

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CONSULTANCY

Project Title: Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Skills and Innovation Project (P179210)

Position: Consultancy to improve the articulation of pathways from secondary to post-secondary and to identify barriers faced by young men in accessing post-secondary education

Location: GRENADA

1. INTRODUCTION

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Skills and Innovation Project (SKIP) is being implemented by the Government of Grenada (GoG), the Government of Saint Lucia (GoSL), and the OECS Commission (OECSC). It is financed with US\$36 million from the International Development Association (IDA), with each of the two participating countries receiving a US\$15 million credit while the OECSC receives a US\$6 million IDA grant.

The OECS SKIP aims to enhance youth transversal and advanced technical skills, strengthen regional collaboration in post-secondary education, and foster collaborative innovation. The project consists of four components:

- (i) Fostering regional collaboration for youth skills and innovation in the post-secondary space, implemented by the OECSC,
- (ii) Strengthening post-secondary institutions to deliver priority skills and participate in collaborative innovation, implemented by the GoG and GoSL,
- (iii) Project Management and Technical Assistance, implemented by the GoG, GoSL, and OECSC, and
- (iv) Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC), which is activated in case of an eligible crisis or emergency.

2. BACKGROUND

Grenada, like many other Caribbean nations, continues to face persistent challenges in ensuring equitable access and meaningful participation in secondary and post-secondary education for young men. While the country has expanded opportunities for higher learning, enrollment and completion rates among male students remain disproportionately lower than those of their female counterparts. Data from post-secondary institutions in Grenada indicate male students tend to enroll at lower rates compared to female students. Additionally, male students experience higher dropout rates than their female counterparts.

Several interrelated factors contribute to the underrepresentation of young men in post-secondary education. Learning outcomes at the primary and secondary levels frequently limit their ability to transition successfully into higher education. Additionally, there is a lack of early warning systems and targeted retention programs to address the specific challenges faced by male students.

Socioeconomic constraints, cultural norms, and prevailing perceptions about traditional male roles in the workforce further influence educational choices, often leading young men to prioritize immediate entry into low-skilled employment rather than pursuing continued education. Employment data show that while men dominate sectors such as construction, electrical, and general maintenance, these industries generally offer low wages and limited upward mobility, reinforcing the consequences of reduced educational attainment. Moreover, there is a need to strengthen the articulation of flexible pathways from secondary to post-secondary education, including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), to ensure smoother transitions and better outcomes for all learners.

Recognizing these challenges, the Government of Grenada (GoG), through the Ministry of Education, seeks to engage an Individual Consultant to conduct two interrelated studies under one consultancy:

- **Study 1:** Articulation of Pathways Between Secondary and Post-Secondary Education
- **Study 2:** Identifying Barriers Faced by Young Men in Accessing Post-Secondary Education

The consultancy will draw upon best practices from international contexts while ensuring that recommendations align with local and regional realities. First, the consultancy will explore currently available pathways between secondary and post-secondary education to identify any gaps and provide recommendations on how transitions can be made more seamless, transparent, and inclusive. Second, the Consultancy will provide an in-depth, evidence-based study on the barriers that young men face in accessing post-secondary education. The consultancy will provide targeted interventions to improve male participation and retention, drawing from global good practices and adapting them to the Grenadian and Caribbean region. These findings will inform the development of strategies and standards to make post-secondary institutions more responsive to the needs of all learners, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), through improved student services, mentorship, career counseling, and information-sharing on the returns to education and career pathways.

The findings will contribute to the Regional Enhancement Plans for post-secondary institutions, ensuring that necessary adjustments to learning environments foster greater retention and accessibility for all students, including those with SEND.

3. OBJECTIVE OF ASSIGNMENT

The consultancy will examine the articulation of education pathways between secondary and post-secondary levels within Grenada. This includes identifying gaps in curriculum alignment, institutional coordination, academic preparation, well-articulated guiding policies and procedures and career guidance systems that may impede smooth transitions for learners, particularly those from vulnerable groups. Strengthening these pathways is essential to ensure that students can

navigate coherent and inclusive trajectories into different types of post-secondary education, depending on their aspirations (e.g. technical and vocational non-tertiary training, short-cycle tertiary, and general tertiary education).

