** Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL)**

**Counting the cost of corruption: A knowledge-based approach to fighting corruption**

**Overview**

A consortium of four organisations, including Christian Aid Sierra Leone (lead partner), the Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL), Restless Development (RD) and Budget Advocacy Network (BAN) (together known as “the Consortium”) is currently implementing a Department for International Development (DFID)-funded project aimed at supporting the Government of Sierra Leone to improve revenue collection, strengthen public finance management (PFM) and anti-corruption initiatives, particularly in the public sector. The government has made strong efforts to increase public revenue and address corruption in the last year, but significant challenges persist. Apart from the challenges relating to budget transparency, access to basic social services is limited, accountability mechanisms require more support, and corruption is still considered to be pervasive. This project recognizes the role non-state actors in Sierra Leone can play in assisting the government to address the development challenges confronting the country, and particularly deliver on its publicly stated goals of fighting corruption. Through counting the cost of corruption, and raising awareness, the Consortium will positively shape the context to enable government to grow revenue, ensure greater fiscal discipline and deliver education and health services with fewer resources wasted. The consortium will use a multiplicity of tools, including research and publication, public education, and citizens’ mobilization to help the government address these challenges.

***Corruption as an impediment to growth***

Sierra Leone is a model of paradox. The country is rich in both natural and mineral resources. It is believed that 70 per cent of the land is arable; it has vast marine resources and receives six months of rain every year. Meanwhile, the country has some of the highest rates of hunger, poverty, illiteracy and maternal and child mortality in the world. Unemployment levels are high, and the government remains the highest employer of skilled labour in the country. Most development experts identify corruption as the key impediment to Sierra Leone’s development potentials. The country’s post-independence development history is replete with instances of egregious corruption and mismanagement. The public sector still needs significant reforms, while the private sector remains weak.

Experts agree that corruption has taken many forms in Sierra Leone, and its impact on the society has been quite corrosive. There is abundant evidence that corruption has undermined the government’s revenue mobilization potential, which has consequently deprived citizens of access to basic social and economic services. A U4 Anti-Corruption Centre report, titled, ‘Overview of Corruption and Anti-Corruption in Sierra Leone’ in 2010 stated that corruption has an impact across the economy, affecting extractives and the private sector, government management of resources down to petty corruption and bribes for access to services. Sierra Leone’s position in international corruption perception indices is not impressive. Data from the ‘Pay no Bribe’ campaign, a DFID-funded project implemented by ACC and civil society partners, shows over 71,000 people reported having paid a bribe in 14 districts of the country over a period of 27 months. Annual reports released by the national audit service over the last two decades indicate that successive governments have failed to fully account for public funds. According to the Ministry of Finance, technical audits conducted by the ASSL in four sectors and covering three years, revealed the equivalent of over $1bn of funds unaccounted for. Other evidence includes ACC investigations/prosecutions, the recent special performance audits and reviews of government procurement. Anecdotal evidence from private sector actors indicate an operating environment riddled by “gatekeepers” and “facilitators” ready to bypass regulations, legislation and formal bureaucratic processes in return for bribes and corrupt payments, or alternatively – if bribes are not forthcoming, to block investments.

Corruption seems to have permeated society, but there is a huge knowledge gap regarding its scale and patterns across all sectors of the economy. There has been little effort to provide broad, well-researched evidence on the cost of corruption to Sierra Leone’s economy and its development aspirations. Credible data that provides a clear picture of the scale, patterns and ultimately the cost of corruption is needed. Such data is critical for raising awareness, and for developing an effective and robust anti-corruption strategy at both national and sub-national levels.

***The Assignment***

While Sierra Leone is ranked as one of the most corrupt countries by Transparency International and other international indices, there has been little attempt to rigorously quantify the scale of the problem.

This assignment seeks to expand the evidence base by developing a well-informed estimate on the likely cost of corruption in Sierra Leone, based on a rigorous methodology, existing evidence and targeted interviews. These estimates on the cost of corruption will help to inform actionable and achievable recommendations for both the Sierra Leone Government and its international partners. This should go beyond perception surveys and assumptions about corruption in Sierra Leone.

The task of the consultants is to undertake research using both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools to provide a methodologically sound and realistic estimate of the potential scale of corruption in Sierra Leone, including both the public and private sector. Measuring the cost of corruption is a key element in capturing the public imagination and driving political reform, and is deemed to be a necessary ingredient of determining how to combat corruption. Furthermore, any breakdown of corruption costs by sector can help to establish where anti-corruption efforts should focus. The team of consultants should also highlight any findings on where there are large opportunities for corruption, and recommend ways of addressing them.

