

Call for Proposals

Consultancy to Conduct a Comprehensive Assessment of Data Landscape and Develop a Strategy for Data Use in the Digital Age for the Government of Sierra Leone.

12 November 2021

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Alliance



About DIAL

The [Digital Impact Alliance](#) (DIAL) is a ‘think, do, replicate’ tank that investigates digital transformation best practices 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 them, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), the United Kingdom’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCDO) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). DIAL is hosted within the [United Nations Foundation](#) in Washington, D.C, United States of America.

In its [Strategic Plan](#) 2021-2026, 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 Alliance Member States on national digital transformation and responsible data use efforts.

In Phase I of the Digital Economy Initiative, an assessment of the progress of 10 Member States in building digital economy was conducted 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. Published in October 2020, the [final report](#) evaluated the success and challenges in government-led digitalization along five pillars of Digital Economy Blueprint for Africa, and DIAL’s recommendations as part of the report were submitted to and welcomed by the Steering Committee of Smart Africa Alliance.

In Phase II of the Digital Economy Initiative, the project kicked off in 2021 and focused on providing targeted support to one of the 10 Member States that participated in Phase I. This is supportive of the approach to digital economy outline in the Digital Economy Blueprint for Africa, and is also in line with the ‘Accelerate’ pillar of DIAL’s ‘A, B, C’ approach to national digital transformation, outlined in the [Strategic Plan](#) 2021-2026. Driven primarily by DIAL and Government of Sierra Leone’s [Ministry of Information and Communications](#) with the support of Smart Africa Alliance as needed, Phase II focuses on national digital transformation by supporting development of relevant digital and data policies and strategies, capacity-building programs, and piloting of one project, that is, the Document Tracking and Workflow System (DTWS).

Description and Context

Recognizing the opportunities in the digital era, the Government of Sierra Leone set a high-level vision in [2019-2023 Medium Term National Development Plan](#). Further, inspired by the [Principles of Digital Development](#), the promise to [Leave No One Behind](#) and the respect for human rights, the Government sought to lay a foundation for better institutional coordination and implementation of the country’s digital transformation initiatives by developing National Digital Development Policy 2021, which is nearing its conclusion with a consideration for approval by Cabinet of Government of Sierra Leone expected by end of 2021. The updated policy focuses on the enhanced growth facilitated by the digital tools as critical enablers, to make Sierra Leone a middle-level income country by 2039. Considering the centrality of digital technologies and the data use in the National Digital Development Policy 2021, Sierra Leone will continue to witness a proliferation of data-driven digital platforms and this will accelerate the generation of unimagined volumes of personal and non-personal data. This has the potential to create new industries and reshape existing ones.

While the use of data has the potential to underpin these new levers for development, it has the potential to undermine trust in critical institutions. For instance, incomplete understanding of critical factors of success around data governance, few common data practices to operationalize cross-sector programs and lack of common platforms in the building blocks are some of the obstacles that governments face in their use of data to inform development outcomes. In this regard, Government of Sierra Leone has done some work and is in the process of enacting a Data Protection Law expected to obtain Presidential assent by end of 2021. In line with Strategic Plan 2021-2026: Beacons of Hope Framework¹. DIAL aims to support the Government of Sierra Leone to drive the Responsible Data Use agenda to further strengthen, institutionalize and / or implement more holistic data governance practices drawing upon global best practices as envisioned in National Digital Development Policy 2021.

It is against this backdrop that the Government of Sierra Leone through the [Ministry of Information and Communications](#), with support from the [Digital Impact Alliance](#), is seeking the services of a Firm or Individual hereafter the 'Consultant' to undertake a thorough review of the current data use landscape in general and in consultation with the [Ministry of Information and Communications](#), propose sectoral strategies to deploy for the Government to better leverage data to inform development results in key sectors identified in the country's [National Development Plan](#) and further propose reform measures, if any, to enhance transactional data efficiency, development effectiveness and operational synergy for increased use of data for development impact in the digital era for Sierra Leone.

