

Terms Of Reference (TOR) For A Consultancy To Develop A Research Product On The State Of EMIS Infrastructure Across The KIX Africa 19 Countries

Project	Research product on the state of EMIS infrastructure across the KIX Africa 19 countries, referenced to the African Union Education Management Information Systems -EMIS Norms and Standards
Type of contract	Individual or institutional consultancy (international or regional)
Duration	Two months from contract signature (up to 40 working days)
Duty station	Home-based, with remote engagement across the 19 countries
Reporting to	Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative-GESCI
Languages	English (UK), working knowledge of Portuguese as an asset

1. Background and Context

The Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Information Exchange (GPE-KIX) Africa 19 Hub brings together 19 member states, comprising 18 Anglophone African countries and 1 Luxophone country: Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Hub is facilitated by the African Union's Pan African Institute for Education Development (AU IPED) and supported through the GPE-KIX programme partners UNICEF and UNESCO IICBA, to strengthen national systems for innovative data usage and management.

Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) are central to evidence-based planning and to reporting against SDG 4 and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA). Member states continue to face persistent data challenges, including incomplete coverage, fragmentation across ministries, and delays in reporting to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). A recurring constraint underlying these challenges is the state of the technological infrastructure on which EMIS depends.

To address quality systematically, the African Union developed an EMIS Norms and Standards Assessment Framework, updated in 2021 for the KIX Data Challenge. The Framework sets out 15 minimum Norms across four focus areas: Policy and Legal Framework; Resource Availability and Utilisation; Statistical Process; and Education Information Reporting. Implementation of each standard is rated on a four-point maturity scale, where Level 4 represents the ideal Quality Statistics standard. Infrastructure sits primarily within the second focus area, and specifically within Norm 6 on Adequate Resources, which covers the human, financial and technological resources required for a well-functioning EMIS. The Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative-GESCI, having

supported continental Education Technology interventions has been commissioned to support AU -IPED in strengthening data systems in the KIX 19 countries.

2. Rationale

While several countries have undertaken Norms and Standards self-assessments, there is no consolidated, comparable evidence base on the state of EMIS infrastructure across the Hub. Investment decisions in hardware, hosting, connectivity, power and security are therefore made without a shared picture of where the binding constraints lie. This assignment will generate that evidence base, benchmark countries against the Framework, and identify priorities for targeted investment and regional collaboration.

3. Objectives

Overall objective: To produce a research product that maps, benchmarks and analyses the state of EMIS infrastructure across the KIX Africa 19 countries, referenced to the AU EMIS Norms and Standards, and that sets out actionable priorities for strengthening that infrastructure.

Specific objectives

1. Assess the current state of EMIS infrastructure in each of the 19 countries across software and platform, hosting and servers, data centre conditions, connectivity, internal networks, power, equipment across administrative tiers, cybersecurity, and system integration.
2. Benchmark each country against the relevant Norms and Standards, using the Framework's four-point maturity scale, and derive a comparable infrastructure readiness score.
3. Identify common constraints, disparities and good practices across the Hub, including differences between central units and sub-national tiers.
4. Recommend prioritised, costed investment areas and opportunities for regional collaboration, aligned to SDG 4, CESA and the EMIS Norms and Standards.

4. Scope of Work

Geographic scope: All 19 KIX Africa 19 member states listed in Section 1.

Thematic scope. Technical infrastructure only. The study will not assess policy content, staffing, statistical methodology or reporting quality except where these bear directly on infrastructure. The infrastructure domains are:

- Software and platform: the EMIS application, its currency, maintenance and licensing.
- Hosting, servers and data centre: hosting environment, hardware adequacy, physical environment, redundancy and uptime, backup and disaster recovery.
- Connectivity, network and power: connectivity at central and sub-national levels, internal networks, and power supply with backup.
- Equipment across tiers: computing and ICT equipment at central, regional, district and school levels.

- Security and integration: cybersecurity infrastructure and interoperability with other systems such as examinations, teacher management, finance and civil registration.

Each domain maps to the technological-resource dimension of Norm 6, with cross-references to Norm 5 (registration), Norm 11 (accuracy and reliability) and Norm 13 (coherence, consistency, comparability and integration) where relevant.

5. Methodology

The consultant should propose a robust methodology in the inception phase.