In addition, the consultancy will identify and analyze the barriers that hinder young men's access to and retention in post-secondary education in Grenada, and to recommend relevant strategies to improve male participation and attainment in higher education. Barriers may include, but are not limited to, psychological, socioeconomic and gender-specific factors. Strategies should encompass practical and implementable policies, programmatic and institutional developments that can be undertaken by the Ministry of Education and/or education institutions.

By achieving these objectives, the consultancy will contribute to addressing existing challenges faced by men in Grenada's workforce, inform strategies for reducing the gender gap in the demand for higher-learning, and support the development of a more integrated and equitable education system that promotes lifelong learning and inclusive economic participation.

4. SCOPE OF WORK

The Consultant will undertake the following specific tasks:

Study 1: Articulation of Pathways Between Secondary and Post-Secondary Education

- a. Conduct a desk review of existing education pathways in Grenada, including curriculum alignment between secondary and post-secondary education, academic preparation of students, certification frameworks, equivalency standards and institutional coordination between secondary schools and post-secondary institutions (e.g. TAMCC, NEWLO, St. Georges University, University of West Indies). Such tasks shall form part of Deliverable A.
- b. Conduct a comprehensive assessment on the articulation mechanisms from secondary to post-secondary such as bridging programs, recognition of prior learning and use of digital tools and platforms to support transitions. Such tasks shall form part of Deliverable B(i).
 - i. Analyze barriers to effective transition, including institutional silos, lack of career guidance, financial and social constraints, program relevance and insufficient support services for students navigating post-secondary options. Such tasks shall form part of Deliverable B(i).
 - ii. Map student trajectories from lower-secondary to post-secondary education in Grenada, identifying key decision points, graduation rates, dropout rates and contributing factors, and alternative pathways to formal education (e.g. informal learning, entrepreneurship, non-formal TVET) - assess outcomes and sustainability of non-traditional routes. Such tasks shall form part of Deliverable B(i).

- iii. Engage stakeholders through structured interviews and focus groups to gather insights on educational pathways. Engagement will involve Ministry of Education leadership, technical teams, and school administrators at the policy level; teachers, faculty, and guidance counselors at the technical level; and students, parents, and youth organizations at the operational level - with tailored engagement strategies and data collection instruments designed for each group to ensure relevance and effectiveness across these distinct stakeholder categories. Such tasks form part of Deliverable B(i).
- c. Identify regional and international best practices for effective articulation of flexible pathways, including recognition of prior learning, dual enrollment, and bridging programs, especially those that promote equity, gender responsiveness and inclusion of SEND learners. Such tasks shall form part of Deliverable B(i).
- d. Propose practical strategies to strengthen articulation of flexible pathways, including policy reforms, institutional coordination frameworks, integration of transversal and technical skills development, and improvements in information provision and student support services. Such tasks shall form part of Deliverable B(i).
- e. Develop evidence-based recommendations to improve the pathways from secondary to post-secondary education that are inclusive and responsive to the needs of vulnerable learners. Pathways must be aligned with national development, and national and regional labor market needs. Such tasks shall form part of Deliverable B(i).
- f. Develop monitoring and evaluation tools and indicators to assess the effectiveness of proposed articulation strategies. Include baseline data, targets, and reporting mechanisms. Such tasks shall form part of Deliverable B(i).
- g. Present findings to stakeholders and facilitate discussions on programmatic responses, emphasizing inclusivity in education. Such tasks shall form part of Deliverable C.

