**Enhancing Access to Information Technology through the Multipurpose Computer Services Project**

**Project Proponent:**

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**Proposal presented to:**

**Proposal Cost:** Kshs. 1,584,000.00

Table of Contents

[Introduction 1](#_Toc535709772)

[Siaya Town 2](#_Toc535709773)

[The Multipurpose Computer Services Project 2](#_Toc535709774)

[Project Goal 4](#_Toc535709775)

[Objectives 4](#_Toc535709776)

[Project Activities 5](#_Toc535709777)

[Project Work Plan 7](#_Toc535709778)

[Project Budget 7](#_Toc535709779)

[Project Monitoring and Evaluation 7](#_Toc535709780)

[Project Outputs 8](#_Toc535709781)

[Project Impact 9](#_Toc535709782)

[Project Sustainability 9](#_Toc535709783)

Introduction

The informational revolution of the present times dictates that all people have need or skills for using computers in order to get a number of things done. Many processes have taken an online form, and whereas the skills for performing these processes is not compulsory (cyber assistants can help clients), the need to undertake these processes online is mandatory.

The launch of e-government in Kenya has opened up avenues for computer bureau or cyber services to thrive. Application for driver license renewal, Kenya Revenue Authority PINs, courses in our tertiary institutions, passports, downloading of pay slips, filing of tax returns, checking of email, online betting, e-commerce with online shops such as Jumia are a few of several processes that require the use of computers to undertake.

Whereas the high penetration of mobile data services through smartphone services almost threatened the existence of computer bureaus, the rise of e-commerce, online betting and e-government still presents computer bureaus with an avenue for making revenue from the internet-using public. Members of the public still find themselves needing assistance or accessing the internet based services in cyber cafes in public places in order to meet their needs and obligations.

Other than the internet, computer bureaus are still useful in offering services such as typesetting and printing, binding of publications, replication (photocopying) services, lamination of documents, and other computer related services that have traditionally been associated with the industry.

Siaya Town

Siaya Town serves as the county headquarters of Siaya County. The cosmopolitan and peaceful nature of the town has enabled it to attract people from all the communities of Kenya who are providers and customers of a wide range of services. The town also hosts branches of all the major banks, offices of utility providers such as power and water, as well as national and county government offices; and those of public and private agencies.

The increased number of business firms in the town has also ensured that Siaya offers the lowest prices for its goods and services, which undoubtedly are of good quality. When these people come to Siaya to attend to other issues, they also have a need for computer bureau services. This means that computer bureau services in Siaya have the potential for attracting clientele from the town and far beyond as well.

The Multipurpose Computer Services Project

The multipurpose computer services bureau is a business enterprise that is set to change the way computer services are offered in Siaya Town. The bureau intends to install top of the range computers and employ a high speed internet connection (i.e. through fiber) to offer lightning speed internet services. In addition, fiber optic connection will enable the use of online video applications such as WhatsApp and Skype (webcams and headphones / speakers) will be installed to facilitate this.

The Multipurpose Computer Services Project also aims at offering superlative quality services in the area of typesetting and printing (with coloured and black heavy duty printers), lamination (up to A3 size), binding (enabling binding of large documents), photocopying (with a heavy duty A3 max. photocopier, and black and coloured photocopying).

In addition to the above, the premier computer services bureau will offer for sale common computer supplies (toner and ink cartridges) and accessories (flash disks, keyboards, mice, etc.) at competitive prices for public purchase. A range of basic school stationery such as exercise books, chalks, stapling pins, photocopy paper and manila paper will also be on offer to the public.

All these services will be offered by a team of competent office assistants who are expected to be courteous to the enterprise’s clients while ensuring that customer satisfaction is achieved through offering top-range services.

A few computers will also be set aside to offer training in basic Microsoft Office packages - Introduction to Computers, Windows, Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint, Email and Internet. Advanced training in professional computer packages such as Quickbooks (Accounting), ArchiCAD (Architectural Design) Programming, etc. will also be available on request.These computers will be set aside in the back room of the computer services project site in order to guarantee privacy for the learners of computer packages.

This project also intends to have a mobile computer training and services module which will essentially constitute of a van, tent, laptops and a solar power module (inverter, battery bank and solar panels). This will be used to provide mobile training and computer services such as cyber services in the remotest parts of the county. On a periodic basis, a part of the beyond Limit 2000 team will be making community outreaches within the villages in areas where there is no power to provide computer training and other services.

Project Goal

To offer world class computer bureau services to the people of Siaya County on a platform of modern equipment and competent human resources.

Objectives

1. To establish fast and quality internet services that adequately addresses the needs of the clients of Siaya Town and beyond.
2. To offer quality non-computer based services (laminating, binding, photocopying, etc.) based on quality equipment and expert service providing human resource.
3. To offer quality and affordable computer supplies and accessories to the people of Siaya County and beyond.
4. To ensure prudent financial management of the project for sustainability.

Project Activities

In order to realize the activities under this project, the following activities shall be undertaken.

