



Office of the Ombudsman  
ST Martin's House  
Private Bag 348  
City Centre  
LILONGWE 3, MALAWI  
Tel: (265) 0 888 246 046

E-mail: [ombudsman@ombudsmanmalawi.org](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsmanmalawi.org)  
Website: [www.ombudsmanmalawi.org](http://www.ombudsmanmalawi.org)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ombudsmanmw](https://www.facebook.com/ombudsmanmw)

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## Call for Expression of Interest

### Provision of Complaint Handling System Assessment Services for the Office of the Ombudsman

Procurement Reference No. **OMB/RFP/FCDO/2025/7/1**

Date of Issue: **15<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

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#### 1.0. BACKGROUND

The Office of the Ombudsman (OoO) and the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC) are implementing a two-year project funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) aimed at building the capacity of the complaint-handling systems in Malawi. The essence of the project is to allow the handling of human rights complaints in a speedy and coordinated manner. The project intends to achieve this through reviewing and strengthening the respective complaint handling mechanisms, designing referral pathways, developing complaint tracking tools, and piloting a new mechanism for supporting implementation of remedies by respondent Agencies. The project will support building the capacity for a three-way coordination for civil society to receive and refer human rights complaints, as well as advocate for compliance among respondent Agencies.

The handling of human rights complaints in Malawi is critical for ensuring accountability and protecting the rights of citizens, particularly vulnerable groups such as women, children, and marginalized communities. Several governmental and non-governmental institutions play a role in the complaints handling process. However, structural, technical, and resource-based challenges often hinder the systems currently in place. These challenges include outdated or inadequate procedural frameworks, inefficient coordination among stakeholders, and a lack of integrated digital systems that could improve the complaints handling process.

This capacity assessment will evaluate the status of complaint-handling systems, including both digital and non-digital systems used in handling human rights complaints in Malawi. The goal is to assess the effectiveness of these systems, identify challenges, and propose improvements to create a more efficient, accessible, and user-friendly system for the benefit of all Malawians, including those from vulnerable groups.

#### 2.0. OBJECTIVE/PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTANCY

The purpose of this consultancy is to conduct a comprehensive capacity assessment of the existing systems for handling human rights complaints in Malawi, including both

digital and non-digital mechanisms. This will include a detailed review of the institutional, procedural, and technological frameworks used in complaints management for all oversight and democratic governance institutions. Based on this assessment, the consultant will identify capacity gaps and provide recommendations to strengthen these systems for greater accessibility, transparency, and effectiveness.

### **3.0. EXPECTED OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES**

The consultant is expected to produce the following key deliverables:

1. Inception Report:

- A detailed work plan outlining the methodology, timeline, and specific approach to be used in assessing both digital and non-digital systems.
- The inception report must be submitted within two (2) days of the contract signing.

2. Capacity Assessment Report:

A comprehensive report documenting the status of the current human rights complaints handling systems, including digital and non-digital. The report should include:

- An overview of the institutional frameworks for handling human rights complaints, including government agencies, NGOs, and other key stakeholders.
- A review of both the digital and non-digital processes used to handle complaints, including their effectiveness, efficiency, accessibility, and limitations.
- An assessment of the adequacy of existing digital tools or platforms used in the complaints process (e.g., electronic submission forms, databases, complaint tracking systems, etc.).
- A review of the current manual (non-digital) systems for tracking, processing, and addressing complaints, including any paper-based or in-person reporting mechanisms.
- An identification of gaps in both digital and non-digital systems, with a specific focus on capacity issues such as technological resources, human resources, and training.

The draft capacity assessment report must be submitted within **(thirteen) 13 working days** after the commencement of the consultancy.

3. Presentation of Findings:

- The consultant will present the findings from the capacity assessment to key stakeholders, including government officials, human rights commissions, and civil society organizations.
- This presentation should take place within one (1) working day after receiving feedback on the draft report and presentation.

4. Submission of Final Report with Recommendations

A final report containing specific, actionable recommendations to improve the human rights complaints handling systems, with particular attention to enhancing digital infrastructure and integrating it with existing non-digital systems. The recommendations should address:

- How to enhance the digital system (e.g., improving accessibility, upgrading software, expanding reach).
- How to better integrate digital and non-digital systems for a more streamlined complaints process.

- Strategies for capacity building, including staff training, resource allocation, and funding mechanisms.
- Suggestions for improving coordination between stakeholders using both digital and non-digital platforms.

The final report must be submitted within **five (5) working days** after receiving feedback on the draft capacity assessment report.