Study 2: Identifying Barriers Faced by Young Men in Accessing Post-Secondary Education

- a. Conduct a desk review on male progression through the education system and their participation in post-secondary education (relative to that of females) in Grenada, including male learners at the post-secondary level with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Such tasks shall form part of Deliverable A.
- b. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the key barriers preventing young men from accessing and completing post-secondary education in Grenada. This assessment should

include an analysis of push and pull factors, such as economic constraints, academic preparedness, socioeconomic influences, psychological pressures, family-related dynamics, and disability-related challenges. Other influences shaping young men's decisions to pursue alternative pathways outside of formal education should also be considered. To ensure a holistic understanding of male educational trajectories, the assessment shall include surveys, focus groups and interviews with students at lower-secondary and extend to young men across various post-secondary decision points. This includes young men (including those with SEND) who:

- Dropped out of school in lower-secondary.
- Dropped out of school in upper-secondary.
- Completed upper-secondary but did not sit (or did not pass) CSEC exams.
- Passed the requisite CSEC exams but opted not to enroll in further education.
- Enrolled in post-secondary education and are either still enrolled or dropped out.

Additionally, the assessment will engage a broad range of stakeholders to gain insights into the challenges and perceptions affecting male educational access and retention. These stakeholders include educators and students support professionals from secondary and post-secondary institutions, parents/guardians, community leaders, disability advocates, employers, youth organizations, administrators and policy makers. Such tasks shall form part of Deliverable B(ii).

- c. Identify best practices from regional and international contexts that successfully address male retention in education. These best practices should also include modules or frameworks for the examination of social norms and expectations that place demands on young men of a specific age or maturity level and influence male aspirations and educational choices. Such tasks shall form part of Deliverable B(ii).
- d. Analyze the role of early warning systems in Grenada, targeted student retention interventions, institutional policies, multi-tiered systems of support including mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS), and School Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) for male students, including those with special educational needs. Comparative analyses of such early warning systems (including but not limited to drop-out predictors, academic performance monitoring, absenteeism flags and referral pathways) against other countries are also expected. The examination of student retention interventions should consider gender-responsive social and emotional learning aspects that may support the erasure of harmful gender stereotypes and help in making the school experience a more attractive option. Such tasks shall form part of Deliverable B(ii).
- e. Develop evidence-based recommendations aimed at enhancing male retention and academic success at the secondary level and improving transition rates into post-secondary

education. These recommendations should be inclusive, ensuring that male students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are adequately supported. The proposed interventions should address systemic barriers while fostering male-responsive educational environments that encourage continued learning and skills development. These recommendations should:

- (i) Propose targeted intervention to reduce pull factors that discourage young men from pursuing formal secondary and post-secondary education. This should include monitoring and evaluation (M&E) metrics to help measure the effectiveness of the pull-factor reduction strategies in retaining male students.
 - (ii) Propose interventions, including policy recommendations, to create more male-responsive learning environments, including the establishment of standards for male-responsive student services, counseling, and mentorship programs that address the unique needs of male learners (including those services that are targeted to learners with disabilities). Policy recommendations should be geared towards improving male participation and success in secondary and post-secondary education institutions, ensuring that institutions develop inclusive education policies that target students with SEND, foster the delivery of social emotional learning curricular to support male learner attendance and success at school and enable a sense of belonging. A monitoring and evaluation metric for the interventions proposed would be beneficial to facilitate impact evaluation of the interventions.
 - (iii) Include a strategic behavior change communication plan for supporting male learners at different education levels, which supports information sharing on the benefits and returns to education and qualifications needed for different career. Such tasks shall form part of Deliverable B(ii).
- f. Outline mechanisms for sustainability of the recommended interventions, emphasizing institutional ownership, capacity development, and integration into existing education systems and budgets to ensure long-term impact and scalability. This task shall form part of Deliverable B(ii).
- g. Present findings to stakeholders and facilitate discussions on programmatic responses, emphasizing inclusivity in education. Such tasks shall form part of Deliverable C.

5. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

The Consultant shall, under the supervision of the National Project Coordinator and Project Implementation Unit (PIU) of the OECS SKIP, complete the deliverables as stated below. All reports associated with the assignment shall constitute a formal document with the following sections (included but not limited to):

- Table of Contents;
- Executive Summary;
- Body of Information;
- Conclusion;
- Recommendations (with relevance to deliverables outlined);
- Appendix – original evidence of meeting attendance registers, meeting notes, photos of stakeholder meetings, sample research instruments, detailed research methodology, agendas and synopsis of discussions, and results including clean data sets, where applicable.

The deliverables and timelines for the studies under the consultancy shall constitute the following:

- A. **Inception Reports.** Within ten (10) business days of contract signing the Consultant shall submit an inception report outlining the methodology, data collection plan, stakeholder engagement strategy, and work schedule covering both Study 1 and Study 2. The report must also present evidence of the Consultant’s desk review and initial contextual analysis.
- B. **Progress Reports.** Within fifty (50) business days of contract signing, two comprehensive progress reports shall be submitted (one for each study) summarizing key findings from the desk review, stakeholder consultations, and preliminary analysis. These reports should also document any research challenges encountered and solutions proposed by the Consultant.
 - i. **Study 1:** Articulation of Pathways Between Secondary and Post-Secondary Education must include analysis of existing articulation mechanisms, gaps in transition pathways, and institutional readiness. The report should propose targeted interventions to improve alignment, access, and continuity between secondary and post-secondary education, with reference to relevant regional and international practices.
 - ii. **Study 2:** Barriers Faced by Young Men in Accessing Post-Secondary Education must highlight analysis of early warning signs, social norms, and systemic factors influencing male educational choices. The report should propose interventions to support male learners, using regional and international practices as the evidence base, including recommendations for improving retention and completion rates in secondary education as well as enrollment and participation in post-secondary education.

These reports will form the basis of the consultant’s key presentation to stakeholders at a validation workshop.

C. Validation Workshop

By the fifty-fifth (55th) business day following contract signing the Consultant shall conduct a one-day validation workshop, coordinated by the PIU, to present key findings

and draft recommendations to key stakeholders, including but not limited to technical officers within the Ministry of Education, secondary school leaders and post-secondary institutions. The workshop will facilitate structured feedback and discussion. The Consultant shall document all feedback received and incorporate relevant adjustments into the final reports.

D. Final Reports

By the seventieth (70th) business day following contract signing the Consultant shall submit two final reports (one for each study) incorporating stakeholder feedback from the validation workshop and presenting actionable, evidence-based recommendations.

- i. **Study 1:** Articulation of Pathways Between Secondary and Post-Secondary Education. Final recommendations should address strategic barriers to transition, propose mechanisms for improved alignment, and include an integrated M&E framework with indicators, tools, and reporting mechanisms to track implementation effectiveness.
- ii. **Study 2:** Barriers Faced by Young Men in Accessing Post-Secondary Education. Final recommendations should propose strategies to mitigate, remedy, or eliminate barriers affecting male access and retention. The report must include a gender-responsive and inclusive M&E framework to monitor progress and potentially measure the impact of proposed interventions.

The final report must reflect stakeholder input, ensuring data-driven, contextually relevant solutions that address systemic challenges.

6. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Item.	Description	Submission Period/Timeframe	Payment Schedule
A	Inception Report	No later than ten (10) business days after contract signing. MoE and other relevant stakeholders will provide feedback on the acceptance of the methodology.	10%
B (i)	Progress Report – Study 1	No later than fifty (50) business days of contract signing.	15%
B (ii)	Progress Report – Study 2	No later than fifty (50) business days of contract signing.	15%
C	Validation Workshop	Workshop to be conducted no later than fifty-five (55) days after contract signing.	10%

D (i)	Final Report – Study 1	No later than seventy (70) days after contract signing. MoE and other relevant stakeholders will provide feedback on the acceptance of the final report. The MoE reserves the right to request revision(s) to the Final Report on review.	25%
D (ii)	Final Report – Study 2	No later than seventy (70) days after contract signing. MoE and other relevant stakeholders will provide feedback on the acceptance of the final report. The MoE reserves the right to request revision(s) to the Final Report on review.	25%

