

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Independent Mid-Term Review of the Network of Impact Evaluation Researchers in Africa

1. Background

The [Network of Impact Evaluation Researchers in Africa \(NIERA\)](#) hosted at [the United States International University Africa \(USIU-A\)](#), is an independent network of East African scholars that conducts Decision-Focused Evaluations (DFE) of social and economic development programs to improve people's well-being. NIERA's [membership](#) currently includes 32 active alumni of the [East Africa Social Science Translation \(EASST\) Collaborative](#), a multi-institution research network administered by the [Centre for Global Effective Action \(CEGA\)](#) hosted at the University of California, Berkeley. Each member of NIERA is equipped with multi-sectoral expertise (high-level academic degrees and experience in conducting rigorous evaluations) and are expected to promote its use across various thematic areas in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Rwanda.

In October 2019, the Network received a grant from the [William and Flora Hewlett Foundation](#) to advance its mandate over a twenty-six-month period. This mandate is anchored on four pillars namely; Capacity Building, Evidence Generation, Policy Outreach and growing sustainably into the Network of choice for advancing DFE in Africa. In pursuit of these pillars, NIERA seeks to deliver results under four key objectives namely:

- **Objective 1:** To develop capacity in decision-focused evaluation research, dissemination and application;
- **Objective 2:** To generate evidence that is decision focused;
- **Objective 3:** To promote dissemination and use of decision-focused IE evidence in practice and policy making;
- **Objective 4:** To grow sustainability in to the network of choice for advancing decision-focused IE research in Africa.

2. Objectives of the Mid-Term Review

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) will assess the progress of the project against stated outputs over a 12-month period from January 1 to December 31, 2020, and recommend course corrections. It will also highlight barriers and opportunities to effective and efficient implementation of activities and their contribution to project outputs, outcomes and potential impact.

The review is being undertaken at the midpoint of project implementation and will pave the way for improved project delivery for the remaining project duration and propose amendments required in project design, implementation arrangements in order to effectively and sustainably achieve the envisaged impact.

3. Key Focus Areas

The following key questions based on [OECD-DAC criteria](#) will guide the Mid-Term Review:

3.1 Relevance

- To what extent are the stated outcomes and outputs for the NIERA project on track?
- To what extent did the objectives and design respond to target audiences' global, regional and country needs and priorities, and continue to do so?
- What factors have contributed to achieving or hindering achievement of the intended outputs and outcomes?
- Was the strategy adopted and inputs identified, realistic, appropriate and adequate for achievement of the results?

3.2 Effectiveness

- Are the project management strategies effective in delivering desired/planned results?
- Are the strategies and tools used in the implementation of the project effective?
- Is the project effective in responding to the needs of the target audiences, and what results can we show?

3.3 Efficiency

- Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions?
- To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and communication supporting the implementation?
- Do project activities overlap and duplicate other similar interventions?
- Are there more efficient ways and means of delivering more and better results (outputs and outcomes) with the available inputs?
- Could a different approach have produced better results?
- How efficient are the management and accountability structures of the project?
- What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the project's implementation process?

3.4 Impact and Sustainability

- Is the project oriented towards achieving the expected impacts? What are the effects of the project, intended or unintended, positive or negative, short term or long term?
- Can the project approach or results be replicated or scaled up by or with other partners? What would support their replication and scaling up?
- Are any further activities / inputs needed to ensure sustainability of the project?

4. Methodology

The consultant should propose the methodology to be used to carry out the review that adopts a consultative and participative approach. The proposed methodology should address sufficiently the preliminary issues and questions outlined within the ToR, specifying the review issues, questions, methods of data collection and analysis that will be undertaken. It should encompass a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods. The mid-term review should include but not be limited to the following:

i. Basic documents for review

The consultant will review relevant program documents including but not limited to:

- NIERA's annual implementation plan;
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework;
- Strategy documents;
- Governance documents;
- Project progress reports (both narrative and financial);
- Project activity frameworks such as mentorship policy.

ii. Interviews

The Consultant will conduct virtual interviews with the relevant stakeholders as identified by the Secretariat. Appropriate data collection tools shall be developed by the consultant and discussed with the Secretariat for approval. Key informants will be drawn from the key project target audiences across East Africa including program designers and implementers, policy makers, grant funders, researchers, media practitioners and NIERA members. No travel will be required for this assignment.

5. Deliverables/Expected Outputs

5.1 Inception report

The consultant is expected to produce an inception report detailing the following:

- A comprehensive description of the consultant's understanding of the ToR and indicating any major inconsistency or deficiency in the ToR and proposed amendments.
- A detailed methodology for the review including a final refined set of evaluation questions based on consultations with the Secretariat.
- The proposed team members and a description of their respective roles.
- An operational work plan and timeline for the entire review period.
- An evaluation dissemination/uptake plan.

5.2 Draft Report

The consultant is expected to generate the first draft report by the end of the third week after inception of the assignment. This draft report will be presented and discussed with key stakeholders including the Secretariat, Country Leaders and members. Inputs from these discussions will be incorporated into the final report.

5.3 Preliminary Findings Presentation

A short PowerPoint outlining preliminary findings and any areas that require further attention or discussion prior to drafting the final report.

5.4 Final Report

The final report shall be no more than 20 pages (excluding annexes) and submitted to the Secretariat within two weeks of receiving comments on the draft report. This report will be the detailed Mid-Term Review report covering items outlined in the scope of this ToR with special attention to main findings and conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.

5.5 Final Presentation

A session or workshop focused on disseminating the key findings of the review to core stakeholders. A short PowerPoint should be created and shared as part of this deliverable.

6. Schedule of the assignment

The review will be carried out for 60 working days and is scheduled to take place in the period between 1st April 2021 and 31st May 2021.

7. Supervision and Work Arrangements

The consultant will work under the overall guidance and support of the NIERA Secretariat through the Program Manager.

The consultant will be primarily virtually. S/He will be expected to have very frequent contact with her/his contact person. All submissions will be made electronically unless other means are needed.

8. Qualification of the Consultant

- At least Master's degree in Public Policy and Management, Public Administration, Development studies, or any other relevant university degree.
- At least 7 years' experience in program evaluation in a development context and proven accomplishment in undertaking evaluations, including leading evaluations of multi-stakeholder programs for development organizations in East Africa.
- Extensive experience of program formulation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English.

9. How to apply

Interested consultants are requested to submit the following:

- i. A Technical and Financial proposal (in USD) which should include a description of the proposed methodology to be used and a schedule of planned activities.
- ii. CV(s) of the professional(s) with suitable references to undertake the consultancy.
- iii. Two (2) samples of previous work.

Consultants who meet the requirements of the assignment should submit their proposals on email to **Anne Maina ammaina@usiu.ac.ke** not later than **22nd March 2021 1700hrs (EAT)**. Proposals should be no more than 10 pages long, Arial font size 11, single-spacing with normal margins.