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Promoting and Monitoring Internet Freedoms in Africa

FINAL EVALUATION OF TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL REPORTS

To

AFRINIC Ltd.

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By

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION

FIRE is a Grant and Awards program designed by AFRINIC in order to support and encourage the development of solutions to information and communication needs in the Africa Region. It places particular emphasis on the role of the Internet in the social and economic development for the benefit of the African community.

Launched in May 2012, the program is partly funded by two donors: IDRC and SIDA International Development Agencies. In 2013, AFRINIC selected eleven grant recipients which received 10 000 USD each for their project.

The grantees are bound by several obligations, which are among other things:

- Implementation and use of the project funds solely to perform the objectives and activities of their project
- Use the funds in accordance with the budget set out in their application
- Submission of an Interim and a Final Report in accordance with AFRINIC's report guidelines outlined in the Memorandum of Grant Conditions.

II. PURPOSE AND EXPECTED USE

AFRINIC required this evaluation in order to confirm that the project is run in accordance with the following criteria:

- Quality and reliance of design
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency of implementation
- Impact and potential of sustainability
- Replicability

AFRINIC also requires this evaluation to be run on the basis of the Interim and Financial Reports sent by the project in accordance with their obligations.

III. OBJECTIVES

AFRINIC requires this evaluation to ensure of the following:

- The project meets identified objectives;

- Enhance the Design and the implementation of FIRE programme;

- Demonstrate and Improve the impact of the various projects on the local community;

- Develop recommendations to improve the implementation and the monitoring of future projects;

- Ensure that funds allocated to the various projects are used efficiently and within the initial identified scope.

IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This evaluation, based on interim and final report provided for the project Promoting and Monitoring Internet Freedoms in Africa highlights a lack of a well-defined strategy and methodology. Not enough information was provided regarding the process by which data are being collected measured and archived.

V. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The quality of the report does not clearly show that project team had a well-defined strategy and methodology. The evaluation committee would like to point out the lack of clear information in this final report. The report should have provided all necessary outputs on how the resources are used by the project team.

We also recommend that the project team clearly address the link between the outputs and the final objectives of the project. More attention should have been given to the report, especially to the financial report. The link between the activities and the budget should have been demonstrated.

Main objectives were globally achieved but the report does not clearly show the sustainability of the outputs.

THE EVALUATION

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. PURPOSE

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This evaluation is also required by AFRINIC in order to help the project in its implementation in accordance with the Memorandum of Grant Conditions.

1.2. AUDIENCE AND USE

The stakeholders who will make use of the evaluation reports are:

1. FIRE programme – AFRINIC

2. International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

3. Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)

4. The grantees

5. Prospective applicants to FIRE program

1.3. OBJECTIVES

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1.4. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology is linked with the objectives, the evaluation questions and the type of evaluation.

Evaluation criteria	Key Results Areas	Evaluation questions	Data sources
Design	Assess the extent to which the project responds to priority issues and identified objectives.	• Are the project objectives still valid? • Has the project team put in place the appropriate strategies? • Are there major risks that have not been taken into account?	• Design documentation. • Project objectives. • Interim and final technical reports.
Effectiveness	Assess the project major key results.	• Are the obtained results aligned with planed objectives? • Are the results in acceptable both in terms of the quantity and their quality?	• Interim and final technical reports. • Project management plan. • Result monitoring report.
Efficiency	Assess the extent to which: - Project plan has been followed; - Project reports are up to date.	• To which percentage has project plan been achieved to date? • Are expenses aligned with established budget? • Have data collected archived for future use?	• Project management plan. • Monitoring and control reports. • Financial reports. • Interim and final technical reports.

Impact	Assess to which extent the project will have a long-term positive impact on local community.	To which extent has the project's general objectives and final goals been achieved?	• Project objectives • Interim and final technical reports. • FIRE programme objectives
Sustainability	Assess to which extent the project has been socially and politically adopted by the local community.	• Will the project contribute to long-term benefits? • Would the long-term benefits be materialized by the implementation of an organization? • What are the costs implications for scaling up impact? • Are there savings that could be made without compromising delivery?	• Project benefits report. • Project cost report. • Project monitoring report.

