



PUBLIC WI-FI PROJECT

1. INTRODUCTION

The Malawi Government through the National ICT Policy of 2013 has a deliberate policy whose objective is to ensure that all its citizens access ICT services which are a catalyst for socio economic development. The ICT Policy aims at developing the ICT sector, promoting the development, use of ICTs in all sectors and enhancing universal access to ICT services as well as addressing the rural–urban digital divide.

Considering that Internet and Broadband are globally recognized as the basis for transformation to a knowledge-based economy, the Government has also developed a five-year National Broadband Strategy (2019 to 2023) whose objectives are to promote broadband deployment, increase broadband adoption and usage as well as ensure availability of broadband services at affordable prices. The Broadband Strategy has the following initiatives:

- I. Increase access speeds and capacity of existing network infrastructure
- II. Increase access network coverage into underserved (unserved) areas

- III. National Backbone Network capacity
- IV. International Network capacity
- V. Availability of broadband
- VI. Affordability of broadband
- VII. Promote demand

The project seeks to address the following National Broadband Strategy Initiatives: availability and affordability of broadband in the country.

The project will provide Internet connectivity to the general public in some targeted public institutions and places in the country.

Under an agreement with the potential ISP, the public Wi-Fi Hotspots will make it possible to offer low cost or free Internet access. This Project aims to accelerate the government's effort in enhancing Internet accessibility for people in the country in order to accelerate to accelerate economic, social n educational opportunities and in reducing the digital divide.

This Concept provides a framework on which any public funding model can fit into, however or the initially, the project will be funded through the US Fund intervention whereby an Internet Service Provider will be identified through a competitive bidding process to provide the service in the targeted public institutions and places.

The project cost is approximately MK 59,893,002.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

The National Broadband Strategy proposes an increase in broadband access minimum speed from 1Mbps to 5Mbps for the year 2023. The Strategy further proposes a broadband access penetration rate to increase from the current 4.5% to 15 % in 2023. The Strategy also identifies affordability of internet services as one of the key elements to be considered when implementing the Strategy due to the effect that it has on broadband. Therefore, affordability of internet services in the country acts as a barrier to access because the cost of accessing the service limits the demand for internet. Therefore the implementation of this project will facilitate that internet access is widely available and that the project will be instrumental in meeting the strategic goals of the BB Strategy of making broadband affordable by the general public. Further, the implementation of this project is in line with the Authority's Strategic goals of promoting universal access of ICT services which considers affordability as a factor to enhance universal access of service.

Malawi has currently has a 31% Internet penetration rate.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this projects to promote affordability of internet services.

3.1 Specific Objectives

Specific objectives for the project include the following:

- i) To install public Wi-Fi in some targeted public institutions/places
- ii) Improve affordability of broadband services
- iii) To subsidize the provision of internet services in at key public institutions and places in the country.

- iv) To raise awareness of the project in the communities where the projects are located.

- v) To provision of alternate sources of energy where necessary.

- vi) To encourage SMEs to provide local based solutions through the use of Innovation hubs

4. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project proposes to provide Internet connectivity in public places across the country and aims at accelerating government's efforts in addressing broadband access gaps in the country and hence it will improve internet accessibility to accelerate economic, social and educational opportunities. This project is in line with the National ICT Policy objective of making universal access of ICT services including advanced services for all the population in the country

The Project shall provide **a one hour** public Wi-Fi Internet access at no-charge in selected public places. After the free hour is used, users shall be required to buy airtime at a prescribed charge.

The project will involve various stakeholders and will have agreements with the public institutions where the Wi-Fi will be installed. Further, the project will identify a potential ISPs through a competitive bidding process and the

successful bidder will be required to manage the Internet Point of Presence in the institutions and public places where the Wi-Fi shall be installed.

5. FUNDING MODEL

The project will be funded through Universal Service Fund. The project further will collaborative partnerships with the private sector on scale-up of innovative technologies or business models for rural mobile signal deployment. This project aims at financing of least-cost subsidy “reverse auctions” for private sector deployment of shared infrastructure and mobile services in targeted rural areas.

6. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

As the Universal Service Fund is a product of a collaborative financing mechanism to accelerate service provision, this project will engage stakeholders' in the implementation of the Rural Connectivity project from the onset. Amongst the stakeholders to be approached are MoLG, Telecoms operators, Ministry of Energy.

No	INSTITUTION	RESPONSIBILITIES
1	Ministry responsible for ICT	Policy direction
2	Ministry of Local Governments	Identification of schools Identification of training needs Coordination of similar projects
3	Ministry of Education	Identification of beneficiary schools
4	MACRA	Site surveys and needs assessment Technical support Coordination of activities Monitoring and evaluation
5	Beneficiary Communities/Institutions	Identification of location Security of the project equipment
6	Telecom operators	Internet connectivity/ Internet PoP.

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,

7. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The project activities are as follows:

OBJECTIVE	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES	PROCESS DELIVERABLE	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
To install public Wi-Fi in some targeted public institutions/places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation meetings with beneficiary institutions and ISPs • Procurement process; Pre-bid meeting, Advertisement, Bid opening & Evaluation • Identify ISPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites identified • Specs for public Wi-Fi developed • ISPs identified – Contact signed 	Public Wi-Fi installed in 12 sites	July to Dec 2020
To subsidize the provision of internet services in at key public institutions and places in the country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation meetings with beneficiary ISPs • Procurement process; Pre-bid meeting, Bid opening & evaluation • Contract negotiations • Identify ISPs • M&E 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specs for public Wi-Fi developed to include funding and subsidy model • ISPs identified • Monitoring reports 	Contract signed with the ISPs for subsidy model	July to Dec 2020
To raise awareness of the project in the project communities	Consultation meetings Develop awareness materials and programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation meetings held • Awareness materials 	Awareness materials developed Awareness meetings and programs implemented	July 2020 to March 2021
Monitoring and evaluation	Site visits Stakeholder meetings Report writing	M&E reports	Annual Report	July 2020 to June 2021

8. INDICATORS

OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS	OUTPUTS/ TARGETS
To install public Wi-Fi in some targeted public institutions/places	Public Wi-Fi installed in the targeted institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 sites identified • Specs for public Wi-Fi developed • ISPs identified – Contact signed IPoPs installed in the sites
To subsidize the provision of internet services in at key public institutions and places in the country	Contract signed with the IP to provide subsidized internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specs for public Wi-Fi developed to include funding and subsidy model • ISPs identified • Monitoring reports
To raise awareness of the project in the communities where the projects are located	Awareness and sensitization meetings held in the targeted sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation meetings reports • Awareness materials and programs developed • Awareness meetings and programs implemented