
REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



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**REFORM OF THE PROCUREMENT AND PROVISION OF
LEARNING AND TEACHING MATERIALS FOR PRIMARY
AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RWANDA**

February 2010

SUMMARY OF REFORM OF THE PROCUREMENT AND PROVISION OF LEARNING AND TEACHING MATERIALS FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RWANDA

1. Background

In 2007 DFID, at the request of MINEDUC/NCDC funded detailed field research into the provision and availability of textbooks, teachers' guides and other learning and teaching materials (LTM) to Rwandan schools. The results of the research revealed among other issues:

- Supply of textbooks to schools depended on availability of funds rather than as needed;
- Long delays in evaluating textbook bids and thus in supply to schools;
- Lack of teacher support for some of the books selected and supplied;
- Large inequities in distribution and widespread poor stock management by districts;
- A serious shortage of textbooks and teachers' guides in schools;
- A shortage of reading materials to support early literacy in languages in general and a particular shortage of reading materials in Kinyarwanda;
- A lack of teacher skills and national strategy in the teaching of early reading and writing and thus the achievement of early literacy.

During 2007 and 2008 the need for reform of the textbook and LTM provision system in Rwanda was discussed at length between donors and the NCDC (representing MINEDUC). A number of workshops and training sessions were organized so that a variety of policy options could be reviewed and the pros and cons of each, and their implications, fully understood by all concerned. As a result of this period of intense debate the following policy initiatives were developed and proposed by NCDC:

- The previous system of monopolistic textbook and teachers' guide supply should be replaced by a system which has competing alternative textbooks;
- Schools would be given the purchasing power and the decision making capability to choose the textbooks and teachers' guides that they wanted from the approved list;
- In order to support school based decision making every school would be provided with an annual per capita purchasing power budget to enable the selection of textbooks, teachers' guides and other learning and teaching materials (LTM) of their own choice. It was proposed that the funding for the per capita purchasing power should be covered by contributions from development partners;
- There would be a centrally designed LTM order form which schools would complete on an annual basis up to the limit of their combined per capita budgets. These order forms would be returned to NCDC, which would then use a software program to consolidate all orders centrally;
- The software program would provide two schedules as follows for all publishers with titles on the approved list: (a) the consolidated print runs from

- all schools for all titles for all publishers; (b) a list of all individual school orders organized by district;
- Publishers would print according to the NCDC schedules and would organize the supply of books themselves directly to the schools. Experience elsewhere in Africa has demonstrated clearly that publisher or bookseller supply to schools is cheaper, more efficient and more effective than Ministry or district supply to schools simply because publisher/bookseller supply is much more highly motivated because payment is not received until signed delivery notes from schools demonstrate successful correct delivery;
 - Publishers would be paid a proportion of the cost of supply on presentation of shipping documents and the remaining proportion of payment would be paid on demonstration of successful delivery to schools. It was accepted that this would lead to a slight increase to the cost of textbooks because publishers would now have to absorb distribution costs into their unit costs. However, the increase in procurement cost would be offset by real decreases in delivery costs incurred by NCDC, districts and schools and a more effective and efficient usage of scarce resources, which in turn should provide the basis for improvements in school, teacher and student performance;
 - NCDC proposed the procurement of supplementary LTMs, via direct school purchase from local booksellers in order to support the re-establishment of a local retail bookseller network in all districts, which would support wider national objectives aimed at developing reading capability and early literacy.

In September 2008 MINEDUC announced important policy decisions as follows:

- (a) A shift from French medium to English medium textbook provision, which would become effective by 2009;
- (b) A requirement to procure all textbooks in English from grade 1 to the end of secondary, as an essential support to the introduction of English medium education.

In January 2009 further important policy initiatives were announced in which the fast tracking of a 9 year basic education system was to be implemented from January 2009. In order to achieve the fast tracking of the 9 year basic education system, it was announced that existing curriculum subjects would be reviewed, new subjects introduced, the number of primary contact hours reduced from 40 to 24, compulsory education extended up to the end of the 3rd grade of secondary and double shifting used in order to ensure a rapid achievement of 9 years of universal basic education.