1.5. TEAM

M. Kenneth SANVI, PMP, is a Canadian Consultant in International Development, specialized in all areas of project management. M. SANVI is a seasoned expert with many audits and evaluations projects in several countries in Africa. He is also a trainer in many areas among which, monitoring and evaluation.

Ms. Rebecca GIDEON, CISA will perform the evaluation of Information Technology aspects of the reports. Ms. Gideon is an experienced Information Technology professional with over seven years of diversified experience.

2.   THE PROJECT

2.1.   CONTEXT

Africa's Internet usage continues to grow steadily, with an estimated 140 million Internet users, or 13.5% of the population on the continent, currently using the net. Increased availability of affordable marine fibre optic bandwidth, a rise in private sector investments, the popularity of social media and innovative applications, and increased use of the mobile phone to access the Internet, are all enabling more people in Africa to get online. In turn, there are numerous purposes to which users in Africa are putting the internet - from mobile banking, to connecting with fellow citizens and with leaders, tracking corruption and poor service delivery, innovating for social good, and just about everything else.

The increasing usage of the Internet, however, has in some countries attracted the attention of authorities, who are eager to provide caveats on the openness of the net and the range of freedoms which citizens and citizens' organizations enjoy online. The popularity of social media, the Wikileaks diplomatic cables saga and the Arab Spring uprisings have led many governments including those in Africa to recognize the power of online media. In a number of countries, there have already been curbs on Internet rights, in what portends tougher times ahead for cyber security. Whereas the 2009 OpenNet Initiative studies on internet filtering in sub-Saharan Africa concluded that Ethiopia was the only country in the region that imposed nationwide politically motivated internet filtering, the continued growth of the internet has seen authorities in other countries control its use.

For instance, Tanzanian web forum Jamiiforums, which serves as citizens' channels to debate key issues such as corruption, has had its editors interrogated on numerous occasions over what government considered sensitive information. There have also been unconfirmed reports that the Tanzanian government was attempting to clone these forums to portray information that benefits it. In Uganda, the communications regulator on April 14, 2011 instructed ISPs to block access to Facebook and Twitter for 24 hours "to eliminate the connection and sharing of information that incites the public." The request came in the heat of the 'walk to work' protests over rising fuel and food prices. Earlier, on February 26, 2011, government directed telecom companies to block text messages that could instigate hatred, violence and unrest during the election period. Back in July 2010, Uganda charged an online journalist with publishing material online "with intent to defame the person of the President", and confiscated the journalist's laptop and phone. The case was still in courts of law as of July 2012.

Since the 2005 disputed elections, the Ethiopian government has frequently restricted Internet access. In June 2012, Ethiopia proposed a law, which would criminalise the use of Skype and other VoIP services like Google Talk. Using VoIP services would be punishable by up to 15 years in prison. Authorities said these measures were necessary because of "national security concerns" and the need to protect the monopoly of the sole, state-owned telecommunications/

ISP provider - Ethio Telecom – which has been accused of filtering citizens' internet access so as to suppress opposition blogs and other news outlets. Moreover, in June 2012, award-winning Ethiopian journalist and blogger Eskinder Nega was convicted of "terrorist acts", "encouragement of terrorism", and "high treason" for allegedly attempting to spark an Arab spring-style revolt in the country. Many other journalists and human rights activists have been found guilty in absentia.

According to the BBC, in June 2011 the Rwandan site Umuvugizi was blocked as its editor was sentenced in absentia to more than two years in jail for insulting president Paul Kagame in an opinion piece. And in Swaziland, SMS and the Facebook site were suspended during planned protest marches in April 2011.

Internet intermediaries have also not been spared in these government crackdowns on Internet freedoms. Sometimes they have been ordered to pull down Internet content deemed to be hostile or critical to governments, thus curbing the rights to freedom of expression and opinion on the Internet.

The project is aims at monitoring and promoting internet freedoms, primarily in six East African states - Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda.

2.2. UNDERLYNG RATIONALE

The project aims at monitoring and promoting Internet freedoms, primarily in six East African states – Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda.