Objectives

Under the general guidance of [Digital Impact Alliance](#), the Consultant shall support the Government of Sierra Leone through its [Ministry of Information and Communications](#) to

1. To evaluate the current state of data use landscape in Sierra Leone's national digital transformation ecosystem through a comprehensive assessment of the technological capabilities, legal, regulatory, institutional and policy opportunities and pain points, key actors, and players – private and public – as well as critical success factors for Sierra Leonean data ecosystem to flourish in the digital age. More specifically, in consultation with the Ministries and Government Agencies (MDAs), this effort is intended to identify priority use cases across the MDAs such as Education, Health, Lands, Transportation and Agriculture for the Government of Sierra Leone –where data usage will be key accelerant of national development objectives. Within the context of the use cases, the assessment should identify the available opportunities and constraints for development planning.
2. To develop the National Data Use Strategy to operationalize the National Digital Development Strategy 2021 and high-level vision in [2019-2023 Medium Term National Development Plan](#) as guided by sectoral strategies, legislations, and the Comprehensive Assessment Report in (1) above.

Expected Benefits

The ubiquity and the pervasive use of digital platforms and services are transforming the data landscape. End user digital applications have become ingrained in people's lives. As a result, the amount of data being generated through these interactions is expanding exponentially. Data being the oil of the 21st century holds the potential to shape the expansion of the digital economy and digital transformation across various economic sectors. Given business models must be founded on clear implementation, legal and regulatory frameworks, the extraction, refinement, and distribution processes around data must meet defined sectoral requirements. Recalling the case of Ebola in Sierra Leone, a number of factors contributed to the challenges faced during response. These included non-aligned data standards², weak digital infrastructure, unreliable connectivity, and non-

¹ [DIAL Strategic Plan 2021-2025](#)

² [World Bank's Open Data Readiness Assessment for Sierra Leone](#)

machine-readable data³. Therefore, this exercise will map the technologies, policies, laws, and institutions, as well as evaluate the opportunities, pain points, and role of key actors in the data ecosystem. In addition, the assessment aims to recommend critical success factors needed to be considered for Sierra Leonean data ecosystem to flourish. Further, by developing a Data Use Strategy, this exercise aims to provide a clear vision, path, and proposed action plan for the future of data use. This will not only confirm the policy aspirations in National Digital Development Policy 2021, but also clarify sectoral threats and opportunities that Government of Sierra Leone needs to consider when leveraging data to inform efficient delivery of public services and government programs in the digital era.

Scope of Work

Under the general guidance and supervision of the Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL), the Consultant will perform the following:

- 1. Project Inception:** The consultant will define a detailed scope of the assignment including a proposed approach, sampling framework, determination of indicative literature to be reviewed, list of stakeholders, schedule for the field missions, the purpose, key questions, key sectors, data requested, expected duration, and timelines. This will be essential for DIAL and [Ministry of Information and Communications](#) (MIC) to facilitate external meetings with relevant partners and / Ministries, Departments, and Agencies of Government (MDAs) / Sectoral Focal Points (MDAs).
- 2. Stakeholder Consultation:** The consultant will conduct consultations - in person and virtual - to solicit cross-sectoral input and recommendations and make subsequent revisions to both the draft assessment report and the strategy. This shall include collection of views from diverse stakeholders', validation of the theoretical insights, and reconciliation of the stakeholder feedback.
- 3. Validation of Findings:** The consultant will hold a joint convening of Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government / Sectoral Focal Points (MDAs) and other stakeholder representatives to further validate the draft reports - assessment and strategy - in that order. This shall include review of the findings and prioritization of strategic initiatives for the latter.
- 4. Develop the Final Reports:** The consultant will produce the final report of the comprehensive assessment of the data use landscape and Strategy on Data Use to be presented to the Government of Sierra Leone. The final drafts should be accompanied by a PowerPoint Presentation with a summarized view of the key highlights of the two (2). This shall include adapting the documents into Government's templates if need be; and facilitating a presentation to the Technical Committee and key officials drawn from Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government / Sectoral Focal Points (MDAs). The same presentation may also be made to the Smart Africa Alliance's Digital Economy Working Group, consisting of senior officials of the Ministry in charge of Digital Economy from the following ten countries: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Niger, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. DIAL and [Smart Africa Alliance](#) will facilitate and oversee the convening of the working group.