The language of instruction policy announced in September 2008 was also adjusted so that English would be the language of instruction and the language of textbook and LTM provision for all subjects (apart from Kinyarwanda) from the first year of primary school onwards.

In September 2008 the NCDC in close collaboration with the RPPA announced a very large bid for textbook submissions for evaluation and approval. This bid was intended to provide the basis for the establishment of the approved and recommended lists of competing and alternative textbooks and was scheduled to close on 30 April 2009.

In January 2009 amendments were made to the bid documents in order to accommodate the reduction in the number of primary subjects, the reduction in the number of primary contact hours. These changes resulted in the delay in bid submission deadlines from April to June in order to provide bidders with additional time in which to prepare their submissions.

The Rwanda textbook and learning and teaching materials bid announced in September 2008 requested textbook and teachers' guide submissions for all subjects at all grade levels plus a variety of supplementary materials (including reading books in Kinyarwanda and English, dictionaries in Kinyarwanda and English, atlases, wall charts and maps, science wall charts, grammar books, story and poetry anthologies, etc). The requirement to cover simultaneously all school subjects at all grade levels for both core textbooks and supplementary materials made this one of the largest and most complex LTM procurements ever attempted. This needed a large number of well trained textbook evaluators.

In this context, training and support services were specified by NCDC in 3 separate areas as follows:

- (a) Support to the fair, efficient and transparent management of the bid process.
- (b) Training and support for the critical phase of bid evaluation, which would cover the management of the bid evaluation, supervision, fair and professional evaluation of each bid, the announcement of awards, the contracting of publishers and the development of the approved and recommended lists.
- (c) The development of local capacity via training and central support in the system of textbook and LTM selection, ordering, procurement, distribution, storage, accountability and usage.

It is only when all the three stages described above have been successfully accomplished that the reform of textbook and LTM provision in Rwanda can be completed. The NCDC is currently focusing on support service number C above.

2. Rationale for a rigorous evaluation procedure

High quality and rigorous evaluation were meant to achieve:

- a) The best textbooks and teachers' guides at the best prices (cost and quality is always a trade-off);
- b) Textbooks that conform to national curriculum specifications;
- c) Textbooks that support national vision and ambitions;
- d) Textbooks that reflect national specifics and national diversity;
- e) Textbooks that are sufficiently durable to survive and achieve national book life assumptions (and therefore forward budget calculations).

All of the above factors have direct impacts on the quality of teacher and student outputs and the costs of supply.

The NCDC has made a conscious and carefully considered decision to introduce rigorous LTM evaluation procedures in order to achieve the important benefits specified above. The NCDC shall produce detailed report showing the measures and procedures introduced into this process, the problems and successes encountered in their delivery. It is hoped that the Rwandan model can be a point of reference for other countries that are still struggling with effective provision of Learning and Teaching Materials.

3. Evaluation Mark Sheets and Records

All evaluation records have been preserved in 65 ring binder files, which have been stored in the NCDC. These will be maintained securely along with all publisher bid submission documentation and samples for a minimum of six months from the date of the announcement of the awards to the publishers.

4. Recommended and Approved Lists

The ultimate aim of this reform was to avail alternative LTM to school and involve them in decision making on the materials they use. This objective was successfully achieved. The following is an approved and recommend lists of LTM with their associated costs.

Please, note that some books have been given conditional approval pending publisher's compliance on some elements that were identified missing during the evaluation process. The concerned publishers know which books and under what circumstances their books were given conditional approval. These conditions must be met by publishers and approved by NCDC before books are taken to schools.

Please, note also that no publisher or school administration is allowed to change these prices, neither are they allowed to change the approved list. The list and associated prices are binding for to both the NCDC and the Publishers for the next five years (2010 – 2014). The following list is hereby published in two local news papers (English and Kinyarwanda) and in 'The East African' news paper for wider dissemination. It can also be accessed at the NCDC website: www.ncdc.gov.rw And dgMarket website www.market.gov.rw

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