, encompasses a comprehensive assessment across various dimensions. Geographically, the study will cover different levels of educational institutions throughout Oyo State, including both urban and rural areas, ensuring a representative understanding of the entire region.

The research will engage a diverse group of stakeholders to provide a holistic view of the current state of transparency and accountability in the education sector. This includes government officials from the Ministry of Education, school administrators and principals, teachers and educational staff, citizens, parents and guardians, and students.

Data collection will employ a mixed-methods approach to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. Surveys and questionnaires will be used to collect quantitative data on stakeholders' knowledge and perceptions, while focus group discussions and interviews will provide qualitative insights into their attitudes and the challenges they face. Additionally, document analysis will be conducted to review existing policies and guidelines on transparency and accountability.

The key areas of focus for this research will include the current policies and their implementation, stakeholder awareness and understanding, perceptions of effectiveness and fairness, practical challenges and barriers, and suggestions for improvement and best practices. By addressing these areas, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the existing framework and identify opportunities for enhancing transparency and accountability in the education sector of Oyo State.

6. Data Collection and Quality Assurance

6.1 Development of Tools

As part of the inception report, the consultant will be expected to develop the following tools for the baseline research on transparency and accountability guidelines, as well as addressing the knowledge gap among stakeholders in Oyo State:

1. Stakeholder Surveys:

To gather quantitative and qualitative data on the current understanding and perceptions of transparency and accountability guidelines among various stakeholders, including government officials, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students.

Questions will cover areas such as awareness of existing guidelines, perceived effectiveness, challenges faced in implementation, and suggestions for improvement.

2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guides:

To facilitate in-depth discussions among smaller groups of stakeholders to explore their experiences, challenges, and recommendations regarding transparency and accountability in the education sector.

A semi-structured guide with open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses and foster dynamic discussions. Separate FGDs are suggested for different stakeholder groups to ensure comfortable and open dialogue.

3. Key Informant Interview (KII) Protocols:

To conduct one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders, including policymakers, educational leaders, and experts in governance and education. Structured and semi-structured questions focusing on specific insights, experiences, and recommendations related to transparency and accountability.

Participants will be selected based on their roles, influence, and expertise in the education sector.

4. Document Review Checklist:

To systematically review existing documents, policies, and reports related to transparency and accountability in the education sector of Oyo State. Checklist items will include policy documents, financial reports, audit reports, school management records, and previous research studies.

7. Data Analysis and Ethical Procedures

Upon completion of data collection, the research team will undertake a robust analysis approach. Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize survey responses and inferential statistics such as chi-square tests to examine relationships between variables. Regression analysis will further explore factors influencing stakeholders' perceptions. Qualitative data will undergo thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns from focus group discussions and key informant

interviews. Integration of mixed-methods data will provide a comprehensive understanding of stakeholders' perspectives, ensuring triangulation and validation of findings.

Ethical considerations will guide every phase of the research process. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, detailing the research purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits. Confidentiality will be maintained through the use of anonymized data and secure storage practices. Measures to minimize harm will be implemented, including providing support resources for participants experiencing distress. Respect for participants' autonomy and cultural sensitivities will inform adaptable research methods. Transparency and integrity will be upheld through unbiased data collection, analysis, and reporting practices, ensuring the research adheres to ethical standards and contributes ethically sound insights to the field.

8. Coordination and Cooperation

AREAi will work closely with the consultant in the following areas: review of the inception report; review of the tools; data collection and management, and review of the report. Upon completion of data collection and analysis, the consultant will present the findings and recommendations. Information will also be shared with participating schools and community leaders and should be presented in a way that will be easily understood by the audience. Communicating findings should be done in a way that will not create or increase conflict or disincentives towards participation in formal or nonformal learning opportunities.