All reports and documents prepared for the assignment will be the property of the Government of Grenada

7. REQUIRED QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE

The assignment is to be undertaken by a suitably qualified Individual Consultant possessing the following qualifications and experience:

- Post Graduate Degree in Higher Education, Education, Social Sciences, Gender Studies, or a related field;
- Minimum of five (5) years of experience in education research and policy within the Caribbean region;
- Minimum of two (2) years of experience in data collection, statistical analysis, and qualitative research methodologies;
- Proven experience in conducting at least one (1) gender-disparity study, social development and research on male participation in education within the Caribbean region;
- Minimum of five (5) years of experience working with programs that support at-risk male youth and/or male youth empowerment.

Other desired skills and professional experience for the qualified consultant are as follows:

- Experience in developing gender responsive policy recommendations and educational interventions within the Caribbean region;
- Knowledge of gender-responsive educational programming and mentorship programs for males;
- Background in inclusive education and supporting learners with disabilities;
- Strong analytical and report-writing skills.

8. *REPORTING ARRANGEMENT*

The Consultant will report to the National Project Coordinator of the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) for the OECS Skills and Innovation Project, and in close collaboration with the T.A. Marryshow Community College (TAMCC) and New Life Organisation (NEWLO), beneficiary institutions of the OECS SKIP. Formal meetings and presentations will be scheduled for the Consultant to discuss the progress of key assignments as necessary. Deliverables of the consultancy will be approved by the Permanent Secretary with responsibility for Human Resources and Educational Development to the Ministry of Education, or whoever he/she designates.

Prior to any execution of activities related to this Terms of Reference, the MoE, through the PIU of the OECS SKIP, shall convene an inception meeting between the Consultant and key stakeholders with respect to this consultancy.

a) Client's Responsibility

On behalf of the MoE, the PIU of the OECS SKIP shall evaluate the quality of work delivered by the Consultant based on this TOR to ensure the quality and relevance of work being conducted, and based on this, shall issue a written project acceptance/approval, retention, or discontinuance. The following comprise the general expectations of the Client:

- Contract management by the PIU to ensure compliance with agreed terms and conditions.
- Technical oversight and coordination by the PIU, in collaboration with the MoE, TAMCC and NEWLO to ensure acceptable quality of deliverables and adherence to agreed timelines.
- Access to all existing documents and repositories of relevance to the successful execution of this consultancy.
- Review of reports to ascertain congruence with the terms of reference.
- Initiate the consultation and cooperation of other internal and external stakeholders required to provide support to the Consultant for realization of the relevant aspects of the assignment. This includes the coordination of the validation workshop.
- The PIU will collaborate with relevant stakeholders within the MoE and beneficiary institutions, to ensure the timely review and acceptance of the required reports submitted by the Consultant.
- The PIU shall process payments based on approved deliverables.

b) Consultant's Responsibility

The Consultant shall provide information that indicates experience, educational/ training qualifications and capacity to undertake the work outlined herein. The following are the general expectations from the Consultant:

- The Consultant shall submit all reports to the PIU in accordance with the agreed timelines.

- The Consultant shall develop a clear work plan, outlining expected outputs and ensuring timely submission for PIU review.
- The Consultant shall be responsible for office space, equipment, materials, accommodation and office requirements.
- The Consultant shall execute services in accordance with the laws, customs, and practices endorsed by the MoE and the Government of Grenada.
- The Consultant shall ensure the strict confidentiality of all information and materials gathered and used during the engagement, maintaining ethical and professional integrity.
- The Consultant shall maintain consistent communication with the PIU, providing progress updates to facilitate timely completion and quality assurance of deliverables.

9. *CONTRACT DURATION*

The consultant will be engaged for a period of four (4) months from the start date.