Consultancy Terms of Reference

Facilitation of a Technical Workshop and Community of Practice titled ‘
Employing research & innovation for evidence-based education sector policies and practices’

1.0 Background of the project

The Global Partnership for Education’s (GPE’s) Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) Africa 19 Hub aims to improve policies and practice that will strengthen national education systems within GPE country partners to accelerate progress towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 for quality, equitable education for all and expedite the implementation of the African Union (AU)’s Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA).\(^1\) Evidence about how to scale up innovations that improve learning outcomes is key to unlocking rapid and sustainable change towards meeting SDG 4 & CESA. There is little available context-specific evidence about what makes or does not make education interventions work whether innovative or not and neither is there evidence about the costs of implementing innovations particularly in SSA. **When evidence is available**, dissemination and the capacity to use that evidence is often weak, especially among key education stakeholders in the region.

The KIX Africa 19 Hub functions as a regional forum to facilitate inter-country knowledge exchange and mobilization, learning, synthesis and collaboration among key national education stakeholders. The overall objectives and responsibilities of the Hub include:

- a. Fostering the exchange of demand-driven regional knowledge and building the capacities of Hub members to identify, use, share and mobilize evidence;
- b. Producing and disseminating relevant knowledge and evidence syntheses to relevant actors;
- c. Advancing effective regional mobilization and knowledge and evidence uptake.

According to the Thematic Priorities in GPE Member States within the KIX Africa 19 Hub Region Summary Report Vol 1 (Aug 2020)\(^2\) there are six thematic areas of need by country partners. These are (i) strengthening learning assessment systems, (ii) improving teaching and learning, (iii)

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2. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374116
strengthening early childhood care and education, (iv) achieving gender equality in and through education, (v) leaving no one behind, and (vi) meeting the data challenge in education.

The KIX Africa 19 Hub is expected to provide a timely opportunity to catalyze the provision of quality education through facilitating evidence-based developments in policy and practice, fostering equitable partnerships and through identifying and contextualizing evidence in education agendas unique to the region. One way in which the KIX Africa 19 Hub aims to promote evidence-based development is through promoting the use of research in sub-Saharan Africa.

The KIX Africa 19 Hub has undertaken a number of assessments to examine the prevailing capacity strengthening and research needs within the hub. In October 2020, KIX Africa 19 Hub undertook a rapid assessment to appraise the possible research gaps which are adaptable for relevant research and innovative best practices to be benchmarked among the member states. In February 2022, the hub undertook another assessment (pulse survey) to appraise countries interest in research and topics of interest. The list below highlights topics of interest identified in October 2020 as well as February 2022:

1. Opportunities and challenges of using technology in the teaching and learning process
2. Good practices on teacher capacity development to use formative assessment in classrooms.
3. Good practice in developing national learning assessment systems.
4. Good practices in improving access to quality education for girls and children with special education needs (children with disabilities, children in conflict zones and refugee camps)
5. Application of national, regional and international learning assessment data in school reforms.
6. Education planning and projection techniques.

In both October 2020 rapid assessment report and preliminary findings from 2022 pulse survey, the need for countries to be trained on how to use research for decision making was highlighted. 15 countries expressed a need to be trained on research during the rapid assessment, while 11 countries expressed the same desire through the February 2022 pulse survey.

3. GPEKIX Africa 19 rapid assessment of member ministries’ institutional capacity building needs, October 2020, UNESCO IICBA
1.2 Purpose of the assignment

KIX aims at supporting GPE member countries through several mechanisms, including filling knowledge gaps, increasing access to evidence, and strengthening systems to support the generation and uptake of evidence and innovations. The assignment will strengthen the capacity of policy makers to effectively identify knowledge gaps in their education systems and use existing research to fill those knowledge gaps and improve education policies and practices at national level.

1.3 Objectives of the assignment

The consultant/consultancy firm undertaking this assignment will be expected to:

a) Work closely with the KIX Africa 19 hub secretariat staff to plan and organise for technical Workshop and Community of Practice for DCPs titled, ‘employing research & innovation for evidence-based education sector policies and practices’;

b) Using successful case studies, to moderate an interactive technical Workshop and Community of Practice to strengthen the capacity of country representatives to use research through practical approaches and methods tailored specifically for their unique professional capacities;

c) Work with the DCPs from KIX Africa 19 Hub countries to identify strategies and develop a road map to address their research needs.

d) Support the DCPs to work towards bridging research needs and gaps identified through facilitating experiential learning among countries and the provision of technical support and mentorship;

1.4 Target groups

This assignment targets national representatives of GPE partner countries and local education groups (LEGs) interested in action research in 19 GPE countries including Eritrea, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia (Somaliland and Puntland), South Sudan, Tanzania (mainland and Zanzibar), Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

1.5 Scope of work

UNESCO IICBA is seeking a consultant to empower policy makers from the KIX Africa 19 Hub in strengthening national education policies and practices through action research. The consultant will be responsible for the following tasks:

Task 1: Work closely with the KIX Africa 19 hub secretariat staff to plan and organize for technical Workshop and Community of Practice for DCPs
a. Undertake a quick desk review of countries priorities, best practices, challenges, evidence and practices on research with an emphasis of identifying learning needs for DCPs, opportunities for improvement and innovative practices;

b. Develop a concept note with a clear training plan and present it to the KIX secretariat team for approval;

c. Prepare training notes/guide and PowerPoint presentations on different types of research that inform education sector policies, importance of research in decision making and the practical ways of generating and using research.