³ [Fast, Larissa and Adele Waugaman. 2016. Fighting Ebola with Information: Learning from Data and Information Flows in the West Africa Ebola Response. Washington, DC: US](#)

Deliverables

Deliverables / Milestones		Indicative Timelines
1	Inception Report	3 weeks upon contract signature
2	Synthesized stakeholder engagement report and findings – Assessment	8 weeks upon contract signature
	Validation Workshop reports	
3	Final report – Assessment	10 weeks upon contract signature
4	Synthesized stakeholder engagement report and findings – Strategy	14 weeks upon contract signature
	Validation Workshop reports	
5	Final report – Strategy	16 weeks upon contract signature
6	PowerPoint Summary	18 weeks upon contract signature
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Use Assessment Data Use in Digital Age Strategy 	
7	Facilitate Presentation	19 weeks upon contract signature
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical Team, Government of Sierra Leone Digital Economy for Africa Working Group, Smart Africa Alliance 	

Project Period of Performance

The estimated duration of services is nineteen (19) weeks, and the estimated starting date is on or around 24th January 2021. During this time, [Digital Impact Alliance](#) anticipates a close working relationship with the selected Consultant, which will include regular discussions with [Smart Africa Alliance](#) and the Government of Sierra Leone through its [Ministry of Information and Communications](#).

Proposal Submission Requirements

Proposal submissions must be created in Microsoft Word in 12-point font. Submissions should not exceed thirteen (13) pages with up to sixteen (16) pages, including the annexures and appendices. In addition, the proposal submissions must include the following at minimum:

1. Proposed Approach:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the project objectives and activities in the context of the country's [National Development Plan](#).
- Describe the approach, methodologies, and deliverable formats, as applicable, as well the plan to include research materials that [Digital Impact Alliance](#) has already developed and relevant pieces of work that the Government of Sierra Leone has or continues to work on.
- Describe project management approach, including suggested timeline based on the indicative proposals contained herein, as well as any recommended updates, including timing and level of effort (LoE) or support on the part of the [Digital Impact Alliance](#) and the [Ministry of Information and Communications](#) Teams e.g., to participate in the scoping, workshops, facilitation of meetings with relevant stakeholders.

2. Project Team:

- 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 the Project Management Team.

- Clear definition of the role of the sub-contractors. DIAL will not reject a proposal based upon the use of subcontractors; however, DIAL reserves the right to refuse the sub-contractors that a Consultant has selected.
- Description of the modes of work – in person and virtually – considering DIAL’s Delivery Team are based across a range of time zones - (GMT-8 to GMT+7).

3. Relevant Experience:

- Demonstrate firm experiences relative to the Scope of Work through submission of profiles, CV and/or résumé of key persons.
- A highlight Project Teams’ experience with related assessment research, strategy, and policy formulation with emphasis on digital transformation, ICT, or telecommunications sector, as well as a link, if any, to publications and/or thought leadership pieces by the Team.
- Provide at least three (3) examples of resources produced for donors and / or similar research conducted by the Consultant.
- Demonstrate experience working with National Governments, Intergovernmental agencies, Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government/ Sectoral Focal Points (MDAs), if applicable do specify the donor/s involved, especially in the African context.

4. COVID-19 Pandemic:

- The travels may be severely limited. Please provide an indication of a working approach for stakeholder consultation should travel for in-person meetings/workshops be negatively impacted.