The main objectives of the project are as follows:

- Examine how current cyber security policies and legislations in Africa enhance Internet Freedom and make recommendations on how they can be more supportive in promoting freedom of expression, human rights and access to information.

- Identify initiatives that are promoting open internet and using internet to promote wider freedoms

- Develop an online platform for researchers and practitioners to access reports and news on Internet rights violations in Africa.

- Promote awareness of Online freedoms in Africa

2.3. STAKEHOLDERS AND BENEFICIARIES

2.3.1. Stakeholders
a. FIRE programme – AFRINIC
b. Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)
c. The grantees
d. Prospective applicants to FIRE program
e. Project team
f. Researchers especially in ICT policy and internet freedoms in Africa
g. Governments
h. Advocacy groups
i. Academia and media
j. Population of different countries involved

The report should have detailed the main stakeholders mentioned. Even tough, a group of stakeholders seems similar, their interests and influence can be completely different.

2.3.2. Users

a. Researchers especially in ICT policy and internet freedoms in Africa
b. Governments
c. Advocacy groups
d. Academia and media

2.3.3. Beneficiaries

a. Researchers especially in ICT policy and Internet freedoms in Africa: these would have access to research materials on the status of online freedoms in a number of countries.

b. Governments: information analysing policies and how they impact on online freedoms and the reviews needed to make the policies and practices more supportive of online freedoms.

c. Advocacy groups: Information on what needs to be done by governments, ISPS and other stakeholders to uphold and promote internet rights

d. Academia and media: these would have access to research materials on the status of online freedoms in a number of countries.

2.4. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

2.4.1. Resources and activities

The resources involved in the project have experience in the ICT field to conduct this project and to deliver the outputs related to it. The project is managed by CIPESA in partnership with ISOC – Uganda, PIN, and KHRC. An IT technical support personnel has also been contracted to administer the website as well as manage the social media platforms but the report does not point out how this personnel will be paid after the project.

Project team has managed to conduct a number of activities and among them include:

- Desk research on how current cyber security policies and legislations in Africa enhance Internet Freedom and make recommendations on how they can be more supportive in promoting freedom of expression, human rights and access to information.
- Data collection and analysis, regional legal frameworks/policy analysis, chart initiatives, proposed/changes in laws, literature reviews.
- Writing and publishing briefing papers.
- Design and implementation of web portal.
- Website maintenance.
- Dissemination workshop - comments and feedback on project work.
- Documentation, Dissemination and Publicity.

Based on the final report, all the activities planned have been well executed and completed.

2.4.2. Expected results

Expected and obtained results are listed below:

- 5 Drafts country reports detailing state of Internet, legal and regulatory frameworks supporting or curtailing Internet freedoms and Internet freedom violation incidents: in-country researchers were sought by CIPESA to assist in undertaking country assessments.

- Incident reports, briefing papers, regional Internet freedom, and analysis reports: CIPESA team mapped and wrote briefing media and policy papers, and documented incident reports on Internet freedom violations in Africa.

- Developed the opennetafrica.org portal. The website was launched on November 21st, 2013.

- Maintenance reports and reviews: a web developer has been contracted to develop the website and to ensure the maintenance.

- Launch of web portal and awareness creation workshop: CIPESA partnered with Unwanted Witness in Uganda and ISOC – Uganda to launch the portal.

- Twitter post @opennetafrica, Facebook posts, Presentations @ ICT forums, Blog posts, news articles – these can be accessed on the CIPESA website http://www.cipesa.org/tag/opennet-africa/ : All incidents reports and key project findings are being shared on the created social media platforms.

2.5. RESULT CHAIN AND LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The project team has sought partnerships with Paradigm Initiative Nigeria (PIN, www.pinigeria.org), Kenya Human Rights Commission and Kenya ICT Action Network under which they held online Internet freedom forum in November 2013. The purpose of this forum is to discuss key online safety matters in Africa. The forum aims to attract discussions from key ICT experts both within Africa and outside Africa. The outcomes of the discussions fed into a report that has been presented at the first ever African Internet Freedom Forum held in the early 2014. This forum brought together ICT thought leaders, government officials, media and human rights activists from six African countries was held in Kampala, Uganda.

