

**Terms of Reference for a Consultancy: MEL accelerator (Sept 2022 – Feb 2023)**  
**#FutureReady**  
**Transforming our approach to learning**

**1. Background and context to the consultancy**

AWDF was established in June 2000 as an Africa-wide philanthropic, grant-making initiative to support the realisation and fulfilment of African women's rights through the funding of autonomous women's organisations. AWDF believes that if women and women's organisations are empowered with skills, information, sustainable livelihoods, opportunities to fulfil their potential, plus the capacity and space to make transformative choices, then we will have vibrant, healthy and inclusive communities.

AWDF works to strengthen and support the work of African women-led activist organisations who hold and advance the line on women's rights on the continent and yet often have limited access to mainstream funding for a variety of reasons, including size, language, location, and marginalisation. We provide funding for projects focused on priority thematic areas; tailored capacity-building programmes and movement-building initiatives; build and share knowledge about women's rights and feminist approaches; and amplify and celebrate African women's voices and African feminists' messages.

We are currently in the process of developing a new strategic framework to guide our work over the next decade. In parallel, the Fund is going through a series of institutional strengthening initiatives. These initiatives and processes will support AWDF in establishing a vision and ways of operating that are (a) reflective of AWDF's original purpose and ethos (b) grounded in our feminist politics and (c) innovative and responsive to current and future trends in women's rights and needs of African feminist movements.

**2. Purpose and expected outcomes of the consultancy**

*The PURPOSE of the MEL accelerator is to help AWDF:*

- prioritise and embed an active culture of learning
- ensure our approach to MEL is feminist and movement-serving
- develop a simple and effective monitoring and evaluation framework (first draft December 2022)
- develop a learning strategy (first draft Feb 2023)

*Expected OUTCOMES of the MEL accelerator are*

- we (AWDF) understand what difference we make and how we made that difference
- there is excitement and ownership of learning in the programmes team & AWDF as a whole
- our learning is Movement led

*Important underlying PRINCIPLES*

- process is meaningfully participatory and engaging
- approach is feminist – with accountability to the movement at the centre
- reflects change is continuous, messy and happens in ways that can't always be captured in numbers or data
- aligns with our Strategic Framework, programme manifesto and team strategies

### 3. Proposed scope and approach

At AWDF, we have found that having an ‘accelerator’ or team who can provide accompaniment support over a period of time to help us move from **ideas to action** is helpful. Having someone external helps us create space for reflection, bring in fresh ideas/good practice, and sustain momentum. We expect the MEL accelerator process will be highly participatory and encourage ownership within the team.

We envision a five-phase approach:

- a. design and inception phase: set up, refining of objectives and planning
- b. information gathering: rapid assessment of AWDF existing commitments & current approach to MEL (what’s in place, where are the gaps). External input via conversations with other feminist funders & AWDF strategic advisory committee
- c. internal consensus-building re proposed approach including small group meetings and participatory workshops with the team
- d. development of i) AWDF M & E framework ii) learning strategy (see deliverables below)
- e. Accompaniment to implement recommendations (*note this may extend beyond Feb 2023 subject to agreement between both parties*)

We hope that the approach will be simple yet transformational, participatory and action-oriented.

### 4. Deliverables

- Agreed plan for the accompaniment process (October 2022)
- AWDF M & E framework (first draft by Dec 2022, final draft by Feb 2023)
- Learning strategy (first draft Feb 2023)
- Written recommendations for AWDF re resourcing the strategy and processes (Feb 2023)

### 5. Supervision of the work and collaboration with AWDF

We expect that most of the assignment will be done remotely – by one consultant or a team of consultants. Overall oversight & learning strategy will be provided by Pontso Mafethe (Director of Programmes). Detailed work on the M & E framework will be overseen by Zeytuna Abdella Feyissa- Azasoo (AWDF MEL manager) and the MEL team.

### 6. Consultant’s preferred profile

AWDF is looking to bring in someone/a team as MEL accelerator who has/have:

- Commitment to AWDF’s values of feminist leadership, accountability, diversity, respect and solidarity
- Demonstrable knowledge and experience in a) feminist approaches to MEL b) helping organisations to take action/change practice
- Understanding of philanthropy/funding, ideally with Women’s Funds
- Experience of working in Africa
- Excellent interpersonal, communication and facilitation skills
- Proven ability to work independently and to deliver work on time

Our criteria for selection of the consultant(s) will include:

- Best ‘fit’ in terms of values, experience, attitude
- Compelling approach and plan that responds to our brief

- Available to work to our timeline and budget

## 7. How to apply

Interested applicants should please submit a CV and application letter of maximum 3 pages including:

- A brief profile - with examples of similar work
- A summary of approach and timeline
- A financial proposal/budget with proposed number of days and daily rate (in USD)
- Confirmation of availability to work within the timeline above
- Details of at least one referee who can speak to your work

The deadline for submission of proposals is September 19, 2022. Proposals should be sent by email to [consultants@awdf.org](mailto:consultants@awdf.org) with "**MEL Accelerator**" in the subject line.

In line with AWDF's Mission, qualified African women are particularly encouraged to apply.

We aim to interview shortlisted applicants the week beginning of October 10, 2022.