

# Call for Proposals

Consultancy to conduct in-depth assessment and evaluation of the National Digital Transformation Ecosystem and develop an operation roadmap for Digital Government in Sierra Leone.

**dial** Digital  
Impact  
Alliance



BILL & MELINDA  
GATES foundation



## About DIAL

The Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL) is a “think, do, replicate” tank that investigates digital transformation best practice at the national, regional, and global level. DIAL combines practical research with evidence-based advocacy to identify which digital efforts work, package them as re-usable solutions, and encourage their use. DIAL is funded through a collaboration among the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the United Kingdom’s Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCDO) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and hosted within the UN Foundation in Washington, D.C.

In its new [Strategic Plan](#) period, 2021-2025, DIAL is providing more direct support to national governments, beginning with one country in 2021, to enable more low- and middle-income countries to embark on and accelerate a whole of society approach to digital transformation and responsible data use. DIAL believes that if more countries can demonstrate that their digital and data transformation investments improve service delivery, then new countries can accelerate their own digital transformation and responsible data use journeys.

## Background

In December 2019, DIAL formalized its partnership with the Smart Africa Alliance for a Digital Economy Initiative to support Smart Africa Member States on national digital transformation and responsible data use efforts.

In Phase One of the Digital Economy Initiative, we assessed the progress of ten Member States in building digital economy by doing an analysis of publicly available data and indices from global and regional organizations, as well as doing interview and focus group discussions with digital service teams. Our [final report](#), published in October, evaluated the success and challenges in government-led digitalization in accordance with the five pillars of Digital Economy Blueprint for Africa, and our recommendations as part of the report were submitted to and welcomed by a Smart Africa Steering Committee meeting in August of 2020.

Phase Two of the Digital Economy Initiative, kicking off in 2021, is focused on providing targeted support to one of the ten Member States that participated in Phase Two. It is focused on the Digital Government pillar of the Digital Economy Blueprint, and is also in line with the “Accelerate” pillar of DIAL’s “A, B, C” approach to national digital transformation, outlined in its [2021-2026 Strategic Plan](#). The goal of this project is to kickstart national-level digital transformation by supporting both strategy development and capacity-building, as well as in-depth support for one (1) e-government project in particular.

To this end, DIAL has partnered with the Government of Sierra Leone to provide support for digital government and help accelerate the creation of an inclusive digital economy. Building on their draft National Digital Transformation Strategy and National Digital Development Policy (to be finalized this year), this partnership hopes to help operationalize planned digital initiatives and activities in the area of digital government, as well as develop a pilot project on document tracking and procedure management in coordination with Smart Africa and the Ministry of Information and Communication for Sierra Leone.

## Project Description

The goal of this consultancy is to conduct a baseline assessment of the digital ecosystem in Sierra Leone, as a precondition for catalyzing operational activities in the area of digital government. Beginning with a rapid landscape of the national digital ecosystem based on publicly available data, the consultant will conduct a gap analysis and work with the government to identify key indicators, collect additional data and validate the results of this baseline assessment.

**(Note:** DIAL has developed an indicator library of critical data points and publicly available data on various aspects of the digital ecosystem at the country level, which we expect the consultant to (where possible)

leverage in the development of their research methodology. These indicators are based on a range of frameworks, indices, and datasets; for example, the World Bank's Digital Economy for Africa (DE4A) Diagnostic Assessment and the GSMA's Mobile Connectivity Index. The consultant is expected to use this indicator library as a foundation to develop and evolve the baseline assessment tool, as well as be open to sourcing data from other organizations and collaborating with other organizations conducting their own assessments in Sierra Leone.)

The consultant will use the results of this assessment to work with the government of Sierra Leone, DIAL, and Smart Africa to scope and draft an operational roadmap and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Framework for digital government. Together with DIAL and Smart Africa, the consultant will work with the government to convene and consult with key stakeholders, prioritize strategic actions for digital government, and develop an operational plan for digital government activities at the Ministry of Information and Communication. Additionally, the consultant will develop a M&E Framework with key outcomes and outputs, indicators, targets, and measurement plan to enable the government to track progress along this roadmap. This project will be a key step in helping the government to operationalize its National Digital Transformation Strategy, which is in the process of being revised and has not been formally adopted.

