**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY PLANS FOR 3 COUNCILS**

**BY**

**ACTIONAID INTERNATIONAL, THE GAMBIA**

**JUNE 2025**

**Project Title:** Empowering Marginalized Young People for Inclusion in Civic Space and Local Infrastructures for Peace

**Terms of Reference (ToR) for 4-Year Strategic Plan for Five Councils**

1. **Introduction**

ActionAid International The Gambia (AAITG) received funding from the United Nations (Secretary-General’s Peacebuilding Fund), to implement a two-year project to expand the inclusion of rural youth, including the marginalized (young women, PWDs and Survivors of Trafficking in civic space and local infrastructure for peace, leaving no one behind in peacebuilding for social cohesion. This is envisaged to strengthen the actual representation of youth in decision-making structures at the local level (District Tribunals, Village Development Committees and Ward Development Committees). It is a well-established fact that Area Councils are the primary agencies for development in their respective regions. Therefore, it is anticipated that the taxes they collect can be reinvested in local development matters, including youth-related initiatives. Although some of the councils have developed Strategy Plans, some of these plans are not only outdated but also not youth-responsive. Therefore, there is a need to support the development of their strategies to be youth responsive and inclusive, as councils have very minimal youth participation and inclusion in the Councils.

1. **The context and rationale for developing a strategic plan for the councils.**

Local councils in The Gambia represent the closest legitimate authority of people, mandated to collect rates and taxes in exchange for the delivery of services to their people. The strategic development plan remains the most critical and strategic document that all councils are expected to possess as provided for by the Local Government Act 2002. As a resource mobilization document, strategic plans of councils are required to encapsulate a tireless consultative process, namely: Village Development Committee (VDC), Ward Development Committee (WDC) and Council.

* 1. **Purpose**

The primary purpose of this strategy is to support the Area councils to have an inclusive, youth-responsive, workable and attainable strategy which can be implemented. Therefore, it is necessary for the consultant to know the councils that have strategies to be reviewed, outdated or that do not have at all.

* 1. **Objectives**

The main objective of this consultancy is to develop a strategic development plan for three (3) councils in The Gambia using participatory approaches with a specific focus on youth inclusion. The process will entail a comprehensive and inclusive process with a high degree of involvement of relevant stakeholders, including all three tiers of decentralized structures, including VDCs, WDCs and Councils, as well as key actors within the concerned councils and Local Government Areas (LGAs), bearing in mind their role as regional / LGA planning authorities of their respective areas. The envisaged results of the project are:

* Development of a 4-year strategic plan for the (3) councils
* Organise inception workshops for AAITG and Councils
* Review and validation workshops

The specific objectives of the strategic plan, such as:

* Enhancing delivery service.
* Promoting community engagement.
* Improving financial sustainability.
* Strengthening inter-council collaboration.

**Scope and Methodology**

* 1. **Scope**

The strategic plan covers support for the development and implementation of strategy plans for three Local Government Areas (LGAs): Janjanbureh, Mansakonko, and Kerewan. A key focus of these strategies is to promote the inclusion of youth, ensuring they have a voice in district-level decision-making processes and can actively contribute to the development and progress of their communities

* 1. **Methodology**

The consultant will take the lead throughout the entire process, while ActionAid International, The Gambia (AAITG) will provide technical guidance and monitor the consultant’s progress within the scope of the assignment. The methodology will include a comprehensive review of relevant literature and interviews with relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to local councils, Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, Civil Society Organizations and the private sector in The Gambia.

To ensure the process is highly participatory, the consultant will engage stakeholders through the following key tasks to effectively develop the strategies:

* Assess the current Local Government situations as they relate to the five councils, focusing on their priorities, challenges and aspirations.
* Lead in the identification, prioritization and analysis of their current situation and prepare a zero draft ahead of its review and validation using a participatory and all-inclusive approach with a specific interest in youth participation and involvement.
* Lead the review and validation of the strategic documents in all five councils using a participatory and all-inclusive process.
* Conduct stakeholder consultations to gather diverse perspectives and input.
* Prepare an Inception report showing the outline of the strategic development plans.
* Facilitate the review processes of the draft strategic development plans
* Organize and lead workshops and planning sessions to support strategy development.
* Facilitate the final validation workshops for the strategies.

Utilize various data collection methods, including surveys, interviews and focus group discussions to ensure comprehensive information gathering.

