



Twinning Fiche

Project title: Strengthening the Delivery of Early Childhood Education and Community Support for learning in Rwanda

Beneficiary administration: Ministry of Education, Republic of Rwanda

Twinning Reference: RW 22 NDICI SO 01 25

Publication notice reference: PROSPECT 183660

EU funded project

⁴² In case of different language versions of the Twinning Fiche it must be clearly indicated which language version prevails.

1. Basic Information

1.1 Programme: NDICI-AFRICA/2022/61240, direct management, ex-ante control

1.2 Twinning Sector: Education

1.3 EU funded budget: EUR 2 Million

1.4 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): This project will address SDG no. 4 - Inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, and in particular, SDG 4.2: Ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

2. Objectives

2.1 Overall Objective(s):

The overall objective is to enhance learning outcomes at the foundational level through improved access to quality early childhood education services and enhanced parental and community support for early learning.

2.2 Specific objective:

The specific objective is to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education to deliver priority reforms and achieve the national targets for Early Childhood Education and Community Support for learning.

Ultimately, this will enhance the quality and availability of Early Childhood Education programmes in Rwanda and enhance children's readiness to participate in primary education at the correct age. This is expected to reduce repetition and dropout rates during the lower primary education years and effectively enable foundational learning to take place.

2.3 The elements targeted in strategic documents i.e. National Development Plan/Cooperation agreement/Association Agreement/Sector reform strategy and related Action Plans

Rwanda's Vision 2050, a strategic national guiding template for social and economic development, envisages "Universal access to high quality education" and that a "reformed education sector will lay the foundation for Rwanda to join the most advanced economies in 2050 with a market-driven education system". Sector strategic plans are also guided by the five year National Strategy for Transformation (NST), the development plans which support implementation of the Vision 2050 and which provide overarching direction for sector development, including education. NST 2, which includes the priority of 'improving the Quality of Education' is currently being finalised and will be published shortly.

The Education sector is regulated by the Education Policy (2003), which states that "the fundamental value of education lies in peoples' capacity to reach their full potential in order to play a leading role in social economic transformation of their societies, countries, and the world at large". The Ministry of Education has developed a new Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP - 2024-2028), currently in draft form and which will be approved shortly. The project will contribute to the achievement of the ESSP, which serves as the comprehensive foundation to the development and provision of education services in Rwanda for the period of 2024-2029, and to the second generation of the National Strategy for Transformation.

The push for universal pre-primary access in Rwanda is recent, with the "Early Childhood

Development Policy” approved in 2016. The Early Childhood Development Policy and the National Early Childhood Development Program (NECDP) Strategic Plan 2018-2024 highlight the importance of early investments in pre-primary education. The government also approved the "Pre-primary Expansion Guidelines" in August 2022, developed with extensive input from international partners, outlining strategic areas to support greater access to pre-primary education.

The first priority of the new ESSP is to “improve inclusive access to basic education with priority on formal pre-primary, lower primary and secondary levels”; and the second priority is to “enhance learning outcomes and efficiency at all levels of education with special focus on early grades”. One fundamental strategic goal of the new ESSP is to attain improved equitable access to and participation in quality pre-primary education in an accommodative teaching and learning environment. This recognizes that the pre-primary level is hugely lagging in Rwanda with enrollment being the major challenge, in addition to aligning ECD and pre -primary provision. The new ESSP demonstrates a shift in focus for pre-primary education, with a priority now given to ensuring all 5 year old children access structured early learning as well as improving the quality of ECD educational offerings for all children. It also prioritizes the mobilization of parents on the importance of early learning, and the conduct of targeted enrollment campaigns to ensure all 5 year olds are enrolled in formal pre-primary.

The Ministry of Education in Rwanda has also developed a Foundational Learning Strategy (FLS, 2024/25 to 2028/29), aligned to the ESSP, which focuses on a unique window of opportunity in the schooling of young children. The Strategy was developed in close collaboration with the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) and the National Examination and School Inspection Authority (NESA), other relevant Government of Rwanda stakeholders and Education Development Partners engaged in supporting Foundational Learning. In this way, the Strategy represents a collective vision for improving foundational learning and a shared commitment from Government and Development Partners to implement the identified initiatives and achieve the desired results.

Covering pre-primary to lower primary levels, its goal is to equip all children with basic literacy and numeracy, and to instill in them a love for learning from an early age when their brains are changing and developing rapidly. Success in this endeavor opens the gateway for children to continue learning in subsequent grades, and even in adulthood.