## Scope of Work

### Research Questions

The results of the baseline assessment will be rigorously applied to inform the approach, prioritization, and decision-making process relating to the project roll-out and the provision of key services and digital infrastructure within the government. By providing the government and key partners with the information needed to contextualize its planned vision, the consultant will help DIAL to answer the following questions:

- a. What is the current state of the digital government ecosystem in Sierra Leone?
- b. What projects and programs should the government prioritize and deliver over the next five years in order to achieve its strategic goals for digital government?
- c. What capacity and resource gaps exist and what does the government need to realize its objectives?
- d. How will the government know that they are on the right track in delivering on their objectives for digital government, as well as ensure those objectives are completed well and in a timely manner?
- e. How does government engage stakeholders (including private sector, civil society, development partners, etc) around development of the digital government vision and implementation of the programs and projects?

### Objectives

The goal of this project is to evaluate the current state of Sierra Leone's digital government ecosystem against selected targets and indicators in order to achieve four (4) main objectives:

1. **To assess and capture baseline data from the national digital ecosystem in Sierra Leone**, which will be used to develop key performance indicators for evaluating digital government progress over time.
2. **To validate baseline data on digital government in consultation with national stakeholders**, which will inform workshops and capacity-building that are used to develop an operational roadmap for digital government.
3. **To develop, cost, and assist the government to adopt a multi-year operational roadmap and monitoring and evaluation (MEL) framework for digital government projects.**

4. **To support the development of a pilot project plan and the provision of ongoing technical and strategic support**, including support towards the digital government institutional framework that will implement the projects in the next five years.

## Activities

Given that the assessment will involve multiple stakeholders and thusly require the alignment of various stakeholders for input to and validation of the project, DIAL anticipates that the project will be delivered through a phased approach as follows:

### Phase 1 – Project Inception and Design (3 weeks)

**Purpose:** Build a detailed project design, as well as create foundational understanding of the Sierra Leone digital ecosystem through secondary research, review of materials, and consultation with the delivery team.

#### Illustrative Activities: \*

- Desk review of country strategy documents, policies, actions, partnerships, measurement frameworks, reports, and other necessary materials, as well as secondary literature review.
- Introductory meetings with delivery team and key stakeholders to determine aims, priorities, and targets, with focus on aligning overall direction between consultant and key stakeholders.
- Preparation of an inception report that outlines the proposed analytical framework, measurement instruments, research questions, and data collection tools.
- Development of a baseline assessment tool for capturing data that assesses local needs and gaps in Sierra Leone (based on DIAL indicator library), including the design of analytical framework, measurement instruments, research questions, and data collection tools.
- Development of a template for presentation of the findings of the baseline assessment and landscape assessment in report format.

#### Deliverable(s):

1. Inception report, with literature review
2. Baseline assessment tool
3. Baseline and landscape assessment templates

### Phase 2 – Baseline Assessment: Secondary data collection and gap analysis (3 weeks)

**Purpose:** Collect data using baseline assessment tool to answer research questions identified in Phase 1, as well as conduct a gap analysis to determine priorities for primary data collection and stakeholder consultation.

#### Illustrative Activities:

- In-depth analysis of digital ecosystem in Sierra Leone and data collection of using baseline assessment tool, using mutually agreed-upon research approach and indicators defined in Phase 1 (and in consideration of DIAL indicator library).
  - To cover (but not limited to) the following areas: Infrastructure, Policy and Regulation, Digital Skills and People, Finance, Digital Government, and Business and Innovation.
- Development of a supporting MEL framework with key performance indicators (KPIs) based on preliminary findings of baseline assessment.
- A stakeholder mapping of those stakeholders that are to be consulted in Phase 3, in cooperation with DIAL, Smart Africa, and the Government of Sierra Leone.
- Preliminary gap analysis of existing data to prioritize primary data collection needs and stakeholder consultation for Phase 3, including preparation of necessary data collection instruments.

**Deliverable(s):**

1. Consolidated gap analysis and stakeholder mapping
2. Draft baseline assessment with findings (with proposed MEL framework)

**Phase 3 – Landscape Assessment: Primary data collection and stakeholder consultation (4 weeks)**

**Purpose:** Conduct in-depth assessment of digital government through validation of secondary research and collection of additional primary data, as well as identification of the list of projects and activities the government needs to operationalize its vision for digital government.

