



TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A CONSULTANT TO CONDUCT A SCOPING ASSESSMENT OF SIX COASTAL DISTRICT COUNCILS IN FIVE DISTRICTS TO EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY AND INFORM THE DESIGN OF ICELAND'S DISTRICT APPROACH TO ITS PROGRAMMING

Background

The recent opening of its Embassy in Freetown marked a critical milestone in formalizing the Government of Iceland's presence in Sierra Leone, with focus on further strengthening development cooperation between the two countries. Iceland's development cooperation with Sierra Leone seeks to contribute to reducing poverty and improving livelihoods through building human capital and supporting the development of a green economy for a peaceful and just society. Accordingly, Iceland's Bilateral Development Cooperation Strategy defines the following key thematic focus areas which resonates with key priorities of the Government of Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan:

- Sexual and Reproductive Health
- Water and Sanitation
- Education
- Economic Empowerment and Job Creation
- Fisheries and the Blue Economy
- Governance

The cooperation is underpinned by human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability and the SDGs. Iceland follows best international principles and practices for effective development cooperation and seeks to be a transparent, reliable, and flexible partner to the Government of Sierra Leone and its people.

The geographical focus of Iceland's current interventions is on fishing and coastal communities, with underserved and vulnerable people as target beneficiaries. These include communities in the Western rural area, Bonthe, Kambia, Moyamba, Port Loko, Pujehun districts, which also have among the highest multidimensional poverty in the country according to the MTNDP. The geographical focus has been determined in collaboration with the Government of Sierra Leone, reflecting communities dependent on fisheries, with high poverty rates and low levels of access to basic services.

Implementation Modality: Programme-Based Approach at the District Level

As a small development partner, Iceland has found it practical and effective to focus much of its interventions on the second tier of government in its partner countries, working with regional/district structures in support of decentralised provision of basic services and social infrastructure and promote the sustainable use of natural resources. Accordingly, Iceland's primary implementation modality in its bilateral development cooperation is a district approach model, which has been applied in its cooperation with Malawi and Uganda with good results.

However, as a first step in its bilateral development cooperation in Sierra Leone, Iceland currently implements through established international organisations, including UN agencies with whom Iceland has established good working relationships through collaborative programmes, and with the respective ministries as well. With time, and as Iceland develops its presence and relationships with the government and institutions in Sierra Leone, it is expected that implementation can increasingly be based on local governance systems.



Considering the above, the Embassy of Iceland in Freetown wishes to engage a national consultant to conduct a scoping assessment to identify and prioritise needs and opportunities in the above coastal district councils to inform the direction and design of its programmatic interventions.

Purpose of the Scoping Assessment

The longer-term vision of the Embassy of Iceland in Freetown is to develop a comprehensive district development programme, with a focus on coastal districts where Iceland is already providing support to improve basic services. The scoping assessment is intended to serve as a forward-looking exercise that will objectively identify and analyse issues, questions and concerns to be addressed. Furthermore, the scoping assessment will determine the priority needs and opportunities, inform the definition and implementation of appropriate interventions, identify other development partners active in the target districts in terms of development programmes support to reduce the likelihood of duplication. Identified needs should be strategically aligned to the key thematic areas highlighted above and contribute to the attainment of relevant desired outcomes of the Government of Sierra Leone's Medium Term National Development Plan.

Scope of work for the consultancy

The scoping assessment is expected to provide an overview of Sierra Leone's current decentralisation efforts and system, the identification and prioritisation of needs and opportunities of the selected district councils. This will include (among others) the reviewing of policies, systems, and district development plans to determine existing capacities and gaps, mapping of on-going projects, partners, and areas of possible synergies. It will also propose project interventions aiming at filling identified gaps and indicate in which areas Iceland's support can add the most value to Government's efforts.

