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SMART ECO

**EVALUATION OF TECHNICAL AND
FINANCIAL REPORTS (FINAL)**

To

AFRINIC Ltd.

Patricia SENHOR – Cooperation & Project Development Manager

By

AKS Consulting

Kenneth SANVI, PMP – Consultant in International Development

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION

FIRE is a Grant and Awards program designed by AFRINIC in order to support and encourage the development of solutions to information and communication needs in the Africa Region. It places particular emphasis on the role of the Internet in the social and economic development for the benefit of the African community.

Launched in May 2012, the program is partly funded by two donors: IDRC and SIDA International Development Agencies. In 2013, AFRINIC selected eleven grant recipients which received 10 000 USD each for their project.

The grantees are bound by several obligations, which are among other things:

- Implementation and use of the project funds solely to perform the objectives and activities of their project
- Use the funds in accordance with the budget set out in their application
- Submission of an Interim and a Final Report in accordance with AFRINIC's report guidelines outlined in the Memorandum of Grant Conditions.

II. PURPOSE AND EXPECTED USE

AFRINIC required this evaluation in order to confirm that the project is run in accordance with the following criteria:

- Quality and reliance of design
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency of implementation
- Impact and potential of sustainability
- Replicability

AFRINIC also requires this evaluation to be run on the basis of the Interim and Financial Reports sent by the project in accordance with their obligations.

III. OBJECTIVES

AFRINIC requires this evaluation to ensure of the following:

- The project meets identified objectives;
- Enhance the Design and the implementation of FIRE programme;
- Demonstrate and Improve the impact of the various projects on the local community;
- Develop recommendations to improve the implementation and the monitoring of future projects;
- Ensure that funds allocated to the various projects are used efficiently and within the initial identified scope.

IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This project aims at contributing to the development of the Tunisian eco-tourism with a platform that shall enhance competitiveness of operators and their ability to respond to market demand. Whilst project team remains focus and dedicated to their objective, final report fails to provide evidences of results achieved thus far.

Risks have been identified and mitigation measures proposed. Nevertheless, final report fails to describe monitoring activities implemented to ensure that mitigation measures are successful and necessary adjustments made if any to achieve positive results. The methodology used to evaluate results as well as monitoring activities has not been described nor does the report provide information on how data archiving is being handled.

V. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Adoption of the tool by various stakeholders is paramount for the success of this project. We thus recommend that project team implement a thorough monitoring system of mitigation activities in order to assess the success rate and make necessary adjustments needed.

THE EVALUATION

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. PURPOSE

AFRINIC required this evaluation in order to confirm that the project is run in accordance with the following criteria:

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- Effectiveness
- Efficiency of implementation
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- Develop recommendations to improve the implementation and the monitoring of future projects;
- Ensure that funds allocated to the various projects are used efficiently and within the initial identified scope.

This evaluation is also required by AFRINIC in order to help the project in its implementation in accordance with the Memorandum of Grant Conditions.

1.2. AUDIENCE AND USE

The stakeholders who will make use of the evaluation reports are:

1. FIRE programme – AFRINIC
2. International Development Research Center (IDRC)
3. Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)

4. The grantees
5. Prospective applicants to FIRE program

1.3. OBJECTIVES

AFRINIC requires this evaluation to ensure of the following:

- The project meets identified objectives;
- Enhance the Design and the implementation of FIRE programme;
- Demonstrate and Improve the impact of the various projects on the local community;
- Develop recommendations to improve the implementation and the monitoring of future projects;
- Ensure that funds allocated to the various projects are used efficiently and within the initial identified scope.

1.4. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology is linked with the objectives, the evaluation questions and the type of evaluation.

Evaluation criteria	Key Results Areas	Evaluation questions	Data sources
Design	Assess the extent to which the project responds to priority issues and identified objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the project objectives still valid? • Has the project team put in place the appropriate strategies? • Are there major risks that have not been taken into account? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design documentation. • Project objectives. • Interim and final technical reports.
Effectiveness	Assess the project major key results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the obtained results aligned with planed objectives? • Are the results in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim and final technical reports. • Project management

		acceptable both in terms of the quantity and their quality?	plan. • Result monitoring report.
Efficiency	Assess the extent to which: - Project plan has been followed; - Project reports are up to date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To which percentage has project plan been achieved to date? • Are expenses aligned with established budget? • Have data collected archived for future use? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management plan. • Monitoring and control reports. • Financial reports. • Interim and final technical reports.
Impact	Assess to which extent the project will have a long-term positive impact on local community.	To which extent has the project's general objectives and final goals been achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project objectives • Interim and final technical reports. • FIRE programme objectives
Sustainability	Assess to which extent the project has been socially and politically adopted by the local community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the project contribute to long-term benefits? • Would the long-term benefits be materialized by the implementation of an organization? • What are the costs implications for scaling up impact? • Are there savings that could be made without compromising delivery? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project benefits report. • Project cost report. • Project monitoring report.

1.5. TEAM

M. Kenneth SANVI, PMP, is a Canadian Consultant in International Development, specialized in all areas of project management. M. SANVI is a seasoned expert with many audits and evaluations projects in several countries in Africa. He is also a trainer in many areas among which, monitoring and evaluation.

Ms. Rebecca GIDEON, CISA will perform the evaluation of Information Technology aspects of the reports. Ms. Gideon is an experienced Information Technology professional with over seven years of diversified experience.

