ZAMBIA OPEN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS (ZOCS)

CONTRACT FOR CONSULTANCY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VIRTUAL LEARNING PLATFORM UNDER THE SCALED SCHOOL READINESS INITIATIVE PROJECT

PERIOD 2022 – 2024

EXTERNAL CONSULTANCY 2024

January 2024

CONTRACT FOR CONSULTANCY FOR ENDLINE EVALUATION OF THE COMMNUITY ACTION FOR OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (CAOOSC) PROJECT

This Contract made on the 19th day of January Two Thousand and Twenty-four (2024) between Zambia Open Community Schools, an organization duly registered with the Registrar of Societies and a Trust in the Republic OF Zambia and having its registered offices at 20 Tito Road, Rhodes Park, Lusaka (hereinafter called "ZOCS") and Chesco-Tech (hereinafter referred to as the "Consultant") of …………………………………………………………………………...

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Zambia Open Community Schools (ZOCS) is a vibrant and flagship organisation for Community Schools in Zambia since 1992 that empowers communities to provide quality basic education to OVC, especially girls and children with disabilities. Premised on the principle that every child has a "right to education", ZOCS, through its three-pillar approach of **Advocacy**, **Capacity Building** and **Service Delivery**, has accomplished much for the children and people of Zambia, reaching out to **259,691** learners **(132,459 Boys and 127,232 Girls)** in **1,385** demonstration Community Schools across **97** Districts in all the 10 provinces of Zambia.

2. Project Background and Context

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Action on Early Childhood Development and Education in Eastern and Southern Africa has been driven by civil society and governments based on international treaties and declarations on Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) (UNESCO, 2007). The more recent Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) target 4.2, underlines the need for "all boys and girls to have access to early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education." Generally, programmes on school readiness and transition (SRT) are seldom based on sound developmental principles or practices (Ladd, 2009). Studies addressing the topic of integrating developmental and academic perspectives together do not also focus on how play-based learning (PBL) can facilitate SRT (Baker, 2014).

Both Zambia and Uganda seem to have made significant gains in developing policies for the provision of ECDE. However, there are key challenges and educational priority areas in pre-primary and primary schooling that need urgent attention. This intervention sought to address the identified challenges in line with the project's objectives during its lifetime namely:

Lack of stakeholder coordination: The roles that parents, teachers, school administrations and the community should play in ensuring school readiness and transition from pre- primary to primary school are not coordinated. In Zambia the Transition Management implementation guidelines (2021) were developed but have not implemented yet. Uganda has not yet developed any guidelines in this regard.

Inadequate school readiness and transition due to limited access to ECDE: It is estimated that only 6% of Zambian children between the ages of three and six attend pre-schools and that 76% of children starting primary school have no ECDE experience (Educational Statistical Bulletin of 2016). In Uganda, in 2016, only 563,913 learners accessed pre-primary education in the registered 6,798 pre-primary schools of which 284,824 (50.5%) were girls (NPA, 2020). Limited access to ECDE has implications on equity and inclusion especially among the marginalized and rural communities.

Inadequate PBL pedagogical practices among teachers and inappropriate learning environments: Teaching through play is favoured for pre-primary and early grades in primary schools. However, teachers have inadequate skills, knowledge and attitudes to implement play approaches (Early learning development standards for Zambia, 2016). The school environments including physical conditions and facilities are usually not age-appropriate (Early learning development standards for Zambia, 2016).

Lack of trained and certified teachers in ECDE: In both Uganda and Zambia, the governments have only recently been involved in the training of ECED teachers. As a result, volunteers without knowledge and skills assume the responsibility of teaching ECDE children.

3. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTANCY 3.1. Purpose

The overall objective of this assignment is to develop a functional Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) under the Scaled School Readiness Initiative (SSRI) with a wide range of integrated web-based applications which will be accessible to Ministry of Education officials, teachers, learners, parents and education leaders and other partners. The VLE will enable users to access information, tools and resources to support quality educational delivery and decision making in leadership and management.

The Consultant/Firm will work under the direct supervision of ZOCS M&E and supported by the Ministry of Education team and will be required to regularly share the milestones based on agreed timelines.

The VLE must provide for cyber security, user friendliness and easy to access both offline and online synchronization, flexibility and attractive out look of Dashboard features and scalability of its use and reach overtime with exclusive ownership by MOE and ZOCS.

4. PERIOD OF ENGAGEMENT
- The assignment is expected to take Thirty (30) working days from the date of signing the contract.
- The engagement may be terminated by either party giving **Twenty-Four (24) Hours** written notice.

5. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES
Scope of Work
5.1. Scope of Work:
- Mobilize resources for the VLE including MoE pre-primary and primary education curriculum, supplementary reading materials, Transition Management Guide, national Curriculum Framework, national Educational Policy, Education and Skills Sector Plan 2022 – 2026 self-assessment quizzes, administrative information about various pre-primary and primary courses including prerequisites, registration requirements, etc;
- Create links to all pre-primary and primary distance learning programmes and their training institutions and examination boards;
- Create a dashboard that directs users to different pages
- Create a VLE that supports communication, including e-mail, threaded discussions, chat rooms, Twitter and other media, with an instructor or an assistant acting as moderator; additional elements include wikis, blogs, RSS and 3D virtual learning spaces
- Create a virtual resource room in which teachers and education leaders will interact and take responsibility for their own professional growth;

- Provide for management of access rights for all users of the VLE;
- Create necessary hyperlinks to all resources and virtual platforms provided for on the VLE;
- Provide capacity building for ZOCS officers and MoE officials at district level in the project sites; and
- Train ZOCS and MoE staff on management of the learning environment and updating system and uploading content.
- Provide mentorship and coaching for the end users of the VLE and give whole rights to ZOCS to use the System after development.
- Manage, track and report any changes made to the learning platform

6. Deliverables

The deliverables of the VLE Consultancy shall include the following

- Preparation of Tools and an Inception Report
- Holding debriefing meetings with ZOCS
- Submission of finalized ToR in collaboration with ZOCS
- Submission of training reports
- Submission of the draft and final Reports
- Presentation of the functional VLE to ZOCS and its partners.
- Record/report on changes made

The VLE should consider the following:
- Equity and social inclusion
- Relevance
- Efficiency
- Sustainability and impact

7. MANAGEMENT OF CONSULTANCY

The consultant will be hired under ZOCS terms of contract and supervised by the Monitoring and Evaluation and IT team solely for delivering the above outputs, within the agreed period. ZOCS as the client shall provide necessary support to the consultant in order to execute the assignment during the duration of the consultancy. These shall include:
- Access to relevant project documents necessary for execution of the duties under this contract.
- Contact details of relevant people to be interviewed.