**Illustrative Activities:**

- Landscape of digital government in consultation with the Government of Sierra Leone, as well as validation of data which has already been connected under the scope of the baseline assessment.
- Demand- and supply-side SWOT analysis of digital government challenges, needs, goals, and activities in consultation with key stakeholders from the Government of Sierra Leone and within the country.
- Preparation of a final baseline assessment report documenting the results and findings of the data collection, including key performance indicators and a proposed MEL framework.
- Preparation of a landscape assessment report based on consultations on digital government, including preliminary list of specific initiatives and investments aligned with roadmap targets and investments and covering key government priorities mapped to an implementation plan (e.g., 2,3,5 year roadmap).
  - Will likely include indicative timelines, budgets for priority activities, and a high-level risk assessment for the draft roadmap with mitigating actions.

**Deliverable(s):**

- Baseline assessment report (including validated findings and MEL framework)
- Landscape assessment report for digital government (including project list and proposed KPIs)

**Phase 4: Validation of findings and development of operational roadmap (4 weeks)**

**Purpose:** Present findings to technical committee to align findings with committee's understanding and build buy-in, as well as develop and draft an operational roadmap based on agreed-upon projects and activities.

**Illustrative Activities:**

- Review of assessment findings by technical working groups and prioritization of initiatives identified in landscape assessment.
- Incorporation of stakeholder inputs and co-creation of implementation recommendations, including technical review and endorsement by technical committee.
- Drafting of an operational roadmap for digital government, including indicative timelines, budgets for priority activities, assigned institutions, key partners, and a high-level risk assessment for the draft roadmap with mitigating actions.
  - Note that the scope and format of this is to be decided between the consultant and DIAL/Smart Africa, but will likely include project description, goals, objectives, risks, stakeholders, and lead institution(s). This roadmap may be about 30-50 projects for idea of the work involved.
- Further articulation of a supporting MEL institutional framework with key performance indicators (KPIs), to be included in final operational roadmap and accepted by the government upon completion.

**Deliverable(s):** Draft operational roadmap for digital government (with MEL framework and KPIs)

## Phase 5: Completion of operational roadmap, with supporting MEL framework (3 weeks)

**Purpose:** Revision and completion of operational roadmap for digital government

### Illustrative Activities:

- Finalize and complete operational roadmap for digital government with supporting MEL framework, including indicative timelines, budgets for priority activities, institutional framework, and a high-level risk assessment for the draft roadmap with mitigating actions.
- Presentation of report to Advisory Group and technical committee within the Ministry of ICT.
- Validation of report with consulted stakeholders, including private sector, civil society, development partners, etc.
- Feedback and revision of operational roadmap based on stakeholder consultation and feedback.
- Final roadmap and report submitted to the ICT Minister and endorsed at the ministerial level.

### Deliverable(s):

- Completed operational roadmap for digital government (with MEL framework and KPIs)

## Deliverables

DIAL is seeking an experienced firm to conduct the proposed research study and develop the following deliverables for use by DIAL, Smart Africa, and the Government of Sierra Leone.

Phase	#	Deliverables/Outputs	Due Date
1	1	Inception report	9 <sup>th</sup> July 2021
	2	Baseline assessment tool	
	3	Baseline and landscape assessment templates	
2	4	Consolidated gap analysis and stakeholder mapping	30 <sup>th</sup> July 2021
	5	Draft baseline assessment template and findings	
3	6	Baseline assessment report	27 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
	7	Landscape assessment report for digital government	
4	8	Draft operational roadmap for digital government	24 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
5	9	Completed operational roadmap for digital government	15 <sup>th</sup> October 2021

## Project Period of Performance

Work will start on or around **1<sup>st</sup> July, 2021** and we're requesting that it be completed by **15<sup>th</sup> October, 2021** at the latest. During this time, we anticipate a close working relationship with the chosen vendor, which will also include regular discussions of Smart Africa and the Government of Sierra Leone.

## Proposal Submission Requirements

Proposal submissions must be created in Microsoft Word in 12-point font. Submissions should not exceed 12 pages with up to 20 pages for Annexes. Proposal submissions must include the following components. (Respondents may include additional elements as needed.)

- **Proposed approach**
  - Demonstrate understanding of the project objectives and activities.
  - Describe approach, methodologies and deliverable formats, as applicable, as well as how you plan to include research materials DIAL has already developed.