2. THE PROJECT

2.1. CONTEXT

SmartEco is a project conducted by TEN's founders. This project aims at promoting eco tourism in Tunisia. To achieve this objective, the main goal is to give an idea about possible products and tours that one can do or buy in Tunisia. Starting from that point, project team imagined the need of a platform, which could help a lot by gathering all kind of information about what's possible to find in Tunisia. Knowing how big of a task this is, project team imagined that it would be best to seek help from everyone. Hence, SmartEco, a project to implement a community platform was developed. This platform will enable stakeholders to input information about places & products that they know well in their surrounding area. Furthermore, it will enable travellers to comment on products based on their experience.

2.2. UNDERLYNG RATIONALE

The main objective of this project is to build and implement a collaborative platform that will:

1. Enable eco-tourists to learn about Tunisian eco-tourism products;
2. Allow eco-tourism stakeholders to exchange and implement joint actions;
3. Gather ideas and projects and create common synergies;
4. Become a valid source on behalf of communities;
5. Become an inclusive group representing communities and integrating all the various statutory and non-law participatory groups;
6. Ensure that groups usually excluded or marginalized are properly represented.

2.3. STAKEHOLDERS AND BENEFICIARIES

2.3.1. Stakeholders

- a. FIRE programme – AFRINIC
- b. International Development Research Center (IDRC)
- c. Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)
- d. The grantees

- e. Product owners
- f. Tour operators
- g. Tourists

2.3.2. Users & Beneficiaries

Product owners, tour operators, tourists and the public in general will be the main users of this platform. They are entrusted with a major responsibility that of populating the platform with data and can benefit from each other's experience. Product owners and tour operators will interact and learn to better promote their products. Another great benefice of the platform will be to have a single point of listing for all ecotourism products in Tunisia. With profiling data gathered from the platform, stakeholders will be able to better understand the market and make necessary improvements (ie. adjusting development strategy or creating new products) to better respond to customers need.

2.4. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

2.4.1. Resources and activities

The main milestones of the project have been identified as:

- Promotional activities
- Beta release of platform
- Presentation and test with stakeholders
- Beta release of mobile application for the platform
- Mobile application test
- Final release of platform and mobile application.

2.4.2. Expected results

Project team is confident that the platform will enhance competitiveness of eco-tourism operators and their ability to respond to market demand. The team believes that the platform will improve eco-tourism offers especially off-seasonal ones and that in marginal geographic areas as well as increase Tunisian eco-tourism products visibility.

2.5. RESULT CHAIN AND LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The main objective of this project is to introduce a tool that will help promote Tunisian ecotourism products. To achieve this objective, project team understood the paramount need of ensuring complete adoption of the tool by stakeholders. As such, the strategy implemented was to raise awareness by providing training events to get stakeholders familiar with the tool offered and most importantly, how to take advantage of statistics available.

In addition to the training activities, a website was developed and various publications printed and distributed.

2.6. PROJECT MONITORING SYSTEM

As highlighted in the evaluation of the Interim report, it appears that project team has implemented a monitoring system. Nevertheless, the team fails to provide information about neither said system nor evidences on how monitoring of activities is being carried out and how results are evaluated.

2.7. EVALUATION FINDINGS

2.7.1. DESIGN

➤ Valid objectives

The project objectives remain valid. Nonetheless, final report does not highlight major milestones that have been achieved in the development cycle of the platform.

➤ Appropriate strategies

Project team has put in place appropriate strategy to get adoption of stakeholders. Various releases are identified and tests planned with stakeholders to ensure quality of deliverable. In addition, project team plans on providing training activities to ensure stakeholders understand how to make use of the tool and take better advantage of the information made available to them.

➤ Major risks not accounted for

Two major risks have been identified and mitigation solutions proposed. Nevertheless, final report has not provided information about monitoring system of the mitigation activities and control measures implemented to ensure that the risks are dealt with accordingly and efficiently.

2.7.2. EFFECTIVENESS

- Results aligned with planned objectives

Final report is not clear about the results obtained thus far. It fails to provide enough evidences for evaluation in order to ascertain alignment with planned objectives.

- Results acceptability

Final report does not provide us with sufficient element to evaluate acceptability of results.

One major risks identified by project team was the adoption of the tool by stakeholders.

Mitigation measure proposed for this risk was to plan training activities and ensure that stakeholders understand the tool and take better advantage of it.

Final report fails to provide evidence of training activities that have taken place and does not elaborate on feedback received by the stakeholders.

2.7.3. EFFICIENCY OF PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Percentage of achieved project plan

Final report is quite unclear on how much activities were achieved. The report seems to indicate that only seventy per cent of the web platform and ten per cent of the mobile application is completed but there are no evidences of the same provided.

- Expenses aligned with budget

Financial report submitted, highlights several variances that have not been explained by project team. We recommend that close attention is paid to expenses and that clear explanation is provided for all variances in order to assured that project is completed within budgeted costs.

- Archive of collected data

Final report does not provide us with any evidence of an archiving mechanism in place.

We recommend that project team clearly describe in final report, the archiving mechanism in place

2.7.3. IMPACT

Impacts of the project are forecasted to be positive on the Tunisian tourism ecosystem. Nevertheless, final report does not provide any evidences on results achieve in order for this evaluation to make a thorough assessment.

2.8. RECOMMENDATIONS

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