In July 2024, the Ministry of Education operationalized a Delivery Unit (DU) to oversee the implementation of the Foundational Learning Strategy. Working closely with the Ministry of Education, the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) – mandated to prepare and distribute curricula, teaching materials, teacher's guide, methodologies and establish teaching methods, NESA, and other education authorities, the Delivery Unit will ensure implementation of the National Foundational Learning Strategy and fast-track any pending actions. It will monitor and assess progress in implementing the foundational learning strategy and achieving the desired results while identifying challenges in implementing the strategy and proposing solutions and actions to overcome those challenges. The Delivery Unit will also identify capacity gaps within the Ministry of Education and design and oversee initiatives to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry to deliver and sustain results for foundational learning.

The delivery unit will consist of education, data and delivery experts, who will be recruited outside of the Ministry’s structure. These experts will be directly attached to counterparts within the Ministry but also in the implementing agency to ensure they are equipped to drive delivery of the identified priority actions.

This Twinning project will be based within the Delivery Unit within the Ministry of Education and will focus on improving the quality of early childhood education and parental and community support for early learning as mandated by the ESSP and the Foundational Learning Strategy.

3. Description

3.1 Background and justification:

Education is what will forge the Rwanda of tomorrow. Enrollment in primary education is nearly universal, but challenges related to retention and learning outcomes remain. More needs to be done to ensure enough young Rwandans have a solid foundation on which to acquire the competencies and attitudes for good jobs and careers in tomorrow's knowledge-based economy. A sharp reduction in learning poverty is crucial for the success of Rwanda Vision 2050, the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1), which envisions the country as a top-tier economy in Africa by 2030 and a globally competitive upper middle income one by 2050.

In Rwanda, children between the age of 3-5 predominantly attend the following early childhood education and development services:

- Home-based ECD: Informal centers in designated homes for children aged 0-3 (and sometimes 3-5 if no nearby center-based ECD is available).
- Centre-based ECD: Formal centers for children aged 3-5, focusing on sensory-motor, social-emotional, and cognitive-language development, as well as school readiness training.
- Community-based ECD: Improvised centers set up by community members using temporary structures for young children's development.
- Pre-primary Education (school-based ECD): Organized instruction designed to introduce children aged 3-5 to the pre-primary curriculum and to promote school readiness.

ECD is managed and coordinated by two primary ministries in Rwanda:

- The National Child Development Agency (NCDA), established in 2020 under the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), holds the responsibility for policy and coordination of early childhood development
- The Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) oversees the implementation of school-based ECD services.

Several key challenges have been identified by the government and development partners:

- Access to Pre-primary Education: Increasing the enrolment rate to 45% by 2024 has faced challenges due to a lack of teachers and classrooms. The school feeding policy revision aims to support greater access.
- Quality of Pre-primary Education: Teachers require further training, and there is a need for more play materials and widespread adoption of the learning through play approach.
- Good Governance: Improved coordination among ministries and agencies is needed along with better planning, strategy, and budget alignment to enhance the sector's effectiveness.

Early Childhood Education for children aged 3-5 as well as parental and community support for learning are both priorities within the recently developed Draft Education Sector Strategic Plan (2024-2029) and the Foundational Learning Strategy (2024-2029) in Rwanda. The Ministry of Education is leading on the implementation of these strategies and plans, which include improving the quality of Early Childhood Education services, enhancing school readiness of learners, the transition to primary school, as well as drawing upon parental and community assets and efforts to contribute towards

improving foundational learning, with a focus on literacy and numeracy.

A Foundational Learning Delivery Unit has been established within the Ministry of Education, to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education and help drive forward the full range of strategies to improve foundational learning at both pre-primary and lower-primary education.

The Draft ESSP also notes that over 40% of parents view early learning as a choice rather than a necessity, largely due to the historical lack of emphasis on early education in the education system. As a result, only 39% of children aged 3-5 have access to formal pre-primary education, falling short of the NST1 target of 45%. Furthermore, data is not broken down to show the specific percentage of 5-year-old children enrolled. Despite recent notable progress in school construction that resulted in the classroom to pupil ratio decreasing from 80 in 2017 to 57 in 2023, there are still many overcrowded classrooms, especially in pre-primary and lower primary levels.