- Describe project management approach, including suggested timeline based on the proposal contained herein, as well as any recommended updates, including timing and level of effort on the part of the DIAL team, e.g. to participate in scoping and requirements, workshops and validation, etc.
- **Staff and team structure**
  - Identify the team structure including roles, responsibilities, and level of effort of staff and any sub-contracted resources.
  - Provide rationale and background on any sub-contracted firms or individuals, as well as any gender considerations in the formulation of your team.
  - Sub-contractors must be identified and the work they will perform must be defined.
    - DIAL will not refuse a proposal based upon the use of subcontractors; however, we reserve the right to refuse the sub-contractors you have selected.
  - Please include a description of how the team will work virtually with DIAL staff across different time zones
- **Relevant experience**
  - Demonstrate firm and key participants' experience relative to the scope of work through submission of CVs and/or resumes.
    - Specifically, please highlight your team's experience with related research in digital transformation and digital government, as well as provide links to publications and/or thought pieces.
  - Provide at least three (3) examples of resources produced for donors and/or similar research conducted by your firm.
  - Demonstrate experience working with national governments if applicable (please specify which donors), especially in the African context
- **Budget**
  - Provide a detailed budget, including assumptions and costs and level of effort for staff and any sub-contractors.
  - Provide professional fees budget, including cost and level of effort per staff member.
  - Provide separate line item for any sub-contractors.
  - Provide expenses budget by type of expenses, e.g. travel, research, etc. Travel estimates should indicate the anticipated destination and duration of each trip.
  - The price you quote should be inclusive. If your process excludes certain fees or charges, you must provide a detailed list of excluded fees with a complete explanation of the nature of those fees.
- **References**
  - Provide names and email addresses of at least two prior clients willing to discuss their experiences working with you

**Note:** Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, travel options may be severely limited. Please indicate an approach for the stakeholder consultation requirements should travel for in-person meetings/workshops not be possible.

## Submission Format

1. All submissions must be delivered electronically with the subject line "Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL) Digital Economy Ecosystem Landscape Assessment Submission – Company Name.
2. Please send all proposal submissions to [RFP@digitalimpactalliance.org](mailto:RFP@digitalimpactalliance.org)
3. In case respondents encounter a problem submitting, please contact Theresa Nyamupachitu at [tnyamupachitu@digitalimpactalliance.org](mailto:tnyamupachitu@digitalimpactalliance.org)

## Submission Timeline

1. All submissions are due on **Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021 by 5:00PM ET.**
2. Questions and clarifications will be communicated to Respondents on a rolling basis until **Wednesday, 19th May 2021.**

- The selected respondent will be notified on **Monday, 31<sup>st</sup> May by 5:00pm ET** and will be expected to start on or around **Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021**.

## Questions and Answers

Please forward any questions to [RFP@digitalimpactalliance.org](mailto:RFP@digitalimpactalliance.org) by **Wednesday, 19th May 2021**. DIAL will make every effort to respond to questions within 48

## Evaluation Process

DIAL will review all written proposals and may request a phone or in-person interview and/or updated submission to address questions or provide clarification. The evaluation committee will use the following criteria to evaluate candidates' response.

The selection decision will be based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Score
<b>1. Knowledge of DIAL objectives (10 points)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed approach shows an understanding of DIAL, the digital ecosystem, and the endline objectives as well as a clear plan for achieving them.</li> </ul>	
<b>2. Subject Matter Expertise (35 points)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate level of understanding of the key stakeholders and dynamics within the digital ecosystem</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience working with mixed methods approaches to conduct outcomes harvesting</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience with advanced data collection, analysis, and visualization tools for multicultural audiences</li> </ul>	
<b>3. Project Management (10 points)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear description of team roles and interaction with DIAL</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achievable action plan that will deliver the project on time and on budget</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thoughtful risk identification and mitigation strategies</li> </ul>	
<b>4. Capabilities and Experience (25 points)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrated firm experience with similar projects and in international development context</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team members with demonstrated skills and experience with similar projects and activities</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High-quality sub-contractors and external advisors, if relevant, especially with knowledge and experience in global south/developing countries</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates ability to access necessary resources and knowledge centers to be successful</li> </ul>	
<b>5. Value (20 points)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed pricing is within budget</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed pricing demonstrates a competitive price and good value for the money</li> </ul>	

## Intent and Disclaimer

This Call for Proposals is made with the intent to identify a consultant to deliver results as described in this Call for Proposals. Issuance of this Call for Proposals does not obligate DIAL to award a



resulting contract and any costs incurred in preparation of a proposal is the sole responsibility of the respondent.

