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| **Study on Digital Gender Divide and Developing Digital Inclusion Strategy** |
| ***Terms of reference for a firm*** |

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| DCBPE Unit  March 2022 |

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# **Acronyms**

**MInT: -** Ministry of Innovation and Technology

**NDIS: -** National Digital Inclusion Strategy

**TOR: -** Term of Reference

# **Introduction**

The Government of Ethiopia has developed and implemented a digital transformation strategy, Digital Ethiopia, 2025 since June 2020. One of the foundational elements for digital transformation as recognized in the strategy is people. It is crucial to build a digitally enabled society to bring a[[1]](#footnote-1)bout inclusive and impactful digital development.

However, as many developing and even developed counties are experiencing, the digital divide poses a challenge to building an inclusive digital economy. Therefore, it is essential to study the country-level context in terms of the digital divide, especially the gender digital divide, to gain an evidence-based understanding. It is also important to develop a national digital inclusion strategy to build a digital economy that leaves no one behind. To do so MInT is seeking a consultancy service for a firm to conduct a study on the national gender digital divide and to develop a national digital inclusion strategy.

This term of reference, therefore, contains the objectives, the scope, major deliverables, and expected outcomes of the consultancy service. The TOR also includes the phases and timeline, the governance and management of activities, the required team composition of the consultancy firm, etc.

# **Background**

## **Digital Gender Divide**

One of the advantages of digital developments is leveling the playing field and providing people with opportunities that were difficult or impossible to have only a few years ago. Technology opens up a world of opportunities for individuals, organizations, and countries.

We have witnessed that technology and digital advancements are amplifying and contributing to already created socioeconomic challenges. One of this socioeconomic issue is the marginalization of certain parts of society, particularly women. Half of the population worldwide is not connected. According to UN women reports, 3.7 billion people globally do not have access to the internet[[2]](#footnote-2). Half of them are evidently women. In some parts of the world, the digital gender divide has been shrinking, however, data shows it is growing in Africa.

This is especially true for sub-Saharan Africa. According to FAO, despite Sub-Saharan Africa being one of the fastest-growing locations in terms of connectivity, fewer women are connected to the internet or own mobile phones, compared to men.  Only 27 percent of women in Africa have access to the internet and only 15 percent of them can afford to use it. That means women are much less likely to benefit from digital services[[3]](#footnote-3). Reports indicate, in 2019, only 20.2 percent of Africa’s female population had online access, compared to 37.1 percent of men.

This has become more apparent in the COVID-19 era. The pandemic has shown that access to technology is not a luxury anymore, it is a necessity, especially for girls and young women.

Besides access to technology, compared to men, women, and girls have lower levels of digital skills to appropriately utilize technology and access digital services. For instance, according to the World Economic Forum, women’s active role in the labor market is globally decreasing, widening financial disparities between the genders. This trend is due to the fact that women are employed in sectors that are increasingly automatized. In addition, women are less likely to enter high-earning professions, as most of them are related to technology.

Since digital development is directly related to economic development, the fact that women have limited access to the internet and digital technologies will ultimately hurt their chances of benefiting economically.

The issue concerning the digital gender divide is complex and deeply rooted and involves many different aspects in various settings. Limited access to material resources and economic restrictions, lower general literacy rate of women, existing cognitive and social biases in communities, regarding women and girls using technology, are some of the underlying reasons for the disparity.

This is indicated in the digital transformation strategy, Digital Ethiopia 2025. Significantly lower female literacy rates and large regional disparities are a critical challenge for inclusive development. Women are some 20 percentage points below men, for example, literacy rates for Ethiopian women above the age of 15 are 29 percent, whereas it is 49 percent for men[[4]](#footnote-4). Furthermore, ICT access in the country is among the world’s most expensive.

To address the gender digital divide, strategies must be multi-faceted. The solutions we employ have to address the already created digital divide and prevent it from occurring in the future.

On one hand, digital strategies and digitalization processes should be cognizant of the digital gender divide and be more inclusive and gender-responsive. This means the issue has to be integrated into every aspect of the digitalization effort. On the other hand, specific interventions to bridge the gender digital divide have to be implemented. Interventions such as providing affordable digital technologies for women and girls to increase women’s access, capacity building programs that focus on women and girls, will help narrow the gap and help women to become digitally enabled.