**Task 2:** Using successful case studies, to moderate the technical Workshop and Community of Practice to strengthen the capacity of country representatives to use research through practical approaches and methods tailored specifically for their unique professional capacities;

d. Identify case studies of countries that have successfully used research in decision making and use these case studies during training.

e. Develop a training plan/guide for DCPs and moderate capacity development sessions on different types of research that inform the development of evidence-based education sector policies; guide the implementation of innovative education sector interventions, and highlight the importance of research in decision making citing practical ways of generating research.

f. Prepare a summary workshop report highlighting what worked well, challenges and recommendations.

**Task 3:** Work with the DCPs from KIX Africa 19 Hub countries to develop a road map of clear strategies to implement sustainable ways of generating education sector research at national level.

a. Guide country participants in analysing national level good practices, challenges, and relevant research in the thematic areas for purposes of developing clear action plans;

b. Help countries to identify strategies to incorporate existing research in decision making.

c. Guide countries in coming up with clear road maps to address research need in their specific countries.

**Task 4:** Support the DCPs to work towards bridging research needs and gaps identified through facilitating experiential learning among countries and the provision of technical support and mentorship;

a. Prepare a follow up and mentorship plan for DCPs aiming at addressing the research needs and gaps and consolidating the knowledge and skills acquired;

b. Facilitate an online discussion to ascertain how the DCPs are progressing on with consolidating the knowledge and skills acquired;
c. Provide DCPs opportunities to share their experiences and best practices on how these research needs and gaps have been addressed; and have eventually informed education sector policy and practice. This will be done through virtual presentations and group discussions;

d. Identify and document the outcome cases through this experiential learning and key lessons to guiding capacity strengthening of DCPs and inform the repositioning of the hub to support the DCPs;

**1.6 Expected Deliverables**

a) An Inception report for the assignment, a concept note with a clear training plan with learner centred activities, training manual/guides, and PowerPoint presentations.

b) Analysis report after each workshop highlighting what worked well, what did not work and recommendations.

c) A document highlighting DCPs road maps to address research needs in their specific countries.

d) Overall report on capacity strengthening and mentorship sessions providing concrete and actionable **recommendations** which will benefit DCPs in using research for policy discussions and policy improvements.

**1.7 Time frame of the assignment**

The **training workshop will** be undertaken in 3 working days. The whole assignment will however commence on 1st April 2022 and end on 30th June 2022 and will take a total of 15 days. The consultant/consulting agency will be hired during this period and the schedule below sets out the expected deliverables and indicative dates;

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Key deliverable submitted for approval</th>
<th>Indicative days</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Development of an inception report for the assignment</td>
<td>• Inception report development</td>
<td>2 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Workshop preparation</td>
<td>• To prepare for the workshop</td>
<td>5 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Hold the technical workshop</td>
<td>Facilitating the following sessions;</td>
<td>3 days</td>
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<td>• <strong>Session 1, April 14th</strong>: Different types of research that inform education sector policies, importance of research in decision making and the practical ways of generating research.</td>
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<td>• <strong>Session 2, April 21st</strong>: Guide countries to Identify and analyse</td>
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</table>
**Task** | **Key deliverable submitted for approval** | **Indicative days**
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| the available and missing research and knowledge in their countries, about specific thematic areas, practices, and/or challenges. |  | 
| Guide DCPs in coming up with clear road maps to address research needs in their specific countries. |  | 
| Session 3, April 27th: Guide DCPs in coming up with clear road maps to address research needs in their specific countries. |  | 
| Prepare and submit reports | Overall report on capacity strengthening and actionable recommendations. | 2 days |
|  | A report on 3 mentorship sessions addressing the identified research needs and gaps. | 3 days |
|  | Total Number of Workings Days | 15 days |

**Profile of consultant**
The consultant is expected to have the following qualifications and skills:

- Advanced academic degree in a related field (preferably education, education policy planning and analysis, international relations).
- Extensive professional knowledge and at least 10 years’ experience working with governments in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Demonstrated experience in regional review of evidence, stakeholder consultations, analysis and synthesis of research findings;
- Demonstrated experience undertaking research and multi-country initiatives.
- Experience synthesising and communicating complex information in plain language is an asset.
- Prior experience with UNESCO, and other UNESCO education programs would be an asset.

**Reporting**
The contract will be managed by the UNESCO IICBA Office in Addis Ababa.
Expression of Interest
Interested consultants may submit a cover letter and CV together with a brief proposal on the methodology and approach for the assignment to info@iicba.unesco.org cc; v.kisaakye@unesco.org. Application files will have to reach IICBA on or before 31st March 2022 midnight (Addis Ababa time). Please label the subject line “Research workshop facilitator 2022”. 