

FACILITY FROM THE REGIONAL TEACHERS INITIATIVE FOR AFRICA

TERMS OF REFERENCE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHER POLICY OPERATIONALIZATION PLAN MINISTRY OF BASIC AND SECONDARY EDUCATION THE GAMBIA Expertise: International consultant

SUMMARY TABLE

Corresponding CAP technical area	Teachers' governance HR and teacher policies
Corresponding CAP main action and activity	Teacher policy operationalization plan
Impacted CAP indicator	ESSP Result area 4: Effective planning, development and management of human resources ensured.
Impacted Facility indicator	Outcome 1. # of RTIA engaged countries implementing new or revised policies, processes or tools related to teacher governance or management
Intended period of implementation	January – April 2026
Total expected number of days	25
Expected key deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report highlighting best practices and recommendations for updating the Gambia teacher' policy• Final version of the teacher policy• Operationalization plan (OP)• Based on the OP, sensitization / capacity building modules for education stakeholders
National implementing partner (Unit in charge of interaction with the experts)	Human Resources Directorate - MoBSE

THE REGIONAL TEACHERS INITIATIVE FOR AFRICA

The Regional Teachers Initiative for Africa (RTIA), a programme funded by the EU/EC via the Education section (G3) of DG INTPA aims to improve learning outcomes and the socio-emotional development of children in Africa, by having a more competent, motivated and inclusive teacher workforce in basic education.

The RTIA will especially seek to achieve the following outcomes over the next 6 years:

1. Improve the governance, management, attractiveness, and gender balance of the teaching profession, with a strong focus on increased digitalisation and innovation.
2. Enhance the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of initial and continuous teacher professional development, notably through digital education, peer-to-peer learning approaches and regional collaboration.

Within RTIA, the Regional Facility for Teachers in Africa will support teacher policy and improve teacher education and professional development systems by i) providing capacity building at country level through technical assistance, ii) promoting innovation and scaling of effective teaching solutions; iii) increasing the production and use of data and evidence, and iv) promoting the use of regional frameworks, evidence-based practices, and joint learning at regional level.

The Facility from the Regional Teachers Initiative for Africa (The Facility) will reach the above-mentioned objectives through 3 types of instruments or “windows”: i) a window to deliver technical assistance on teacher governance and teacher education and professional development based on the demand from eligible partner countries, ii) a window on testing and scaling effective programs for teacher education and professional development in the thematic areas of digital skills, gender, green skills, and pedagogical skills, including in the context of refugees and displaced population, iii) a research window to create new evidence and support the integration of evidence in the policy making process and in the design of teacher education and professional development programs.

In addition to these windows the Facility’s knowledge management and communication activities will further contribute to the sharing of knowledge, evidence, and best practices related to the overall Initiative outcomes.

The Facility is funded by the European Union and co-implemented by the Partnership formed by three-member state agencies: Expertise France for France, Enabel for Belgium, EDUFI for Finland. Expertise France has been designated the Coordinating Agency for this Partnership. With the Facility governance scheme serving as the Initiative's governance scheme, it is expected that the Partnership will work closely with UNESCO and AUC, in charge of the other 2 components of the EU Initiative.

GENERAL CONTEXT IN THE COUNTRY

As of mid-2025, The Gambia's population is estimated at 2.82 million people, with around 45% falling within the school-age bracket of 4 to 18 years. This youthful demographic underscores an urgent need for expanded school infrastructure and a larger, well-trained teaching workforce.

Investing in education is a key pillar of the Gambia’s National Development Plan 2023–2027. The Gambia Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) has made significant strides in expanding school enrolment. The introduction of the ‘fee-free policy’ and the provision of school grants have improved education coverage, resulting in near-universal access to basic schooling. This progress is largely attributed to the expansion of school infrastructure, improved facilities, and the deployment of newly trained teachers nationwide associated with an increase in public expenditure on education.

The education system is structured into 3 years of early childhood education (ECE), 6 years of lower basic education (LBE), 3 years of upper basic education (UBE) and 3 years of senior secondary education (SSE). According to the Gambian Education Statistics 2024/2025; 148, 299 children are enrolled in ECE; 442,901 children in LBE, 144,964 in UBE and 94,731 in SSE.

However, challenges remain. Enrollment rates for children with special needs continue to lag behind, highlighting persistent gaps in inclusive education. Moreover, improving the quality of education—particularly at the foundational level—has proven difficult. The 2023 Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) revealed a deeply rooted learning crisis in foundational literacy showing alarmingly high rates of zero scores and low reading fluency.

Recognizing the key role of teachers in promoting learning in the classroom, MoBSE has tripled the number of qualified teachers from 4,600 in 2000 to 13,300 in 2023. Measures such as hardship allowances intend to support teachers’ deployment in remote areas. However, the lack of HR policy undermines transparency and accountability in regard to teachers’ recruitment, deployment, and promotion, with a negative impact on teachers’ morale and retention. MoBSE identified the development and implementation of an HR policy as one of their top priorities.