These interventions are highly diverse and based on country context. In recognition of this need, the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MInT) has decided to conduct a national study of the gender digital divide. This study will provide a clear, evidence-based indication on the status of the gender digital divide in the country and suggest where interventions are needed most.

## **Digital Inclusion Strategy**

The term digital inclusion has been used to articulate the policy, research, and practical efforts to look beyond issues of access to computers and the Internet and toward a more robust understanding of the skills, content, and services needed to support individuals, families, and communities in their abilities to truly adopt digital devices and the internet. Thus, Digital exclusion ranges from a lack of physical access to the internet to insufficient knowledge, skills, or confidence to get online and carry out routine tasks and transactions.

Therefore, digital inclusion has two basic underlying concepts: 1) access to affordable and high-quality technology and 2) the Digital Literacy/Skills that are needed to efficiently utilize the technology.

Access refers to people’s ability to obtain and use good-quality technologies when they are needed. Access is not just a technical issue involving the logistics of transporting a technology from the manufacturer to the user. Access requires a product as well as services and depends on how systems perform in practice. Access also involves social values, economic interests, and political processes.

UNESCO’s Digital literacy global framework defines digital literacy as the ability to access, manage, understand, integrate, communicate, evaluate, and create information safely and appropriately through digital technologies for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship. It includes competencies that are variously referred to as computer literacy, ICT literacy, information literacy, and media literacy. And digital literacy includes digital competencies such as digital knowledge, skills, and to some extent attitude[[5]](#footnote-5).

Therefore, it is expected that the national digital inclusion strategy will incorporate the two-underlying concept of digital inclusion, access, and digital literacy/skills.

# **Brief Description**

The consultancy service will include two major components, a) data collection on the national digital gender divide and b) developing a five-year digital inclusion strategy. The data collection will provide us with country-level data on access to internet services such as mobile and fixed internet services disaggregated based on gender. The study will also provide data on women’s digital literacy/skills at different (i.e., basic, intermediate, and advanced) levels.

The second component is to develop a five-year national digital inclusion strategy. The strategy will include the national priority areas regarding digital inclusion, identify main stakeholders, determine the governance, roles, and responsibilities of major stakeholders. The strategy will also identify major projects and programs which will be carried out in a short-, mid-and long-term manner. Both the results of the study and the five-year strategy will be utilized nationally.

# **General and specific objectives of the consultancy service**

## **General Objective**

The general objective of the consultancy service is to study the digital gender divide (Disparities) in the country and develop a comprehensive five-year national digital inclusion strategy.

## **Specific objectives**

Specific objectives include: -

* Data collection on the national digital gender divide (disparities) using qualitative and quantitative methods. The data collection includes
* Women’s access to internet services (i.e., access to internet services both mobile (2G, 3G, 4G) and fixed internet) disaggregated based on gender) and digital devices such as smartphones, PCs, tablets,
* Women’s level of digital literacy/skills (such as basic, intermediate, and advanced)
* Provide disaggregated data for Ethiopian women based on regional states, socio economic status, geographic location and etc.
* To develop a national, five-year digital inclusion strategy and implementation plan,
* To conduct a series of workshops to validate the findings of the study and to create awareness about the strategy for key stakeholders,

# **Scope of the service**

The consultancy service is expected to include the following activities,

1. Producing an inception report, including initial context assessment, study, and strategy development methodologies,
2. Data collection and study of digital gender disparity,
   1. Developing study design,
   2. Developing data collection instruments,
   3. Collecting qualitative and quantitative data using instruments,
   4. Analysis and interpretation of data,
   5. Producing study document,
   6. Validation workshop with stakeholders in collaboration with MInT,
   7. Produce final study document,
3. Develop a Five-year national digital inclusion document,
   1. High-level strategic assessment design (Methodology) document,
   2. Conducting strategic assessment,
   3. Strategic assessment document,
   4. Developing NDIS,
   5. NDIS Document,
   6. Validation workshops with key stakeholders about the developed NDIS in collaboration with MInT,
   7. Final NDIS Document.

