

Terms of Reference

Consultancy: Communications Accelerator

BACKGROUND

The African Women's Development Fund 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.

To achieve this, AWDF supports African women's organisations leading the charge for women's rights in Africa by:

- Mobilising and advocating for increased and improved financial resources to support gender equality initiatives led by African women (through resource mobilisation and philanthropic advocacy);
- Funding organisations that work towards the promotion of women's rights and gender equality (through grantmaking);
- Strengthening African women's rights and feminist organisations and leaders (through capacity building and technical support);
- Supporting African feminists as they learn from each other's work and build solidarity (through knowledge- and movement-building); and
- Amplifying the voices of, and changing the narrative around African women and feminists (through communications)

AWDF is currently in the process of developing a new strategic framework to guide its work in the next decade. We are committed to improving and deepening our work to change the narrative around African women's agency, to expand public understanding of what gender justice means for Africa, to amplify the voices of African feminists, and to provide the best possible representation of the work and impact of AWDF's team and grantee partners.

PURPOSE, SCOPE AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE CONSULTANCY

Building on the recommendations of a Communications Audit undertaken in 2018, AWDF is now recruiting a consultant (or teams of consultants) to act as a Communications Accelerator - a communications strategist and expert who can assist the team in ensuring our communications strategy, brand and voice, contents, practices and competencies are aligned with our new strategic vision. The Communications Accelerator's work will run concurrently with, and feed into AWDF's overall strategic planning process. As such, support will be provided over a period of six months.

The Communications Accelerator will help keep momentum and move from talk to action on ideas that have been raised in the past, bring in fresh ideas, help identify and fill key competency gaps, and review progress. The role is about supporting the Communications team to transform, not tweak, their approach and work for improved impact. The approach will be participatory with activities that encourage ownership.

The scope of the consultancy will include:

- A critical review of AWDF's Communications work against the organisation's 2017-2021 Strategic Plan, the 2016 Communications Strategy and the 2018 Communications Audit recommendations;
- The development of a new Communications Strategy, in alignment with AWDF's new strategic priorities, that reassesses the 'why' (rationale and grounding), 'what' (content), 'how' (processes) and 'who for' (audiences), and "who" (roles, knowledge and skills available and needed) for our Communications work;
- Targeted skills-building and connections-fostering support to the Communications Team, and the wider AWDF Team, in areas where capacity needs have been identified; and
- Ongoing or initiative-specific support on key areas or projects that require support or can be used as opportunities to test new ways of working.

The Communications Accelerator programme will contribute towards the following outcomes:

- A Communications strategy that is innovative, grounded in feminist values, responsive to AWDF's audiences' needs, and aligned with AWDF's new strategic vision;
- A shift in AWDF's Communications products and engagements - so they are better plugged in with the realities and dynamics of feminist movements and philanthropic ecosystems in Africa and globally; so that AWDF leads and drives conversations more effectively with engaging content that draws a wider audience; and so that AWDF's representation of its own work is as cutting-edge as the work itself.
- A Communications Team whose team structure, skills and ways of working are aligned with the new, future-facing strategy, and whose work is better integrated within AWDF's overall work, and which collaborates better with other AWDF teams.

DURATION OF THE CONSULTANCY

This assignment will last 6 months, and will ideally start around mid-February 2022. We envisage that 60 to 75 working days will be necessary to complete the assignment.

COLLABORATIONS WITH THE AWDF TEAM

The consultant (or team of consultants) will report directly with the CEO of AWDF, and will work closely with the Communications Specialist and the entire Communications Team, as well as other teams within AWDF.

CONSULTANT'S PROFILE

The consultant (or team of consultants) should have the following qualifications and experience:

- Expert knowledge of communications within the context of human rights/ social justice and movement building.

- Demonstrated experience of developing and implementing communications strategies, preferably for initiatives or organisations focused on women’s rights and/or African audiences.
- Demonstrated experience in communications training or skills-building.
- Sound understanding of, and networks within the women’s rights/feminist movements in Africa. Experience in women’s rights issues and organisations is desirable.
- In-depth understanding of feminist principles and how they relate to communications work and organisational processes.
- Excellent writing skills and proficiency in English are essential. French proficiency is a plus.
- Strong project planning and project management skills; ability to work independently and to deliver on time.
- Excellent presentation, interpersonal and facilitation skills.

How to apply

Interested consultants or teams of consultants should express their interest by submitting:

- A technical proposal (5 pages maximum). This should outline your approach, the steps you will take to successfully complete assignment, any proposed revisions to the proposed approach or timeline, and details regarding your availability.
- A financial proposal.
- A CV (max 3 pages) for each consultant involved in the work.

The deadline for submission of proposals is 15 February 2022. Proposals should be sent by email to consultants@awdf.org with “Communications Accelerator Consultancy” in the subject line.

In line with AWDF’s mission, qualified and interested women from Africa or from African descent are encouraged to apply.