



Advancing Citizen Engagement Project

Terms of Reference – Internal Midline Data collection

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Background to the ACE Project

Rwanda is widely celebrated for its remarkable post-genocide social, political, and economic renaissance. Uninterrupted economic growth since the mid-1990s has resulted in a more than three-fold increase in per capita income. While still a low-income country, today Rwanda's per capita gross domestic product (GDP) is higher than that of more than 20 countries in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA). The country has made excellent progress in increasing adult survival and reducing maternal mortality rates to levels approaching those seen in lower middle-income countries. It has also radically improved its investment climate, climbing to 38th place in the 2020 Doing Business global rankings. Rwanda's official poverty estimates suggest a continued decrease in poverty from 45 percent in 2010/11 to 38 percent in 2016/17.

Strong state institutions and capable public administration have been the cornerstones of Rwanda's success. International governance rankings place Rwanda ahead of most upper middle-income countries, with particularly strong performance on indicators of government effectiveness, control of corruption, rule of law, and regulatory quality. Government officials are bound by a detailed performance contract (imihigo) with the President of the Republic, which has proven an effective tool for state-driven, socio-economic transformation. However, while improving, Rwanda ranks low on voice and accountability, just below the average for low-income countries.¹

Despite the impressive progress, Rwanda faces challenges translating strong growth into poverty reduction. Even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, poverty reduction had stagnated, particularly in rural areas.² Persistent high levels of rural poverty (peaking at 69 percent in Nyamasheke district) and stunting (38 percent) continue to limit Rwanda's productive capacity and future competitiveness.³ Ninety percent of the poor live in rural areas and two-thirds of households face seasonal food shortages. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated Rwanda's development challenges, with GDP contracting by 3.4 percent in 2020 before bouncing back to 10.9 percent in 2021. Growth is expected to moderate through 2022-2024 due to the impacts of the war in Ukraine.

The centralized, top-down development model that proved effective in the initial phase of post-genocide state-building will not serve Rwanda's next phase of development. In 2001 the government issued a decentralization policy, which established the institutional architecture for subnational government. Implementation of the policy has put in place the institutions for participatory, bottom-up planning. The 1st phase (2001-2005) established democratically elected structures at the local level and institutionalized decentralization. The second phase (2005-2010) devolved more resources (human and financial) to local governments to enhance mechanisms for service delivery and streamline coordination of development

¹ Rwanda's score for Voice and Accountability in the Worldwide Governance Indicators increased from 15.76% in 2016 to 22.22% in 2021. The 2022 Rwanda Governance Scorecard also showed an increase in citizen satisfaction with participation and inclusiveness.

² 38 percent of the population are living in poverty (from 39 percent in 2014) and 16 percent in extreme poverty (no change since 2014). The poverty rate increases to 43.1 percent in rural areas.

³ Fifth Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey, *National Statistics Institute of Rwanda*, 2016/17

efforts. The third phase, which included the approval of the 2011 Fiscal and Financial Decentralisation Policy to adequately resource local governments in line with their responsibilities, focused on sectoral decentralization, local economic development, citizen participation and accountability mechanisms and local government capacity building (especially for Public Financial Management). The decentralization policy was designed to strengthen citizen engagement and begin the shift to a more bottom-up, participatory approach to development planning. However, citizen voice and participation remain limited and planning processes are still centralized and top-down.⁴ This has seen many of the poor in rural areas – and particularly marginalized members of the community such as youth, persons with disabilities and women – being left out of the benefits of Rwanda’s economic growth.

