



GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
(Consulting Services – Firm Selection)

Date of Issue: 29th September, 2023

Country: Republic of Sierra Leone

Name of Project: Sierra Leone Digital Transformation Project

Consulting Services: Recruitment of a Consulting Firm to undertake a comprehensive market, tariff and cost study to develop Significant Market Power (SMP) legislation, and clear interconnection regulations in Sierra Leone

Reference No: SL-MOFED-367838-CS-QCBS

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. The Ministry of Communications, Technology and Innovation (MCTI) is the line Ministry chiefly in charge of driving the Government's digital transformation strategic vision and promoting ICT sector policy. 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.

Sierra Leone is currently experienced an exciting development in the Telecommunication and ICT sector as demonstrated by an increase in the number of Mobile Network Operators, Fixed lines, Internet Service Providers (ISPs), the volume of broadband data, and the number of Radio and TV broadcasters. There has been a significant step forward in the drive to achieve the objectives of the ICT pillar in the New Direction Manifesto. The privatization of the Cable Landing Station and the terrestrial Fiber backhaul comprising of the national fibre project and the ECOWAN has led to increase availability of high speed internet across the country. as Sierra Leone's ICT/Telecom sector undergoes rapid development, special policy measures and initiatives are needed to create the necessary enabling legal, regulatory and institutional environment to facilitate its development. The National Regulatory Authority (NatCA) was established by the National Communications Act 2022 replacing the Telecommunications Act 2006 (as amended). The mandate of the Authority is to license and regulate the electronic communications operators and other related matters. Additional responsibilities include the promotion of fair competition among operators for the benefit of end-users of telecommunications services and products.

The lack of a market analysis and assessment of market power has over the years led to Mobile Network Operators individually claiming to be the dominant player in terms of market share and best services and complained of undercharging for ICT services. The regulatory body has no technical evidence to affirm such claims. On the other hand, the National Communications Authority (NatCA) questions the undercharging of spectrum and numbering resources to operators. To promote open and fair competition in the telecommunications sector there is the need to develop an effective interconnection regime, avoidance of predatory pricing, price squeeze, excessive pricing practices and price dumping, among others. Since the establishment of the Regulatory regime in 2007, there has never been any studies conducted to set tariffs for interconnection and other telecommunications services, and to also determine the costs to deliver services to end-users by network operators and service providers in Sierra Leone. Understandably, the prescription of tariffs for telecommunications services and products by the Regulatory Authority has not been scientific in nature, rather this is achieved through negotiations, which are normally based on subjectivity.

In order to address these challenges, NatCA is seeking to hire a consulting firm to carry out a **comprehensive market, tariff and cost study** for all Mobile Network Operators (MNOs), Internet Infrastructure and Bandwidth Providers, Internet Service Providers (ISPs), and Mobile Money Operators thereby identifying operators with Significant Market Power (SMP), and at same time providing a comprehensive guide for cost-based Regulations to the Authority for next five (5) years and develop Significant Market Power (SMP) legislation, and clear interconnection regulations in Sierra Leone. The study will set out a proposal for the development of regulations for SMP and interconnection to promote fair market competitions. It will also provide interconnection rates for both mobile and fixed line services and products, as well as formulate a pricing mechanism for other telecommunications services and products including mobile and broadband Internet services, SMS and mobile money transactions in Sierra Leone. The study will focus on capacity tariffs levied by the sole wholesale provider of international bandwidth for voice and broadband services and products to ensure that the rates are efficiently priced. The study will take into account the provisions of the applicable laws, which details the categories of operators entitled to get licenses and consider new business models and services including Mobile Virtual Network Operators (MVNOs), extended networks, international roaming, active infrastructure sharing, and wholesale services.

The overall objective of the assignment shall be to develop proposals for future glide path tariff regimes to enhance competition among telecommunications operators in Sierra Leone, based on a costing model for telecommunications services and products and a benchmarking study of different tariffs among similar economies and countries in Africa.

The Project Coordination Unit of the Sierra Leone Digital Transformation Project now invites eligible consulting firms (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. The shortlisting criteria are: core business and years in business, relevant experience, technical and managerial capability of the firm. Key Experts will not be evaluated at the shortlisting stage.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank’s “Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers” July 2016 Revised November 2017,

August 2018 and November, 2020 Procurement Regulations setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to Section 111 of the World Bank's Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers July 2016 Revised November 2017, August 2018, November, 2020 and National Public Procurement Act 2016, setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

Consultants may associate with other firms to enhance their qualifications but should indicate clearly whether the association is in the form of a joint venture and/or a sub-consultancy. In the case of a joint venture, all the partners in the joint venture shall be jointly and severally liable for the entire contract, if selected.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the **Quality and Cost Base Selection (QCBS)** method set out in the Procurement Regulations.

Further detailed Terms of Reference can be obtained at the link below: Kindly see the link below for the TOR:

<https://moic.gov.sl/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/SLDTP-ToR-for-Comprehensive-Market-Tariff-and-Cost-Study-Final-1.pdf>.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in electronic form through the pcu@sldtp.moic.gov.sl on or before **Friday 13th October, 2023 at 11:00 GMT**. For further information and enquiries please send your email to coordinator@sldtp.moic.gov.sl and copy morefayia@gmail.com. Please address the Expression of Interest to:

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Please indicate clearly the **Name of the Assignment** in the email subject heading and attachment as only electronic submission will be accepted.