

"Terms of Reference (ToR): Review and Update of the Communications and Policy Advocacy Strategy to Ensure Gender and Social Inclusion are Integrated into the Strategy"

Introduction:

Zimbabwe Network of Early Childhood Development Actors (ZINECDA), in partnership with the Network for Early Childhood Development of Lesotho (NECDOL) and Early Childhood Development Coalition (ECDC) Malawi, has been implementing the TRANAC (Transnational Networks Advocacy Capacity Strengthened for Improved ECDE Legislation, Policies, and Measures in Southern Africa) project from 2020 to 2023. The project aimed to strengthen advocacy capacity and promote improved legislation, policies, and measures for Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Southern Africa. The project involves ECDE coalitions from other participating partners namely Zambia National Education Coalition (Zambia) in Zambia, Eswatini Network, and Rede para o Desenvolvimento da Primeira Infância in Mozambique, who contribute to the consortium's activities.

After the completion of the first phase of the project and achieving notable achievements, the TRANAC consortium has been awarded a grant to implement the second phase of the project from October 2023 to December 2026. The strengthened Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) will engage in transnational advocacy to hold governments in Southern Africa more transparent and accountable on ECDE issues. Transparent and accountable governments ultimately improve the development and implementation of sustainable, equitable, inclusive, and gender-responsive ECDE policies, legislation, and systems, as well as improved ECDE financing by governments, CSOs, and donors.

Overall Objective:

The overall objective of Phase 2 is to enhance and establish vibrant national and transnational Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) networks/coalitions that effectively influence and hold governments and southern African regional bodies accountable and transparent in ECDE gender-sensitive and socially inclusive legislation, policies, and strategies related to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.2 and GPE priorities. The second phase will involve six ECDE networks from six countries: Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, Eswatini, Lesotho, and Zambia, while Botswana, South Africa, and Namibia will be participating partners. The project design is based on the human rights-based approach (HRBA), incorporating regional and global education frameworks such as SDGs, the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children (ACRWC), United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) to guide implementation.

Purpose and Objectives of the Assignment:

The purpose of this assignment is to engage a firm or a consultant to review and upgrade the Policy Advocacy, and Communications Strategy and incorporate aspects of Gender and Social Inclusion for the TRANAC Consortium. The assignment will also include assessing the policy advocacy, and communications capacity of consortium members and providing a capacity-building plan for TRANAC partner staff in advocacy, communications, and ECDE gender-sensitive and socially inclusive legislation.

Specific Objectives:

- To critically review and update the current ECD communications, and policy advocacy strategy plan and integrate gender and social inclusion into the strategic plan for the TRANAC consortium.

- To conduct an ECD landscape mapping exercise in Southern Africa to gain deeper insights into the existing ECD policy gaps, challenges, and opportunities faced by the sub-region.
- To identify, prioritize, and match key audiences with key messages (stakeholders, duty bearers, actors, influencers, etc.) for the Communications, Policy Advocacy, Gender, and Social Inclusion Strategy Plan.
- Provide a contextual analysis on regional and international gender and inclusion issues including policies and protocols that should inform the strategy plan.
- To develop the capacity of project staff and management to foster ownership of the strategy, and ensure its successful implementation

Deliverables:

The consultant should be able to deliver the following:

- An inception report outlining the methodology, key deliverables and timeframes
- A mapping exercise report with key messages and key stakeholders
- Develop Communications, Policy advocacy, and Gender and Social Inclusion strategy plan which includes key stakeholders such as state agencies, civil society organizations, and multilateral and funding partners at all levels.
- A capacity development workshop and report
- Final Communication Policy Advocacy, Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy Plan for the TRANAC Consortium
- PowerPoint presentation of the key content or sections of the Communication Policy Advocacy, Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy Plan for the TRANAC Consortium in summaries

Approach and Methodology

The consultant or consulting firm should propose an approach and methodology that has project partner participation aligning with the objectives and deliverables of the assignment.

Required Competences:

- Must have a Master's degree in the relevant discipline
- Proven 10 years of knowledge and relevant professional experience in a similar function within an international development context - Public Policy, Advocacy, and Communications; Gender and Social Inclusion.
- Demonstrated experience in policy advocacy, communications, gender and social inclusion, and learning strategies related to Early Childhood Development or similar sectors.
- Strong analytical, facilitation, writing and communication skills;
- Ability to devote full time towards meeting the assignment deadlines.

The following evaluation criteria will be used:-

Relevance and understanding of the assignment (20%)

Proposed approach and methodology (30%)

Experience and qualifications of the consultant or consulting firm (20%)
Budget and cost-effectiveness (15%)
Samples of previous work or references (15%)

The evaluation committee will review and score the proposals based on these criteria and select the consultant or consulting firm that best meets the requirements of the assignment.

Submission of Proposals:

Interested consultants or consulting firms should submit a detailed proposal that includes the following information:

- Understanding of the assignment, including a brief analysis of the objectives and deliverables.
- Proposed approach and methodology, including a description of the activities, timeline, and tools to be used.
- Team composition and roles, highlighting relevant experience and qualifications.
- Detailed budget, including itemized costs and justification.
- CVs or profiles of key personnel who will be involved in the assignment.
- Samples of previous work or references related to policy advocacy, communications, gender, and social inclusion strategies.

The expression of interest should be submitted by [15 February 2024] to [ZINECDA] at zinecdanetwork@gmail.com]. Any questions or requests for clarification should also be directed to the same e-mail. Hard copies will not be accepted.