



**Government of Sierra Leone  
Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education  
New England Ville  
Freetown.**

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**Terms of Reference (ToR) – Local Consultant  
Education Sector Analysis (ESA) for Sierra Leone (2025)**

**Background and Context**

Sierra Leone's Education Sector is undergoing a transformative phase, anchored on the government commitment to Free Quality School Education and framed by national priorities and global initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4), the Transforming Education Summit, World Education Forum social contract and the Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024-2030). These strategic frameworks reflect the country's ambitions to provide an inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all.

The government has made significant moves towards improved access to quality education, as enshrined in the current and previous Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2022-2026 and Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. In a bid to promote equity, the government developed and is implementing the Radical Inclusion Policy and the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act 2022 (GEWE).

Despite impressive enrolment gains across the sector, learning outcomes remain below global benchmarks. Early grade literacy and numeracy assessments reveal that a significant number of children are not meeting minimum proficiency levels. As global education standards rise, driven by sustainable Development Goal 4 and regional commitments under the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25), critical challenges of equitable allocation of resources to the various sub-sectors of education remain. Furthermore, the education system continues to face challenges of inefficient spending, leakage and weak accountability mechanisms which hinder effective service delivery. Strengthening governance and transparency including the management of teachers' payroll, procurement and school grants is essential to building public trust and ensuring resources reach the intended beneficiaries.

As the current Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2022-2026 implementation nears completion, conducting a comprehensive Education Sector Analysis (ESA) in 2025 is imperative to inform the development of the next ESP 2027-2031. The ESA is a technically robust, system-wide diagnostic exercise that evaluates sector performance across access, equity, learning, governance, and financing. It provides an empirical basis for strategic decision-making, priority setting, and formulation of a credible and costed sector plan.

More than a technical assessment, the ESA is a participatory capacity-building process that engages stakeholders at the national and local council or district levels, including district education officers, local councils, traditional leaders, female groups, people with disabilities and other marginalized groups, civil society, and all development and donor partners. The ESA underpins the next ESP development.

Against this backdrop, the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE), Ministry of Technical and higher Education (MTHE), the Teaching Service Commission (TSC), Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and development partners seek to engage two **consultants** to conduct a comprehensive Education Sector Analysis (ESA). The consultants will be engaged directly and not through another organization. The ESA will provide an evidence-based understanding of the current status, achievements, challenges, and opportunities within the education sector. It will support decision-making, priority setting, and strategy formulation for the next Education Sector Plan (post 2026) and guide national and donor investment towards inclusive, high quality and corruption-resistant education system strengthening and service delivery.

### **Objectives of the ESA**

The overall objective is to conduct a comprehensive, forward looking Education Sector Analysis that provides a clear picture of Sierra Leone's education system performance and identifies actionable priorities for reform.

Specific objectives for the ESA are as follows:

- Gather data (including identifying data gaps) to assess the overall performance of the education sector against the targets set in the ESP 2022–2026 in terms of Access, Equity, Quality and Efficiency.
- Analyse learning outcomes with emphasis on foundational literacy and numeracy relative to global proficiency benchmarks.
- Examine the crossovers between MBSSE and MTHE work – for example on Teacher Training Institutions – to understand alignment across the sector.
- Examine the status of innovation and digital transformation in improving teaching, learning and management.
- Review education financing, including domestic revenue resource mobilization, cost efficiency and impact of dwindling aid flows, paying particular attention to how financial support is provided to educational institutions.
- Assess the capacity of the sectorial actors to deliver the ESP, including with a SWOT and PESTEL analysis.
- Provide recommendations for policy priorities, strategic interventions and review and lessons learnt for the upcoming ESP, 2027-2031.
- Ensure alignment with national development frameworks (e.g., 'Big Five Game Changers', Human Capital Development Agenda), and global commitments (e.g., SDG 4, Continental Education Strategy for Africa - CESA 16–25).

### **3. Consultant Scope of Work**

The ESA will encompass a system-wide analysis of all levels of the education system and types throughout the country from Early Childhood Education, Primary, Secondary, Technical and Higher Education, Non-formal and Adult Education. It will examine the trends and disparities in access, participation, learning outcomes, resource allocation and use, and system governance. Cross-cutting issues such as gender, inclusion, resilience, and climate issues will be holistically assessed.

The consultant will work alongside a second consultant to conduct the ESA. Both consultants will work with other stakeholders as directed by the ESA TWG – including but not limited to (1) LIFT fellows to align with and leverage the ecosystem diagnostic and agree on evidence synthesis priorities; and (2) teams carrying out specific chapters of the ESA such as UNESCO IIEP who will complete the disability inclusion chapter.

Analytical Domains:

- Context Analysis: Socio-economic, Demographic, and Policy context.
- Access, Participation, and Equity
- Internal and External Efficiency
- Quality of Education and Learning Outcomes
- Education Financing and Budget Analysis
- Governance, Management, and Institutional Capacity
- System Resilience and Emergency Preparedness

### **4. Methodology**

The ESA will use a mixed method approach combining quantitative analysis (EMIS, ASC, WAEC, allocation and Expenditure data on education and qualitative inquiry (policy review, stakeholders' interviews, focus group).

