Review and Harmonization of Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Framework for REPOA

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

REPOA's core business is the generation of knowledge through research to inform policy development. The goal is to accelerate socioeconomic transformation for inclusive development and to raise the quality of life of the people of Tanzania. REPOA's research agenda remains responsive to the rapidly evolving context of the Tanzanian economy as well as the changes in the global economic environment. Its current research programme reflects priorities from key domestic, regional and international development frameworks, including the Tanzania Development Vision 2025, and the accompanying Long Term Perspective Plan (LTPP), the East African Development Vision 2025, the Southern African Development Community Industrialization Strategy, Africa Union's Agenda 2063, and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. REPOA is a well-established, trusted, confident institution with wide network of both local partners (including the government) and international partners. REPOA collaborates with international institutions in implementing large research projects which is expected to contribute in strengthening the capacity of key actors in economic development on a wide range of issues.The independent work undertaken by REPOA bridges its stakeholders by influencing evidence based dialogue and knowledge exchange. It also provides inputs for development planning and policy decisions.

In Tanzania, where a substantial proportion of the population is poor, poverty cannot be separated from the dynamics of development and socio-economic transformation. Thus, REPOA advocates for economic growth that is inclusive and transformative, i.e. growth that results from (and reinforces) structural change to generate productive, reasonably remunerated jobs, safe work environments and generalized access to economic opportunities.

REPOA has started implementation of a five-year Strategic Plan (SP) 2020-24, which builds on their 2015-19 Strategic Plan that ended December 2019. The SP was developed

with consultations with all key stakeholders, which provides REPOA with a strong basis to achieve the vision and mission set out by its Board of Directors in august 2019.

The key REPOA's strategic goals are:
- Goal 1: Undertaking quality, relevant and high impact research
- Goal 2: Provide high impact capacity building of researchers and research users
- Goal 3: Develop an organizational model of excellence for evidence based and stakeholder-led research

2. Rationale

SP 2020-24 provides an assessment of the research environment (the measures of performance for each goal are provided in section 5 of the SP 2020-24).The baseline information given and respective performance measures provide very high level description of the current situation/baseline. While the results framework developed subsequently by REPOA and shared with core funding partners represented an improvement, it is still challenging for this framework to measure results or changes in ways that is commonly accepted by all core partners.

REPOA wishes to improve its MEL framework to a more robust framework. A comprehensive and robust MEL framework will guide the tracking of its strategy and direction, management and governance, quality of research outputs and the extent to which it reaches the right audience, enhance uptake of research recommendations, and link well with outcomes and impact of evidence produced. It will also be able to capture the diverse reporting and monitoring needs of core funders and capture the effects of changes in political economy and its relative implication to REPOA's work.

The review of the current MEL framework with view to ensuring its robustness, comprehensives, and harmonized information needs with the core funding partners in line with REPOA SP 2020-24 will require an engagement of an independent and experienced consultant. The consultant will review the current MEL framework of REPOA, consult with core funding partners to establish their information needs that will appropriately inform their results matrix.

3. Objectives of the Assignment

i. Overall objective
The overall objective of this assignment is to assess and provide inputs for strengthening Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework that will guide the organization's MEL activities and facilitate capturing of results, learning and practices. This assignment will comprise needs and gaps assessment, establishing inputs for a robust MEL Framework in consultation with core funding partners, and supporting

operationalization of the improved MEL framework. The assignment will focus on the following specific objectives:

ii. Specific Objectives
a) To review the existing REPOA's logical model and establish whether the current MEL framework and results framework is appropriate to REPOA's theory of change and its strategic goals
b) To review REPOA's monitoring and Evaluation tools and templates, policies, procedures and guidance notes to identify gaps
c) To suggest areas of improvements in the MEL (MEL) Framework, including tools, templates, and other process with respect to anticipated outcomes for each strategic goals
d) To propose appropriate measures for harmonizing REPOA's results framework with the common needs of core funding partners for the purpose of enhancing reporting and accountability

4. Scope of Work

a. Consultants Responsibilities

- The consultant(s) is expected to work collaboratively with REPOA project team to identify the scope of the MEL framework. However, to be effective, the Consultant will need to understand REPOA's Organizational structure, Theory of Change (ToC) underlying its strategic plan and its reporting framework on one hand, and the information needs for the resulting framework of the core funding partners on the other.

- To conduct a thorough desk review of the existing REPOA M&E system and tools to identify the strengths and weaknesses and see how the tools can be harmonized with reporting needs of its key partners and improving the reporting structure. The consultant should also conduct interviews with development partners (DPs) providing core support to REPOA to identify their reporting requirement which will then be used to inform MEL system re-design at a later stage.

- To review the current MEL tools which includes but not limited to: Tools for data collection; indicator tracking table (ITT), stakeholder complaints and feedback mechanism, risk log and other relevant tools and any available MEL tools. The consultant(s) is expected to review and advise on appropriate systems that will enable REPOA to systematically and reliably store, manage and access M&E data. Such a system may include but not limited to Appropriate Data format, Data organization mechanism, Data quality and control protocols, Responsibility and accountability of data

management, Data security and legalities considerations and suggestions for most effective/efficient Information technology tools.

● To analyze the existing REPOA information flow and suggest an improved information flow, mapped out in an information flow chart. To this end, the consultant will work with REPOA staff to come up with the most effective and efficient mechanism for utilization and dissemination of MEL information and which will have to be documented. This will also include a map of a reporting cycle that will facilitate timely reporting.

● To conduct a capacity gaps assessment at REPOA to implement a robust results framework and MEL overall in terms of practices, knowledge and institutional arrangements where necessary that need revision or addressing in order to effectively manage the MEL Framework.

b. *Expected Deliverables*

✔ A comprehensive review and identification of gaps on the M&E framework and reporting structure.

✔ Building on the identified gaps -A comprehensive list of actions and inputs for improving MEL system towards a robust MEL Framework, including amongst others:-

- Indicators to measure progress and performance,
- Indicators to measure and link outcomes, outputs, and activities
- Risk Management,
- Feedback mechanism,
- MEL data collection and reporting tools,
- Reporting cycle/calendar for different projects, and templates for harmonized reporting based on needs of core funders
- Baseline data for establishing robust M&E framework and reporting formats,
- Structure and inputs for establishing a harmonized result framework, and
- Proposal for capacity building plan.

✔ Recommendations for robust and diverse alternative formats and templates for harmonized reporting based on needs.

5. Duration of the assignment

The assignment will start as soon as possible and end by the end September 2020. The actual dates will be agreed upon.

6. Qualifications and Professional Experience

- Minimum of Master's degree in a field relevant to the assignment, for example development studies, economics, M&E, project management, other social science fields, or business administration.
- At least 7 years of experience in Results Based Management (RBM), Strategic Planning, and M&E related capacity building
- Experience in designing and conducting monitoring and evaluation of programs/projects in a policy research context
- Advanced knowledge on M&E Frameworks, M&E Plans, Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) Management
- Experience in designing, conducting and managing social and economic policy research and familiar with socio-economic development challenges and needs of Tanzania
- Strong interpersonal skills and communication skills, resourcefulness, initiative, maturity of judgment, tactful, competent in negotiating skills, and the ability to cope with situations which may pose a conflict
- Knowledge of donors funded projects monitoring and reporting systems
- Previous experience in similar assignments with donor funded projects would be an added advantage.
- Possess facilitation, mentorship and training skills
- Excellent in English language (written and oral) and proficient in computer skills.