There are three types of teacher categories: certified (by a Teacher Training College or in-service training), qualified (which have a secondary school certificate), and not-qualified (which hold neither of the previous two). Since expanding access to pre-primary, the government has also made great efforts to train more teachers (mostly in-service). While the pre-primary curriculum includes the learning through play approach, its implementation is still challenged by several factors related to teacher capacity and availability of teaching and learning materials. Many pre-primary classrooms are set up as primary grade classrooms, with chairs and desks. For those that have already established pre-primary classrooms that follow a learning through play approach, there is also a need to support the transition to primary education effectively.

The Foundational Learning Strategy identifies community-based initiatives, such as community-based ECD centres and community libraries as important centres for learning and development of young children. The Kigali Public library has a mandate to support community-reading initiatives, including community libraries, through training of librarians and provision of reading and other materials.

The sector coordination is spread across different agencies and ministries, several of which are newly established, creating challenges in coordination and implementation. Education inspectors (sector level) are under the authority of the National Examination and School Inspection Authority (NESAI), while District Education Officers are under the Ministry for Local Government (MINALOC). Cohesion between central and district-level planning and monitoring is crucial for the overall efficiency of the system and the implementation of the ESSP.

3.2 Ongoing reforms:

Over the past years, tremendous efforts have been put in place to increase enrolment figures at pre-primary education level. Pre-primary Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) increased from 33.2% in 2022 to 53.1% in 2023, while the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) increased from 24.2% in 2022 to 39% in 2023. This is a significant increase in only one year, but still below the ESSP targets (57% for GER and 45% for NER). Low levels of enrolment and exposure to early childhood education opportunities translate into large numbers of children starting primary school late and with inadequate school readiness, which contributes to relatively high rates of repetition and subsequent drop out from primary school. Of the new children admitted to primary one in 2023, only 35.3% attended pre-primary education.

Progress has been made to strengthen the enabling environment for a high-quality ECD sub-sector. For example, in 2015, the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) revised the national curriculum to a competence-based curriculum (CBC), which included a 3-year pre-primary curriculum. In

2016, the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) developed the minimum standards and norms for ECD to ensure that all ECD service providers provide quality, accessible and equitable ECD services for young children in different settings.

In 2019, MIGEPROF developed the National Parenting Curriculum (NPC), which is a comprehensive, evidence-based parenting curriculum, used as a guide to support Rwandan parents in providing holistic care to their children. In recent years, expanding access to quality pre-primary education has become a priority within the education sector in Rwanda and MINEDUD and NCDA have developed harmonised standards for early childhood education services which are provided across all platforms.

Linked activities:

Several development partners are supporting the Government of Rwanda to achieve the objectives for expansion to quality early childhood education services, including the EU.

The EUR 50 million EU programme focuses fully on supporting pre-primary education in the country. It includes a commitment to increase the access capacity to ECD services through a large-scale pre-primary school construction programme, by additionally mobilizing the first ever European Investment Bank (EIB) loan in the field of education in Sub-Saharan Africa. The programme also includes a EUR 3 million grant to the NCDA, which was signed in May 2024 and will further complement the Twinning operation. Furthermore, it also includes a budget support operation of EUR 30 million (2023-2025) to support school feeding, teacher training, school materials and increase of the pre-primary budget.

The government of Rwanda has implemented various linked initiatives such as the USAID-supported *Tunoze Gusoma* project that focuses on ECD and training primary-school teachers to improve early literacy skills, actively support the improvement of teachers' competence in foundational literacy, active pedagogy, and social-emotional learning. The USAID *Uburezi Iwacu* project collaborates with communities and parents to create a home environment conducive to learning. The LEGO Foundation emphasizes hands-on quality learning through play for children aged 3–6 years. The European Union is committed to enhancing access to pre-primary education and improving its quality through teacher training and the provision of teaching and learning materials, especially age-appropriate toys. These projects collectively contribute to the holistic development of teachers and children in foundational literacy and numeracy.

Initiatives funded by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and UNICEF are also in place to support the national objectives for early childhood education, including improving access to and the quality of services at Community-based ECD centres, including parenting programmes, and school-based pre-primary schools.

The GPE Education Sector Programme Implementation Grant (July 2020 to June 2024), of which UNICEF is the grant agent, has also contributed to pre-primary education. Programme components relevant to the Twinning project include procurement of teaching and learning materials for learners in pre-primary and upper primary (including those with special education needs); enhancing focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects in pre-primary, primary and lower secondary.