The methodology will include,

- Desk Review of national and international existing reports, studies, EMIS data, and policy documents.
- Secondary Data Analysis of national surveys (e.g., SLIHS, DHS, MICS, Learning Assessments).
- Disability and inclusion mapping using MICS and school data
- Innovation and governance case studies
- Stakeholder Consultations and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)
- Education Financing Analysis
- Equity and Gender Analysis
- Mapping of Development Partners Interventions

The consultant may propose other or additional data collection methods.

## 5. Illustrative Deliverables and LoE

The consultant is expected to work closely with a second ESA consultant to achieve the deliverables listed in the table below. Deliverables may be adjusted if necessary with agreement from the MBSSE, MTHE and both consultants.

No	Deliverable	Means of verification	Estimated LoE
1.	Inception meeting conducted with the ESA TWG and Steering Committee for the ESA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agenda and materials for the meeting</li><li>• Meeting attendance register</li><li>• Meeting minutes</li></ul>	2 days
2.	Inception Report	A written document that includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the detailed methodology for conducting the ESA</li><li>• the detailed work plan</li><li>• data mapping activities</li><li>• stakeholder consultation plan (based on IIEP guidance)</li><li>• Description of the ESA validation process</li></ul>	10 days
3.	Data collection tools	Data collection tools as per the approved methodology	2 days
4.	Compilation of quantitative and qualitative data collected for the ESA	Compilation of quantitative and qualitative data collected for the ESA and as required in the agreed methodology.	16 days
5.	Outline of the final ESA report	Written outline for the ESA agreed and approved by the ESA Steering Committee	3 days
6.	Inputs to the draft ESA	One round of written feedback on the ESA report drafted by the second consultant	10 days
7.	Validation workshop conducted with the MBSSE, MTHE and their partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting agenda and materials (including a presentation to the setting out key findings/data)</li><li>• Attendance records</li><li>• Meeting minutes</li></ul>	2 days
8.	Final ESA report	Written inputs to finalise the report based on feedback from the validation workshop	5 days

Timelines for completing each deliverable will be agreed with the successful applicant.

### Level of Effort and Duration of the Consultancy

The consultancy will begin in January 2026 and be completed by 31st May 2026.

All deliverables must be completed and signed off by the MBSSE Chief Education Officer and MTHE Chief Technical and Higher Education Officer or their designates by end May 2026. The Level of Effort (LoE) for this consultancy is up to 50 days.

### **Location**

The consultancy will take place in Freetown, Sierra Leone, with travel to schools and District Education Officers in two districts to conduct interviews.

All travel (vehicles and accommodation) will be agreed in advance by the MBSSE/MTHE members of the Technical Working Group. The consultant will be reimbursed for in-country travel based on established Mott MacDonald rates.

Note that no international travel costs will be reimbursed under this consultancy.

### **Required qualifications and experience**

- Advanced degree in Education, Economics, Public Policy or related field
- At least 7 years' experience in education policy analysis or sector planning in a Sub-Saharan Africa context, preferably including in Sierra Leone.
- Proven expertise in learning outcomes analysis, inclusive education/disability, and education financing
- Experience assessing governance and integrity systems in education
- Familiarity with domestic financing mechanisms and aid transition planning
- Experience with innovation, digital education tools, and data systems
- Experience working with GPE, UNESCO-IIEP or World Bank frameworks
- Excellent analytical, writing and facilitation skills including English language fluency (C2 level).

A deep understanding of the education system and context for education in Sierra Leone is desirable.

## **6. Reporting and Supervision**

The consultant will be contracted by Mott MacDonald on behalf of the MBSSE and MTHE.

The consultant will report to the Chief Education Officer and Chief Technical and Higher Education Officer or their designates and work in close collaboration with the Technical Working Group (TWG) under the overall guidance of the **Country Steering Committee (CSC) for the Education Sector Diagnostic 2026/2027.**

## Evaluation Criteria

No	Criteria	Weight
1	Understanding of assignment & methodology (Learning, inclusion, innovation, integrity)	25
2	Relevant experience (ESA, inclusion, innovation, governance, financing)	35
3	Qualification and skills	20
4	Proposed daily rate	20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

## Application Process

Interested candidates should submit the following documents as part of their application:

1. Covering letter explaining why they are a suitable candidate for this assignment and their proposed daily rate
2. List of relevant assignments completed
3. Curriculum vitae
4. Interested applicants should submit their applications to [MMSL.Procurement@mottmac.com](mailto:MMSL.Procurement@mottmac.com), using the subject line "ESA Consultancy Application"

Applicants should note that the final daily rate agreed with the successful applicant will be based on their salary/daily fee rate history.

## Core Themes to Guide ESA

1. Learning Outcomes
2. Inclusion and disability: ensure no child is left behind
3. Innovation: leverage 21<sup>st</sup> century digital tools for teaching, learning and management
4. Integrity and Governance: Build a corruption resistant education system
5. Financing and sustainability: mobilize domestic resources amid declining aid

## 11. Risk Management

The ESA process will include risk identification and mitigation strategies. Anticipated risks include delays, data sensitivities, staff turnover, and procurement bottlenecks. A risk log and mitigation plan will be maintained throughout the assignment.