Multiple analyses have highlighted that the government needs to strengthen citizen engagement in local governance to improve development outcomes. The government has launched a number of initiatives to enhance this engagement, including through LODA’s August 2019 concept note to strengthen Citizen Engagement in Social Protection Programs. However, these efforts remain a work in progress, as acknowledged in the 2019 joint Government of Rwanda (GoR)-World Bank Future Drivers of Growth study, which observed that ‘the government’s top-down approach to public administration...impairs trust and stifles local initiative and creativity.’⁵ The need to strengthen citizen participation is reflected in the National Strategy for Transformation 2017-2024 (NST1). In particular, priority areas 5 and 6 under the Transformational Governance Pillar, ‘Strengthen capacity, service delivery and accountability of public institutions’ and ‘Increase citizens’ participation, engagement and partnerships in Development’, are seen as important strategies for improving livelihood and social welfare.⁶

The government is responding to the need for more citizen participation, including by introducing a new decentralization policy that aims to “deepen and sustain citizen centered governance and promote equitable local development for socio-economic transformation”.⁷ At the same time the government is rationalizing staffing, including increasing official presence at the cell, the lowest administrative level in the governance structure.⁸ This represents a strategic opportunity to improve the alignment of local development plans with citizen needs and aspirations.

While the GoR is increasingly committed to strengthening citizen engagement for decentralization and rural poverty reduction, important gaps remain. While there are a number of ongoing initiatives and institutions in place to strengthen citizen engagement, the government lacks a comprehensive framework

⁴ Ministry of Local Government (2017) *Assessment of the impact of decentralization policy implementation in Rwanda (2001-2017)*.

⁵ World Bank Group; Government of Rwanda. 2019. *Future Drivers of Growth in Rwanda: Innovation, Integration, Agglomeration, and Competition*. Washington, DC: World Bank

⁶ 7 Years Government Program: National Strategy for Transformation (NST 1) 2017-2024. See p.19, http://www.minecofin.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/NST1_7YGP_Final.pdf

⁷ Republic of Rwanda Ministry of Local Government (2021) National Decentralization Policy, accessible at: https://www.minaloc.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Minaloc/Publications/Policies/NATIONAL_DECENTRALIZATION_POLICY_OCTOBER_2021.pdf

⁸ World Bank (2020) “Rwanda Human Capital for Inclusive Growth Project Preparation Mission Aide Memoire”, January 2020.

for inclusive planning at the grassroots village-level. Local government capacity for participatory planning is also limited. At the village level, community mobilization is undertaken by Social Economic Development Officers (SEDOs) within the respective cell government administrative units. SEDOs have a good understanding of government targets to reduce poverty, improve household assets and support food security. However, many feel ill-equipped to mobilize citizens to own and lead change. Engagement processes continue to be influenced by top-down development objectives, with limited technical capacity for community dialogue, feedback cycles, and inclusive participation. Staff to be newly assigned to the cell level will need technical support to effectively reach out to citizens. Consistent with the Rwanda Governance Board recommendation to strengthen cooperation with civil society, the government recognizes that CSOs have an important role to work alongside public officials to strengthen local capacities for citizen engagement and mobilization.⁹ CSOs can also help to establish inclusive village-level development planning platforms to provide space for women's voice and leadership at the village and cell levels.

In 2017, the government approached Spark Microgrants, requesting support to strengthen citizen engagement, increase the uptake of government social programs, and improve rural livelihoods. Founded in Rwanda in 2010, Spark has formulated a participatory village development approach that leverages historical Rwandan social organizing practices, including *ubudehe*, *imihigo*, and *umuganda*. *Ubudehe* refers to the long-standing Rwandan practice and culture of collective action and mutual support to solve problems within a community.¹⁰ *Imihigo* is a precolonial tradition where individuals or communities publicly set goals and promise to achieve them. *Imihigo* has been formalized in Rwanda into performance contracts which hold public officials accountable on an annual basis. *Umuganda* is a practice derived from the precolonial Rwandan culture of self-help and cooperation.¹¹ In March 2019 (updated January 2020), LODA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Spark for a strategic collaboration to: (a) develop a National Framework for Participatory Village Planning for all 14,000 villages in Rwanda; and (b) strengthen existing decentralization initiatives by building on historical Rwandan traditions. This partnership opens up a timely opportunity to address important gaps in Rwanda's approach both to rural poverty reduction and local governance.