5. Budget:

- Provide a detailed budget, including assumptions and costs and level of effort for project staff and sub-contractors, if any.
- 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 e.g., travel and research. The travel estimates should indicate the anticipated destination and duration of each trip.
- The price quoted should be all inclusive. If the process excludes certain fees or charges, this must be provided in a detailed list of excluded fees with a complete explanation of the nature of those fees.

6. References:

- Provide names and e-mail addresses of at least two (2) prior clients willing to discuss their experiences working with you.

Submission Format

1. All submissions must be delivered electronically with the subject line “Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL) Data Landscape Assessment and Data Use Strategy Development– Company Name.
2. Please send all proposal submissions to RFP@digitalimpactalliance.org.
3. In case respondents encounter a problem submitting, please contact Theresa Nyamupachitu at tnyamupachitu@digitalimpactalliance.org.

Submission Timeline

1. All submissions are due on **Friday, December 3rd, 2021 by 5:00PM ET**
2. Questions and clarifications will be communicated to respondents on an ongoing basis
3. The selected respondent will be notified by **13th December 2021 by 5:00pm ET**.

Questions and Answers

Please forward any questions to RFP@digitalimpactalliance.org. DIAL will make every effort to respond to questions within 24 hours and may choose to share the questions and answers from these bilateral discussions with other respondents.

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 the candidates' responses.

The selection decision will be based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Score
1. Knowledge of DIAL objectives (10 points)	
The proposed approach shows an understanding of DIAL, the digital ecosystem, and the end line objectives as well as a clear plan for achieving them.	
2. Subject Matter Expertise (30 points)	
Appropriate level of understanding of the key stakeholders, Africa's digital ecosystem and local dynamics in Sierra Leone.	
Solid knowledge and experience in 4IR, Digital Economy or ICT policy research.	
Experience working with mixed methods approaches to conduct outcomes harvesting.	
Solid understanding of Africa's development context and policy dynamics.	
Experience with advanced data collection, analysis, and visualization tools for multicultural audiences.	
3. Project Management (15 points)	
Clear description of team roles and interaction with DIAL.	
Achievable action plan that will deliver the project on time and on budget.	
Thoughtful risk identification and mitigation strategies.	
Team diversity in terms of academic background, experience, geography, and gender.	
4. Capabilities and Experience (30 points)	
Demonstrated consulting experience with similar digital or telecommunications policy or data mapping projects in the international development context.	
Team members with demonstrated experience with similar projects and initiatives. Local knowledge and expertise would be a plus.	
High-quality sub-contractors and external advisors, if relevant, especially with knowledge and experience in the global south / developing countries.	
Demonstrated ability to access knowledge resources.	
Ability/presence to conduct part of the work on the ground, particularly primary data collection and stakeholder engagement.	
5. Value (15 points)	
The proposed pricing is within budget.	
The proposed pricing demonstrates a competitive price and good value for the money.	

Intent and Disclaimer

This Request for Proposal is made with the intent to identify a consultant to deliver results as described. Issuance of this RFP 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 RFP. If DIAL amends the RFP, 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 an RFP 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 RFP, 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 RFP.
- Waive any minor irregularity, informality or nonconformance with the provisions or procedures of the RFP.
- Negotiate with all consultants UNF deems acceptable.
- Issue multiple awards.
- Copy the responses.

This RFP is not an offer to contract. DIAL assumes no responsibility for Consultant's cost to respond to this RFP. All responses become the property of DIAL. The Consultant, by submitting a response to this RFP, waives all right to protest or seek any legal remedies whatsoever regarding any aspect of this RFP.

Consultant represents that it has responded to the RFP 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 RFP process (“Confidential Information”). Consultant agrees to not use Confidential Information for any purpose other than its participation in the RFP 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., Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), the United Kingdom’s Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCDO) 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.