9. Data Sharing Agreement (DSA)

To ensure data protection, AREAi will share the relevant data (ex: project location, logistical information, attendance and enrollment data, etc.) with the consultant in line with the requested data information for the assessment. The data will focus on data related to this project. The guarantees and the consultant will sign a Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) which will constitute an overall part of the contract and will be legally binding. While further details are noted in the DSA, Data Protection principles should be followed by all parties, including:

- data should be used solely for final evaluation of this research and excluded from being used for other things.
- The consultant will also be asked to delete the data at the end of the evaluation, and guarantees should also delete any data (ex: raw data) that is no longer needed.
- Personal Data cannot be transferred to any other 3rd parties without explicit consent and agreement.

- The data cannot be used by the consultant, or by the other guarantes, for further publications after the completion of the work.

9.1. Consent and transparency

The consultant will exercise the following: To inform participants about the data subjects on why we want to collect their data and educate them on their rights regarding their data collected (this includes, the right to request for correction where a subject's data is inaccurate, right to withdraw/ask that their data be deleted, etc), as well as any risks that they may face in providing this information. Data subject consent must be sought before data collection commencement, using a consent form – which should be plainly explained to them.

- Access to Data collected must be restricted to the controller and the data processor, and on a 'need to know' basis.
- Data collected should be deleted after the purpose of collection or program is completed – taking into consideration any local laws/contractual obligations.
- Data collected will be kept to a minimum and based on only the information that will be used and analyzed for the evaluation

10. Responsibility of the partners:

While AREAi will solely be responsible for the overall coordination process. The consultant will sign the data use and processing protocol as part of the terms of the contract as per AREAi's policy on data protection and use.

11. Activities and Responsibility

Phase	Role	Primary Task
Planning	Program Manager, Director of Programmes, Executive Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lead in project introduction meetings with the consultant. - Submit project documents to consultant - Provide technical inputs to improve methodology/ questionnaires <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruit enumerators. - Support in facilitating data collection.
	Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lead on the process of assessment design, methodology, planning and quality control procedures.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Test and adjust survey tools. - Train field data enumerators
Data Collection and Analysis	Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate data collection. - Fully responsible for data quality assurance - Analyse, present and validate data to consortium team
	Project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review Data
Reporting and follow up	Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide a draft report which provides information for the key indicators of the project. - Discussion with the project team on findings and reflect feedback in the final report. - Final report submission based on the feedback
Signed Off the Final Report:	Director of Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sign off the Final report after incorporating all the feedback.

12.Deliverables

- An inception report that responds to the scope of work by adding any further detail or clarification regarding the study approach, method, or implementation arrangements as per the terms of reference. This includes a detailed description of the assessment, including the overall design, sampling framework, data collection tools, data sources, data analysis plan, quality assurance criteria, limitations, and a work plan for the implementation of the assessment.
- The Consultant will also share Dataset shared as well.
- Completion and presentation of tools and methodologies to AREAi and Partners for input ahead of data collection
- Draft of the baseline assessment report: its design, analysis, findings, limitations, references, data collection tools and any other information to inform and support findings and context analysis (including existing service delivery and community power dynamics).
- A final assessment report (in English, 40 pages maximum excluding annexes) structured as follows:
 - ✓ Cover page.

- ✓ A list of acronyms and abbreviations
- ✓ A table of contents
- ✓ An executive summary
- ✓ Introduction and background
- ✓ Scope and objectives of the evaluation
- ✓ Methodology
- ✓ Results (Part 1: on findings and Part 2 on Results per outcome indicators)
- ✓ Conclusions
- ✓ Lessons learned and recommendations.
- ✓ Appendices of the report, including:
 - o Terms of reference
 - o List of documents consulted.
 - o Baseline tools
 - o List of persons and organizations/institutions consulted.

13. Timeframe

The assessment will start from 14th July to 3rd August 2024 and the estimated number is 20 calendar days to complete the assessment.

