



## Terms of Reference

# Sierra Leone JSS and SSS National Learning Assessment

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A consortium led by Mott MacDonald is leading the implementation of the systems strengthening component of the Sierra Leone Secondary Education Improvement Programme (SSEIP II) – also known as “Leh Wi Lan” (Krio for “Let us Learn”.) SSEIP II builds on the work of SSEIP I. The programme is supporting the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) to improve learning outcomes for boys and girls at secondary level and to increase the enrolment, retention and well-being of girls and children with disabilities in school.

### Background

During the implementation of the first phase of Leh Wi Lan (which ended in March 2023), several Learning and School Safety (LASS) Studies were conducted. The most recent study is available at [Policies and research Archives - SL Education KP \(mbsseknowledgeplatform.gov.sl\)](https://mbsseknowledgeplatform.gov.sl)

Leh Wi Lan is planning to conduct up to two more rounds of learning assessment before the programme concludes in March 2028. The first round of assessment will be conducted in 2025 in the 2024-25 academic year. The second round of assessment will be conducted in 2027. Note that these two rounds will only include learning assessment. It will not include the component on school safety.

### Scope of Work

Mott MacDonald is inviting proposals from suitably qualified and experienced suppliers to design and conduct a national assessment of pupil learning in Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) and Senior Secondary Schools (SSS) in Sierra Leone.

The purpose of the national assessment is to:

- provide insights into pupil learning in secondary schools in Sierra Leone, highlighting areas of progress and challenges
- enable tracking of progress in pupil learning in secondary schools in Sierra Leone relative to the [Global Proficiency Framework](#) and the national curriculum
- inform policy, planning and resource allocation decisions.

The key questions to be answered by the national assessment are as follows:

1. What are the English and Maths skills typically demonstrated by pupils in JSS1 and SSS1? Are these skills in line with what the national curriculum expects pupils to have achieved in these grades?
2. To what extent are skills in line with minimum standards proficiency levels expected of pupils in JSS1 and SSS1 as described in the Global Proficiency Framework (GPF)?
3. What topics or skills do pupils find more challenging? Are there any insights to support remediation efforts?
4. How large are the learning gaps by gender, wealth, disability, district and other pupil background characteristics?

This large-scale, sample-based baseline assessment will be conducted using a paper-based test, administered to groups of pupils present in schools. The timing of the assessment will be finalised with the successful bidder. The sampling strategy will be designed to provide representative results at gender and district level.

Interested bidders may find the following information useful:

- The [LASS study conducted in 2022](#) was based on a nationally representative sample of 1200 pupils (600 girls and 600 boys) drawn from 150 secondary schools.
- The [LASS study conducted in 2021](#) was based on a nationally representative sample that also allowed for regional comparisons of 2000 JSS3 and SSS3 drawn from 250 schools.
- The sampling strategy in the recent Primary 4 National Learning Assessment was designed to provide representative results at gender and district level. 5548 pupils from 400 schools were tested.

In addition to information about pupil learning, the assessment will collect and present descriptive (self-reported) statistics from pupils' and schools' characteristics at national and district levels to better understand contextual factors potentially associated with learning outcomes. The supplier is expected to use the Washington Group Questions to gather background data on disability.

## Deliverables and timelines

A final set of deliverables and timelines will be agreed with the successful bidder. Illustrative deliverables and timelines are as follows:

Deliverables	Timeline	
	Round 1 assessment (2025)	Round 2 assessment (2027)
1. Detailed methodology and work plan for Round 1 of assessment including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aligning the assessment with the Global Proficiency Framework</li> <li>• Setting performance bands</li> <li>• Test design</li> <li>• Sampling strategy</li> <li>• School and pupil selection</li> <li>• Approach to analysis</li> <li>• Ways of working with NASU</li> </ul>	March 2025	-
2. Updated methodology and workplan for Round 2 of assessment based on lessons learned from Round 1	-	April 2027
3. Final data collection tools (following tool development, piloting, psychometric analysis and validation')	May 2025	May 2027
4. Report on completion of enumerator training	August 2025	August 2027
5. Cleaned and labelled data sets in SPSS, Stata or R format	November 2025	November 2027
6. Draft Report shared with SSEIP II and FCDO for review and feedback	December 2025	November 2027
7. Final draft report incorporating feedback from SSEIP II and FCDO	December 2025	November 2027
8. Presentations of the report to MBSSE and its partners	January 2026	December 2027
9. Final report on the JSS and SSS Learning Assessment  Three short briefs focused on key findings from the assessment suitable for a wider audience	January 2026	December 2027

Payments will be made on achievement of deliverables agreed with the successful bidder and submission of means of verification (MoVs). Payment will be subject to approval of deliverables and MoVs by Mott MacDonald and FCDO.

## Information for suppliers

Interested national and international suppliers are invited to submit a proposal for conducting the Sierra Leone JSS and SSS National Learning Assessment.

The proposal should include four clearly marked sections:

### *Section 1: Work Plan and Approach (up to eight pages excluding the work plan)*

This section should provide:

- An overview of the proposed approach to:
  - assessment design including but not limited to the sampling strategy and indicative sample sizes required to answer the four key questions with required disaggregation of results (described under Scope of Work) and test design
  - benchmarking pupil learning in JSS1 and SSS1 to the GPF
  - data collection
  - analysis and reporting.
- Information about any other organisations the supplier will work with to conduct the assessment, their role and their suitability for this role.
- Working with the MBSSE's National Assessment Services Unit to conduct the assessment, analyse data and report on results.
- An illustrative work plan showing what will be done and when to complete the assessment.

### *Section 2: Past Performance/Experience (up to four pages)*

This section should include examples of relevant work you have completed in Sierra Leone and in similar contexts for similar clients. This section should also include evidence of conducting learning assessments in partnership with government assessment institutions and experience conducting learning assessments benchmarked to the Global Proficiency Framework.

### *Section 3: CVs (four CVs maximum)*

This section should include the CVs of the Team Leader for this work and CVs of up to three more suitably qualified technical team members. This section should also include a brief description of the role of each of the team members proposed and why they have been selected for this role.

### *Section 4: Financial Proposal (budget)*

The budget should be clearly linked to the work plan submitted in section 1.

## **Evaluation criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Evidence of strong, proven performance on similar assignments, and in similar contexts, to assess pupil learning – up to 40 marks
- Coherence of the approach and work plan in relation to the ToRs – up to 20 marks
- Cost reasonableness and clarity of linkages to work plan – up to 20 marks
- Proven experience and expertise the team proposed, including any partners – 20 marks

Only eligible proposals will be evaluated. Eligible proposals will be those proposals that:

- provide all sections of the proposal as per the instructions given above.
- are submitted before the deadline.

Proposals should be submitted to [Rodney.William@mottmac.com](mailto:Rodney.William@mottmac.com) no later than 09:15am on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

Any clarification questions about the ToRs or submitting a proposal should be addressed to [Rodney.William@mottmac.com](mailto:Rodney.William@mottmac.com) latest by 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025.