Terms of Reference

Survey on demand for Government Information Center (GIC-1919) services and assessing the sustainability of its services

1. Introduction

Many organizations worldwide provide customer service and support via call centres. Banking, insurance, travel, in addition to utility service providers such gas, water, and electricity providers are nowadays increasingly using call center services. In this context, these call centres are virtual organizations that could be located anywhere in the world, and therefore, have no geographical boundaries.

As call centres have the potential to facilitate better service provision, government departments and enterprises are increasingly becoming interested in using call centres as an e-governance tool. This is due to the common belief that obtaining accurate and relevant information related to the citizen services provided by various government organizations is a difficult and unpleasant task. Open and flexible operations, call centres could enable government organizations to deliver better information and services to citizens as well as engage them in policy making and implementation dialogues.

Following the global trend, the Government of Sri Lanka initiated the Government Information Centre (GIC-1919) in August 2006 under the aegis of the Presidential Secretariat and the Information and Communication Technology of Sri Lanka (ICTA) as the first one–stop government call centre of the country with the aim of providing citizens with information and services of the government in an efficient, effective and friendly manner. The GIC-1919 was launched as a public-private partnership and it is a single, electronic, trilingual, online knowledgebase of over 3,000 services available from more than 300 key government organizations. Currently, the call center operated by Sri Lanka Telecom receives over 5,500 calls daily on average and is operational throughout the week, 14 hours a day.

Key matters related to the operations of the GIC call center and associated services are resolved through a Steering Committee chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of telecommunication and Digital Infrastructure (MTDI), with members of government organizations of which information related to their services are at very high public demand.

Considering the popularity of this information service, it was recognized as one of the key ICT initiative of the National Action Plan of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) – an international collaboration to promote openness of the government - in which Sri Lanka is actively engaged in through multiple sectors.

As the GIC completes a decade of operation, ICTA and its present line Ministry- Ministry of Telecommunication and Digital Infrastructure (MTDI) aim to assess the overall performance of the service with an intention of identifying its present status, identify opportunities for further improvement, and drafting a roadmap for its sustainability. For this purpose, ICTA aims to obtain the services of a reputed consultancy firm for a period of 14 weeks to conduct the assignment.

2. Objectives and research questions of the study

2.1. Primary objectives

Primary objectives of this assignment are to:

i. Carry out a comprehensive investigation of the present status of the GIC-1919,
ii. Assess the possibilities for further expansions of the service, and
iii. Formulation of a strategy/draft a roadmap for continuous sustainability of the service.

2.2. High level objectives

High level objectives of the study are to,

i. Assess overall usage of the service by citizens,
ii. Assess overall quality of the service provided,
iii. Assess overall readiness of the service provider to deliver citizens friendly service,
iv. Assess commitment and attitudes of public sector leaders towards continuous support for this service,
v. Assess the possibilities of expansion of the project in the future,
vi. Assess the monitoring and quality control process, and
vii. Assess the sustainability of GIC as a project under the long run.

Some of the key questions to be addressed are as follows:

i. What is the overall usage of service?
ii. What is the overall quality of the service provided?
iii. What is the overall readiness of the service provider to deliver citizen friendly service?
iv. What is the commitment and attitudes of public officials towards continuous support for the service?
v. What is the appropriate coordination mechanism among MTDI, ICTA, GIC, and respective government organizations in terms of updating the knowledgebase, responding to queries, and handling complaints?
vi. How can the service be further improved for better information and service delivery to citizens?
vii. What are the best practices and strategies that can be adopted to ensure the sustainability of the service?

3. Tasks to be carried out

The following four (04) key tasks should be carried out:

Task 1: Study methodology, sample frame and research instruments
Task 2: Pre testing and implementation
Task 3: Data entry, processing, analysis and reporting
Task 4: Formulate a strategy/roadmap

Details of each task are given below.

3.1. Task 1: Study methodology, sample frame and research instruments

i. Meet with representatives of MTDI, ICTA and other key stakeholders for gathering requirements of the study, propose a suitable research methodology for the study, identify and propose suitable variables to be used to achieve the objectives of the study, define a study instrument, and define time schedule for the project.
ii. Preferred study methodology shall be mixed methods of evaluation and the consultants are expected to discuss and justify the methods that they propose in their bid.
iii. Answer all research questions in order to achieve objectives of the study
iv. The evaluation instruments (survey/interview questionnaires, guidelines) should be able to capture information, to the extent possible, as indicated in the Aims and Objectives Section of the ToR.
v. Evaluation instruments should also be able to capture necessary information through site surveys, interviews, and observations, discussions with the citizens and other stakeholders, potential beneficiaries etc.
vi. Consultant is required to define a list of variables against which data will be collected, show the connection with the study objectives and how the results will be analysed. Data analysis could include various quantitative data results (descriptive statistics, tests of means, cross-correlations) and qualitative data analysis techniques such as thematic analysis, content analysis and so forth.
vii. Development of relevant training materials and written instructions for all persons involved in fieldwork.
viii. The consultant should be responsible to implement all possible quality control measures in the research to ensure the quality, reliability and validity of data collected and analyzed.
ix. Provide, in English, a detailed study implementation plan outlining all the steps involved in the design and implementation of the study, including a project time schedule and resource plan, data collection instruments (in all three languages), and outlines of the instruction manuals to be developed. Submit the plan in electronic form and as a hard copy to MTDI.

