



## **Terms of Reference for outsourced ICT Support Services**

### **Introduction**

MwAPATA Institute is an independent policy think tank in Malawi, established to inform and guide national policy issues related to agriculture, natural resources, and rural transformation. The mission of the MwAPATA Institute is to conduct independent, objective, empirical research aimed at providing innovative and practical recommendations to inform agricultural sector policies in Malawi. The aim of the Institute is to accelerate the adoption of effective Malawian-led policies and programs to drive broad-based agricultural transformation, diversification, and improved smallholder incomes and nutrition in Malawi. The Institute plays a leading role in identifying strategies that will improve the investment climate, and promote agricultural productivity, diversification, and commercialization. The Institute is affiliated with the National Planning Commission (NPC) and the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) and is currently receiving technical and institutional development support from Michigan State University.

Under the supervision of the Finance and Administration Manager, the ICT consulting firm will support the necessary ICT systems at the MwAPATA Institute Office in alignment with the MwAPATA Institute ICT policies. The firm will manage information requirements and technical support needs for MwAPATA Institute in Malawi, offering weekly technical support for users of the Local Area Network (LAN)/Wide Area Network (WAN), as well as information management tools and technology infrastructure.

The ICT Consulting Firm will designate a Lead Consultant proficient in LAN/WAN and communication systems to ensure the technology environment's 100% availability. This includes system support for both corporate and user-specific technology environments. Additionally, the firm will advise on new technologies to enhance ICT unit productivity and security.

### **Objective**

Apart from working remotely daily when there is a need, the consulting firm will physically deploy at least one engineer-level ICT personnel for on-site support for 1 to 2 days weekly during working hours. Additional man-power or overtime may be sought as necessary. The staff will possess strong technical and communication skills, industry certification, and substantial experience in installation, configuration, troubleshooting, and maintenance.

### **Key Responsibilities of the Lead Consultant**

1. Safeguard computerized data, information, files, and documents.
2. Ensure internet availability and reliability in collaboration with ISPs.
3. Maintain cleanliness and organization of ICT equipment, storage areas, and workspaces.
4. Administer and maintain office servers and LAN/WAN equipment.

5. Ensure network utility procedures and security attributes are operational.
6. Train staff on office intranet usage and document archiving.
7. Troubleshoot and monitor network problems and follow up on corrective measures.
8. Implement corporate ICT policies, strategies, and plans.
9. Administer antivirus servers and ensure system protection.
10. Install and maintain telecommunications equipment and software.
11. Document processes, procedures, and troubleshooting guides.
12. Provide timely notification if contractual stipulations cannot be met.
13. Test and verify newly purchased ICT equipment.
14. Manage faulty machines under warranty.
15. Conduct weekly site visits to assess user machine status and resolve incidents.

### **Deliverables**

1. Functioning, secure, and efficient network and servers.
2. Installed and functional computer systems, PABX, and accessories.
3. Efficient software applications and antivirus software.
4. Optimized network infrastructure aligned with corporate standards.
5. Well-equipped staff on the latest ICT technology.
6. Satisfactory user support.
7. Comprehensive handover notes with recommendations at the end of the contract.

### **Firm Requirements**

1. Legal registration with expertise in network technologies, corporate ICT security, and viral protection systems.
2. Ability to manage confidential work and handle large volumes.
3. Experience in client support and help desk services.
4. Commitment to issue resolution regardless of effort or time required.
5. Local presence to handle emerging issues.

### **Lead Consultant Qualifications**

1. Advanced degree in Information Technology or related fields.
2. Minimum 5 years' experience in troubleshooting, networking, and hardware and software maintenance.
3. Proficiency in troubleshooting, networking, and relevant software.
4. Proficiency in English.
5. Ability to work under challenging circumstances with minimal supervision.

### **Timeline and Location**

1. Services provided on-call, 24/7, with communication via electronic means.
2. Contract duration is 12 Months, renewable upon satisfactory performance and availability of funding.
3. Main service site: Plot Number 10/386, Lundu Street, Area 10, Lilongwe.

### **Communication and Reporting**

1. Quarterly activity reports required. The report may cover such aspects like progress made in provision of services, identification of unforeseen areas of concern, delays in provision of the services, causes of such delays and proposed measures to correct the causes.
2. Written notification for onsite technical support beyond regular hours, subject to approval of the MwAPATA Institute.
3. Submission of end-of-contract report.
4. Be responsible for any damages done to equipment as a result of the service providers' negligence.

**Payment Terms**

1. Monthly payment shall be made in 14 days upon submission of invoice and service performance report.
2. No advance payment to the vendor.

Proposal Submission Deadline: June 30, 2024.