Hiring a consulting firm to assist the ICTA M&E unit to produce regular project performance monitoring/implementation progress reports and conduct regular field monitoring activities (ICTA/SG2/GOSL/CON/QCBS/2017/001)

1. Background:

Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA) is the apex government institution, responsible for formulating policies and implementing projects towards digital development of the country. The Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) has recognized the critical role that ICT can play in fostering social integration, peace, growth, and poverty reduction. The Government intends to use ICT to improve the reach and responsiveness of public services, reduce transaction costs to business, make government more transparent and accountable, and especially address the needs of the poor communities and citizens in geographically isolated regions.With the objective of fully leveraging the benefit of digital technologies in every sector of the country, ICTA commenced the implementation of Digitalization of the Economy' initiative in 2016.

Currently, ICTA is in the process of implementing number of national digitization initiatives   including i) developing required digital infrastructure across the country to effectively serve all citizens irrespective of the geographical regions that they are living, ii) creating an enabling environment required for the knowledge economy; iii) delivering faster, more efficient, and more transparent government services to all citizens and businesses; iii) developing specialized ICT skills and broad ICT literacy across the society, iv) promoting the competitiveness of IT and BPO industry and v) promoting widespread ICT adoption and empowerment of citizens across the country. In order to achieve the outcomes of these initiatives, ICTA has already commenced over 80 projects in collaboration with various stakeholder organizations.

ICTA M&E System: Having recognized the critical role of M&E in measuring the progress of these initiatives, ICTA implements a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system across all the projects and programmes. The main objectives of the M&E are: 1) measuring of performances, ii) evaluating progress towards outcomes, iii) institutional learning: improving focus and performance orientation iv) understanding and negotiating stakeholder perspectives v) public accountability, vi) measuring impacts vii) building M&E related capacities of internal project teams and stakeholders

ICTA M&E process can mainly be categorized into two components; a) Ongoing monitoring b) Periodic Evaluations.

i) Ongoing Monitoring system

This component focused on the collection and collating of data generated from project implementation (monitoring data) for the purpose of: a) measuring the progress against planned targets including the procurement process, b) monitoring the implementation progress and quality of outputs, c) understanding the levels of stakeholder engagements d) measuring the usage levels of project services by beneficiaries.

Internal project management team is responsible for collecting and entering data in to an internal database system and currently M&E team is engaged in consolidating and formats designed by various stakeholder organizations.

Handling massive amounts of data generated through the procurement processes and project implementations from nearly 600 subprojects/procurement line items has become an extremely complex task for the internal M&E team.

In order to collect data required to take decisions on improving project performances, ICTA M&E team is conducting regular field visits to the beneficiary organizations. In these site visits Rapid Appraisal techniques such as focus group discussions, direct observations and field discussions are used to gather required data and such findings are communicated to the project management teams to take appropriate corrective measures and also communicate good practices and lessons learnt during these visits.

Furthermore, M&E unit also engaged in continuously reviewing international benchmark indices such as International Telecommunication Index (ITU), Networked Readiness Index (NRI) and UN e-Government Index to understand the country's standing in terms of ICT development.

ii) Periodic Evaluations:

Project specific baseline and evaluation surveys are conducted under this component. (This section also included cost benefit analysis for some of the newly designed projects. Baseline and outcome related data are collected through project specific as well as cross cutting /overall surveys)

To ensure the reliability, validity, rigorousness, and objective nature of evaluation data, evaluation activities are to be outsourced to a competent external consulting firm/consultants through competitive bidding process. However, data collection process will be closely monitored by the internal M&E team

2. Objectives of the assignment:

The main objective of the proposed consultancy is to assist the ICTA M&E unit and provide project implementation and management support services in producing and timely submission of the regular performance monitoring reports and conduct as and when required field visits targeting various stakeholder organizations. The consultant is required to ensure the quality and accuracy of the data of progress reports that they produce.