The Education Sector Strategic Plan (2016–2030) outlines a bold vision to professionalize the Gambia’s teaching workforce. Central to this effort is the development of a Teacher Competency Framework,

which defines career pathways and expected competencies at each level, alongside a comprehensive teacher policy. These initiatives have yet to be fully operationalized.

In-service teachers' capacity building through Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs remains heavily dependent on financial support from development partners. Coordination of CPD initiatives and capture of corresponding data are lacking. MoBSE is planning to pilot a platform developed by Owl Technology by the end of 2025. Teachers are expected to be key users of the platform, to apply online for vacant positions and transfer, and to access information on/ apply for capacity building opportunities. The launch of the platform will contribute to the efforts to increase transparency and accountability in teachers' governance and continuous professional development.

CAP CONTEXT – ARTICULATION WITH PREVIOUS WORKS

The Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) in the Gambia sent a request for technical assistance to the RTIA Facility in April 2025. Following the approval of the request, two experts from the RTIA Facility went to Banjul in October 2025 to co-develop the Country Action Plan (CAP) with directors and technicians of the MoBSE, and representatives of the teachers' unions and education partners. During this mission, the technical areas and the thematics presented in the request were adjusted. The CAP components cover both teachers' governance and teachers' education and professional development. The development of an HR policy, the operationalization of the teacher policy and support provided to the implementation of the HR platform will contribute to enhancing transparency and effectiveness of the teaching force management. A STEAM component, including the development of a policy and a teacher competency framework, intends to anchor 21st century skills in the whole education cycle. Finally, the operationalization of the teacher competency framework and the revision of a mentoring program for newly qualified teachers aim at facilitating the transition between pre-service and in-service, and articulating teachers' professional development and career development around the acquisition of core competencies.

This process of experts' recruitment starts after the CAP has been validated by the MoBSE and the Facility management.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

The Gambia's priority reform: *Accessible, Equitable, and Inclusive Foundational Learning*, aims at achieving high learning and skills outcomes, with more than 80 percent of the children reaching the minimum learning competencies and standards in line with the National Education Policy 2016 – 2030. Recruitment of qualified teachers and in-service training and teacher professional development are core components of the reform.

As such, the CAP activities are aligned with national priorities in the education sector, and the technical assistance (TA) will contribute to several ESSP (Education Sector Strategic Plan) 2016-2030 indicators. The components on teachers' governance (HR policy and operationalization of the teacher policy) intend to foster enhanced planning and management of human resources and will directly contribute to the ESSP Result area 4, Sector management program: ***Effective planning, development and management of human resources ensured.***

Specific objectives

The teacher policy developed in 2021 was never fully implemented. Discussions during the CAP development in country highlighted the need to potentially update it and to develop an operationalization plan, to sensitize and build capacities of relevant education stakeholders for an actual implementation of the teacher policy.

The international expert will have to collaborate and coordinate with a local expert working on policy monitoring and evaluation, both for the HR and the teacher policies.

If the main outcome of this consultancy is the teacher policy operationalization plan, its development process should be designed carefully, to ensure relevance, practicability and ownership of national stakeholders.

As such, the mission aims at providing technical assistance for both

- reviewing the existing teacher policy against best practices and international standards
- updating (if needed) the teacher policy
- and developing the teacher policy's implementation plan.

STAKEHOLDERS

The HRD (Human Resources Directorate) will be the lead implementing partner for this component on teachers' governance focusing on the development of the operationalization plan of the teacher policy. Other stakeholders include other departments and directions of the MoBSE, GTU (Gambia Teachers' Union) and representatives from decentralized education services, the regional education directorates. Consultations with education partners and EUD are also key, in order to take into account past and current initiatives in the education sector, in particular in the area of education policies' development and implementation.

MAIN DELIVERABLES

The main deliverables for this consultancy include:

Deliverable 1: Inception report

This inception report includes an outline of the work to be carried out for this mission (no longer than 2-3 pages).

Deliverable 2: Desk review report.

This report provides an analysis of the existing teacher policy draft against a benchmark (best practices in Africa and globally), with recommendations for potential revisions (format/ contents).

Deliverable 3: Teacher policy (updated/final version)

Based on the analysis, the existing teacher policy will be updated and the final version co-developed with the core technical group. The official validation of the teacher policy is the responsibility of the core technical group.

Deliverable 4: Operationalization plan

Once the teacher policy validated, the operationalization plan co-developed with the core technical group will include roles and responsibilities in the implementation, a communication strategy, a timeframe, a monitoring plan, tools for an annual review... The monitoring plan and tools for an annual review will be developed with a national expert.

Deliverable 5: Sensitization/ capacity building modules

Based on the operationalization plan, these modules might target different education stakeholders, with different objectives: information/ sensitization or capacity building.

Deliverable 6: Mission final report (for the Facility)

GENERAL APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The general approach and methodology described below are indicative and non-exclusive. The expert must develop the methodology he/she intends to use in his/her application.