The GPE System Transformation Grant (July 2024 to June 2028), for which UNICEF is the Grant Agent, also contributes to improving the quality of ECE services. It will provide comprehensive support to teachers through training programmes that cater to both formal and non-formal ECD environments. The project will also provide the textbooks necessary to enhance the quality of education in all ECD settings, whether school-, centre-, home- or community-based. The aim is to create an inclusive and

holistic approach that supports children's development and learning.

The Education Outcomes Fund (EOF) is also funding an upcoming results based financing programme to improve access to and quality of community-based ECD services, which will be implemented in partnership with civil society organizations and is intended to start in January 2025.

All of these initiatives are contributing to sector goals for early childhood education, which in turn will build the foundation for all future learning. The Twinning project will ensure that all actions in the areas of ECE and parental and community support for learning are aligned to the sector objectives for ECE and that they are implemented in coordination with the National Foundational Learning Strategy.

There is an Early Childhood Development Technical Working Group, which is co-chaired by NCDA and REB and which brings together all the in an effort to coordinate and align interventions in the sub sector. The Twinning Project will engage with partners through this working group.

3.3 List of applicable *Union acquis*/standards/norms:

The content and structure of national Early childhood education and care (ECEC) systems remains the competence of the relevant national authorities. The European Commission supports EU Member States and facilitates cooperation between them by providing data and analysis on developments and issues concerning early childhood education and care.

Early childhood education and care has been identified as a priority area for cooperation under the European Education Area initiative for the period 2021-2030.

In May 2019, the Council of the EU adopted a Recommendation on high-quality early childhood education and care systems approved by the education ministers of EU Member States.

The Council Recommendation supports Member States in their efforts to improve access to and the quality of early childhood education and care.

3.4 Components and results per component

The Twinning project will support the Ministry of Education to achieve the following results related to Early Childhood Education and community support to learning within the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) and the Foundational Learning Strategy (FLS), structured along the following components and result areas:

Component 1: Increased access to formal ECE services (with a priority focus on one year of pre-primary education) and community-based programs

Component 2: Improve instructional quality at pre-primary education through teacher development and provision of effective teaching and learning materials for pre-primary education

Component 3: Strengthen systematic quality assurance and performance management of pre-primary education.

Component 4: A culture of parental support for learning developed , including increased time children spend practicing learning out of school

Component 1: Increased access to formal ECE services and community-based ECD programs

Result 1.1: An expansion plan for pre-primary/Early Childhood Education is developed/updated and is guiding the work of the Ministry of Education and Development Partners.

- Evidence-based research on best investments in early childhood education, to help achieve national targets.
- Development, approval and dissemination of expansion plan for pre-primary education, together with relevant stakeholders, including development partners, and based on new ESSP targets.

Result 1.2: Capacity of the MINEDUC Pre-Primary and Primary Analyst and selected NCDA and REB staff enhanced to support the development, coordinated delivery, monitoring and reporting of ECE expansion plan.

- Training plan developed and delivered to support the development, coordination, monitoring and reporting of the ECE expansion plan.

Result 1.3: All development partners contributions are effectively aligned and coordinated towards achieving the sector targets for increasing access to Early Childhood Education services.

- Assessment of coordination framework for development partners and other donors and development of tools to map DP programme support.
- Development of new partnerships to support the implementation of pre-primary expansion plan.

Result 1.4: Mechanism developed to increase coordination between MINEDUC and NCDA on ECE and ECD to expand coverage and access to ECE services

- Formalized coordination forum between the leadership of NCDA and MINEDUC on ECD/ECE is established, operationalised and strengthened to expand coverage of ECD services

Result 1.5: Enhanced coordination between MINEDUC and NCDA to invest in ECD caregiver training

- Provide oversight and support to existing programmes (and contribute to the development of new programmes) supporting capacity building support of ECD caregivers.

Component 2: Improve instructional quality at pre-primary education through teacher development and provision of effective teaching and learning materials for pre-primary education

Result 2.1: Training programmes for pre-primary teachers have a focus on play based foundational learning as well as the effective use and management of play based learning materials

- Provide technical guidance to the design of Training programmes and training materials for pre-primary teachers, together with REB and other key stakeholders, with a focus on play based foundational learning as well as to effectively use and manage play based learning materials.
- Development of budget estimate, yearly implementation plans and strategy for scale up of training.

Result 2.2: Review of the Early Childhood and Lower Primary Education (ECLPE) option in TTCs (Teacher Training Colleges) completed, identifying strategies and actions to strengthen its focus on school readiness and play based learning

- Review and assessment of the current curriculum for Early Childhood and Lower Primary Education (ECLPE) option in TTCs completed, identifying strategies and actions to strengthen its focus on school readiness.
- Make recommendations on potential revisions to the ECLPE curriculum, based on the assessment.