3.2. Task 2: Pre testing and implementation

i. Develop data collection instruments, including support documentation, instruction manuals for interviewers/surveys/observations, instructions for data entry, and a manual of operations and field procedures. Provide all instruments and documentation to MTDI in electronic form and as hard copies.

ii. Train enumerators/interviewers, supervisors of interviewers, supervisors of teams, and data entry personnel. The consultant is expected to discuss appropriate approaches for conducting results oriented training.

iii. Pre-test the survey/interview questionnaire and re-estimate the sample size. After the pre-test, if necessary, revise the questionnaire and documentation, and translate the questionnaire into Sinhala and Tamil. If necessary, adopt the sample size to ensure that final results will be of statistical validity and representative. A test of data entry (data entry program and procedures) must also be included in the testing procedures. Provide MTDI with a summary of test results and relevant comments and suggestions.

iv. Prepare a basic description of the survey/interviews. This should include the confirmed sample frame and sample size, methodology, data collection plan, and a description of the fieldwork techniques to be used. Developed questionnaires (in all three languages) and related documentation should be included as appendixes. Provide electronic versions and hard copies of each document to MTDI.

v. After approval by MTDI, conduct field operations and collect data in accordance with the plans and proposals developed earlier.

3.3. Task 3: Data entry, processing, analysis and reporting

i. Enter collected data via database software. The software must be able to verify ranges and consistency of the data and generate reports indicating missing data, data outside of the accepted ranges, and inconsistent answers. Clean data records and verify that the sample is still sufficient for reliable statistics. Provide a brief data entry report to MTDI in electronic form and as hard copy. Together with the report, deliver the database in MS Excel format containing all entered data records.

ii. Conduct data analysis. The Consultant will conduct quantitative (e.g. frequencies, percentage tabulations, and cross tabulations) and qualitative data analyses (content analysis, thematic analysis). Where necessary, statistical significance levels are to be calculated to enable proper interpretation of results.

iii. Final study findings shall be in English. The report must contain descriptive statistics of all variables of the survey, cross tables, and graphs, as well as qualitative interpretations and presentations. Selected variables should be presented by graphs and/or correlation measures, on thematic maps. A critical review of the methodology, realisation, and results should be given, together with recommendations for improvement. The report must be submitted in electronic form and as a hardcopy.

iv. Conduct a presentation workshop at MTDI to present and discuss Final Report findings to the GIC Steering Committee, when specified by MTDI.

3.4. Task 4: Formulate a strategy/roadmap

i. Based on the findings of the evaluation, develop a roadmap highlighting the way forward of GIC-1919.

4. Qualification of consultants and organization

4.1. Key staff

i. The key functional areas to be carried out by staff includes but not limited to:

   (1) design evaluation research with the use of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods evaluation approaches,
   (2) identify relevant variables that can be used to design the evaluation instrument,
   (3) design evaluation instruments,
   (4) conduct field operations,
   (5) analyse collected data from qualitative, quantitative and mixed method research, and
   (6) effective interpretation of data and writing reports.

ii. Consultant is free to propose the number and structure of experts appropriate to his implementation approach, provided that the team properly covers the above mentioned functions.

iii. Adequate number of experts, who can, within the limited timeframe, facilitate and conduct the evaluation as well as analyze and report on research data, must be proposed by the Consultant.

iv. Personnel proposed to cover the key functions (Key Experts) must be included in the proposal with their full CVs in accordance with the format provided.

v. Positions to cover other project functions must also be presented in the bid, including the number of staff, their input in terms of staff days, and their work schedule. Particular persons must not be nominated and their CVs not included in the proposal but in the case of survey supervisors and enumerators, they must fulfil the basic qualifications and experience and it should be confirmed in the proposal. A description of an appropriate team structure, team collaboration arrangements and project management functions must be included in the proposal.

vi. The suggested minimum number of staff for this assignment is presented in the table below.