# **Deliverables and reporting requirements**

## **Inception Report**

The inception report should include the conceptual framework that will be used for the study, method of data collection, analysis, data collection tools, sources of data, strategy development stages, and methodologies. The inception report should also include a timetable and budget breakdown of the remaining work.

## **Filed Reports**

There will be field trips the consultant is expected to undertake, especially for data collection. Therefore, the consultant is expected to submit field trip reports within two weeks of each trip.

## **Draft documents**

The consultant is expected to deliver two main draft documents,

1. National Digital Gender Divide Study Draft Report,
2. National Digital Inclusion Strategy Draft Document,

The draft documents will be delivered to MInT, and the consultant is expected to have an internal workshop (within the MInT) to discuss the draft documents.

## **Workshops**

Workshops will be conducted for MInT (Internal) and identified key stakeholders (External). The key stakeholders include (but not limited to)

* Ministry of Education,
* Ministry of Labor and Skills development,
* Ministry of Women and social affairs,
* Higher education institutions,
* Ethiopian Communication Authority,
* Civil society,
* Reginal ICT agencies,
* Private companies that are in the industry of ICT/Digital/telecommunications, and etc.

The expected workshops are as follows,

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Workshop | Audience | |
| Internal | External |
| 1. | Inception report workshop |  |  |
| 2. | Draft Study document Workshop |  |  |
| 3. | Draft strategy document workshop |  |  |
| 4. | Draft Study document Workshop |  |  |
| 5. | Draft strategy document workshop |  |  |
| 6. | Validation Workshop on Final Study document and strategy document |  |  |

Note: -

* Based on the request of the consultant or MInT other workshops might be organized.
* Workshop reports will be submitted after each workshop, within two weeks after the workshop was held.

## **Final documents**

Three hard copies and soft copies of the following two final documents are expected to be delivered by the consultant,

1. National Digital Gender Divide Study Final Report,
2. National Digital Inclusion Strategy Final Document,

## **Exit Reports**

The consultant is expected to deliver an exit report containing all the activities undertaken and lessons learned for future reference.

# **Expected outcome of the service**

The study and the development of the strategy are expected to ultimately help realize the digital strategy 2025’s vision to build inclusive prosperity, by promoting an inclusive digital ecosystem. Some of the specific expected outcomes include

* Clear and empirical evidence-based understanding of the national digital gender disparity, that can be used as an input and reference for national digital inclusion initiatives,
* Increased awareness about digital divide and inclusion among stakeholders and the public in general,
* Clear objectives and goals of the national digital inclusion effort,
* Clearer stakeholder roles and responsibilities regarding digital inclusion,
* Improved stakeholder engagement and coordination,
* Coordinated, consistent and impactful national digital inclusion activities,
* Integration of digital inclusion in sector’s/institutions plan and activities,
* Identified digital inclusion initiatives and projects,

# **Methodology**

## **Assessment**

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches of study shall be utilized. The specific methodology will be determined by MInT and the consultant based on the assessment design the consultant provides.

## **Strategy development**

The strategy development shall be participatory, key stakeholders’ engagement shall be robust on all phases of the strategy development. The specific strategy development method will also be determined based on the strategy development method the consultant provides.

# **Phases of tasks**

The consultant is expected to follow the following phases,

## **Phase one: Initiation phase**

In this phase, the first contact between the consultant and client (MInT) is expected. Another key component of the initiation phase is a high-level context analysis to understand country-level context regarding the digital gender divide and digital inclusion. Finally, an inception report is expected to be developed and a briefing session to be held between the consultant and the client.

## **Phase Two: - Data collection and draft study report**

In phase two, the consultant is expected to collect relevant data regarding the digital gender divide. The consultant is also expected to produce, submit, and present a comprehensive national study report.

## **Phase three: - Conducting validation report and finalization of study document**

In this phase, the consultant will hold internal briefing sessions, internal workshops (Within MInT), and validation workshops with key relevant stakeholders. After consultations had taken place, the study document will be finalized and submitted to MInT.

## **Phase four: - Drafting Strategy document**

The consultant will produce and submit a draft national digital inclusion strategy. After submission, a briefing session for MInT is expected to be organized. After deliberations between the consultant and MInT, an external validation workshop with key stakeholders will be conducted.