Result 2.3: Plan to increase regularity of investment in curricular play-based learning for TTCs developed, especially the ECLPE option

- Develop a five-year resourcing plan for TTCs.
- Develop a framework for monitoring availability and provision of play based resources to TTCs and demonstration schools.

Result 2.4.: Set of cost-effective play-based materials for pre-primary classrooms, including digital materials, identified.

- Together with REB, identify a set of cost-effective play-based materials for pre-primary classrooms.

Result 2.5.: Development partner and other stakeholder support to play based teaching and learning materials provision and replacement maximized

- Provide analysis on overall requirements and funding mechanisms to provide appropriate levels of play based materials to all primary schools, including identifying funding gaps.
- Develop a mapping of Development Partner support to provision of play based teaching and learning materials against the overall requirements and funding gaps
- Engage with Development Partners, including through the ECE/D Technical Working Group to support coordinated alignment and the procurement of play based materials, based on supply and funding gaps.

Result 2.6: Capacity of local publishing and creative industry to produce quality play-based learning resources enhanced, including response to market need

- Assess the current national market and capacity of local publishers and creative industries to develop play based materials, as well as market and other barriers they encounter.
- Identify support required to local publishers to stimulate the local sector to develop quality cost-effective play based materials

Component 3: Strengthen systematic quality assurance and performance management of pre-primary education.

Result 3.1: Development/update and use of the inspection framework for pre-primary education to include key metrics on monitoring play-based pre-primary teaching practices

- Together with NESAs contribute to the update of the inspection framework to include key metrics on monitoring school and classroom support for play-based pre-primary teaching practices.
- Together with NESAs develop classroom observation tools to help monitor play based teaching and learning.
- Together with NESAs, and coordinating with an EU direct grant to this agency, develop performance management and observation tools with metrics on usage of play based materials.

Result 3.2: Capacity of district inspectors and sector education officers to effectively inspect key elements of play based pre primary education enhanced

- Together with NESAs develop a set of school inspection protocols and related data collection templates and training plan for District Education Officers and Sector Education Officers on using these resources for system monitoring.

Component 4: A culture of parental support for learning developed, including increased time children spend reading and learning out of school

Result 4.1: Engagement plan developed and implemented for MINEDUC and REB to lead initiatives on parental engagement for learning

- Create engagement plan and train identified MINEDUC and REB staff in parental support engagement.
- Identify strategies at the school level for the School General Assembly Executive Committees (SGAECs) to strengthen structured parent engagement mechanisms to support parent contribution to home learning.

Result 4.2: Behavior change communication initiatives to sensitize parents on supporting foundational learning coordinated across different agencies

- Together with the NCDA project manager, under the EU direct grant, support the development of a new evidence-informed behavior change communication campaign (activity coordinated under EU grant to NCDA).
- Review of communication products available and propose additions or revisions to NCDA and other partners.

Result 4.3: Resourced plan developed to strengthen the Kigali Public Library's mandate to oversee the expansion of community reading structures, including libraries, reading clubs and literacy outreach activities.

- Support the development of a costed plan to strengthen community reading structures, including identification of potential funding sources.

Result 4.5: Plans operationalised to provide material support to schools to implement the school library guidelines and greater opportunities for students to access books in and out of school

- Coaching plan for schools to operationalize libraries is developed in partnership with REB.

Result 4.6: Strategy developed to effectively disseminate and use engaging educational entertainment content to supplement foundational learning

- Strategy for dissemination of edutainment materials to schools, libraries and ECD Centres, developed.
- Report on availability and use of edutainment materials developed.

3.5 Means/input from the EU Member State Partner Administration(s)*:

The project will be implemented in the form of a Twinning agreement between the Rwandan Ministry of Education and the respective EU Member State(s). The implementation of the project requires one Project Leader (PL) with responsibility for the strategic oversight of and high level engagement within the project, one Resident Twinning Advisor (RTA), to manage the technical implementation of the project and project activities, working closely within the Foundational Learning Delivery Unit of the Ministry of Education, Component Leaders (CLs) and short term experts (STEs), who will provide

discrete and timely expert support to the planning, implementation and review of specific aspects of the project on a needs basis. It is essential that the team has sufficient broad expertise to cover all areas of the project, as described in this paper.