2.2. Specific objectives of the assignment:

The specific objectives of the assignment are;

a) To produce the regular performance monitoring reports with required quality in agreed frequencies using the given formats. The data required for the report should be extracted through the internal data base system which is updated by respective project managers twice a month. The consultant is required to follow up of timely updating the system with reliable and consistent data.

b) To carry out monitoring activities at the field level to ensure quality of data gathered by independent evaluation consultants contracted for specific program evaluations. Based on the visits the consultants are required to produce field monitoring reports with evidences based corrective actions.

c) To assist the M&E unit to evaluate objectively the quality of ICTA events (such as trainings, technical sessions/exhibitions, workshops, and etc.).

3. Scope of work and key tasks to be carried out:

i. Meet the representatives of ICTA and gather details of the requirements of the consultancy. The consultants must peruse all documentations necessary and conduct a document/literature review to develop good understanding projects implemented by ICTA and their present status of implementation. The documents to be review include project log frames, project plans and proposals, M&E reports so far produced.

ii. The consultant must develop excellent working relationships with the M&E team and the project staff. To understand the project implementation level the consultants are expected to closely engage with client's staff to exchange and validate data/ information.

iii. The consultant is expected to establish an effective and conducive mechanism to smoothly follow up the data collection and updating processes, validation and quality assurance of data collected.
To provide, a detailed Implementation approach and the Plan outlining all the steps involved in planning and implementation of the assignment, including a time schedule, resource plan, data management plan and submit to ICTA in electronic form and as a hard copy.The consultant is responsible for producing regular reports by using the reporting formats given. Table-(1) presents the details of the reports the Consultant needs to produce. The consultant is responsible and accountable for the quality standards of the reports submitted to ICTA.

iv. To undertake field visits to facilitate data collection processes for evaluation/survey activities. These field visits must be conducted objectively and in highly professional manner and should be done in collaboration with ICTA M&E team. Based on the visits the consultants are required to submit field monitoring reports based on the observations made.

v. Additionally, the consultant is responsible for conducting field monitoring visits to the beneficiary organizations in collaboration with the ICTA project management teams and M&E team. In these visits the consultant is expected to carry out evaluation research activities by using rapid appraisal techniques. For this purpose consultant must be equipped with necessary evaluation skills, expertise

and best practices in evaluation and expertise. Based on the visits, the consultant is expected to produce field monitoring reports with forward looking corrective actions.

vi. ICTA organize various events, training programmes, and change management events under different projects to improve the capacities of the stakeholders and beneficiaries. To ensure the effectiveness and impacts, these training programmes and events should be planned and implemented by using appropriate techniques and methodologies. To evaluate the quality, appropriate evaluation activities must be implemented by the consultant in consultation with ICTA staff. The consultant must have proven expertise to conduct such evaluation activities in an effective manner.

vii. The consultant in his bid shall present the best practices of survey management and field monitoring methods and any additional quality control measures that are essential. The consultant in the bid must discuss as to how the proposed approach will support for achieving the objectives of the assignments

viii. To implement the above mentioned activities successfully the consultant must have the proven expertise of M&E and the best practices that is required to be applied throughout the assignment must be discussed in bid.

Table-(1): List of reports/documents to be submitted: Frequency, and Language to be used:

Report	Target organization/s	Frequency	Language	Report Deadline
Report on physical progress of the ICTA projects (standard template provided)	Ministry of Telecommunication & Digital Infrastructure (MTDI), Department of National Budgets.	Twice a month	English	1st report- 2nd of each month 2nd Report- 17th of each month
Quarterly Progress report (Format will be provided)	Department of Project Management & Monitoring (DPMM).	Quarterly	English	As requested
Quarterly Progress report (Format will be provided)	Presidential Secretariats.	Quarterly	English	As requested
Quarterly Progress Report (Format will be provided)	Parliament Sectoral Committee.	Quarterly	English, Sinhala, Tamil	As requested
Organizational Results Framework (ORF)	DPMM	Quarterly	English	As requested
Report to the Parliament Sectoral committee meetings	Parliament Sectoral Committee.	Quarterly	English, Sinhala, Tamil	As requested

