



PRESS RELEASE

SIGNING OF CONTRACT BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND TELEKOM NETWORKS MALAWI FOR THE PROVISION OF FREE PUBLIC WIFI UNDER PPPC'S DIGITAL MALAWI PROJECT

1. BACKGROUND

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is now globally recognized as an essential tool in promoting competitiveness, job creation, sustainable development, and overall poverty reduction. A combination of widespread access to broadband and a robust ICT service ecosystem can offer a powerful platform for reducing poverty, improving human development and increasing government transparency and efficiency. ICTs have the potential to transform business and government - driving entrepreneurship, innovation and economic growth and breaking down barriers of distance and cost in the delivery of services. In recognition of this fact, the Government of Malawi through the Public Private Partnership Commission with financing from the International Development Association of the World Bank is implementing a project in the realm of ICT – the Digital Malawi Project.

2. OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of the Digital Malawi Program Series of Projects (SOP), is to contribute to a 'digital transformation' of Malawi's economy, society and Government.

The Program therefore aims at extending and improving access to critical ICT infrastructure for the public and private sectors; improve

ICT governance; improve access to government services; and reduce infrastructure costs by providing reliable, fast and adaptive government digital systems that will facilitate provision of e-services thereby enhancing public service delivery.

3. PROGRESS UPDATE

Institutional Reforms

All strategies under this component namely; the Digital Government Strategy, the National Broadband Strategy, the Cybersecurity Strategy and the e-Waste Strategy have now been approved by the Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC). Institutional review report for the Department of e-Government was completed and also approved by the Office of the President and Cabinet, the Ministry of Information, the Department of e-Government and Department of Human Resources Management and Development (DHRMD).

Under this component, two studies namely the Universal Service Fund (USF) Gap Analysis and the Data Protection Legislation Consultancy are ongoing. Draft legislation has been submitted and reviewed, whereas the Gap Analysis Study had been extended to October 2020. MACRA, through the Project, is carrying out a cyber security maturity model (CMM) for nations assessment expected to be completed by December 2020.

Digital Skills

The project awarded grants to tech hubs in July 2020 pending contract signing. The Project has further distributed 250 all-in-one desktop computers. Among other activities under this sub-component, is a Digital Skills Gap Assessment Study which has commenced and its inception report has been submitted by the consultants. The study is projected to be completed in the first quarter of 2021. The Project is in

the process of recruiting a consulting firm to run an e-lancing workshop.

Malawi Research and Education Network (MAREN)

The PPPC has completed recruitment of national connectivity and campus Wi-Fi service providers. However, the contracts could not be signed due to outstanding safeguards approvals. This is the biggest challenge the Project is facing in terms operationalization the association within the first-half of the 2020 calendar year as originally planned.

Connectivity to Public Institutions

The final draft feasibility study report has since been submitted by the consultant and has been approved by the PPPC after review by both the Department of e-Government and MACRA. In addition, the Ministry of Finance has also approved the deliverable pending commencement of procurement procedures. Local Area Network installation procurement will commence in October 2020 following the approval of the relevant safeguards in August 2020.

Digital Government

The PPPC has recruited the electronic documents and records management system (EDRMS) trainer who has provided several training activities and has also recruited an EDRMS Advisor. With the implementation of the Electronic Documents and Records Management system, we expect to have paperless Government offices.

Enterprise architecture advisors were recruited in September 2020 for the digital platforms. Procurement of the Data Centre will commence in October, 2020. Applications will be procured in parallel, wherever possible.

The PPPC will support Government efforts towards implementing institutional arrangements to support the full operationalization of the systems.

Free Public WIFI

The PPPC has completed procurement of a service provider for free Wi-Fi zones (TNM) in some 30 sites throughout the country.

For this pilot phase, the Commission is expected to reach out to about 16 Secondary Schools and Four National Libraries in all the four regions of the country. secondary schools and libraries,

In health, a total of eight Central and District hospitals are expected to be connected which include Mzuzu , Kamuzu, Queen Elizabeth and Zomba Central Hospitals, Nkhata Bay, Nkhotakota, Thyolo and Mangochi District Hospitals.

Blantyre and Lilongwe City markets are also target places for the free wi-fi.

The contract signing ceremony for this project is scheduled to take place on 1st October, 2020 at Sunbird Mount Soche.

The General public will continue to be updated regarding the progress of the Digital Malawi Project.

For further questions, please contact:

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