At the same time, faced by the COVID-19 crisis, the GoR has identified supporting livelihoods and social cohesion as top priorities for community recovery from the impact of the global pandemic. A substantial number of people most affected by COVID-19 are not traditional safety net beneficiaries. The

⁹ See above, n.5.

¹⁰ In 2001 the *Ubudehe* Program was launched as a flagship poverty reduction program with the ambition to strengthen democratic processes and good governance through greater community involvement in decision making. Today *Ubudehe* is one of the country's core development programs, including a process of household poverty/wealth categorization. However, the process has been diluted over time, is quite top down, and involves very little real consultation or constructive engagement.

¹¹ Traditionally, members of the community would call upon their family, friends and neighbors to help them complete a difficult task. For example, villagers may band together to help someone to harvest their crop if they are sick, disabled, or elderly when the harvest time comes, set a day aside to work together to build houses for the poor, or provide transportation to medical facilities to those who were in need.



government's Economic Recovery Plan calls for increased social protection and sustainable livelihood programming to tackle the expected medium-longer term impacts of the pandemic on the Rwandan economy. Government counterparts have recently affirmed the ongoing relevance of the MoU with Spark in the COVID context.

The Advancing Citizen Engagement project (ACE), signed between Spark Microgrants, the World Bank¹² and Comic Relief in June 2021 with a total value of \$5,840,000 over 36 months, will play an important role in strengthening civic engagement in local development planning and implementation, and improve rural livelihoods, in 249 villages in four districts in Rwanda. The ACE project development objective (PDO) is to improve livelihoods for 17,750 households/76,000 people and capacity of communities and national and local government for citizen engagement in 249 villages in Rwanda.

This objective is being achieved through a set of activities combining sustainable livelihood grants for poor, rural villages and capacity-building for district, sector, cell and village officials and villages on inclusive, participatory planning. Experience from the village-level activities will then be translated into a national policy framework for participatory village planning, in partnership with central and local government. The Project combines grassroots and policy level activities to strengthen rural livelihoods and establish a National Framework for Participatory Village Planning that will institutionalize participatory and inclusive village development planning at the village level in Rwanda. The project is supporting village-driven planning and livelihood programs in 249 villages in four districts – Huye, Gakenke, Gicumbi, and Burera.

The Project is designed to combine Spark's experience implementing their Facilitated Collective Action Process (FCAP) in Rwanda with existing Government institutions and capacities. The FCAP within the Spark project is a series of facilitated weekly village meetings, during which village residents analyze and agree on village development priorities, and make a simplified village development plan (VDP). The VDP includes three 'pathways': i) a project-funded microgrant project, ii) independent actions to be taken by villages, and iii) government-supported actions, linked to existing Government development plans and programs. The FCAP empowers citizens to exercise decision making power over village plans and facilitate a process to mitigate elite capture and garner widespread engagement, ensuring that development priorities are defined by and benefit normally disadvantaged groups such as women, and the poorest households. The FCAP within the ACE project generates two annual village cycles, with a six-month inception period and a six-month post-implementation phase. The entire project has a 36-month timeframe, running until December 31, 2024.

The FCAP is a partnership between the local Government in the target areas and Spark. The weekly village meetings are mandated by the Government of Rwanda at set dates and times - and the FCAP is designed to leverage and enhance this existing platform for citizen engagement and locally-led development. Under the ACE Project, Spark is training local Government officials - Social and Economic Development Officers,

¹² The World Bank is managing grant funding provided by the Government of Japan, via the Japan Social Development Fund.



known as SEDO's – who in turn train community-based facilitators to lead weekly village meetings during which development planning decisions are discussed and made. SEDOs are responsible for implementing/coordinating a range of other local development programs, which may also be discussed during the weekly meetings. As such, the ACE Project aims to both enhance an existing CE platform - the weekly meetings - through introduction of participatory development planning and implementation activities, and training of SEDOs and community-based facilitators to lead these meetings. In addition, the Project contributes additional development resources at the village level, through the provision of small, discretionary grants to each target village, as a complement to broader Government-led development programs.

