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Partnership
Commission

THE DIGITAL MALAWI PROGRAM PHASE I: DIGITAL FOUNDATIONS PROJECT

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

COVID-19	-	Coronavirus Disease 2019
FIFO	-	first-in, first-out
GM	-	Grant Manual
ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
IDA	-	International Development Association
IPF	-	Investment Project Financing
IT	-	Information Technology
MACRA	-	Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority
MIS	-	Management Information System(s)
MRA	-	Malawi Revenue Authority
PIU	-	Project Implementation Unit
POC	-	Proof of Concept
PPPC	-	Public Private Partnership Commission
PPSD	-	Project Procurement Strategy for Development
SBD	-	Standard Bidding Documents
SOP	-	Series of projects
TORs	-	Terms of Reference

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Digital technologies and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are now an essential tool for promoting competitiveness, job creation, sustainable development, and overall poverty reduction. A combination of widespread access to broadband and a robust ICT services ecosystem can offer a powerful platform for reducing poverty, improving human development and increasing government transparency and efficiency. Digital technologies are transforming the way people, businesses and governments communicate, transact, and access information and services, which has potential to drive entrepreneurship, innovation and economic growth and break down barriers of distance and cost in the delivery of services.

In recognition of the promising benefits enabled by ICTs and digital technologies, the Government of Malawi is implementing the Digital Malawi Program in partnership with the World Bank Group to support a comprehensive, long-term investment in Malawi's digital transformation. The program seeks to leverage digital technologies to drive economic growth, innovation and job creation, access to services, information and markets, and to increase government efficiency and transparency. Recognizing the importance of strengthening analogue enablers in parallel to investing in digital infrastructure and technological adoption, the program is implemented over two phases of support.

The first phase—the Malawi Digital Foundations Project—focuses on laying foundations for digital connectivity, market competitiveness, digital skills, and digital services delivery infrastructure. The second phase—the Malawi Digital Acceleration Project—will focus on leveraging improved connectivity and public digital service delivery capacity to accelerate growth expansion of digital services offering across sectors. Currently, the program is implemented under the first phase of activities comprised of four components: Digital Ecosystems, Digital Connectivity (i.e. digital infrastructure), Digital Platforms and Services (e.g. e-Government), and overall Project Management. Digital Ecosystems consists of a sub-component to support digital skills and innovation. The objective of the Digital Skills and Innovation sub-component is to help address Malawi's digital literacy and advanced ICT skills gaps, strengthen the digital innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem and encourage job creation, entrepreneurship and creativity, particularly for youth. By raising the level of basic digital literacy in Malawi and encouraging the development of a larger pool of advanced ICT professionals and supporting digital entrepreneurship and innovation, this sub-component aims to empower citizens and small businesses to utilize ICTs to access online services and increase their sales opportunities, encourage growth of the digital economy, and help launch new digital start-ups and investment by leading tech/IT firms. The sub-component will seek to establish partnerships to leverage the resources and expertise of global and regional tech companies, foundations and innovation networks to attract new skills development and entrepreneurship programs to Malawi. In order to achieve the above objectives,

a series of activities are planned including support to hubs through competitive grant awards which can be utilized to scale-up operations in order to serve more digital entrepreneurs and expand services offerings. Hubs which are not currently providing technical, digital or innovation services will have the opportunity to scale up their operations in these areas through this grant. One of the key objectives of this activity is to leverage partnerships and other support for skills development and innovation in order to promote digital inclusion – targeting youth and disadvantaged or disconnected populations, particularly women.

The recent COVID-19 pandemic will have devastating effects on economic growth which will lead to increased levels of unemployment including youth unemployment. The innovation grants will provide an opportunity for hubs in Malawi to mitigate the negative impacts of COVID-19 by supporting digital skills development and job creation for youth, especially women and disadvantaged youth.

This manual has been developed to guide the grants implementation process through which eligible hubs and digital entrepreneurs will be able to access the Digital Skills and Innovation Grants for digital skills capacity building and mass literacy. The overall objective of awarding these grants is to close the digital divide in the country through the Digital Malawi Program.

This document has been divided into four parts: (1) Management, (2) Eligibility, (3) Procurement and (4) Grants Disbursement Process and Monitoring. Parts 1 to 3 describe the roles and responsibilities of the team composition that will be responsible for ensuring the success of the program, how the grants should be managed, the selection criteria and the grants application process. The fourth part describes how the awardees of the grants should be monitored.

The manual is also equipped with an annex which contains all the required forms that will be used and required during the grants implementation process including a sample grants proposal template.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

Digital technologies and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are now an essential tool for promoting competitiveness, job creation, sustainable development, and overall poverty reduction. A combination of widespread access to broadband and a robust ICT services ecosystem can offer a powerful platform for reducing poverty, improving human development and increasing government transparency and efficiency. Digital technologies are transforming the way people, businesses and governments communicate, transact, and access information and services, which has potential to drive entrepreneurship, innovation and economic growth and break down barriers of distance and cost in the delivery of services.

In recognition of the promising benefits enabled by ICTs and digital technologies, the Government of Malawi is implementing the Digital Malawi Program in partnership with the World Bank Group to support a comprehensive, long-term investment in Malawi's digital transformation. The program seeks to leverage digital technologies to drive economic growth, innovation and job creation, access to services, information and markets, and to increase government efficiency and transparency. Recognizing the importance of strengthening analogue enablers in parallel to investing in digital infrastructure and technological adoption, the program is implemented over two phases of support.

The first phase—the Malawi Digital Foundations Project—focuses on laying foundations for digital connectivity, market competitiveness, digital skills, and digital services delivery infrastructure. The second phase—the Malawi Digital Acceleration Project—will focus on leveraging improved connectivity and public digital service delivery capacity to accelerate growth expansion of digital services offering across sectors. Currently, the program is implemented under the first phase of activities comprised of four components: Digital Ecosystem, Digital Connectivity (i.e. digital infrastructure), Digital Platforms and Services (e.g. e-Government), and overall Project Management.