Key Staff	Minimum Academic Qualification	Minimum Experience	Minimum Number of Similar Assignments Conducted
1. Team Leader	Bachelor's Degree or higher degree qualifications from a recognized university	i. Demonstrated experience of at least 5 years in designing impact/outcome evaluation study. ii. Ability to develop monitoring and evaluation tools, analyze and interpret quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods data. iii. Demonstrated experience in formulating strategies/policies. iv. Ability to write similar evaluation reports v. Knowledge of best practices in evaluation study/outcome/impacts evaluation activities vi. Excellent oral and written language skills (Sinhala /Tamil and English)	5 Similar assignments specially in the areas of ICT for development/and e-government
2. Strategist	Master Degree/ Postgraduate Diploma or higher qualifications from a recognized university	i. Minimum 5 years of demonstrated experience as a strategist ii. Ability to formulate sstrategies/policies iii. Extensive experience in qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research designing and implementation iv. Demonstrated experience in designing research, developing surveys and qualitative questionnaires, collecting data through surveys and interviews/focus groups, analyzing data, interpreting data. v. Excellent report writing skills	5 Similar assignments
3. Statistician and Qualitative data analyzer (Mixed methods data analyzer)	Higher Degree preferably a Masters Degree on statistics/qualitative data from a recognized university	– Minimum 5 years demonstrated experience in handling statistical analysis/qualitative data analysis and implementing national level research/project evaluations (Preferably for the public sector)	5 Similar assignments

4.2. Other staff

Enumerators	Bachelor's Degree or higher Degree qualifications from a recognized university	– Demonstrated experience in conducting face-to-face interviews and surveys (five surveys) – Excellent language skills in Sinhala and Tamil to manage the Tamil and Sinhala speaking respondents effectively	Participated in at least 5 similar assignments

5. Nature of the organization

The organisation should be specialized and have relevant experience in designing and implementing similar projects. The organisation should be able to provide a strong enumerator network to facilitate information gathering.

6. Client's inputs

i. The Client will provide a list of organisations covered by GIC-1919.
ii. The Client will introduce the selected consultant to the current GIC Call Centre Operator (SLT).
iii. The Client will provide background information of other projects of MTDI and ICTA relevant for the implementation of the study.
iv. The Client will provide venue facilities to hold workshops to present key findings of the survey.
v.

7. Procedures for review of outputs

i. A review committee will be appointed by MTDI to review the deliverables periodically.
ii. Review and comment on the draft report (By the client): Due within one week from the date of final presentation.
iii. Incorporate comments and submit final audit report (By the consultant): Due within one (01) week from the date of submission of comments.

8. Outputs, deliverables and payment schedule

i. All reports and deliverables are to be prepared in English and submitted to MTDI in electronic form (DOC and PDF formats) and one (01) hard copy.
ii. Evaluation tools/survey questionnaires/interview questionnaires are to be prepared in English and then translated into Sinhala and Tamil.
iii. Upon completion of the study, MTDI and ICTA will own all evaluation tools, reports, and all related data/information in respect of this assignment. Additionally, MTDI and ICTA will also have the right to reproduce and circulate the evaluation tools and report at its discretion.
iv. The duration for this project has been set for a total of 14 weeks. The following preliminary work schedule is suggested as follows.

Phase/ Reports	Task(s)	Deliverable(s)	Deadline	Payment Schedule
Phase 1: Inception Report	(i) Finalize work plan (ii) Evaluation/Study sites schedule (iii) Study framework including variables (iv) Questionnaire (survey and interview) (v) Survey questionnaires in all three languages, Enumerator training	(i) Report on the research approach including study framework and variables (ii) Sampling frame and the survey sample (iii) Evaluation Tools/Survey and Interview questionnaires (iv) Detailed work plan (v) Report on field staff training	Contract date + Week 3	10%
Phase 2: Interim Report I	Completion of 50 % of the sample	Monitoring Report 1 (Details of study implementation, monitoring and quality assurance activities conducted) including individual site evaluation reports	Contract date + Week 4	10%
Phase 3: Interim Report II	Completion of 100 % of the sample	Monitoring Report 2 (Details of survey implementation, monitoring and quality assurance activities conducted) including site evaluation studies	Contract date + Week 7	20%
Phase 4: Draft Report Evaluation Report	(i) Completion of Study (ii) Completion of data entering and cleaning (iii) Completing data analysis (iv) Presentation of draft study report	(i) Draft Study Report (ii) Presentations of draft report content	Contract date + Week 10	10%
Phase 5: Draft strategy report	Based on the evaluation result, draft strategy for GIC-1919	(i) Draft Strategy Report (ii) Presentation of draft report content	Contract date + Week 11	10%

Phase 6: Evaluation Final Report	(i) incorporating comments on the draft report (ii) Submission of final report	(i) Final findings in a report format (ii) Presentation of the findings (iii) Completed questionnaires (iv) Completed database	Contract date + Week 12	20%
Phase 7: Final Strategy Report	(i) Review the findings of the final evaluation report, and draft strategy report (ii) Submission of final report	(i) Strategy for GIC-1919 (ii) Presentation of findings	Contract date + Week 14	20%