In summary, the assignment is to cover the following key questions as far as possible within the time scale:

* What is the overall cost of corruption to the Sierra Leone economy?
* If possible, breakdown these costs to the different groups below. In some cases, this is likely to be more descriptive/qualitative given lack of qualitative evidence.
	+ Costs at the household level
	+ Costs of corruption to firm profitability
	+ Costs of corruption to government revenue generation
	+ Costs of corruption to public service delivery
	+ Costs of corruption faced by different groups, including women and girls and people with disability
* What are some of the main factors that create the opportunities for corruption?
* What areas should be prioritized in anti-corruption efforts?
* What are the major research and evidence gaps on anti-corruption that should be addressed?

**Audience and use**

The report will be targeted at several key stakeholder groups. Firstly, it will give government an estimate of the overall cost of corruption on the economy, and the need to priorities reform in order to achieve the national development plan aspirations. Secondly, it’ll be a useful source of information for the ACC in targeting their anti-corruption efforts. It’ll also be a resource for bilateral and multilateral donors, emphasizing the importance of supporting anti-corruption efforts. In particular, DFID will be using the findings from the work to inform future planning decisions. And lastly, the report will raise awareness with civil society, media and the public on the impact that corruption has on the economy and people’s lives.

In order to reach these various audiences, the report will be communicated in a range of ways, including through print and digital media; radio; online publication; launch events; working with mobile companies to send out mass messages; tv coverage; and infographics, videos and cartoons.

**Approach**

The goal of the study is to establish an estimate for the cost of corruption in Sierra Leone. Given the time allocated for the work, this will rely largely on existing evidence and data (including estimates from other countries that can be adapted to Sierra Leone). This should be supplemented by interviews with key experts, public sector leaders and businesses in Sierra Leone, as well as a limited sample of businesses. The report should focus on the cost to the economy (in GDP terms) but also the human cost in terms of access to services (to allow for public engagement around the report findings). Further, the report should disaggregate where possible by gender, and highlight any particular challenges/costs faced by marginalized groups (including women and people with disabilities). The data from the Pay No Bribe Campaign should be used to give examples of the issues and costs faced at sector level. The report should focus on reality rather than perceptions (we’ll be commissioning separate work on corruptions perceptions). To build up this information the report should build up evidence from various sectors across the economy and look at various types of corruption (including embezzlement, bribery and extortion, collusion and cases involving public private partnerships). Given the deadline for the work and the lack of evidence in some sectors, there will need to be a pragmatic approach involving a range of types of evidence (from official research to government reports, media stories and interviews undertaken as part of the study) and reviewing evidence and literature from the last 10 years in order to build up a picture across the economy. Monetary values assigned to corruption will ultimately be estimates based on the best available evidence at the time and verified against other sources and through the interviews. Values can be expressed as plausible ranges.

**Key Sources (non-exhaustive)**

* U4, Overview of Corruption and anti-corruption in Sierra Leone (<https://www.u4.no/publications/overview-of-corruption-and-anti-corruption-in-sierra-leone>)
* Impact of Corruption on Nigeria’s Economy (<https://www.pwc.com/ng/en/assets/pdf/impact-of-corruption-on-nigerias-economy.pdf>). Although a different context has some useful methodology.
* Data from the Pay No Bribe Campaign (<https://www.pnb.gov.sl/what-is-pnb/>)
* Annual report from the auditor general
* Reports from the National Public Procurement Authority
* IMF [*https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2016/sdn1605.pdf*](https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2016/sdn1605.pdf)
* Recent technical audit

**Research Products**

The consultants should produce the following:

* **Inception report.** A short report outlining the methodology, main sources of information, findings from initial desk research and list of key meetings to be arranged.
* **First draft of report.** A full draft of the report with succinct executive summary, methodology, findings, gaps in the research and policy recommendations.
* **Final report.** Following comments from the consortium, a re-drafted final report.
* **Launch presentation:** providing a short presentation of the report findings at a launch event (event will be organization by the consortium)

**Timetable**

* **July 30th- August 6th -** Project commences. Initial desk-based review of existing evidence and writing the inception report.
* **August 7th – September 7th -** Meetings and data collection.
* **September 8th – September 22nd -** Drafting of full report
* **September 23rd – September 27th -** Review and comments
* **September 27th – October 4th -** Finalisation and sign-off
* **October 10th –** report presentation at launch event

**Qualifications and competencies**

We are looking for a team of at least 2 consultants, preferably one to be already based in Sierra Leone with extensive experience of the country and the other to have experience carry out corruption studies in other countries. The consultants should have over 10 years’ experience working on governance and anti-corruption, including experience in corruption perceptions and costs of corruption work in similar contexts. The consultants should have a degree in development, governance, economics or a related field.

**Mode of application and deadline**

To apply, please send CVs and a short proposal on how the work will be carried out (including elaboration of methodology, provision contents page for the report and timeline) to info@carl-sl.org or 51 Upper Brook Street, Freetown and (please include CA’s email and physical address). Deadline for submission is July 24th.