Under these components, various activities are being implemented to ensure the objectives are met, one of which is to build digital capacity and to spur digital innovations in the country by supporting technology/innovation hubs and entrepreneurs to scale up their activities and service offerings. These activities will be supported through grants provided by the Digital Malawi Program.

The Malawi Digital Foundations Project, and the wider Digital Malawi Program's series of projects (SOP), are expected to benefit all citizens of Malawi. At the macro

level, the project and program will support increased economic growth, productivity and job creation – both within the telecommunications and IT sectors and through technology diffusion and innovation across all productive sectors. At the individual level, citizens will benefit from access to affordable, higher quality digital communications services with an emphasis on broadband internet, access to digital public and private services, digital skills development and entrepreneurship opportunities. The public sector will also benefit through lower cost, higher quality access to the internet within public institutions, more secure and reliable data storage, ability to launch new digital services much more quickly, efficiently and securely than is possible today, and by taking advantage of data analytics to improve policy and decision-making. Finally, private sector telecommunications companies, IT companies and individual digital entrepreneurs will benefit from the establishment of a seamless, open-access national fibre optic backbone and an improved enabling environment which will lower their operating costs and capital requirements to launch coverage in new areas and increase bandwidth and network reliability to enable rollout of new services and digital content.

Malawi's digital landscape is characterized by significant digital skills gaps as summarized below:

- Low basic digital literacy rates are a key barrier to the greater use of ICTs by citizens and increased uptake of digital technology by the private sector. This is hindering Malawi's participation in the digital economy and constraining the ability of its citizens and businesses to access digital services.
- The lack of more advanced ICT skills-- namely application developers, cybersecurity professionals, and IT professionals -- are a constraint to sector growth and innovation.
- Malawi's tech innovation ecosystem is relatively undeveloped, but offers significant potential for job creation, particularly for youth.
- There is lack of equipment, insufficient co-working and meeting space, high internet connectivity costs, limited training and mentoring opportunities in business plan development and other digital entrepreneurial skills, and limited financing opportunities to scale up good ideas.
- A 2014 study of access and usage of ICT services in Malawi demonstrated the ICT gender gap, showing that although mobile phone ownership is higher amongst women than men, the level of use of the internet is around 13 percent lower.

A key element in digital skills and competitive grants is to focus on closing the gender gap. Women typically have less access to, and usage of, digital infrastructure. If Malawi is to develop digital leaders then targeted efforts need to be made to attract, train and retain women in the digital ecosystem. Another key element is the proposals strength in responding to the adverse impact of the COVID-19 crisis particularly related to job creation and economic growth.

1.2 The Digital Skills Sub-Component

The Malawi Digital Foundations project, through the Digital Skills and Innovation sub-component, aims to mitigate the challenges identified above through targeted digital skills training, mass literacy and digital entrepreneurship incubation and acceleration programmes. To do this, the project will provide grants to hubs and digital entrepreneurs to carry out different services as stipulated in the table below.

The table below indicates the types of digital skills training to be provided. However different digital skills may be considered, based on demand and market needs as well as in response to COVID-19. All proposals should be linked to direct job creation.

RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES FOR DIGITAL SKILLS	PRIORITY
Digital Skills Training (short and long term)	Yes
Incubating Digital Start-ups	Yes
Incubating non-Digital Start-ups (with digital elements)	Yes
Acceleration for best start-ups in the ecosystem	Yes
Organization of Multi-stakeholder, national-level conferences	Yes
Online learning, collaboration and discussions	Yes
Women-only digital skills & entrepreneurship programmes	Yes
Mentorship by successful entrepreneurs and investors	Yes
Technical and business skills training	Yes
Leadership and Soft Skills Training	Yes
Networking, e.g., thematic presentations followed by informal discussions	Yes
Competitions to identify most promising start-ups e.g. Pitching	Yes
Thought Leadership & Management Consultancy Services	Yes
Office and co-working spaces at subsidized costs for limited periods of time	Yes
Mobile app testing facilities and research and development	Optional
Formal incubation program	Yes
Assistance with marketing apps (e.g. advice on pricing, delivery channels)	Optional
Assistance with access to early-stage finance in terms of sub-grants and investor networks	Yes
Sub-grants to digital entrepreneurs	Yes
Access to seed funding	Yes
Mass literacy in Finance, Agriculture, Education and Health	Yes
Any other ICT related activities	Optional
COVID-19 responsive	Yes

1.3 Purpose Of This Manual

The objective of this manual is to provide a framework of operational procedures and processes for the implementation of the Digital Skills and Innovation Grants program under the Digital Skills and Innovation sub-component of the Malawi Digital Foundations Project. This Grants Manual (GM) provides guidelines that will have to be adhered to successfully implement the Digital Skills sub-component. The procedures set out in this GM have been developed in accordance with generally accepted standards and principles, and are consistent with World Bank guidelines. Specifically, the objectives of the GM are to:

1. Guide the successful implementation and operation of the Digital Skills and Innovation sub-component of the Malawi Digital Foundations project;
2. Establish procedures and criteria that will underscore the efficient operation of the Innovation Hubs.
3. Establish internal control procedures to ensure accountability to stakeholders and Development Partners.
4. Provide management and staff of the Innovation Hubs management teams with an understanding of the terms, conditions and policies, which form part of their employment contracts.
5. Provide format guidelines for the submission of project proposals
6. Provide guidelines for the disbursement of funds

In addition to the above, the GM will guide Innovation Hubs management teams to advise on:

- Systems to generate accurate, complete, reliable and timely financial reporting
- Maintenance of adequate and reliable accounting records
- Effective control and efficient utilization of World Bank/PPPC funds.
- Reliable reporting to World Bank, PPPC, external auditors and other stakeholders in accordance with agreed formats and reporting periods.