The Government of Rwanda is interested in scaling this approach nationally, and this programme acts as a pilot to generate evidence on the effectiveness of participatory, community-driven development planning in the context of the Government of Rwanda's decentralization agenda, to inform scaling plans in future. The national framework is, therefore, key not just as a vehicle for local development but as one that strengthens citizen-state relations by enhancing the space for civic engagement in bottom-up development processes. This evaluation will focus on both economic impacts and local government capacity for citizen engagement.

The project is being implemented through four components:

- **Component 1: Village and Local Government Capacity Building.** This component builds the capacity of local government at the district, sector, and cell levels to facilitate village-driven village development processes to enhance citizen engagement and improve rural livelihoods. It also builds village capacity to engage in development planning and to manage village level subprojects.
- **Component Two: MicroGrants.** Component two finances priority subprojects identified in the VDPs to improve livelihoods. Each target village is provided a grant of US\$8,000, disbursed over two years. The government in each of the target districts contributes five percent of the total grant amount, while village members will make contributions in-kind. MicroGrant eligibility is guaranteed for every target village provided eligibility conditions are met, including the election of a Village Leadership Committee, completion of the VDP and submission and approval of a subproject proposal.
- **Component Three: National Framework for Participatory Village Planning.** Component Three consolidates lessons from the pilot activities under components one and two and supports the Government of Rwanda to prepare a National Framework for Participatory Village Planning.
- **Component 4: Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Knowledge Dissemination.** This component includes overall project management, monitoring and evaluation, communications and knowledge dissemination.

Background to the Assignment

In March 2021, Spark conducted an internal baseline study for the ACE project to ascertain the status of the project outcome indicators pre intervention/FCAP implementation to provide a basis for comparison at midline and endline studies. Spark is planning to conduct a follow up study (midline) in February 2023 and is seeking services of highly skilled and qualified 40 consultants to conduct data collection for the study. The consultants will conduct both quantitative data collection through a structured questionnaire programmed in a Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) application and qualitative data collection through Focus Group Discussions using an interview guide.

Scope of Work

Quantitative data collection

The consultants will be employed to collect data in 140 villages spread out in 7 sectors and 4 Districts of Burera, Gicumbi, Huye and Gakenke. Each enumerator will be required to collect 7 surveys per day and cover a total of 20 households in each village. Each enumerator is expected to have a fully functional android smart phone on which the data collection tool will be installed. Below is a table representing the expected surveys in each sector

District	Sector	Surveys per village	Number of villages to be surveyed	Total surveys
Burera	Rwerere	20	20	400
Burera	Kinyababa	20	20	400
Gakenke	Busengo	20	20	400
Gicumbi	Mutete	20	20	400
Gicumbi	Cyumba	20	20	400
Huye	Gishamvu	20	20	400
Huye	Kigoma	20	20	400
Total		140	140	2800

Qualitative data collection

Out of the 40 consultants, 32 will be selected to conduct Focus Group Discussions. A total of 16 FGDs will be conducted, 4 in each District. Each FGD will be managed by 2 consultants one working as a facilitator/moderator and the other as a note taker. These FGDs will sample 3 key project demographics (SEDOs; Women; Ubudehe Cat1) alongside an open access group. This methodology is designed to demonstrate 90% of issues.

Timelines

Activity	Jan-23													Feb-23																
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Consultant recruitment	█	█	█	█	█		█	█	█	█	█	█																		
Consultant training															█	█														
Quantitative data collection																	█	█	█	█		█	█	█	█	█	█	█		
Qualitative data collection (FGDs)																														█

Expected outputs

Each of the 40 consultants is expected to have collected a total of 70 surveys by the 12th of February 2023 and for the 32 consultants that will conduct the FGDs, a transcription typed in MS word and translated in English (in soft copy) and a recorded audio file of the FGD will be expected from each pair of consultants.