## **Phase five: - Finalization of the strategy document**

After internal and external consultations, the consultant is expected to submit the final national digital inclusion strategy.

## **Phase six: - Conclusion phase**

In the final stage, the consultant is expected to submit an exit report and final briefing session with MInT.

# **Time frame**

The consultancy service is expected to be finalized within 6 months.

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| No. | Phases | Activities | June | | July | Aug | Sep | | Oct | | Nov | |
| 1. | Phase one | Initiation |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Inception report |  | |  |  |  | |  | |  | |
| 2. | Phase two | Data collection |  | |  |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Producing draft study document |  | |  |  |  | |  | |  | |
| 3. | Phase three | Validation workshop |  | |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |
| Producing final study report |  | |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |
| 4. | Phase four | Producing draft strategy document |  | |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |
| 5. | Phase five | Validation workshops |  | |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |
| Producing final strategy document |  | |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |
| 6. | Phase six | Exit report and final briefing session |  | |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |

# **Governance and management**

## **National Team**

The national team will be responsible for overseeing the activities. The national team will be assembled from different institutions to ensure inclusivity, multistakeholder ownership, and implementation. This national team will be composed of key stakeholders, including but not limited to,

1. Ministry of Innovation and Technology,
2. Ministry of Education,
3. Ministry of Labor and Skills Development,
4. Ministry of Women and Social Affairs,
5. Ethiopian Communication Authority,

The Ministry of Innovation and Technology will be the chair of the national team and the Ministry of Education will be a secretary.

The national team will be responsible for,

* Overseeing high activities,
* Stakeholder mobilization for data collection and validation workshops,
* Providing feedback and inputs on final deliverables,

## **Ad hoc Joint Technical Team**

The MInT joint team will be composed of subject matter experts from different departments and units. The team will generally be responsible for making sure the national (macro) and sector-specific needs are met. To do so strong monitoring and evaluation system will be implemented.

The joint technical team will be responsible for,

* Overseeing and monitoring the day-to-day activities,
* Giving technical assistance to the consultant whenever necessary,
* Receiving periodic reports,
* Provides feedback on enquires, reports, and deliverables,

# **Qualifications of the consultancy firm**

The consultancy firm shall be a competent consultancy firm, that has proven experience in conducting and developing national digital literacy or similar national digital studies and strategies. The Consulting Firm will provide a team of experts with the following skillsets who shall be adequately qualified and experienced in the digital/ICT sector and related sectors. CVs for Technical Experts, including the Consultant Team Leader, should be consistent throughout this assignment and will be examined during the proposal review process.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Name of Position | Key Qualification | Experience |
| 1 | Team Leader | Post-graduate qualifications in the fields relevant to the expertise MSc in Computer science, MIS, and related fields | * At least 15 years of demonstrable experience in their fields of specialization * Demonstrable experience working in leading teams consisting of specialists in a multitude of areas of expertise and establishment of systems/institutions * Proficiency in English language and knowledge of at least one Ethiopian national/working language |
| 2 | Gender studies specialist | Post-graduate qualifications in Gender studies, sociology, psychology, or related social science fields | * At least 5 years of conducting research both qualitative and quantitative * Demonstrable experience working on gender studies, |
| 3 | Digital Skills Specialist | Post-graduate qualifications in the fields relevant to the expertise MSc in Computer science, MIS, and related fields | * least 5 years direct & relevant work experience in the area of digital skills * Demonstrable experience working on institutional networking and establishment of a web-supported database |
| 4 | IT specialist | Post-graduate qualifications in the fields relevant to the expertise MSc in Computer science, MIS, and related fields | * At least 5 years direct & relevant work experience in the area of specialty * Demonstrable experience working on institutional networking and establishment of a web-supported database |
| 5 | Management/policy specialist | Post-graduate qualifications in the fields relevant to the expertise | * At least 5 years direct & relevant work experience in the area of specialty * Demonstrable experience working on development policy/system/strategic documents |
| 6 | Education and training specialist | Post-graduate qualifications Educational Quality Management, Educational standard-setting, and related fields | * At least 5 years direct & relevant work experience in the area of specialty * Demonstrable experience working with both quantitative and qualitative data |

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