This should include:

- Inception and instrument refinement: refine the analytical framework and finalise the data collection instruments, building on the infrastructure assessment questionnaire provided by the Hub.
- Desk review: review existing Norms and Standards self-assessments, national EMIS policies and strategic plans, sector analyses, and prior KIX and AU IPED outputs.
- Primary data collection: administer a structured infrastructure survey to the EMIS focal point in each country, complemented by key informant interviews to validate and deepen responses.
- Scoring and benchmarking: apply the four-point maturity scale, compute a per-country infrastructure readiness score, and benchmark against the thresholds of the Framework (above 3.3 strong, 2.6 to 3.3 acceptable, below 2.6 weak).
- Analysis: identify patterns, disparities between central and sub-national tiers, and good practices, and triangulate survey data against desk sources.
- Validation: present preliminary findings to the Hub and focal points for validation before finalising the product.

6. Deliverables

#	Deliverable	Indicative timing	Format
1	Inception report: approach, analytical framework, refined data collection instruments, and work plan	Week 1	Report
2	Desk review summary and finalised survey and interview instruments	Week 2	Report and tools
3	Country dataset and infrastructure scorecards for all 19 countries, with readiness scores	Week 5	Dataset and scorecards
4	Draft research report with cross-country analysis and recommendations	Week 6	Report
5	Validation session and presentation of preliminary findings	Week 7	Slides and session
6	Final research product and a short policy brief for decision-makers	Week 8	Report and brief

All written deliverables shall be in English (UK), submitted in editable format, and shall become the property of the commissioning institution.

7. Duration and Level of Effort

The assignment, covering research through validation, will run for two months from the date of contract signature, for an estimated level of effort of up to 40 working days. The consultant is expected to manage the schedule to meet the milestones in Section 6.

8. Reporting and Coordination

The consultant will report to Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative-GESCI. A focal point will be designated to facilitate access to country teams, existing assessments and relevant documentation and to coordinate the validation session.

9. Required Qualifications and Experience

- Advanced degree in education planning, information systems, ICT, statistics, or a related field.
- At least eight years of experience in EMIS, education data systems, or ICT infrastructure in developing-country contexts.
- Demonstrated experience assessing ICT or data infrastructure, ideally across multiple countries.
- Working knowledge of the AU EMIS Norms and Standards, SDG 4, CESA, and UIS reporting.
- Experience working with African ministries of education or regional bodies.
- Strong analytical and report-writing skills in English, and the ability to design and administer digital surveys.
- Working knowledge of Portuguese is an asset, given the inclusion of Mozambique.

10. Application Process

Interested candidates should submit the following to procurement@gesci.org by **7th July 2026**

- A technical proposal (maximum eight pages) setting out an understanding of the assignment, proposed methodology and work plan.
- A financial proposal in USD, with a breakdown of fees and any reimbursable costs.
- A curriculum vitae, or company profile and team CVs for institutional applicants.
- Two samples of comparable work and two professional references.

11. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be assessed on a combined technical and financial basis, weighted 80 percent technical and 20 percent financial. The technical score will be allocated as follows:

Technical criterion	Points
Relevant expertise in EMIS and education data systems	30
Experience assessing ICT or data infrastructure	20
Proposed methodology and work plan	25
Understanding of the AU EMIS Norms and Standards, SDG 4 and CESA	15
Regional experience in Africa, and language	10
Total	100

12. Payment Schedule

The full consultancy fee will be paid as a single payment of 100% upon satisfactory completion and approval of the final research product and policy brief.

13. Confidentiality and Intellectual Property

All data, instruments, drafts and outputs produced under this assignment are confidential and remain the intellectual property of the commissioning institution. The consultant shall not publish or share any material arising from the assignment without prior written consent.

Annex A: Indicative Infrastructure Assessment Domains

The following domains, drawn from the Hub's infrastructure assessment instrument, indicate the expected coverage of primary data collection. Each is rated on the four-point maturity scale.

- Platform, software currency, delivery channels, and licensing.
- Hosting environment, server and database hardware, data centre physical environment, redundancy and uptime.
- Backup and disaster recovery.
- Connectivity at central and sub-national levels, internal network, and power supply with backup.
- Computing and ICT equipment at central, regional, district and school levels.
- Cybersecurity infrastructure and system integration with examinations, teacher management, finance and civil registration systems.