Spark's responsibility

In order to facilitate the consultants to undertake the exercise, Spark will do the following;

1. Conduct a 2 days training for the consultants covering; ACE project and FCAP approach, the data collection tools, research ethics, procedure for selection of households to be interviewed and the survey logistics.
2. Secure an introductory letter from the relevant District and Sector officials that each consultant will be expected to carry at all times while undertaking the assignment
3. Provide transportation to and from the field on a daily basis during the period of the assignment
4. Mobilization of FGD participants and bringing them into a central location where the FGDs will be conducted
5. Introducing the consultants to the village leadership and working with the leaders to help the consultants navigate the village

Application Details

Applications are welcome from individuals, who are able to demonstrate the capacity to deliver the piece of work set out above, within the Rwandan context

The following skills and experiences are essential criteria for all applicants

- A university degree in any discipline
- Previous experience in conducting household survey data collection using digital tools within Rwanda; the consultant must have worked on at least 2 data collection assignments previously.
- Experience in conducting qualitative data collection through Focus Group Discussions



- Excellent English and Kinyarwanda spoken and written skills
- Estimated start date: As soon as possible
- Application closing Date: On a rolling basis, we reserve the right to close this recruitment process at any time.

Interested individuals should submit a cover letter demonstrating how you meet the criteria above and your updated CV through this [link <https://sparkmicrogrants.bamboohr.com/careers/63>](https://sparkmicrogrants.bamboohr.com/careers/63)

Annex 1: Contractors Code of conduct

All **Contractors** and staff of **Contractors** of Spark MicroGrants agree to:

- Respect and promote fundamental human rights without discrimination of any kind and irrespective of social status, race, ethnicity, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, national origin, political affiliation or disability.
- Treat all refugees, internally displaced persons, project affected communities, target groups and other persons fairly and with respect, courtesy, dignity and according to the respective country law, international law and local customs.
- Support and maintain an environment that prevents exploitation and abuse, abuse of power and corruption.
- Uphold the highest standards of accountability, efficiency, competence, integrity and transparency in the provision of goods and services in the execution of their contract.
- Never commit any act or form of harassment that could result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to individuals, especially women and children.
- Never exploit the vulnerability of any target group, especially women and children, or allow any person/s to be put into compromising situations.
- Never engage in any sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense.
- Never engage in sexual exploitation or abuse. This constitutes acts of gross misconduct and is therefore grounds for termination of this contract.
- Never exchange money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours. All forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior are prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to project affected communities.
- Never abuse their position to withhold project-related or other assistance, nor give preferential treatment; in order to solicit sexual favours, gifts, payments of any kind, or

advantage. The **Contractor** should be conscious of not taking advantage of his/her position vis-a-vis local communities, project affected persons and staff of the **Organization**, and may not accept gifts or bribes.

- Not engage in sexual relationships with project affected persons. Such relationships may be based on inherently unequal power dynamics and are not permitted. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of development work.
- Ensure that all confidential information, including reports of breaches of these standards by colleagues, obtained from beneficiaries or colleagues is channeled correctly) through the grievance redress mechanism, see Annex 2) & handled with utmost confidentiality.
- Ensure that reports of breaches of these standards are immediately reported to your assigned contract manager who is expected to take prompt investigative action, or anonymously through the Grievance Redress Mechanism (Annex 2).
- Any breach of the Code of Conduct will be treated as a major violation of standards of conduct and performance and will be subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of the **Organization**.

Annex 2: Grievance Redress Mechanism

Spark has implemented a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) to record and address any complaints that may arise during the implementation phase of the Advancing Citizen's Engagement Project. The GRM is designed to address concerns and complaints promptly and transparently and resulting in no negative implications (cost, discrimination) to the affected people raising a grievance.

The **key objectives** of the GRM are to:

- Provide people affected by the project and other stakeholders safe, transparent and accessible tools for reporting any issues that are placing participants/beneficiaries at risk, impacting the quality of the project, or otherwise resulting in negative outcomes;
- Record, categorize and prioritize the grievances;
- Settle the grievances using the most appropriate method and inform those stakeholders of the solutions;
- Forward any unresolved cases to the relevant authority.