14. Management of the assessment

A Steering Committee (SC) will be established by AREAi, with the following members:

- GGE Program Manager
- Director of Programmes
- Executive Director

Throughout the process, the consultant will closely work with the steering committee responsible for the management of the assessment. The committee will coordinate the assessment process. It will review and approve each deliverable of the assessment and establish a dissemination and utilization strategy. A scoping meeting between the consultant and the committee will enable to align the understanding of these terms of reference and to validate the methodology proposed by the consultant. The consultant will be responsible for logistics, communications, and the secretariat (printing documentation, etc.). The consultant as well as AREAi staff will also be responsible for the administration of all methodological tools such as questionnaires, focus group, etc.

15. Assessment consultant team

AREAi seeks expressions of interest from people with the following skills/qualifications.

- i) Advanced university degree or equivalent in Education, Humanitarian/Development Studies, Social Sciences, statistics, or other fields related to the assignment.
- ii) At least 7-10 years of relevant experience and proven expertise in the education sector with at least five years in evaluation.

- iii) Significant experience in conducting assessment, data analysis, research, and/or evaluation – including prior experience in project and programme reviews and evaluations.
- iv) Strong quantitative and qualitative research skills.
- v) Knowledge of the status of education with vast experience on education-focused assessments/studies. Familiarity with Oyo State is preferred.
- vi) Must be based in and have extensive knowledge about OYO state Educational Sector
- vii) Ability to work independently and achieve quality results with limited supervision.
- viii) Strong analytical, synthesis, and writing skills.
- ix) Excellent command of written and spoken English.
- x) Experience in designing quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and managing participatory and learning-focused evaluations.
- xi) Excellent teamwork, communication skills, flexibility, and good organization skills.

16. Ethical Considerations

The assessment must respect the rights of the people interviewed by guaranteeing confidentiality and security. Respondents should not be exposed to any risks and discomfort. As such data collection tools will be pre-tested and evaluation activities will provide a safe, creative space where respondents feel that their thoughts and ideas are important. All staff involved, evaluator(s) and enumerators are expected to be briefed on AREAI's Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct with which they must comply. The data collection plan must state how NRC and the evaluator(s) will file the data and keep it secure. Enumerators (male and female) will be trained on ethical data collection techniques.

17. Payment Schedule

Payment to the Consultant/Consulting firm shall be made in accordance with normal procedures of AREAI. In principle however, Consultant/Consulting firm fees will be paid upon the satisfactory report of performance. The payment schedule will be as follows:

- 1st payment: after successful submission and approval of the inception report and tools, digitalizing of tools and uploading of all materials into the cloud-based platform; and submission of the implementation schedule, the Consultant/Consulting firm will be paid 35% of total payment.
- 2nd payment: upon successful completion of training of enumerators and data collection across project locations, the Consultant/Consulting firm will be paid 20% of total payment.

- 3rd and final payment: upon submission of the final cleaned transcripts, data sets, process report and final study report to AREAi, the Consultant/Consulting firm will be paid the final 45% of the total payment.
- AREAi reserves the right to withhold payment if deliverables do not meet the requirements outlined in these Terms of Reference.

18. Application process and requirements

The technical and financial proposals of up to 6 pages maximum (excluding annexes) should include the following:

- Proposed methodology, including a tentative work plan.
- Composition of the assessment team.
- CV of the member(s) of the assessment team including references.
- The consultant shall propose a realistic cost estimate for this assignment, including a breakdown of the budget and justification of expenses. The budget shall include only those costs that can be directly attributed to the activities proposed. This should be submitted separately from the Technical Proposal.
- An extract or links (3-5 pages) from reports written for similar missions.
- A cover letter with the following information: a description of how their skills, qualifications and experience is relevant to the requirements of the assignment, a list of previous evaluations that are relevant to the context and subject of this assignment, a statement confirming their availability to conduct the assignment and the budget (please indicate currency of amount), a statement confirming that the candidate has no previous involvement in the delivery of the project or any personal relationship with anyone engaged in it.

Applications are accepted in English no later than 12th July 2024

Interested firms/individual consultants can obtain additional information by sending correspondence by sending an e-mail to ifeoluwa@areai4africa.org cc. Edidiong@areai4africa.org