In reaching out to the Project beneficiaries – human rights activists, bloggers and citizen journalists, the project team organized capacity building events which are aimed at empowering them to stay safe online in the line of their work. In the course of their interaction with these groups of people they encourage responsible reporting in line with limitations from the laws. The beneficiaries actively participate in identifying the agenda for the awareness raising/ training events.

In Uganda, a partnership was done with the Internet Society, where a forum to create awareness for Internet freedoms was held.

Also in order to gather evidence on state surveillance and censorship, technical audit tests on over 1400 websites for evidence of website blocking in Ethiopia and Uganda between July and December 2013.

2.6. PROJECT MONITORING SYSTEM

Based on the report, the website created was the only tool used to perform the monitoring activities. Though many information may have been stored on the website, we do not have access to supporting evidences. It is to be noted that the lack of a monitoring and reporting system was pointed out in the interim report.

2.7. EVALUATION FINDINGS

2.7.1. DESIGN

➢ Valid objectives

Project objectives remain valid throughout the implementation of the project. The problem identified is common to many countries in this area of African continent and has not been solved yet. Even if the expected results have been completed, based on the report, the objectives remain valid after the completion of the project.

➢ Appropriate strategies

As pointed out in the interim report, the strategy used by the project team is still yet to be clearly identified. The link between the activities and the objectives should have better been shown in the final report.

➢ Major risks not accounted for

Though this report fails to point out risks encountered during the execution of the project it definitely appears that there is an institutional risk associated. In effect, a potential risk that stands out is related to the political aspect of the problem tackled by the project. Another possible risk that could be mention is the impact of the absence of data protection and privacy laws in the named countries. Thus, governments and other third party entities can easily misuse and/or manipulate user data.

2.7.2. EFFECTIVENESS

➢ Results aligned with planed objectives

Based on the report, the results are clearly aligned with the plan.

➢ Results acceptability

The report does not highlight the approach used to ensure quantity and quality of dataset to use for measurement.

2.7.3. EFFICIENCY OF PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

➢ Percentage of achieved project plan

Based on the final report, we could conclude that most aspects of the project plan are completed. All the activities mentioned have been achieved accordingly with the plan.

> ➢ Expenses aligned with budget

The total amount of expenses for the whole project seems to be aligned with the budget. Nevertheless, there seems to be an inconsistency on research expenses. In fact, according to the quantity and the unit cost, the total should be 520 000 UGX instead of 2 080 000 UGX. But according to the project team explanation, the researchers worked for four (4) months each. This should be reflected in the presentation of the financial report in order to allow people to understand without referring to the project team.

> ➢ Archive of collected data

Report did not provide us enough elements to insure that collected data is being archived. Despite the fact that a website was implemented and information published on, there is no information on how data collected from the project is archived. This failure was highlighted at the interim evaluation but the recommendations seem to have not been taken into account.

2.7.4. IMPACT

> ➢ General objectives and final goals achieved

We would like to point out that results alone are not sufficient to evaluate the impact of a project. However, it should be noted that the project objectives could be formulated as a first step in achieving overall objectives.

The project team believes that, the implementation of the project has been able to increase awareness on Internet rights and the right to protect them in Africa, while improving access to information on policies and internet rights violation for different stakeholders.
The impact has also been felt in the number of mentions in media and third party posting of content produced by the project.

> ➢ Long-term benefits contribution

This project could contribute to long-term profits provided it is integrated into a much broader plan. The project team has pointed out the fact that it is important to have a centralized platform that provides access to information for researchers and practitioners to access reports and news on Internet rights violations in Africa. Thus, the project could in a collective effort help to improve the sensibility of the different stakeholders.

There is also a need to continue creating awareness about Internet freedoms, review new policy developments and documenting and publishing violation incidents.

2.8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The quality of the report does not clearly show that project team had a well-defined strategy and methodology. The evaluation committee would like to point out the lack of clear information in this final report. The report should have provided all necessary outputs on how the resources are used by the project team.

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