BUILDING EDUCATION FOUNDATIONS THROUGH INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY (BEFIT) PROGRAMME

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	:	**Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Research and Learning (MEARL) Specialist**
Incumbent(s) or Open	:	**Open**
Department/Country	:	**Programmes -Malawi**
Duty Station	:	**Lilongwe**
Supervisor Title	:	**National Programme Lead**
Technical Reporting line	:	**Ministry of Education Head of MEARL**
Direct Reports	:	**MEARL Officer**
Job Grade	:	**N/A**
Salary Scale	:	**MK68,000,000 – MK82,000,000 Per Annum**
Date Finalized	:	**December,2025**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Malawi Government through the Ministry of Education (MoE) is implementing the **Building Education Foundations through Innovation and Technology (BEFIT) Programme** to improve primary school children's acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills using education technology supplementing teacher efforts in schools across Malawi. Within the MoE, the programme is being led by the Directorate of Open Distance and eLearning (DODeL) and the Directorate of Basic Education (DBE).

The BEFIT Programme will be a national roll out of a tablet-based learning intervention to all pupils in Standards 1-4 in public primary schools of

Malawi, reaching approximately 3.8 million learners in 6,000 schools. The roll out will be implemented in six different phases spanning from year 1 to year 6, between September 2023 to August 2029.

The BEFIT Programme goal is to improve pupil learning outcomes in reading and numeracy through supplemental use of individualized, self-paced instruction delivered through specialized apps on Android tablets in standards 1-4 in all public primary schools in Malawi.

The BEFIT Programme is implemented by the Ministry of Education with support from a consortium made up Imagine Worldwide (IW), Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) and One Billion (OB). The Ministry of Education is the Lead Implementing Entity, while IW, VSO and OB (the software developer) will provide the technical, operational, and coordination support. The overall programme management, technical services provision and coordination is being provided through a Programme Implementation Management Unit (PIMU).

Therefore, in order to ensure efficient and programme progress monitoring, evaluation, accountability and leaning, the Ministry of Education through the BEFIT Programme intends to engage the services of a Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Research and Learning (MEARL) Specialist who will be responsible for overseeing and coordinating all programme MEARL activities across the BEFIT Programme ensuring that programme design, implementation modalities, outcomes and impact measurement align and contribute to achievement of the programme goals and objectives.

II. JOB SUMMARY

The **MEARL Specialist** will work closely with the **BEFIT National Programme Lead** ensuring that the BEFIT Programme has an effective, efficient and coherent MEARL system that is well aligned and feeds into Ministry of Education's monitoring system while meeting diverse donor data requirements. MEARL Specialist will also promote reflective and adaptive practices and establish mechanism of achieving intended objectives. The MEARL Specialist will also lead in the identification, capturing and sharing of innovations, best practices, lessons learnt and knowledge across the BEFIT Programme and ensure development of robust tools, systems, processes, and/approaches to increase programme technical excellence, overall programme reporting and influencing.

The MEARL Specialist will receive technical monitoring, evaluation, accountability and Learning support from MEARL Advisors from the principal consortium partners in order to ensure that all matters relating MEARL are properly managed.

The MEARL Specialist directly reports to the BEFIT National Programme Lead and closely collaborate with Ministry of Education and Imagine Worldwide Malawi Ltd Monitoring, Evaluation and Reaserch and Learning teams to ensure appropriate technical support.

The MEARL Specialist is a key member of the BEFIT Programme Implementation Management Unit (PIMU) and as such is responsible for leading and supporting BEFIT Programme management initiatives.

The position is based in Lilongwe but expected to travel 15-30% of time to field locations to provide programme implementation support

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

Job Responsibility #1: Measurement, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Technical Quality Backstopping (30% of Time)

- Lead the MEARL team in supporting program team in setting up and finalization of BEFIT Programme MEARL systems, Theories of Change, Log Frame, program indicators, and other MEARL elements;
- Lead the development and/or revision of BEFIT Programme MEARL guidance and tools.
- Ensure that BEFIT Programme is generating good quality data and information in a timely manner to meet government and donor reporting requirements.
- Create and promote capacity strengthening opportunities for program staff in different MEARL topics/processes.
- Coordinate training of programme/project teams in the use of the relevant programme indicators and programme approaches.
- Coordinating and support programme research agenda in collaboration with Ministry and IW research teams.
- Liaise and work with IW and Ministry of Education MEARL teams and Partners relevant structures in programme progress, outcome and impact monitoring and learning.
- Lead in the coordination of baselines, midline, endline evaluation, thematic studies, needs assessments, and other forms of evaluation, and ensuring dissemination of findings.

Job Responsibility #2: Programme Reporting and Documentation Management (30%of time)

- Lead in the organisation and monitoring of year-round data collection and consolidation of program results for timely annual reporting.
- Development and management of programme beneficiary and participant's database that is responsive to data needs.
- Lead in the Centralized Programme Data Management in liaison with IT department. This will include monitoring the use of the centralized data management for all key programme elements and updated log frameworks.
- Lead in the timely, accurate and effective reporting of program information to Government and regulatory bodies (e.g., NGO Board).
- Support MEARL team in development programme data quality audits (PQAs) tools and implementation of PQA exercise
- Develop and implement government/donor reporting processes that include appropriate lead times and signoff for donor reports.

Job Responsibility #4: MEARL Networking, Partnership, and representation. (15% of the time)

- Ensure that BEFIT Programme is ably represented in Ministry/National/consortium MEARL Technical Working Group.
- Establish MEARL network with BEFIT Consortium Partners that would be used for capacity building.