#### **4.0. SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES**

The consultancy will cover the following activities:

1. Desk Review:
  - Review of relevant documents, including policies, guidelines, and reports concerning both digital and non-digital systems for complaints handling.
  - Review of previous assessments, evaluations, and reports regarding human rights complaints management in Malawi, particularly about existing technological tools and manual systems.
2. Stakeholder Mapping and Consultation:
  - Mapping of key institutions involved in complaints handling, with special attention to both digital and non-digital systems used by these organizations.
  - Conduct consultations with key stakeholders, including government agencies, human rights commissions, civil society organizations, and affected communities, to understand how the complaints process works in practice and the challenges faced in both digital and non-digital formats.
3. Digital System Review:
  - Assess the current digital tools used to handle human rights complaints, including software platforms for complaint tracking, databases, and digital communication channels (e.g., email, social media).
  - Evaluate the user-friendliness, accessibility, effectiveness of these tools, and cost effectiveness with a particular focus on vulnerable groups.
4. Non-Digital System Review:
  - Review the traditional non-digital methods for complaints handling, including paper-based documentation, in-person reporting, and telephone-based systems.
  - Assess how well these systems' function, especially in remote areas or for populations with limited access to digital resources.
5. Institutional Capacity Assessment:
  - Evaluate the capacity of institutions to handle human rights complaints, focusing on human resources, technical skills, and organizational structures.
  - Review training and capacity-building efforts for both digital and non-digital complaint-handling processes.
6. Integration of Digital and Non-Digital Systems:
  - Assess how the digital and non-digital systems can be integrated to create a more efficient and comprehensive complaints management system.
  - Evaluate the potential for digitizing certain non-digital processes and integrating the results into existing digital tools.
7. Final Report and Recommendations:

Based on the findings, the consultant will provide a detailed report with actionable recommendations for enhancing both the digital and non-digital systems for handling human rights complaints.

#### **4.0. METHODOLOGY**

The consultant will use the following methodology to conduct the capacity assessment:

1. Document Review:

The consultant will review relevant policies, procedures, and reports to understand the existing complaints-handling frameworks, both digital and non-digital.

2. Interviews:

The consultant will conduct interviews with key stakeholders, including government agencies, human rights commissions, civil society organizations, and affected communities, to assess the practical challenges and effectiveness of both digital and non-digital systems.

3. Focus Group Discussions:

The consultant will organize focus group discussions with specific stakeholders to gather qualitative insights into how human rights complaints are handled in both formats.

4. Semi-structured Interview:

Surveys will be distributed to relevant stakeholders to gather quantitative data on the functionality and efficiency of digital and non-digital systems.

5. Workshops:

The consultant will facilitate workshops with key stakeholders to discuss findings, validate the results, and brainstorm possible improvements.

#### **5.0. DELIVERABLES TIMELINE**

The consultancy is expected to follow the timeline below:

1. Inception Report: 2 days after contract signing.

Draft Capacity Assessment Report: 5 working days after the start of the consultancy.

2. Presentation of Findings: 1 working day after receiving feedback on the draft report.

3. Final Report: 2 working days after receiving feedback on the draft report.

#### **6.0. REPORTING**

The consultant will report directly to the Project Coordinator for the Strengthening Human Rights Complaints Handling in Malawi project. Regular updates will be expected throughout the consultancy period. The consultant will provide the final report to the Project Coordinator and key stakeholders.

#### **7.0. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

The consultant should possess the following qualifications and experience:

- 1. Education**

At least a Degree in ICT, Management Information Systems, Human Rights, Public Policy, Public/Business Administration, or a related field.

## **2. Experience**

At least 5 years of experience working with complaint handling-human rights system in the public domain or governance, with a specific focus on capacity assessments and systems evaluation.

## **3. Expertise in Digital Systems**

A strong understanding of digital tools and platforms used in complaints management and their integration with non-digital systems.

## **4. Familiarity with Malawi's Context**

Experience working in Malawi's Human Rights landscape, understanding the challenges and opportunities in both digital and non-digital complaint handling.

## **5. Language**

Fluency in English and Chichewa

## **8.0. SELECTION**

Expressions of Interest will be evaluated in accordance with the Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets act of 2025. Participation is open to eligible bidders.

## **9.0. SUBMISSION**

Interested eligible bidders may submit expressions of interest to **The Chairperson, Internal Procurement and Disposal Committee, Office of the Ombudsman, St Martins House, Private Bag 348, Capital City, Lilongwe 3** including details of assignments undertaken in the past five years, qualifications of key staff and proof of registration with the Registrar of Financial Institutions.

Expressions of Interest must be deposited in the tender box situated next to the main entrance at the address below by **10:00 AM on 31th July 2025**. Late submission shall be rejected.

The submission should be address to;

**The Chairperson, Internal Procurement and Disposal Committee,  
Office of the Ombudsman,  
St Martins House,  
Private Bag 348,  
Capital City,  
Lilongwe 3**