MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

SIERRA LEONE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

IDA- E1130-SL

Terms of Reference

for

Recruitment of a Consultant for the Development of a Communications Plan for the National Drone Regulations

Procurement number: SLDTP/SLCAA/INDV/001

June 2025

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Recruitment of a Consultant for the Development of a communications plan for the national drone regulations

1. Introduction

The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) has committed to transforming its economy based on a more inclusive and human-centric digital growth and development approach. A high-level vision for the digital economy is articulated in the new National Digital Development Policy (NDDP), which was approved by the Cabinet in December 2021 setting the GoSL's vision to transform Sierra Leone into an inclusive digital economy and society and to leverage digital technology to support the GoSL to deliver on its national development plan effectively and efficiently. The Sierra Leone Digital Transformation Project (SLDTP) aims to expand access to broadband internet, increase digital skills and improve government capacity to deliver public services digitally. The project will support the development of a strong enabling environment for the nation's digital transformation and digital development agenda as articulated in the National Digital Development Strategy.

The advancement of drone technology presents both opportunities and challenges for national development. Drones have potential applications across multiple sectors, including agriculture, disaster management and healthcare, to name a few. Sierra Leone is emerging as a leader in drone technology in West Africa, the country hosts West Africa's only National Drone Corridor, a dedicated space for the innovation and testing of drone hardware and use cases.

To leverage these opportunities while addressing associated risks, the Sierra Leone Civil Aviation Authority (SLCAA) is in the final stages of developing the National Drone Regulation and a Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Unit to provide a comprehensive framework aimed at governing the operation and usage of drones throughout the country. The Consultant will design a communication strategy that addresses the diverse needs of stakeholders and leverage advanced engagement techniques to ensure effective dissemination and reception of the new regulations, procedures, and guidelines.

2. Project Description

The Sierra Leone Digital Transformation Project (SLDTP)

The SLDTP is a five-year International Development Association (IDA)-funded project supported with a US$50 million grant. The project's main implementing agency is the Ministry of Communications, Technology and Innovation (MoCTI). The proposed Project Development

Objective (PDO) is to expand access to broadband internet, enhance digital skills and improve government capacity to deliver public services digitally.

The SLDTP proposes four integrated and mutually reinforcing components, with a fifth component dedicated to contingent response to future emergencies (*Contingent Emergency Response Component*, *CERC)*.

- Component 1 – Expanding Digital Access and Increasing Resilience of the Digital Environment;
- Component 2 – Digital Skills Development and Innovation
- Component 3 – Laying Key Foundations for Digital Government Services and Systems
- Component 4 – Project Management and Implementation Support; and
- Component 5 – Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC).

The proposed activities integrated into Components 1, 2, and 3 are designed to support the Government in building resilient and inclusive policies by strengthening its legal and regulatory frameworks, scaling up the citizen-centric digital public service delivery by reinforcing the government portal and relevant Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) capacity. By enhancing the service delivery infrastructure and platforms, the project will support ensuring the continuity of public services in times of crisis.

The Project is being implemented by a Project Coordination Unit (PCU) in the MoCTI. The MoCTI is the primary stakeholder of ICT-related policies and is tasked with overseeing the development, review, and implementation of the Government's Technology, Communication and Innovation agenda. The MoCTI facilitates universal, ubiquitous, and cost-effective access to information and communications infrastructure and services throughout the country. Digital infrastructure provides a way for people, businesses, and governments to get online and link with local and global digital services, thus connecting them to the global digital economy. Good and affordable internet connectivity is a critical foundation for a digital economy.

3. Objectives

The objectives will be divided into two focus areas to enable the Consultant to deliver on the SLDTP's general and specific objectives, as below:

General Objectives

The primary objective of this project is to recruit a qualified Consultant to develop a comprehensive national communication strategy that will yield a well-informed and supportive community, facilitating a smoother regulatory transition and broader acceptance of the National Drone Regulation and the UAS Unit for its administration.

Specific Objectives

The Specific objectives of this activity include:

1. Develop a strategy for external communications and outreach
2. Engage with key stakeholders to gather insights and identify their concerns relating to the regulation, procedures, and guidelines.
3. Develop a target plan for engaging each stakeholder group.
4. Design the branding document for the plan.