Report to the Department of Public Administration	Department of Public Administration.	Monthly	English	As requested
ITM (Information Technology Management) Report	Department of Information Technology Management, Ministry of Finance.	Monthly	English	As requested
Project Field Monitoring Report.	M & E Unit, ICTA	Quarterly	English	
Evaluation reports on key ICTA events.	M & E Unit, ICTA	As required	English	
Design & carry out specific assignments such as evaluations.	M & E Unit, ICTA	As required		

4. Qualification of the Consultant:

The Consultant shall have minimum three (3) years specialized experience in project management, monitoring and evaluation related consultancy/research assignments preferably for the public sector projects. Table-(2) below shows the details of the positions required, respective qualifications and experience.

Table-(2): Key positions, preferred experience & qualifications:

Position	Preferable Academic Qualification	Preferable Experience
Team Leader (01 position)	Master Degree qualification in the relevant field.	Minimum eight years of work experience in the field of monitoring and evaluation and /or as an external evaluator/ consultant of managing independent evaluation assessments, surreys etc Experience in producing monitoring and evaluation reports, , survey reports targeting to development agencies, various government ministries and departments. Experience in managing development projects/consultancy assignments Should have excellent working knowledge in English language and excellent ability to write reports
Consultant - Monitoring &Reporting (2 positions)	Minimum Bachelor Degree in relevant field	Minimum 5 year experience in a development project and /or as a senior officer in the government planning service Experience in producing monitoring and evaluation reports, , survey reports targeting to development agencies, various government ministries and departments. Experience in managing development projects/consultancy assignments Experience in development projects. Strong skills in Microsoft excel statistical software such as SPSS.
Project Officer - Monitoring and Reporting. (2 positions)	Minimum Basic Degree – preferably in statistics	Minimum 2 years' experience in data entering, analysis, and reports preparation. Experience in handing statistical software systems (I e SPSS) is and added qualification Good analytic, writing and communication skills; Good judgment and interpersonal communication skills; Strong interpersonal communication skills , skills in working in spread sheets

Position	Preferable Academic Qualification	Preferable Experience
Consultants – for field level monitoring and reporting (3 Positions)	Master degree in social science such as economics, sociology etc).	At least 2 years of work experience in the environment of development projects. Minimum of 2 yrs experience in operational and academic research, participatory methodologies, gender approaches, monitoring and evaluation or related fields. Good command of quantitative and/ or qualitative research methodologies, Good analytic, writing and communication skills; Good judgment and interpersonal communication skills; Publishing at least 2 research papers are an added qualifications Should have pleasant personality & ability to maintain personnel relationships. Good analytic, writing and communication skills; Publishing at least 2 research papers are an added qualifications Excellent report writing skills in English

5. Other important aspects related to the assignment:

Duration of the assignment:

The Consultant Firm will provide the particular services to the M&E Unit of ICTA for a period of one year and based on the performance of the Service Provider and the requirements of the client, the contract will be further extended. The assignment is expected to start at the beginning of the third quarter of 2017.

Reporting focal point of ICTA:

The Consultant Firm will work in close collaboration with the ICTA M&E unit and will report to the Head of Monitoring and Evaluation, ICTA. Under the supervision of the Head of the M & E Unit, the performance of the Consultancy Firm is evaluated against the objectives of the assignment.

Facilities and services to be provided by the client:

M&E Team, ICTA will provide required technical support and directions, available data, other supportive inputs and documents to the consultant for smooth implementation of the assignment. Should any information be deemed as confidential, the consultants shall not disclose such information, to any person or group without written permission of the MD/CEO, ICTA.

Facilities to be provided by the consultant:

The consultant shall be entirely responsible for having all other required facilities such as office, transport, logistics, necessary office furniture, equipment and maintaining necessary communication and coordination

among the project personnel, individual consultants, and technical experts in order to make sure expected quality and the effectiveness of the assignment.