This GM is expected to evolve with lessons learnt during program implementation. It shall therefore be revised and upgraded regularly to respond to the new realities as the Digital Skills and Innovation programme implementation develops. It is also anticipated that stakeholders shall provide feedback on this initial manual.

1.4 Revisions To This Manual

Any future revisions to this manual will be carried out by the Public Private Partnership Commission (PPPC) and the World Bank.

2 THE GRANTS PROGRAM

2.1 TYPES OF GRANTS

There are two types of grants with two distinguished objectives and target awardees:

a. *Innovation Grants:*

These grants will be provided to support the growth of innovation networks/tech hubs to serve more digital entrepreneurs and expand digital skills services offerings, address the digital literacy and the ICT skills gap, and to strengthen the digital innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem. One of the objectives of this grant is to upskill hubs that are not currently innovation or tech hubs.

b. *Innovation Program for funding Proof-of-Concept (POC) activities*

These grants will be awarded to entrepreneurs seeking to determine the viability of their business ideas/business models in the context of technology development, deployment or transfer through the beneficiary creative and innovation hubs. The primary objective of these grants is to allow entrepreneurs and innovators with a business idea or technical innovation to design, prototype and test market to prove that the idea/business model is technically and commercially viable. These grants will be issued by the beneficiary innovation hubs through a competitive process.

2.2 INNOVATION GRANTS

2.2.1 Eligibility Criteria and Procedures

2.2.1.1 Eligibility Criteria for the proposed Innovation Grant Beneficiary

The proposed Innovation Grant Beneficiary:

- a. is a privately-owned hub established and operating under the Laws of Malawi;
- b. possesses organizational, management, technical capacity and/or financial resources necessary to carry out their proposed activities;
- c. accepts the terms and conditions as associated with the call for proposals;
- d. presents all documentation required by the call (e.g. certified copy of business registration, banker's reference, financial statements, etc.);
- e. has no enforceable outstanding tax or social security obligations
- f. is not delinquent in servicing of existing debt instruments

- g. has not been declared bankrupt by a court of law;
- h. business site must be adequate/suitable for implementation of the activities to be funded; (the site may be acquired after receipt of the grant)
- i. if selected, agrees to be involved in the Program's visibility campaign;
- j. agrees to provide all of the information required by the Program for purposes of monitoring activities and evaluation of results or impact performed by the Program Administration or those hired to do so;
- k. trains at least 500 youth in digital skills training to improve their employability and entrepreneurial opportunities. At least 50% of the people trained must be women.
- l. commits to provide 20% of the funding as subgrants to incubations being mentored by the hubs;
- m. submits a satisfactory business plan, including financing plan and budget together with the application
- n. submits a satisfactory implementation plan with the application
- o. provides satisfactory evidence of an established comprehensive record keeping system; and
- p. has not previously benefited from an Innovation Grant or, if it has benefited from an Innovation Grant, it has completed the corresponding Subproject in a manner satisfactory to the PPPC and the World Bank;

2.2.1.2 Eligibility Criteria for Innovation Grant Proposals

The proposal submitted by the application should at least:

- a. be designed to, inter alia, enhance information and communications technology innovation, entrepreneurship and training; provide coding and associated informational technology courses;
- b. provide clear and direct links to jobs including online work, freelancing and microwork
- c. provide mentorship programs, incubation hubs and opportunities for developers and digital entrepreneurs;
- d. be technically feasible, and economically and financially viable
- e. be replicable and scalable
- f. have a strong focus on closing the digital and gender divide in Malawi, and
- g. be responsive to COVID-19

2.2.2 Grant Conditions

- a. The Innovation Grant shall be made on a non-reimbursable grant basis
- b. The PPPC may suspend or terminate the right of the Innovation Grant Beneficiary to use the proceeds of the Innovation Grant, or obtain a refund of all or any part of the amount of the Innovation Grant that has been withdrawn,

upon the Innovation Grant Beneficiary's failure to perform any of its obligations under the Innovation Grant Agreement

- c. The Innovation Grant Beneficiary shall be required to carry out its Subproject with due diligence and efficiency, and in accordance with sound technical, economic, financial, managerial, environmental and social standards and practices
- d. The procurement of the goods, works and services to be financed out of the Innovation Grant should be in accordance with the established procurement rules
- e. The Innovation Grant Beneficiary must maintain policies and procedures adequate to enable the PPPC to monitor and evaluate the progress of the activities financed by the Innovation Grant and the achievement of its objectives
- f. The Innovation Grant Beneficiary must maintain a financial management system and prepare financial statements in accordance with consistently applied acceptable accounting standards to reflect its operations, including the operations, resources and expenditures related to the activities financed by the Innovation Grant. The PPPC will audit these financial statements through independent auditors
- g. The PPPC will inspect the activities financed by the Innovation Grant, its operation and any relevant records and documents
- h. The Innovation Grant Beneficiary shall prepare and furnish the PPPC with all such information as shall be reasonably requested

2.2.3 Program Implementation

Implementation of the Innovation Grant programme will involve three distinct but inter-related stages as follows:

- a) *Competitive Selection of beneficiaries***
Selection will be based on the set criteria and the strength of the application.
- b) *Establishment of a firm***
A firm shall be established, if need be, to manage the hubs. Preference will be given to the existing management team if it has all the required skills and capacity required to manage the hubs;
- c) *Administration of the Grant***
This stage shall involve the implementation of identified activities at the innovation hubs under the auspices of the innovation hub's Manager. The grant shall be disbursed in three instalments upon completion of agreed deliverables.

In order to support the closing of the digital and gender gap, the grants will be issued to hubs and Digital Entrepreneurs in various geographic locations within Malawi including rural areas. Beneficiaries are expected to provide tailored services to their members in the areas of digital skills training, mass literacy, leadership and soft skills development, mentorship, networking, acceleration, and access to investment, inter-alia.

The hubs will act as innovation intermediaries that orchestrate collaboration between various actors in the ecosystem and provide capacity building platforms for aspiring developers and digital entrepreneurs. They will organize initiatives such as technology boot camps, hackathons and build international networks to link young programmers and developers to opportunities both locally and globally.