Objectives of the Assessment

The primary objective of this scoping assessment is to explore the feasibility of a programme-based approach at the district level and inform the design of such potential programme. This involves gathering information and insights from 5 coastal district councils (Bonthe, Kambia, Moyamba, Port Loko, Pujehun) to better understand their specific needs, challenges, and priorities. Specific objectives are:

1. Identify key issues and challenges facing coastal communities in accessing basic services and social infrastructure such as basic education and maternal health with special attention to gender equality and environmental sustainability.
2. Assess effectiveness of the district councils to provide their population with such basic services and analyse key reasons for adequate/inadequate levels of service delivery.
3. Assess existing programmes and services and identify gaps in service provision by determining areas where there are unmet needs or insufficient resources.
4. Explore potential synergies and collaboration by identifying opportunities for cooperation and collaboration among the district councils.
5. Obtain inputs/feedback from the district councils on the proposed district approach and its potential benefits.
6. Inform programme development and implementation by using the findings of the assessment to make recommendations of tailored programmes and initiatives that address the specific needs of coastal communities.

Duration

This is a 30-day consultancy to be concluded within a period of two months from the date of signing the contract with the embassy of Iceland in Freetown (**6th January -10th March 2025**)



Expected Deliverables

1. Comprehensive report of the scoping assessment. including an executive summary of the findings capturing key issues and challenges, gap analysis and specific recommendations for areas of greatest need for intervention.
2. A summary/review of Sierra Leone's current decentralisation policies and strategies, and how effectively their implementation is in terms of local governance/service delivery.
3. Quantitative and qualitative data on various aspects of the district councils' operations, such as demographics, economic indicators, and service delivery and in-depth case studies of specific initiatives or projects undertaken by the district councils.
4. A table/list of key interventions and implementing agencies/Development Partners with presence in each of the target districts
5. Transcripts or summaries of interviews and focus groups conducted with stakeholders, including district council officials, community members, and other relevant parties and results from surveys or questionnaires administered to stakeholders.
6. Mapping and visualization to illustrate the distribution of various factors, such as population density, economic activity, and infrastructure and charts, graphs, and other visual representations of the data collected.

Financial Proposal and Schedule of Payment

The consultant is expected to submit financial proposal that includes an all-inclusive daily fee. Payment will be made as follows upon completion of milestones:

No	Deliverable	Payment (%)	Submission Date	Comment
1	Submission of a satisfactory inception report	20	15 January 2025	Payment will be made after certification by the HoM
2	Submission of first draft of scoping assessment report	30	10 February 2025	Payment will be made after certification by the HoM
3	Submission of final scoping assessment report	50	10 March 2025	Payment will be made after certification by the HoM

Institutional/Reporting and logistical arrangements

The Consultant will work under the supervision of the Programme Adviser, Embassy of Iceland in Freetown and the close supervision and overall oversight of the Head of Mission. The consultant will also work in close collaboration with relevant personnel of the Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs, and the relevant district councils.



Inception report, draft and final scoping assessment report should be submitted to the Head of Mission, Asdis Bjarnadottir (asdis.bjarnadottir@utn.is) copying the Deputy Head of Mission Kjartan Oskarsson (kjartan.oskarsson@utn.is) and the Programme Adviser, Mohamed Bah (mohamed.bah@utn.is)

Embassy will provide logistical support and facilitate setting up meetings.

Qualifications and Competencies Required

- A minimum of a master's degree in social sciences, humanities, development studies or a related field.
- Familiarity of Sierra Leone's local governance system and an in-depth knowledge of service delivery at the local level
- Excellent Extensive experience in conducting needs assessments for international development projects.
- Excellent analytical, written and verbal communication skills in English.
- Ability to work independently with minimum supervision.
- Detailed knowledge and practical experience of social research methodologies.

How to apply

Interested and qualified candidates are encouraged to apply by submitting their CV, letter of motivation and detailed workplan, methodology and financial proposal to freetown@utn.is or submit hard copies to the Embassy of Iceland in Freetown, 28 Fudia Terrace, Spur Loop, Freetown, **by 13 December 2024.**