In submitting a proposal, the respondent certifies that information contained therein is truthful and accurate to the best of the respondent's ability. Should any information later be found to not be in-line with this certification, DIAL reserves the right to terminate any resulting contract(s) and/or select an alternative contractor. DIAL assumes it can be confident in the Consultant's ability to deliver the product(s) and/or service(s) proposed in response to this Call for Proposals.

If DIAL amends the Call for Proposals, copies of any such amendments will be sent to all respondents.

DIAL is partially funded by SIDA with a commitment to women and non-US owned organizations, DIAL will consider all proposals in consideration of the selection criteria but will give preference to women and non-US owned businesses.

## Contract Terms

The UN Foundation/DIAL will negotiate contract terms upon selection. A copy of the contract terms and conditions will be provided upon pre-selection. All contracts are subject to review by UN Foundation's Business Services Budget Reporting (BSBR) team. Once a draft contract is reviewed by BSBR, DIAL's Program Administrator will contact the Vendor. The project will start upon the execution of the contract. The contract will outline terms and conditions, scope, budget, and applicable flow-down terms proscribed by the funding partners and the UN Foundation.

## Release

Consultant understands that DIAL has chosen to solicit a Call for Proposals for consulting services, and that consultant's response does not guarantee that DIAL will enter into a new contract with Consultant or continue any current contract(s) with Consultant.

Consultant agrees that DIAL may, in its sole discretion:

- Amend or cancel the Call for Proposals, in whole or in part, at any time
- Extend the deadline for submitting responses
- Determine whether a response does or does not substantially comply with the requirements of the Call for Proposals
- Waive any minor irregularity, informality or nonconformance with the provisions or procedures of the Call for Proposals
- Negotiate with all consultants UNF deems acceptable
- Issue multiple awards
- Copy the responses

This Call for Proposals is not an offer to contract. DIAL assumes no responsibility for Consultant's cost to respond to this Call for Proposals. All responses become the property of DIAL.

The Consultant, by submitting a response to this Call for Proposals, waives all right to protest or seek any legal remedies whatsoever regarding any aspect of this Call for Proposals.

Consultant represents that it has responded to the Call for Proposals with complete honesty and accuracy. If facts provided in Consultant's response change, Consultant agrees to supplement its response in writing with any deletions, additions, or changes within ten (10) days of the changes. Consultant will do this, as necessary, throughout the selection process. Consultant understands that any material misrepresentation, including omissions, may disqualify it from consideration for a contract award.

Consultant understands it may receive proprietary and confidential information from DIAL during the Call for Proposals process (“Confidential Information”). Consultant agrees to not use Confidential Information for any purpose other than its participation in the Call for Proposals process and to not reveal Confidential Information directly or indirectly to any other person, entity, or organization without the prior written consent of DIAL. Consultant further agrees to exercise all reasonable precautions to maintain the proprietary and confidential nature of Confidential Information where it can best demonstrate its value and capacity to delivery ecosystem-wide, meaningful value.

## Intellectual Property (IP) Considerations

DIAL’s mission is to create public goods that enable a more efficient digital economy for everyone’s common benefit. To serve this goal in partnership with other organizations and individuals, DIAL funds the development of important hardware and software, databases, computer protocols, research and useful industry standards.

Intellectual property ("IP") is at the heart of all things creative and inventive. DIAL's IP policy is shaped by our key funders’ (i.e., the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) policies. DIAL’s work products thus must comply with BMGF’s “Open Access” policy. Further, any IP DIAL funds should be licensed for free use worldwide. This is accomplished through open source and Creative Commons licensing and by open standards, unencumbered by restrictive copyrights and patents.

The scope of work for this project and deliverables will, as such, abide by DIAL’s intellectual property (IP) policy and its donor’ compliance requirements. If special considerations are required, DIAL will negotiate those on a case by case basis with selected vendors.

As required by its donors, DIAL is committed to “Global Access”. As such, DIAL will ensure that knowledge and information gained from any project and any deliverable produced will be prompt and broadly disseminated under a creative commons license, and any funded developments will be made available at an affordable price to:

- People most in need within developing countries and /or
- In support of the U.S. educational system and public libraries, as applicable

DIAL will take into consideration consultants’ intellectual property issues as part of the selection process.