2.2.4 Funding Limits

The Innovation Grants program will award \$2 million in total. However, a fixed amount of grant will be awarded to each hub per application based on their proposal to fund agreed-upon activities. The fixed amounts will vary depending on the size of the hub and the kind of activities to be run. The grants are to cover both the digital skills and digital entrepreneurship programs, subgrants and operational activities. The maximum proposed amounts of the grant award will not exceed \$250,000. The final amounts may be modified by the selection committee before award based on the individual applications.

- i. The total maximum amount of a single grant may not exceed \$250,000
- ii. A beneficiary may not be awarded more than \$250,000 from the Digital Skills and Innovation Grant during any single activity cycle.
- iii. Projects can be proposed with a running time of between one and two years.
- iv. A grant activity is not officially completed until the final narrative and financial reports as well as other deliverables described in the grant agreement have been submitted to, and accepted, by the Partnership Coordinator.

In addition to the grants-in-cash, the project may provide grants-in-kind such as computers to the selected hubs for providing digital skills training for the duration of the project.

2.3 PROOF OF CONCEPT FUNDING

2.3.1 Purpose Of Proof Of Concept Funding

The hubs shall provide Proof of Concept (POC) funding to entrepreneurs seeking to determine the viability of their business ideas/business models in the context of technology development, deployment and mentorship. In general, the POC grant will be up to \$5000. The aim of the POC grants is to allow entrepreneurs and innovators with a business idea or technical innovation to design, prototype and test market to prove that the idea/business model is technically and commercially viable. It is expected that POC grants will help entrepreneurs to fine-tune elements of the business idea/model or open opportunities for other sources of funding. Each hub will issue about 20 grants as POC.

Therefore, the proposed ideas and business models to be funded under POC shall be expected to demonstrate potential positive impact through the resolution of given socio-cultural and technological challenges.

2.3.2 Process Of Proposal Submission And Selection

The general structure for administering the Innovation and Training Grants shall be as follows:

- a. Technology and Innovation hubs proposes and prepares draft Calls for Proposals on thematic entrepreneurship with digital elements in it.
- b. Calls for Proposals are published in the national dailies, social media, etc., and on the designated website for the Malawi Digital Skills and Innovation website and any other publishing platforms.
- c. Project Proposals need to be submitted within four weeks after publication on the website.
- d. The hubs screens the proposals based on minimum criteria.
- e. All applicants are notified of outcome
- f. An agreement is signed between the hub and the Grant beneficiary for the implementation of the specific grant programme.
- g. Disbursement of funds and procurement of goods and services for successful grantees commences
- h. The Grants beneficiary reports every 3 months to the hub manager on activity progress (both narrative and financial).
- i. The hub manager follows up with regular monitoring activities.
- j. The Grant beneficiary provides final report upon closure of grant activity.

2.3.3 Grants Selection Criteria

The Grant Proposal shall

- Meet the definition of an ICT or ICT Enabled Project resulting in one or more of the following (product upgrade, process upgrade, marketing and organizational process upgrades) in all sectors.
- Be innovative. This generally refers to a new idea or renewing, changing or creating more effective processes, products or ways of doing things.
- Be sustainable i.e. the business is able to yield cost savings, revenue growth, and competitive advantage
- Be completed within the timeframe agreed to by Digital Malawi.

The above criteria will be entailed with detail in a grant bidding document which will also be used during the selection process.

a) *Technical Approach*

This is the degree to which the proposed activity offers an innovative approach which meets the overall objectives of the project. The approach should be well thought out, with logical linkages between inputs and expected outputs and outcomes. The applicant should be able to define the objectives, goals and mission of the proposed activity

b) *Implementation Capacity*

The extent to which the applicant is capable of undertaking and accomplishing the proposed activities, based principally on the applicant's profile and past achievements, as well as the qualifications of key staff being involved in the project. The applicant will also have to demonstrate having enough working space for implementation and this may include working spaces at hubs.

c) *Potential for Scale Up*

This is the needed strategy and effort to increase in terms of service or product as proposed in the submission made by the Applicant. The approach should be well thought out and defined, with logical linkages between inputs and expected outputs and outcomes.

d) *Value for Money*

This is the relationship between the co-financing grant that is requested, and the significance and quality of the projected outcomes as stated in the proposal. This criterion looks at the overall ambition of the project, given the requested inputs and envisaged outputs. In addition, this indicator assesses whether the resources requested are reasonable in the context of the proposed project.

e) Other Considerations

Other considerations for selection will include:

- Clarity of innovation in product/service.
- Clarity of digital entrepreneurial objectives for the next three years.
- Willingness to engage and manage digital businesses for a profit.
- Readiness to start project within the shortest possible time.
- Commercialization of the business idea.
- Marketability of the product/services.
- Possession of the basic knowledge, skills and entrepreneurial qualities required for the project.
- Experience level.
- Financial strength.
- Ability to cost share.
- Cost share level.

2.3.4 Grants Application Evaluation For POC

The hubs will evaluate the proposals based on the above criteria and complete an evaluation report providing recommendations for each application. The Hub Manager will then submit the evaluation report and recommendations indicating whether to:

- i. fund the proposal;
- ii. not fund the proposal;
- iii. fund the proposal pending revision based on the amendment of conditions and/or recommendations.

2.3.5 Time And Funding Limitations

2.3.5.1 Timeline and Deadline

Calls for Proposals will be announced and published in the national dailies, social media and on the designated Malawi Digital Foundations Digital Skills and Innovation Website stating the time period and deadline within which submission of grant applications should be made.

2.3.5.2 Retroactivity

No grants application will be considered for retroactive funding. Grants will not be awarded for expenditures that occur prior to the start of the grant's activity without prior approval from the Grant Manager.