1. **Deliverables**
   1. **Final Comprehensive Strategic Development Plan:** Submission of a finalized, detailed strategic development plan that encompasses the vision, goals, priorities and strategies tailored to the three councils (Janjanbureh, Mansakonko, and Kerewan). The plan should reflect stakeholder inputs, particularly youth engagement, and provide a clear roadmap for sustainable local development.
   2. **Council Specific Action Plans:** Development and delivery of actionable, council-specific plans that break down the overall strategy into clear, time-bound activities, responsibilities, and resource requirements for each Local Government Area. These action plans should guide implementation at the local level and align with the broader strategic objectives.
   3. **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework:** A robust M&E framework outlining the mechanisms, indicators and processes to track progress and assess the effectiveness of the strategic plan over the four-year implementation period. This framework should include methods for regular data collection, reporting schedules, roles and responsibilities, and provisions for adaptive management to ensure the plan remains relevant and impactful.
2. **Timeline**

The duration of this consultancy is **approximately 60** days from the date of signing of the contract by both parties.

1. **Budget**

The Strategy Plans should include a detailed costing that outlines the estimated budget required for both the development and implementation of the strategic plan. This budget should cover all necessary expenses such as human resources, workshops, consultations, data collection, communication, and any other relevant activities to ensure the successful execution of the strategic plan.

1. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Describe how the implementation of the strategic plan will be monitored and evaluated over the four years.

This framework should:

1. Define clear indicators aligned with the strategic objectives to track progress and measure outcomes.
2. Establish regular reporting timelines to ensure timely feedback on implementation status.
3. Assign roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis, and reporting.
4. Incorporate mechanisms for participatory monitoring involving key stakeholders, including youth representatives, to maintain transparency and accountability.
5. Facilitate periodic reviews and evaluations to assess effectiveness, identify challenges, and inform adaptive management strategies to improve implementation.
6. **Risk Management:**

Identify and suggest potential risks that could affect the successful development and implementation of the strategic plans, along with appropriate mitigation strategies.

1. **Key Components of the Strategic Plan**

To ensure a comprehensive and actionable strategic plan, the following essential components should be included:

* 1. **Vision and Mission Statements:**

The vision statement will clearly define what each council aspires to achieve in the long term, serving as an inspirational guide for future development. The mission statement will articulate the council’s fundamental purpose, outlining its role and the communities it serves.

* 1. **Goals and Objectives**

Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals and objectives will be established. Goals provide the broad targets aligned with the vision, while objectives break these down into actionable and trackable steps that direct implementation efforts.

* 1. **Situational Analysis**

A comprehensive situational analysis will be conducted, including a SWOT assessment to identify internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats. This analysis will ground the strategic plan in reality and help identify priority areas for intervention.

* 1. **Target Audience**

The plan will identify key stakeholders and beneficiaries, such as local communities, youth, government entities, civil society organizations, and private sector partners. Understanding the target audience is crucial for designing relevant strategies and ensuring inclusive participation.

* 1. **Strategies and Tactics**

Clear strategies will be developed to achieve the set goals and objectives, complemented by specific tactics—concrete actions and initiatives to be undertaken. This will provide a detailed roadmap for implementation, aligned with local contexts and capacities.

* 1. **Resources Required**

An outline of the financial, human, and material resources necessary for successful implementation will be provided. This will include budget estimates and considerations for mobilizing and managing these resources effectively.

* 1. **Timeline**

A detailed timeline will be presented, outlining the schedule for executing each element of the strategic plan. This will facilitate monitoring progress, ensuring accountability, and maintaining momentum throughout the implementation period.

* 1. **Evaluation and Monitoring**

A robust monitoring and evaluation framework will be established, including criteria and indicators for assessing progress and outcomes. Regular data collection, reporting, and feedback mechanisms will ensure the strategic plan remains relevant and adaptive over the four-year implementation period

1. **Experience and qualification of individual/firm**

* A minimum of a master’s degree in governance, Local Administration, Public Policy, Public Administration, Development studies, Economics or related field
* Minimum of Ten (10) years’ working experience in the field of local governance and public sector management.
* Proven understanding of the decentralization framework and local governance structures in The Gambia, including the roles and responsibilities of Local Government Authorities (LGAs).
* Significant technical experience in development research, policy analysis and strategic plan development.
* Experience in working closely with communities, Government institutions, and development partners.
* Excellent written and oral communication skills in English.
* Significant experience in writing/editing reports for large organizations at the national and international level
* Proven experience in facilitating stakeholder engagement processes.
* Strong knowledge of participatory methodologies, community engagement  
  techniques, consensus-building approaches, and public sector management.
* Demonstrated ability to work under pressure and meet tight deadlines without compromising quality or stakeholder engagement.

1. **Duration of this assignment**

The duration of this consultancy is approximately **sixty** (60) days upon successful signing of the contract, submission and approval of the inception report of the assignment. The duration includes all phases of the assignment, such as preparatory work, stakeholder consultations, drafting, validation workshops, and submission of final deliverables.

1. **Payment schedules**

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| **Deliverables** | **Payment Schedule** |
| Upon signing the contract | 35 % 1st Tranche Payment |
| Submission of the first draft plan | 40% payment of the 2nd tranche |
| Submission of acceptance of the plan | 17 % payment as Final Payment |
| Withholding Tax | 8 % Directly Paid to GRA |
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