Proposals submitted by Member State shall be concise and focused on the strategy and methodology and an indicative timetable underpinning this, the administrative model suggested, the quality of the expertise to be mobilised and clearly show the administrative structure and capacity of the Member State. Proposals shall be detailed enough to respond adequately to the Twinning Fiche, but are not expected to contain a fully elaborated project. They shall contain enough detail about the strategy and methodology and indicate the sequencing and mention key activities during the implementation of the project to ensure the achievement of overall and specific objectives and mandatory results/outputs. The interested Member State(s) shall include in their proposal CVs of the designated PL and the Resident Twinning Advisor, as well as CVs of the potentially designated component Leaders-CLs. The Twinning project will be implemented by close co-operation between the partners aiming to achieve the intended results in a sustainable manner. The set of proposed activities will be further developed with the Twinning partners when drafting the work plans, keeping in mind that the final list of activities will be decided in cooperation with the Twinning partner.

3.5.1 Profile and tasks of the PL:

The EU Member State Project Lead should be a high-level civil servant in a Government Department overseeing Education or early childhood education provision or overseeing quality improvements, standards, and quality assurance of education of early childhood education.

He or she should have sufficient authority and experience to ensure that the relevant MS public authority or body supports the project and the role of the RTA, Component Leads and the short term experts, who may be identified and mobilised with the support of the PL.

He or she should be able to devote sufficient time to supporting the project (to be determined and agreed upon during the initial phase of the project) including high level engagement with senior Government officials in Rwanda to help advance the results of the project.

He or she will coordinate from the Member State side the work of the Project steering Committee (PSC). The PL will co-chair project steering committee meetings when required, together with the Beneficiary Country project lead.

a) Qualifications, skills and experience:

- University level education or equivalent experience of 8 years in relevant fields.
- Minimum of 3 years of working experience in EU MS administration dealing with the provision, quality enhancement, standards and oversight and/or quality assurance related to education and or early childhood education.
- Knowledge of education systems or administration in developing context.
- Experience in performing institutional assessments, need analysis and coordination of capacity/institutional building interventions is an asset.
- Excellent command of written and spoken English.

b) Tasks:

- Overall coordination, guidance and monitoring of the project.
- Review and quality assurance of project progress reports, in collaboration with the RTA.
- Co-chairing of project steering committees.
- Provision of strategic and technical advice and analysis when required.

3.5.2 Profile and tasks of the RTA:

The Resident Twinning Advisor will be embedded within this Delivery Unit, with a specific focus on

supporting the delivery of results for Early Childhood Education and community support for learning. The RTA shall be based full time in the Ministry of Education Foundational Learning Delivery Unit in Kigali for 24 months and shall report to the Delivery Unit Coordinator on a daily basis as well as to the Director General for Education Policy and Analysis. The RTA shall also work closely with officials in charge of or dealing with different aspects of Early Childhood Education (policy and planning as well as implementation) in the Ministry of Education, Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) and the National Examinations and School Inspection Authority (NESA). The RTA will have particular responsibility for strategic collaboration between the Ministry of Education, the National Child Development Agency (NCDA) and the Kigali Public Library to support the implementation of different aspects of the Foundational Learning Strategy covered within the two components of this project.

a) Qualifications, skills and experience:

- Master Degree level education or Bachelor Degree with experience of 5 years, in relevant fields.
- Minimum of 3 years of working experience in EU MS administration or Government Department dealing with education or early childhood development OR equivalent relevant experience working in education policies, for example with a MS development agency or in a third country.
- Knowledge of education systems, community development and/or literacy programmes
- Experience in designing and/or implementing capacity building programmes for professional staff.
- Excellent command of written and spoken English.
- Good interpersonal relations and communication skills.
- Previous experience in project management would be an asset.
- Experience in working on similar projects would be an asset.

b) Tasks:

- Overall supervision, coordination, guidance, monitoring and reporting of the project, within the work of the Delivery Unit and the Foundational Learning Strategy implementation;
- Preparation of work plans, ensuring timely and effective implementation of planned activities under his/her direct responsibility and under the responsibility of the component leaders and any short-term experts assigned to the project.
- Preparation of and participation in the project steering committees, providing technical inputs of in his/her field of expertise, whenever needed.
- Mentoring and capacity building of counterparts within the Delivery Unit, Ministry of Education and REB, based on a capacity needs assessment.
- Liaison with EU Project Manager to align the work of the project with larger support in education from the EU;
- Technical assistance to achieve results in the areas of early childhood education and community support for learning within the ESSP and Foundational Learning Strategy.
- Supporting the partnerships with NCDA and the Kigali Public Library to achieve synergies in delivering the results of the Foundational Learning Strategy.