2.3.6 Proof Of Concept (POC) Management

The rules governing the POC grant facility will be developed by the beneficiary hubs and Partnership Coordinator with guidance from the PIU. The application process will be two-staged as follows:

1. Submission of proposals using the standard application format with stated criteria.
2. Re-submission of proposals which have been improved based on comments from and discussions with applicants.

Proposals that meet all the requirements need to only go through stage 1.

After the deadline indicated in the request for proposals, the proposals will be reviewed by the beneficiary hubs. After the proposal has been reviewed, the applicant is invited to discuss the proposal and the comments made. It would be up to the applicant to accept or decline the invitation. The invitation will include the new deadline by which the improved proposal must be submitted.

After the deadline for re-submission the proposals will be categorized and re-submitted to the beneficiary hubs that will rank the proposals based on the criterion of contribution to achieving the objectives of the Hubs.

The projects proposed for grant receipt are subject to the approval of the PIU. The final proposals, meeting all requirements, will form an integral part of the POC grant agreements between the hubs and the grant recipients. After signing the POC Grant Agreement, the POC grant projects can be implemented. The POC Grant Agreement is expected to include:

- Milestones and a schedule for achieving these milestones;
- A disbursement schedule;
- Reporting requirements (financial reporting on a quarterly basis);
- The requirement to have a separate bank account for the POC grant;
- The right of the Grants Manager to conduct snap visits to the premises of grantees to assess progress and review project documentation; and
- A termination clause.

3 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 Role of the PPPC and the World Bank

The Public Private Partnership Commission through the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) will have oversight responsibility for the Innovation Hubs to ensure that they operate in accordance with the Government of Malawi's vision of developing a strong and vibrant digital ecosystem that includes the youth of Malawi.

The World Bank team will provide support and guidance during the implementation of the programme as part of its technical assistance support to the Government of Malawi and to the PPPC.

3.2 Organizational structure of the Grants Management Team

The Organizational Structure of the Grants Management Team will be as follows:

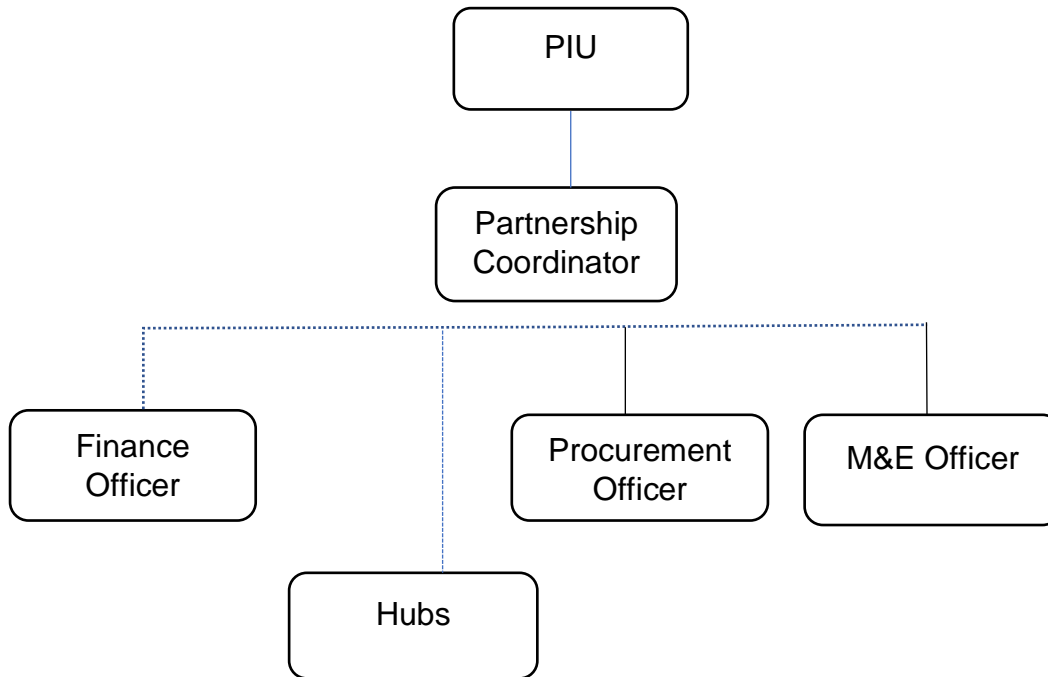


Fig. 1 Organizational Structure

3.3 Roles and Responsibilities of the Grants Management Team

3.3.1 Evaluation Committee

An Evaluation Committee will be established by Public Private Partnership Commission, to review and evaluate the applications received for the innovation grants. Members of the Committee will represent the wider innovation ecosystem, leading institutions and main stakeholders.

3.3.2 The Partnership Coordinator

As part of the project implementation arrangements, a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) within the PPPC has been set up to oversee the implementation of Malawi Digital Foundations Project, and to coordinate activities across implementing partners, stakeholders, and organizations. The PIU is also responsible for the procurement, financial management, and M&E functions of the Malawi Digital Foundations Project.

The PIU team serves as the administrator of, and fiduciary agency for, the funds received under the Malawi Digital Foundations Project. The Partnership Coordinator, together with other PIU members, shall coordinate accordingly to ensure effective

physical, financial and procurement implementation of the Grants programme under the Project.

The Partnership Coordinator shall submit a request for funds under the project to the PIU of Malawi Digital Foundations Project for processing. Approved funds will then be released into the Innovation Hub's Designated Account as per the agreed implementation plan and budget. The funds will be disbursed in three tranches based on the completion of deliverables.

The PIU will coordinate all financial management and project disbursements, including the preparation and submission of replenishment requests to IDA.

To ensure compliance with procurement rules and procedures, the Partnership Coordinator will be supported and guided accordingly with other members of the PIU in the:

- Preparation and review of Bidding documents for the procurement of goods and works;
- Preparation and review of Terms of References (TORs) for the selection of Consultants for the provision of specific services;
- Evaluation of bids for the procurement of goods and works as well as contracts documentation.