4. Scope of Assignment

The Consultant will be expected to assist the PCU in the implementation of the SLDTP of which the scope of work focused on the communications strategy with the detailed tasks including but not limited to the following:

Research and Analysis

- Stakeholder Analysis: Identify and categorize key stakeholders, their interests, and communication preferences.
- Current Landscape Assessment: Review existing regulations, procedures, guidelines, public perceptions, and past communication efforts.
- Competitive Analysis: Examine communication strategies from other jurisdictions or organizations that have successfully implemented drone regulations.

Key Messages

- Develop clear, concise messages tailored to different stakeholder groups.
- Emphasize the benefits of the regulation, procedures, and guidelines, including safety, privacy, and environmental considerations.
- Highlight resources available for education and compliance, including training programs, guidelines and manuals, online resources, etc.

Communication Channels

- Identify and utilize appropriate communication channels, including:

- Social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn)
- Official websites and blogs
- News releases and media outreach
- Webinars and informational workshops
- Printed materials (brochures, flyers)

Implementation Plan

- Timeline: Outline a phased approach for rolling out the communication plan, including key milestones.
- Roles and Responsibilities: Assign team members or departments responsible for various aspects of the plan (content creation, social media management, stakeholder outreach).

Engagement Strategies

- Develop strategies for engaging with stakeholders, including:
  - Interactive Q&A sessions
  - Surveys and feedback mechanisms
  - Public forums or community meetings

5. Reporting, Time Schedules, and Payment Schedules

The Consultant is expected to complete the assignment in full within 8 weeks. The Consultant will regularly report to the SLCAA on all aspects of the agreed activities and report to the SLDTP Project Coordinator.

The deliverables comprise the following:

	Deliverable	**Timeline**	**Indicative Payment Schedule**
	Stakeholder Analysis Report: A document detailing identified stakeholders, their interests, communication preferences, and potential concerns regarding drone regulations.	Commencement + 2 weeks	20%

	Key Messages Document: A comprehensive list of tailored key messages for different stakeholder groups, emphasizing the benefits and requirements of the new regulations.	Commencement + 4 weeks	20%
	Engagement Strategy: A plan outlining method for engaging stakeholders, including interactive sessions, feedback mechanisms, and public forums.	Commencement + 6 weeks	20%
	Final Communication Plan	Commencement + 8 weeks	40%

VI. Qualification and Experience of the Consultant

The assignment calls for an individual consultant who will possess the following qualifications, skills, and experience:

Key Position	**Experience**	**Qualifications**
Communications Consultant	Minimum of five (5) years of experience in media engagement with a focus on technology and innovation. Must have executed five (5) similar prior assignments related to developing national strategies and policies, preferably in tech for governments, with at least three (3) as a Team Leader or equivalent. Must have relevant experience working in Africa or the subregion.	A degree in communication, policy, media relations, or a related field.

V. Facilities Data and Information to Be Provided by Client

SLCAA shall provide office space with Air Conditioner, electricity and Internet connection for the successful Consultant to facilitate the smooth implementation of the assignment. The following shall be provided to the Consultant by the Technical Lead Agency (SLCAA):

i. the SLCAA will facilitate engagement with its staff and other consultants, ensuring the consultant has access to expertise and institutional knowledge. This collaboration will enable the consultant to address any questions, gather relevant insights, and refine the technical quality of the outputs for alignment with the SLCAA's objectives and standards, and

ii. prepare a letter introducing the Consultant to operators in the drone sector and other relevant institutions, wherever required in performing the assignment.

The Consultant shall provide all the administrative, technical, professional and support staff needed to carry out the assignment efficiently. The Consultant shall also be responsible for providing all other necessary facilities and logistical support, including accommodation, vehicles/transportation, office equipment, field survey and investigation equipment, laboratory testing, communications, utilities, office supplies and other miscellaneous requirements wherever applicable to render their services. The Consultant shall make himself available for regular meetings with the PCU and SLCAA teams.

VI. Working Language

The working language for the consultancy service shall be English.

VII. Conflict of Interest

The successful Consultant shall declare any conflict of interest, especially if the Consultant is currently carrying out consultancy work for other stakeholders including licensed operators or service providers in Sierra Leone.

VIII. Confidentiality of Information

The Consultant shall protect the confidentiality of the data or information received to conduct this assignment and shall sign a confidentiality agreement with MoCTI. No data, information, or deliverables from this assignment will be released to third parties without the written approval of MoCTI. The Consultant shall surrender all data and other materials to the Regulatory Authority and shall not retain any information or materials after the closure of the assignment.