- Liaise and work with other BEFIT Consortium MEARL and Research focal persons to establish capacity for MEARL and Research and for keeping abreast of and engaged with MEARL innovations and networks across the BEFIT Programme.
- Lead in connecting BEFIT Programme with research or knowledge institutes and external communities of practice, networks and platform to increase visibility of BEFIT Programme knowledge and impact work and ensure BEFIT Programme technical knowledge products are published on key external knowledge platforms.

Job Responsibility #3: MEARL Team management and Capacity Building (20% of the time)

- Manage MEARL team towards high standards of performance through development of clear annual objective, roles and responsibilities, on-going feedback, and appraisals. Pro-actively address performance issues through timely constructive feedback and coaching.
- Build/nurture talent and maximize the use of available talent through on-going staff development, succession planning, career management and utilization of a leadership style that will drive employee engagement and motivation.
- Establish and maintain effective and strong mutual working relationships between program implementation team and MEARL team.
- Ensure appropriate MEARL team orientation package is put in place, reviewed and always utilized as one of ensuring appropriate nationalization of Programme MEARL systems to new/developing staff.

- Support the recruitment of well qualified MEARL staff and ensure relevant capacity building needs are identified and plan developed as well as implemented.
- Provide proper supervision and management for all MEARL staff and lead the establishment and functioning of a strong, effective, and coordinated MEARL & Program team.
- Ensure that projects and programs receive adequate technical support to meet all program technical quality standards and requirements in line donor and government Quality standards.
- Support the implementation of performance management system for MEARL staff and identification of mechanism to address performance issues through regular, constructive, and honest feedback and coaching.
- Facilitate training priorities based on performance management documents and in line with skills requirement of various positions and prepare a timetable of training to take place during the fiscal year.

Job responsibility # 5 Carry out any other duties as may be assigned – 5%

- Carry out any other relevant duties as may be required from time to time, including filling in the temporary staffing gap in the Programme Implementation Unit.

IV. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Required Education and Experience:

- Degree level qualification from accredited university in relevant subjects (e.g. research, statistics, development, economics, and closely related areas).

- At least 8 years of experience in monitoring and evaluation in a developing programme preferably education or within development programming context.
- Demonstrated experience providing technical and programmatic support in monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning.
- Experience in designing and implementing highly effective and efficient MEARL systems that deliver accurate and timely information for reporting and evaluation.
- Strong understanding and experience in the use of big databases/data processing tools (e.g. Excel) and working with qualitative and quantitative research/evaluation methods, creating reports and dashboards.
- Experience in developing and implementing impact measurement activities.
- Demonstrated experience in development of effective and competitive MEARL plans for proposals for diverse donors.
- Strong familiarity with commonly used software applications for MEARL.
- Technical training in the field related of education or related areas is an added advantage.
- Demonstrated experience in a similar role or senior management role that included similar responsibilities with clear articulation of achievements or contributions.
- Ability to communicate with respect and impact, in both written and spoken English.
- Collaborative, able to thrive in a matrix structure.
- Results oriented, able to prioritize and remain focused when faced with competing demands.
- Resilient, able to cope with ambiguity and manage work-life balance.

- Strong work ethic, able to lead by example and demand accountability from others.
- Progressive and brave, challenges business-as-usual and is not afraid to fail, but willing to try new things or new ways of doing things.

Desired Knowledge and Abilities:

- At least 10 years field experience managing programme MEARL in development programmes.
- Interpersonal and intercultural communications skills, with the ability to communicate knowledge in a manner appropriate to diverse audiences.
- Proven ability to work in partnership with other professionals, and to support learning and sharing of lessons and best practices.
- Demonstrated abilities in strategic planning, management, and oversight of complex technical initiatives.
- Analytical skills, with practical experience in data-based decision-making. The ability to understand and use analytical models and indicators is essential e.g., root cause/problem tree analyses, cost-benefit analysis, risk analysis, chances for success, etc.
- The ideal candidate should be ICT savvy. Skills in online collaboration and development of products using MS Office (notably PowerPoint, word and excel) are essential.

V. DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY

- **General:** The incumbent will be responsible for decision-making pertaining to the MEARL related programmatic issues in strict compliance with established policies, regulations, principles, and guidelines and within the

limits of the level of authority accorded to MEARL Specialist within BEFIT Programme.

- **Financial:** The incumbent will have the level of authority for project / programme MEARL staff and budget holder's responsibility as defined in relevant BEFIT Programme policies.

VI. CONTACTS/KEY RELATIONSHIPS:

This role is expected to establish and maintain open, professional, and cordial relations with the Programme internal and external customers. These include and not limited to.

Internal

- Ministry of Education Monitoring staff from relevant directorates including Planning and M&E.
- IW and VSO Country Office MEARL and Research teams; BEFIT Programme Technical and Support Teams.
- Consortium partners' international teams responsible for MEARL and Research.

External

- Donors / Government agencies / Other organizations (peer organizations)

VII. WORKING CONDITIONS

The position is based in Lilongwe with regular travel arrangements to field offices and other destinations.

VIII. CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS

Expression of interest including updated detailed curriculum vitae and certificates must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail), by **Friday, 19th December 2025 at 16:00 Hours Malawian Time.**

The Chief Human Resource Management Officer (CHRMO)

Ministry of Education

Private Bag 328

Lilongwe

Email : samisonikanduluu@gmail.com , ckumbanga1@gmail.com