The PIU will be coordinating with the Partnership Coordinator to maintain management information systems (MIS) of the project for tracking the progress of the Grant components, in terms of financial performance, meeting implementation targets, and monitoring the performance of the Hubs.

3.3.3 The Finance Officer

The Finance Officer will be responsible for all the grants financial transactions from;

- Dissemination of grants
- Book keeping
- Audits
- Budgeting, and
- Providing financial advice

3.3.4 Procurement Officer

The grants Procurement Officer will be responsible but not limited to the below;

- Preparing bidding documents with coordination from the rest of the team
- Organizing and conducting evaluations with assistance from the evaluation committee
- Advising on the World Bank procurement regulations, and
- Preparing and managing contracts

3.3.5 Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer will be responsible for monitoring the progress of the Grants implementation program. This will involve random visits to tech hubs together with the Partnership Coordinator to ensure the grants are being used effectively and for the intended purpose

3.3.6 The Innovation Hubs Personnel

Roles within the Hubs include responsibility in the development of strategies for Access to Finance, budgets for the Proof of Concept funding and investment facilitation activities. Other roles include managing the budgets for the special Digital Skills training, incubation and acceleration programmes for best start-ups in the ecosystem, mentorship, hackathons, technical and soft skills trainings, management consultancies and content development and mobile application testing facilities among others. These would require a skills mix at the Hubs to ensure successful implementation of programmes.

3.3.7 The Grants Committee

Five individuals representing both the private and public sectors will constitute the committee that will support the review and evaluation of grants. However, the Grants Committee will not be responsible for formulating any policies and strategies with regards to the Grant Manual as this will be the sole responsibility of the PPPC and the World Bank.

- The Committee will be approved by the Commission and the World Bank. Once this is done, there will be an information session between the PPPC, the Committee and the World Bank
- The Committee will be reporting to the PPPC – Digital Malawi Program through the Partnership Coordinator
- The Committee will be required to prepare a report recommending grant awards

4 PROCUREMENT MANAGEMENT

4.1 Applicable Guidelines

The Digital Malawi Program Phase I: Digital Foundations Project PIU will give support to the Partnership Coordinator on procurement processes as outlined above to ensure that all procurements follow the required procedures and processes. The procurement process to be followed will be according to the World Bank Procurement Regulations for the Investment Project Financing (IPF) Borrowers. These will be the Procurement in Investment Project Finance for Goods, Works, Non-Consulting and Consulting Services dated July 2016, Revised November 2017 and August 2018.

The Procurements to be done under this project will follow the Project Procurement Strategy for Development (PPSD) for the Digital Malawi Program Phase I: Digital Foundations Project. If there would be any unique procurements that will require the PPSD to be revised, the Digital Malawi Program Phase I: Digital Foundations Project PIU team will have to do that.

4.2 Procurement Of Goods

The process of procuring goods is well outlined in the World Bank Procurement Regulations for the IPF Borrowers, the Procurement Investment Project Finance for Goods, Works, Non-Consulting and Consulting Services dated July 2016, Revised November 2017 and August 2018.

Depending on the threshold, the procurement will be done using the Bank's Standard Bidding Document (SBD) and all payment made to the bidders will as per the Financial Agreement Document, that is for the intended purpose.

4.3 Procurement Of Non-Consulting Services

Procurement of non-consulting services will follow procurement processes of non-consulting services as outlined in the World Bank Procurement Regulations for the IPF Borrowers, the Procurement in Investment Project Finance for Goods, Works, Non-Consulting and Consulting Services dated July 2016, Revised November 2017 and August 2018.

4.4 Procurement Of Consulting Services

Consultancy services which would be provided under the project will follow process of consulting services as outlined in the World Bank Procurement Regulations for the IPF Borrowers, the Procurement in Investment Project Finance for Goods, Works, Non-Consulting and Consulting Services dated July 2016, Revised November 2017 and August 2018 which will include:

- Quality and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS)
- Quality Based Selections (QBS)
- Least Cost Selection (LCS)
- Single Source Selection (SSS)
- Consultant's Qualification (CQ)

Individual Consultant (IC) shall be hired in accordance with Section V of the Consultant Guidelines.

All other methods that will be required will be guided by the Regulations as outlined above.

4.5 Procurement Capacity Assessment

Procurement Capacity Assessment Hubs Management:

In the course of implementation of the programme, the beneficiaries will be expected to make procurements for works, goods and services in accordance with World Bank procurement guidelines and/or national procurement systems. In the light of this, the procurement capacity of the management team will be assessed at the outset of the Innovation Hubs implementation by the PPPC to ensure conformity with the procurement guidelines.

The objectives of the capacity assessment of the beneficiaries will be to:

- a. evaluate the capacity of the beneficiaries(s) to carry out procurement activities;
- b. assess the risks (institutional, organizational, procedural, etc.) that may negatively affect the ability of the beneficiaries team to carry out procurement;
- c. develop an action plan to address the deficiencies detected by the capacity analysis and to minimize the risks identified by the risk analysis; and
- d. propose a suitable Public Private Partnership Commission (PPPC) procurement supervision plan for the project compatible with the relative strengths, weaknesses and risks revealed by the assessment.

At the minimum, the management teams of the Innovation Hubs will have staff who have experience in the procurement of goods, works and services.

The PIU team of the Digital Malawi Program Phase I: Digital Foundations Project will be expected to assist the beneficiaries to ensure conformity with the procurement procedures of the World Bank through the following:

- preparation and review of Bidding documents for the procurement of goods and works;
- preparation and review of terms of reference for the selection of consultants for the provision of specific services; and
- support of the Malawi Digital Foundations Procurement Specialist in the evaluation of bids for the procurement of goods and works as well as contracts documentation.