1. ***Precedent Activities:*** this refers to the activities precedent to the establishment of the project. A business premises will have to be sought, a leasing agreement with the landlord signed and rent paid for at least four months. It is estimated that a rent of Kshs. 10,000/= will be modest for this business. Caution will be taken to ensure that the business is located in an area that is easily accessible to the public, probably near the bus park, and on the ground floor if on a storied building. The relevant licenses by the county government will also be applied for at this stage. The room for the project will need to be partitioned into four sections: cyber (8 computers), accessories and supplies section, services section and a small counter/ reception area. Shelves (for accessories) tables (for computers and office machines/ equipment) together with chairs will be brought in at this point. Providers of optical fiber services (Jamii Telkom) will then be consulted and the process of supplying fiber optic internet initialized. Additionally, all the equipment (as is shown in the budget) will be sourced and installed in the computer bureau. Wiring of the room will also be done to accommodate the increased number of gadgets (addition of requisite sockets). The computer supplies and accessories will also be ordered and brought on site ahead of commencement of activities.

Two competent holders of at least a certificate in computers or ICT with some relevant experience will be recruited through a competitive process involving interviews.

1. ***Business Process Activities:*** After the precedent activities are in place, the business will open to the public, with the public being expected to come in and enjoy the services. Every day shall witness the first ten customers of internet services getting half rate services (i.e. browsing at 50cents per minute instead for one shilling per minute). Several marketing and promotion activities will be lined up to increase the visibility of the business and make is stand out from the rest. The working hours will be from 7 am to 7 pm from Monday to Saturday, while on Sunday, services will be available from noon to 6 pm. Courtesy and polite treatment of our clients will be a hallmark of our services.
2. ***Project Management:*** The coordinator or manager of the project will be constantly available to ensure that all transactions are receipted, credit transactions are avoided (at least in the beginning) and that funds for paying for utilities, bills and supplies are availed at all times. Targets will be set for revenues to be raised by the three sections of the business, i.e. cyber, computer packages training, bureau services and computer accessories and supplies sales.

All incomes shall be banked every day at 1.00pm, while all expenses, unless avoidable, must come from the bank account. The coordinator / manager will keep the books of accounts and may hire a consultant to ensure that the books are in order, and for the purposes of remission of required taxes. Employees’ salaries will be paid promptly alongside bills and utilities. Initially, a greater part of the business revenue will be ploughed back in order to ensure the growth of the business towards stability. With time and growth, only a small part of the revenues will be dedicated to this.

The executives of the group (i.e. Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer) will closely monitor the business to ensure that it is always on course to achieving its targets which will be revised upwards or downwards depending on market realities.

Project Work Plan

The premier computer bureau services project is set to be executed according to the following work plan or timelines:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Timeline (in months)** | | | | | | **Responsibility** |
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** |
| Precedent activities |  |  |  |  |  |  | Group Executives |
| Business process activities |  |  |  |  |  |  | Employees  Group Executives |
| Project management |  |  |  |  |  |  | Coordinator/ Manager  Group Executives |

Project Budget

The budget for the project is on the attached Excel Document

Project Monitoring and Evaluation

The continuous monitoring and periodic evaluation shall be done by an M&E Sub – Committee consisting of the Secretary and Treasurer of the group, together with three members of the group. This sub-committee will be tasked with monitoring the activities of the project i.e. computer bureau services and training, and checking whether these are in tandem with the set targets and goals of the project. Any negative deviances from the set goals and target will be expeditiously communicated to the Co-ordinator/Manager who will be required to institute the appropriate measures to correct the situation. Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted according to a developed extensive checklist that will capture all the indicators and outputs that are required of the business. A critical part of M&E will be to capture customer sentiment and ensure that the business is always favourable in the eyes of its clients. Evaluation will be conducted on a quarterly basis to assess the long term progress of the project towards its goals.

Project Outputs

The successful running of the project will realise the following outputs:

1. Browsing clients to enjoy at least 1400 hours per month of high speed internet services from the bureau (rated at about 55% of the full capacity of the cyber). Additionally, at least 20,000/= to be made every month from training both at the site or on mobile outreach excursions.
2. Laminating jobs worth at least Kshs. 4,000/=, typesetting jobs worth at least Kshs. 5,000/=, printing (from the cybercafé and clients’ removable media) worth 20,000/= and photocopying worth Kshs. 10,000/= undertaken every month.
3. Computer supplies and accessories together with basic stationery worth Kshs. 15,000/= (and a profit of Kshs. 4,500) undertaken by the project.

Project Impact

This project shall have the following impacts within its area of operations:

1. Assurance to all clientele of superlative and reliable internet, bureau services together with computer supplies and accessories.
2. The superior services and reliability of the project will lead to corporate clients such as the County Government of Siaya, public and private corporate agencies outsourcing their computer related services to the Multipurpose Computer Services Project.
3. Increased uptake of video based computer services could potentially lead to the establishment of e-education for long distance learners and computer based WhatsApp communications.

Project Sustainability

This project is set to be sustained through the following strategies:

1. A plough-back of revenues from the business into expansion e.g. more computers, more business machines and more computer supplies and stock.
2. Opening up of satellite branches in nearby towns as per continuous market surveys in the spirit of taking services closer to the people.
3. Continued proactive investment in cutting edge technology to ensure that the enterprise is always ahead of the competition and is therefore the service provider of choice for clients.