General approach:

The international expert will work closely with the MoBSE. He/she will also collaborate and coordinate with a national expert for the development of the teacher policy implementation monitoring plan and of the annual review tools.

A participatory approach with the MoBSE partners is essential, to ensure that what is proposed is in line with their needs. They will be the ones guiding the process, identifying and involving relevant stakeholders, and taking responsibility for the validation processes. Interactions will also take place with decentralized directorates, teachers' unions and education partners throughout the consultancy.

Methodology:

To carry out this work, the expert recruited must:

- Carry out a desk review of the main policy documents of the Gambian education system
- Consider the situational analysis of the Gambia education policies (and recommendations) developed as the first activity of the CAP
- Carry out a desk review of existing teacher policies in the education sector in Africa
- Participate in a scoping meeting with the MoBSE focal points and the Facility. Following this meeting, the expert will propose a brief note describing the work to be carried out, including the methodology and an updated timetable considering logistical constraints, particularly those related to travel.
- Facilitate working sessions with national stakeholders with the objective to update and finalize the teacher policy
- After validation by the education authorities, facilitate working sessions with the MoBSE and relevant stakeholders to develop the teacher policy implementation plan, engaging with and involving the national expert in the process.
- Based on the validated operationalization plan, the two experts (international and national) will develop relevant tools and modules to be used for the implementation of the teacher policy.

The whole process aims to be owned by the MoBSE. Consultations, technical exchanges, and feedback take place before the finalization and submission of the deliverables. Even if a consensus among stakeholders might not be reached at each step, creating a safe space for discussion is key to ensure national ownership of both the process and the final product.

Throughout the consultancy, the expert is expected to have technical discussions with the Facility. The deliverables will be validated by the MoBSE and the Facility.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The MoBSE is responsible for:

- Providing all the documentation required for the desk review and the preparation of the field work if any
- Facilitating the organization of meetings with relevant stakeholders
- Facilitating the validation process by the national authorities
- Commenting on and approving deliverables.

The RTIA Facility is responsible for:

- Contracting and facilitating the integration of the expert by providing all available documents and resources
- Supporting and monitoring the expert's work from start to finish
- Acting as the expert's main resource person
- Ensuring quality control of deliverables in collaboration with the NTC's focal points
- Acknowledging final validation of deliverables by all parties
- Evaluating the expert's overall performance under this mandate.

The expert is responsible for:

- Reviewing and commenting on these Terms of Reference (ToR)
- Ensuring that all deliverables comply with the guidelines set out at the scoping meeting, in line with the agreed timetable
- Informing the Facility immediately of any difficulties encountered in implementing the mission
- Ensuring that stakeholders are consulted throughout the assignment
- Behaving with the highest level of personal integrity and committing to the required standards of conduct.

EXPERTS' PROFILES

Academic qualification:

Advanced degree in education policy, or related field

General work experience:

Minimum of 10 years of experience in education policy, and/or in teachers' governance; proven experience in implementing policies at a national level

Specific work experience:

Experience in/ knowledge of developing or updating teacher policies in the education sector; Proven knowledge and experience of education policies and systems in West Africa, and the Gambia in particular

Language Proficiency:

Excellent proficiency in English (both written and spoken);

Knowledge of French (advantageous but not required)

Interpersonal and soft skills and experience

Excellent communication and presentation abilities

Ability to work collaboratively with stakeholders from various backgrounds, including government officials, educators, and technical experts

High adaptability and flexibility in dynamic environments

Additional assets

Previous experience working in the Gambia

Familiarity with the education context and policies of the Gambia

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF DAYS & GENERAL TIMELINE

The consultancy is planned to take place between January and April 2026 for a total of 25 expert days.

	Preparation	On-site work	Distance work (including drafting deliverable)	Total
International expert	1	10	14	25
National expert	0.5	4.5		5
Total experts	1,5	14,5	14	30

HOW TO APPLY & SELECTION PROCESS

[*Guidelines.* For individual expertise, please specify in the paragraph below, the email's subject that applicants should use to make it easier to process application. For institutional call for proposals, please provide more detailed information on the type of information that is expected and general selection process]

Please attach your CV (following [Europass template](#) and a one-page cover letter. In the subject of your email, please specify "[COUNTRY] – [ASSIGNMENT]". Note: if you do not do so, your application might not be considered".

If possible, please attach a sample of previous works that are similar to the above assignment (1 to 3 work samples; extracts of entire deliverables accepted). In each case, you should specify your role (main author, major contributions, minor contributions, etc.)

"At RFTA we value all experts as unique individuals, and we welcome the variety of experiences they bring to the Facility. As such, we have a strict non-discrimination policy. We believe everyone should be treated equally regardless

of race, sex, gender identification, sexual orientation, national origin, native language, religion, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, pregnancy, or any other characteristic protected by law. If you feel that you have been discriminated against, please let the RFTA team know as soon as possible. Every complaint will be appropriately investigated"