5 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

5.1 Financial Management System

The objectives of Innovation Hubs financial management system are:

- to ensure that funds are used only for their intended purposes in an efficient and economic manner;
- to ensure that funds are properly managed and flow smoothly, adequately, regularly and predictably in order to meet the objectives of the project;
- to enable the preparation of accurate and timely financial reports;
- to enable project management to monitor the efficient implementation of the project; and
- to safeguard the project assets and resources.

5.2 Features of The Financial Management System

The following are necessary features of a strong financial management system:

- The beneficiaries shall have an adequate number of procurement and financial skills such as preparing financial reports, budgets, preparing bidding documents, etc.
- The internal control system shall ensure the conduct of an orderly and efficient payment and procurement process, and proper recording and safeguarding of assets and resources;
- The accounting system shall support the project's requests for funding and meet its reporting obligations to the Public Private Partnership Commission;
- The system should be capable of providing financial data to measure performance when linked to the output for the beneficiary; and
- The beneficiary will let an independent, qualified auditor periodically review their financial statements and internal controls.

5.3 Description Of Financial Management Arrangements

5.3.1 Planning And Budgeting

The beneficiaries shall prepare budgets that must be approved by the PPPC. The World Bank's reporting guidelines provide for periodic activity, cash flow and procurement projection analysis and review on an ongoing basis.

5.3.2 Chart Of Accounts

The beneficiaries shall develop a chart of accounts and analysis codes to provide a framework for capturing and grouping data in a manner that will facilitate the generation of the required reports. The Chart of Accounts shall be designed to address the budget lines stipulated in the beneficiaries work

plan and revisions and shall allow project costs to be directly related to specific work activities and outputs.

5.3.3 External Audit

A professionally qualified independent auditor who should meet the World Bank's requirements in terms of independence, qualifications and experience shall be appointed. Annual Audited Financial Statements, taking into consideration the new Audit Policy Guidelines of the World Bank Group should be submitted to the Public Private Partnership Commission and the World Bank within six months after end of each financial year.

5.3.4 Financial Statements

Annual Financial Statements shall be prepared by the beneficiaries in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards. The beneficiaries Financial Statements, which will include minimum disclosures required by International Financial Reporting Standards will include:

- a. A Statement of Sources and Uses of Funds/Cash Receipts and Payments for each funded phase which recognizes all cash receipts, cash payments and cash balances controlled by the entity; and separately identifies payments by third parties on behalf of the entity.
- b. The Accounting Policies Adopted and Explanatory Notes. The explanatory notes should be presented in a systematic manner with items on the Statement of Cash Receipts and Payments being cross referenced to any related information in the notes for each funded phase; and
- c. Management Assertion that Bank funds have been expended in accordance with the intended purposes as specified in the Grant Agreement.

Requests for disbursement from Malawi Digital Foundations project funds will initially be made based on approved work plans and cash flow projections for eligible expenditures (report-based disbursements). The Malawi Digital Foundations project will make advance disbursement from the proceeds of the Grant by depositing into the beneficiaries designated account to expedite project implementation.

If ineligible expenditures are found to have been made from the designated account, the beneficiaries will be obligated to refund the same.

5.4 Financial Reporting Process

5.4.1 Reports and Data Analysis Requirements

Formats of quarterly Financial Monitoring Reports to be generated from the financial management system will be agreed with the Public Private Partnership Commission. There will be clear linkages between the information in these reports, the Chart of Accounts, and subsidiary accounting records to be maintained by the beneficiaries. The financial reports will be designed to provide quality and timely information to the Public Private Partnership Commission, the World Bank, management, and various stakeholders on project performance.

5.4.2 Reporting Currency

The reporting currency for the Grants Manager shall be the US Dollar. Receipts and payments shall be converted to US Dollars at the rate at which the funds were drawn down based on FIFO method.

5.4.3 Reporting Timeframe

The beneficiaries shall prepare and submit reports to the Public Private Partnership Commission on a quarterly basis. Annual reports shall be prepared and submitted not later than 60 days after the end of the year. Quarterly reports are prepared and submitted not later than 30 days after end of quarter. The following reports will be prepared by Grants Manager.

1) **Monthly Management Reports:**

A report on the receipts and expenditure for the month. The report will include the budget analysis, progress and programmatic report.

2) **Interim Financial Report:**

A report on the receipts and expenditure for the quarter for submission to the Public Private Partnership Commission and the Advisory Committee, which will also include budget variances and cumulative receipts and expenditure information. After approval, this report will be used to document expenditures and will form a basis for request for funds from the World Bank

3) **Bank Reconciliation Report:**

This report is meant to ensure bank balances tally to cash book balances. It also helps management pick outstanding reconciling items for further investigation. This report provides assurance to management that the funds at the bank are safeguarded. This is a monthly report, which will be prepared by the beneficiary and will accompany the periodic reports.

4) Annual Financial Report:

A report on the receipts and expenditure for the year which will also include budget variances and cumulative receipts and expenditure information. The report will be prepared by the beneficiary and will accompany the periodic reports. This will also be subjected to an annual audit by a reputable audit firm.

6 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The selected Hubs may implement a locally-relevant Business Metrics (Results) Framework and Performance Monitoring Framework, which must be described in the business plan submitted at the inception stage of the project. The process must be led by Hubs' Grants Management personnel/team.

Based on these frameworks, the following indicators should be monitored at a minimum:

- a. Number of applications submitted to the Hubs, (including 50% of those submitted by women);
- b. Percent of applications accepted, 50% of women-led applications accepted;
- c. Number and types of services (e.g. digital skills trainings, soft skills trainings, mentorship support, incubation and acceleration programmes) delivered;
- d. Numbers (disaggregated) of entrepreneurs (individuals) and growth-oriented enterprises (firms) served via training, incubation and/or acceleration, 60% of women entrepreneurs and women-led firms for each of the three categories; please indicate extent of overlap, i.e. where a firm participated in both incubation and acceleration;
- e. Numbers of youth who have undergone digital skills training, 50% of whom are women;
- f. Number of job matching and facilitation activities undertaken by each hub;
- g. Number of jobs secured after job-matching and facilitation activities;
- h. Number of jobs secured after digital skills trainings;
- i. Number of growth-oriented (GO) entrepreneurs/GO firms securing external, non-grant investment, and average investment size.
- j. Number of growth-oriented (GO) entrepreneurs/GO firms securing external grant investment, and average investment size.
- k. Number of new products and services launched and adopted by the market (i.e. downloaded and used by customers, whether individual or corporate)
- l. Number of customers per GO firm.
- m. Revenues per GO firm.
- n. Skills retention programs

6.1 Performance Measurement Framework

The performance measurement framework will set out the following parameters:

- Expected results
- Indicators
- Targets for 2 years
- Assumptions
- Data sources

- Frequency

The Grants Manager will be expected to detail the Performance Framework as part of Inception Reporting.