3.5.3 Profile and tasks of Component Leaders:

The Twinning Team assigned by the EU Member State Partner Administration(s) will include component leaders for each of the four components of the project, though some of the component leaders could lead on more than one component, if they have expertise in those areas.

The Component Leaders will have the following:

a) Qualifications, skills and experience:

- Master Degree level education or Bachelor Degree with experience of 5 years, in relevant fields.
- Minimum of 3 years of working experience in EU MS administration, government department or agency in fields relevant to the component.
- Experience in performing institutional assessments, need analysis and capacity/institutional building interventions.
- Excellent command of written and spoken English.
- Good interpersonal relations and communication skills.
- Previous experience in relevant project management.
- Experience in working on similar projects and providing remote leadership support would be an asset.

b) Tasks:

- Responsible for the implementation of the activities and achievement of the outputs in their respective components, in support of the RTA;
- Provide practical expertise/advice to the RTA, Delivery Unit and other relevant staff of the Ministry of Education and partner organisations for execution of different tasks related to the project in their respective component;
- Provide expert and strategic advice to the Ministry of Education and the Delivery Unit during different phases of the project implementation - planning, inception, implementation, monitoring and assessment;
- Assist in key tasks, in the field of analysis, material development, training, preparing guidelines for strategic use;
- Prepare analyses of the existing approaches, guidelines, manuals, and programmes related to the programme component implementation and make recommendations for improvements;
- Identify the profile and tasks of complementary short-term experts that may be required to strengthen the service delivery capacity of Government counterparts.

3.5.4 Profile and tasks of other short-term experts:

The role of and support provided by short term experts shall be determined during the course of the project, in consultation with the RTA, component leads and indeed the project lead. The following is an indication of the potential roles played by the short term experts as well as the general experience and expertise required.

a) Qualifications, skills and experience:

These short term experts shall work as advisors and/or trainers or perform specific studies or assignments within the scope of the twinning project. The qualifications, skills and experience will be defined as soon as the required intervention is defined. The minimum qualifications should be similar to those of the Component leaders. The areas to be covered by short-term experts may include, but not limited to: a) behaviour change communication campaigns, b) community libraries; c) play based learning material development and use; d) pre-school teacher development; e) capacity development programme design and delivery.

b) Tasks:

- Provide practical expertise/advice to relevant staff for execution of different tasks related to the project in the specific area of expertise;
- Assist in key tasks in the field of analysis, data and monitoring, training, communication campaigns, community engagement and material development;
- Contribute to the project monitoring, assessment reporting, and documentation.

4. Budget

Maximum Budget available for the Grant: EUR 2 Million

5. Implementation Arrangements

- 5.1** Implementing Agency responsible for tendering, contracting and accounting (AO/CFCU/PAO/European Union Delegation/Office): The European Union Delegation in Rwanda.

Provide full contact details of the contact person.

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5.2 Institutional framework

The key and direct institution from the beneficiary administration is the Ministry of Education. Other beneficiary agencies include the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) and the National Examinations and School Inspection Authority (NESA). The Ministry of Education retains oversight over the entire project implementation and is largely responsible for setting the policy and planning the implementation of the reforms within the Foundational Learning Strategy. REB and NESA are responsible for implementation of different aspects of the project (REB: Teacher training and teaching and learning materials development; NESA: Quality assurance and inspection frameworks).

Overall coordination of the project and its implementation will be provided by the Foundational Learning Delivery Unit, which will be based within the Ministry of Education and which plans to place members of the Delivery Unit within REB and NESA to support implementation of specific elements of the Strategy.

5.3 Counterparts in the Beneficiary administration:

5.3.1 Contact person:

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Director General, Education Policy and Analysis
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5.3.2 PL counterpart

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5.3.3 RTA counterparts

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6. Duration of the project: 24 Months

7. Management and reporting⁴⁷

7.1. Language

The official language of the project is the one used as contract language under the instrument (English). All formal communications regarding the project, including interim and final reports, shall be produced in the language of the contract.

7.2 Project Steering Committee

A project steering committee (PSC) shall oversee the implementation of the project. The main duties of the PSC include verification of the progress and achievements *via-à-vis* the mandatory results/outputs chain (from mandatory results/outputs per component to impact), ensuring good coordination among the actors, finalising the interim reports and discussing the updated work plan. Other details concerning the establishment and functioning of the PSC are described in the Twinning Manual.

