



SCHOOL CONNECTIVITY PROJECT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Malawi Government through the National ICT Policy of 2013 has a deliberate policy statement whose objective is to ensure that all its citizens access ICT services which are a catalyst for socio economic development. In line with this policy, the government has put up initiatives to include compulsory ICT curriculum in the education system in the county.

This document responds to the government initiative of promoting ICTs in schools and proposes projects to be undertaken in order to connect public school in the country with internet as well as provide ICT infrastructure to the schools.

Connecting schools provides many benefits including access to an ever-growing volume of educational information, opportunities for collaboration and the use of online applications.¹ It is important for students and teachers to learn information and communication technology skills to enable them to participate in the evolving knowledge society. School connectivity also enhances educational administration through the electronic exchange of forms, data and other information. It also achieves cost efficiencies by automating manual tasks and reducing expenses associated with textbook printing and distribution. It is under this background that the MACRA through the Universal Service

1. Stosic Lazar; *the Importance of Educational Technology in Teaching*. Internal journal of Cognitive Research in Science, Engineering and Education. Vol 3, No. 1, 2015

Department would like to embark on a school connectivity project aiming at addressing ICT access in the education system especially in rural secondary schools. As a scale up we intend to partner with the government of Malawi as the construct the new day secondary schools.

The project cost is approximately MK 606,699430.

2.0 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

Internationally ICT has been recognized as an enabler for social and economic development of any country affecting all development sectors including education. Internet in particular has been used to enhance teaching and learning in schools globally. However, with the latest statistics which indicate a general internet penetration of 31%, the education system in Malawi has not benefited from this ICT revolution especially those in rural areas. Apart from the internet unavailability, this can be attributed to lack of ICT infrastructure and high computer illiteracy levels among teachers and students. It is against this background that school connectivity program is being proposed. As this will act as an immediate solution to make sure that students and their teachers utilize computers and internet connectivity in their lessons.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

MAIN OBJECTIVE

To promote universal access to ICTs in the Malawi Education System especially in rural areas.

Specific objectives

1. To install and equip computer labs with ICT equipment in public secondary schools.
2. To connect rural public secondary schools with internet and establish a hotspot in rural schools.
3. To build capacity of teachers and students in ICT skills.
4. To enhance security of the existing computer labs in rural public secondary schools.
5. To provide extended support to surrounding schools and communities to benefit from the Computer Lab.
6. To provision of alternate sources of energy where necessary.
7. To raise awareness of the project in the communities where the projects are located

4.0 PROJECT SCOPE:

This project will be implemented throughout Malawi in public secondary schools through provision of Computers and Internet connectivity and also improving existing facilities to be used for computer labs. Further, the project will enhance security of school computer labs.

As part of building capacity of the users, the project will also train teachers and students in basic ICT skills as a way of sustaining the project in future. The project further seeks to absorb new graduates as ICT officers in the schools who shall be responsible for managing the computer labs where the projects have been implemented. It is hoped that this will make the ICT training and usage of labs an ongoing phenomena.

5.0 FUNDING MODEL

The project will be funded through Universal Service Fund. The project further will collaborative partnerships with the telecom operators and the private sector on the provision of internet to the schools and ICT equipment for the targeted schools.

6.0 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In order to successfully implement the project, Universal Service Department will work with relevant identified stakeholders to effectively implement the project. The approach to be taken will be a consultative process, where stakeholders' involvement will be emphasized from the onset of the project.

The actual implementation of activities will be undertaken by various stakeholders as highlighted in table 1 below:

Table 1: Stakeholder Engagement

No	INSTITUTION	RESPONSIBILITIES
1	Ministry responsible for ICT	Policy direction
2	Ministry of Education	Identification of schools Identification of training needs Coordination of similar projects
3	MACRA- Universal Service Department	Needs assessment Financial and Technical support Coordination of activities Monitoring and evaluation
4	Beneficiary Schools	Identification of structure Management of the labs Security of the project structures Identification of training needs Utilizing the computer labs
5	Telecom operators	Internet connectivity.

In order to enhance the relationships with the stakeholders the following Committees will be put in place:

- a) Project Steering Committee comprising of various stakeholders including officials from MACRA (Universal Service Department), Telecom operators, MoICT and Ministry of Energy and Mining will coordinate the activities of the project.
- b) School and Community Management Committee: to oversee the project at the Rehabilitation Centre.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	PROCESS DELIVERABLE	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
To identify project sites	(i)Preliminary stakeholder discussions with Education Officials MoICT Official (ii)Schools verification (iii)Consultations with service providers	Meetings Project proposal	Project sites identified	Sep 2020
To identify Contractor (US operator)	(i)Bid documents-ITA, Bid Submission (ii)Bid Evaluation (iii)Contract Negotiations and Award (iv)Identify training institute (to follow recommended procurement procedures as above)	Publishing ITA Report Contract	Contractor(s) identified training institute identified	Sep –Oct 2020
Implementation	(i)Installation & commissioning of the equipment (ii)Preparation & distribution of promotional materials	(i)Equipment in place (ii)Distribution of materials	Schools provided with computers and internet connected	Oct 2020 – June 2021
Training & capacity building	(i)Identification of the ICT officers under the GOM internship program. (ii)Train trainers, & students on site (iii)Organization of related events (iv)Develop online content	(i)List of ICT officers (ii)Training reports	Training conducted in the schools	Jan 2021
Monitoring and Evaluation	(i)Monitoring of school lab usability (ii)Preparation of Project closure report (iii)Impact assessment	(i)Progress reports (ii) Impact assessment reports	Monitoring reports	July 2020 – June 2021
Monitoring and evaluation	Site visits Stakeholder meetings Report writing	M&E reports	Annual Report	July 2020 to June 2021

8.0 INDICATORS

No	Objective	Indicators	Output/Target
1	To install and equip computer labs with ICT equipment in public secondary schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of rural public schools with labs and equipped with ICT. 	8 schools Southern Region Central Region Northern Region Eastern region
2	To connect rural public secondary schools with internet and establish a hotspot in rural schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of schools computer labs connected to the internet Number of rural secondary schools Hotspots established 	8 schools Southern Region Central Region Northern Region Eastern region
3	To build capacity of teachers and students in ICT skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICT officers identified under the internship program. Training institute identified Training for trainer of trainers Number of student trained on ICT skills Number of teachers trained on ICT skills 	1 ICT Officer placed in each beneficiary school. 2 training institutions identified. 200*8=1600 students trained. 800 teachers trained
4	To facilitate renovation of existing computer labs in rural public secondary schools and where necessary facilitate construction of school computer labs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of existing computer labs renovated 	8

5	To provide extended support to surrounding schools and communities to benefit from the Computer Lab.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of beneficiaries outside mainstream public secondary schools 	100 per school X 8 800
6	To provision of alternate sources of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools connected to some form of energy 	8
7	To raise awareness of the project in the communities where the projects are located	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Awareness programs(Campaigns) 	2 per school x 8 16
8	To plan scale up new schools to have compute labs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new designs for schools have a computer lab 	Scale up plan in place