ANNEXES

Application Process

ANNEX A Grant Proposal Template

- i. Executive summary
Brief introduction of the institution and the program for which the grant is being requested for. The amount of funding requested and a general description of how the funds will be used
- ii. Institution Description
 - hub/business history
 - Objectives
 - Goals
 - Vision
 - Current office location
 - Management Structure
 - Major accomplishments
 - Current programs
- iii. Previous grants and how they were used to be accompanied by proof
- iv. Program Description
A detailed description of the program to be funded by the grant, including any sub programs and the different activities that will be implemented under this program; the reason for the existence of the program; the targeted people, including the age ranges; the impact the program will make.; the goal of the program; the measurable success outcome and the duration of the program.
- v. Current Challenges that require funding
- vi. Program Timeline
- vii. Budget
- viii. Sustainability plan
- ix. Gender design
- x. COVID-19 responsive
- xi. Monitoring and Evaluation

ANNEX B Institutional Profile

NAME OF INSTITUTION	
TRADE NAME IF DIFFERENT THAN COMPANY NAME	
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	
COMPANY CONTACT	
MAILING ADDRESS	
PHYSICAL ADDRESS	
TELEPHONE NUMBER	
FAX NUMBER	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
WEBSITE ADDRESS	
DATE OF COMPANY REGISTRATION	
YEAR WHICH COMPANY COMMENCED OPERATIONS	
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	Male:
	Female:
INDUSTRY/SECTOR	
REASON FOR EXISTENCE	

ANNEX C Evaluations Bidding Document Sample

Table 1: Preliminary Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Score
Is the country of origin and establishment Malawi	
Are the program goals and objectives clearly defined in line with the Digital Malawi Project	
Clear identification of issues and how the program would tackle these issues	
Clear illustration of projected budget in line with the program milestone	
Sustainability plan for at least 12 months	
Employment creation and mentorship for the students trained and businesses incubated including gender design considerations	
Demonstration of having the right and required skills for the implementation of the program	
Responsive to COVID-19	
Working space or clear plan to develop working space	

Table 2: Secondary Evaluation Criteria

SERVICE CRITERIA	
Digital Skills Training	Yes
Incubating Digital Start-ups	Yes
Incubating non-Digital Start-ups (with digital elements)	Yes
Acceleration for best start-ups in the ecosystem	Yes
Multi-stakeholder, national-level conferences	Yes
Online learning, collaboration and discussions	Yes
Women only digital skills & entrepreneurship programmes	Yes
Mentorship by successful entrepreneurs and investors	Yes
Technical and business skills training	Yes
Leadership and Soft Skills Training	Yes
Networking, e.g., thematic presentations followed by informal discussions	Yes
Competitions to identify most promising start-ups e.g. Pitching	Yes
Thought Leadership & Management Consultancy Services	Yes
Office and co-working spaces at subsidized costs for limited periods of time	Yes
Mobile app testing facilities and research and development	Optional
Formal incubation program	Yes
Assistance with marketing apps (e.g., advice on pricing, delivery channels)	Optional
Assistance with access to early-stage finance in terms of sub-grants and investor networks	Yes
Access to seed funding	Yes
Any other ICT related activities	Yes
COVID-19 responsive	

Grant Disbursement

ANNEX D Grant Disbursement Sheet

INSTITUTION	CONTACT PERSON	GRANT DISBURSED	REASON FOR DISBURSEMENT	DATE OF DISBURSEMENT

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ANNEX E Implementation Plan Template

COMPONENTS	DESCRIPTION	RESULTS	TIMELINE (please fill in the dates when the activities will be started and completed)
COMPONENT 1:			
Activity A			
Activity B			
Activity C			
COMPONENT 2:			
Activity A			
Activity B			
Activity C			
COMPONENT 3:			
Activity A			
Activity B			
Activity C			

BUDGET

ANNEX F Budget Template

COMPONENT	BUDGET	MILESTONE

DIGITAL SKILLS TRAINER EVALUATION CRITERIA

ANNEX G Digital Skills Trainer Evaluations Template

CRITERIA	Maximum Score	Project Score
EVALUATION OF THE COMPLETENESS OF THE PROPOSAL		
a. Is the proposal clearly defined as outlined in the guidelines for the submission of a proposal for training	10	
b. Has the training provider demonstrated thorough understanding of the purpose and scope of the training.	10	
EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATION OF THE TRAINER		
a. Do the qualifications of the trainer adequately demonstrate the ability to deliver the proposed course material	10	
b. Does the prescribed trainer have the necessary experience in digital skills training?	10	
METHODOLOGY		
a. Does the methodology match the training	10	

requirement?		
b. Would the course content outlined in the proposal achieve the desired results?	10	
c. Has the train the trainer curriculum been defined and the mode of delivery appropriate?		
d. Is there a clear gender aspect in the programme and has it considered the COVID-19 response?	10	
TECHNICAL CONTENT OF THE PROPOSAL		
a. Are there adequate resources available for carrying out this training course?	10	
b. Are the evaluation tools appropriate for assessing and evaluating <i>the trainees</i> ?	10	
c. Is there a clear indication of adherence to quality standards in the proposal?	10	
TOTAL	100	