7.3 Reporting

All reports shall have a narrative section and a financial section. They shall include as a minimum the information detailed in section 5.5.2 (interim reports) and 5.5.3 (final report) of the Twinning Manual. Reports need to go beyond activities and inputs. Two types of reports are foreseen in the framework of Twinning: interim quarterly reports and final report. An interim quarterly report shall be presented for discussion at each meeting of the PSC. The narrative part shall primarily take stock of the progress and achievements *via-à-vis* the mandatory results and provide precise recommendations and corrective measures to be decided by in order to ensure the further progress.

8. Sustainability

The project has been designed to strengthen the delivery capacity of the Ministry of Education and other education agencies in Rwanda to plan for, deliver, monitor and assess key reforms in the area of foundational learning, with a focus on early childhood education and community support for learning.

While expansion of quality early childhood education is an emerging priority for the Government of Rwanda, much progress has been made to place this level of education on a sustainable footing, through the progressive increases in government budget allocated to ECE over the last number of years.

The twinning project will support this push towards sustainability through a collaborative approach with policy makers, planning officials and implementing agencies at central and community level to support the implementation of a Foundational Learning Strategy which has been developed through a consultative and inclusive process.

The twinning project will have at its core a focus on capacity needs assessment and capacity development of key officials within the beneficiary administration, at national and local level, in order to put in place the required levels of expertise to manage and sustain the reforms covered by the two components of the project.

The specific results outlined across the four components will contribute to a strengthened school and community system, which is already well established and growing in Rwanda. Teacher development and the provision of quality play based teaching and learning materials will contribute to sustainable improvements in the quality of ECE services. Enhanced capacity of the quality assurance and inspection system will provide the systemic support to ECD centres and pre-primary schools to put into practice play based approaches to enhance school readiness. School readiness for children beginning primary school education will have the knock-on effect of reducing repetition rates and will help unblock inefficiency in the early grades of primary, which currently restrict progress in foundational learning and act as a drain on financial and human resources in the education sector.

The project will also support effective monitoring, data collection and analyses, documentation and reporting on the results of the project, so that all education stakeholders in Rwanda are aware of the project achievements and are informed by the learning from the project implementation in their own

work.

9. Crosscutting issues (*equal opportunity, environment, climate etc...*)

Gender: The Foundational Learning Strategy, when developed, was acutely aware of the gender gaps which are evident in learning outcomes in Rwanda, the roots of which are developed in the early years. The education system is concerned with gender parity and gender equality and in providing equal opportunities to learn to boys and girls. This project maintains that focus on gender equality, which is relevant to the areas of teaching and learning material development, teacher training (the majority of pre-school teachers are female) and community initiatives in support for learning, many of which are female-led.

Inclusion: Inclusive teaching and learning for children with disabilities and special needs remains a priority for the Ministry of Education, and the Foundational Learning Strategy will be implemented in synergy with other ongoing initiatives outlined in the Special Needs Education Policy, such as training teachers on inclusive pedagogies and in using inclusive teaching and learning materials. Through the School General Assembly Executive Committee (SGAEC), which is an important focus for the second component of this project, parents can also engage with teachers and school managers and leaders on matters affecting their children's schooling including children with special needs.

10. Conditionality and sequencing

There are no preconditions required for the Twinning Project to commence and achieve the planned results. The identified components and results within those components have been designed so as to be achieved over a two year period with certain activities and results identified as year 1 and others as year 2 (in particular component 4), which is outlined within the results framework. This sequencing can be updated during the first year of implementation. The one precondition required is that the highest level of commitment and support is provided to achieving the results of increasing access to quality pre primary education and enhancing community and parental support for learning, which have been included as core elements within the newly designed Education Sector Strategic Plan and Foundational Learning Strategy. This high level commitment will ensure that the results targeted by the Twinning Project remain priorities within the sector over the coming years.

11. Indicators for performance measurement

See Annex 1: Programme results framework

12. Facilities available

The RTA will be based in the Ministry of Education and will be provided with office space for the full duration of the project. The RTA will also be provided with an assistant (funded through the twinning programme budget) to assist with administrative and other support necessary to fulfill his or her role. The RTA will be able to make use of facilities such as meeting rooms, printing facilities and other administrative and IT support provided to all Ministry of Education staff. Short term experts or component leads, when they are in Kigali, shall also be provided with working space at MINEDUC.