



Terms of Reference for a Communications Consultant: Development of Communications Guidelines and Mentorship for the SPADRA Media Focal Points.

September 2025

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

1. Background

The African Disability Forum (ADF) is the continental membership organization of Disabled Persons' Organizations (OPDs) in Africa. Formally established in 2014, legally registered in 2017 in Ethiopia and re-registered in 2023, ADF seeks to strengthen and unify the representative voices of Africans with disabilities, their families, and organizations.

ADF is an independent, democratic organization, where representative Organization of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) are the members and decision-makers. It currently has 49 National Federations, 10 continental and 4 sub-regional OPDs. The organization has been implementing disability inclusive projects in various African countries.

The ADF governance structure is composed of 10-member Executive Council (with one non-voting power) and currently has three offices located in Ethiopia, Niger, and South Africa.

ADF is a full member of the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and it is recognized by the African Union Commission in a circular sent out to all member states of the African Union in 2018. More information about ADF can be found at www.africandisabilityforum.org.

The new strategic plan (2024-2028) states three strategic objectives and 12 priority actions.

Objective 1 - Advocate for and promote the rights of persons with disabilities and their inclusion in development programmes to reduce poverty and mitigate the impacts of climate change, disasters and conflicts in Africa.

Objective 2 - Strengthen the institutional capacity of ADF and its members (continental, sub-regional and national OPD federations) to promote and advocate effectively for the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities and their families.

Objective 3 - Empower African children, youth, women and girls with disabilities to protect and fulfil their rights and inclusion, and to ensure equality between women and men within the African disability movement.

The organization implements the following projects/programs

➤ **Strengthening Partnerships to Advance Disability Rights in Africa (SPADRA)**

The Strengthening Partnerships to Advance Disability Rights in Africa (SPADRA), funded by Sida, seeks to advance gender and disability rights in Ghana, Benin, Malawi, and Zambia through a consortium led by ADF with DIWA and Inclusion Africa.

The main phase pursues three objectives: (1) strengthen OPD capacities through ADF development, women's leadership, MEAL systems, and media outreach; (2) advance the rights of women with disabilities by shaping continental and national agendas and legal frameworks; and (3) leverage knowledge and lessons to enhance community engagement and grassroots impact. Four results are expected, with the first focused on strengthening the consortium through capacity development, women's advocacy, MEAL, and reinforced communication, visibility, and outreach.

➤ **We are Able!**

The We are Able! programme aims to co-create inclusive governance for access to Basic resources that leave no one behind. It focuses on empowering, amplifying voices and building resilience among people (including men, women and youth) with disabilities, who are the core target group, and other excluded groups, particularly those facing food insecurity in areas of protracted crisis.

The project is implemented in consortium with ZOA, See You Foundation, Leprosy Mission Netherlands, VNG International and the Hague Academy for Local Governance. ADF members in each country are directly implementing the project. The strategic goal of the project is to ensure food security for all. This will be achieved by mobilizing communities, strengthening civil society and OPDs, and engaging public authorities. The target countries are Ethiopia, DRC, Burundi, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

The project is a five-year programme (January 2021-December 2025) funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

➤ **We Can Work**

We Can Work is a regional signature disability program that uses a system and mindset change approach to impact the lives of at least 1,000,000 young women and men with disabilities and enables them to access dignified and fulfilling work. The program has three main pillars:

Pillar 1 - Supporting young women and men with disabilities in their transition to work and empowering them as agents of change towards a more inclusive society

Pillar 2 - Embedding and institutionalizing disability inclusion in Young Africa Works strategies and interventions and among partner organizations and other key system actors.

Pillar 3 - Ensuring meaningful participation of young women and men with disabilities in advocating for inclusive policies and environment.

As a strategic partner of Light for the World (lead organisation), ADF and its members are involved in the programme under the third pillar. The target countries are Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal.

We Can Work is an eight-year programme (2023-2030) funded by the Master Card Foundation.

➤ **International Fellowship Program - University of Massachusetts, Boston**

The International Fellowship Program is implemented together with the University of Massachusetts Boston Institute for Community Inclusion Partners and International Disability Alliance. The program designed for emerging leaders in East Africa, aims to facilitate exchange and implementation of best practices for disability-inclusive civic engagement. The program will support approximately 12 mid-career disability rights professionals (Fellows) from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Ethiopia to participate in a 5-week intensive Fellowship Program in Spring 2025. The program includes a placement with US host organizations to enhance leadership and professional skills.

Each Fellow will be individually matched with a US host organization based on shared professional interests and goals to ensure a meaningful exchange. The focus of the Fellowship will be on a key policy or practice issue related to disability and civic engagement in their respective home countries. Fellows will collaborate with US colleagues to design individual project action plans, which they will implement upon return to their home countries. US hosts may also visit East Africa to provide technical assistance, support fellows' projects, and foster ongoing collaboration. The programme runs for two years (July 2023 - December 2025) and is funded by the US Department of State.

➤ **Strategic Positioning of Women with Disabilities in Africa**

Strategic Positioning of Women with Disabilities in Africa project is designed in partnership with Disabled People's Organizations Denmark (DPOD) and African Disability Forum (ADF) and aimed to bring in gender specific strategic and guiding organizational tool in place and strengthening ADF/DIWA coordination.

Although the project is brief, running from June 1st to May 31st, 2026, it offers ADF a valuable opportunity to develop its gender policy and strategy, while also strengthening its partnership with Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA)

➤ **Rights in Action**

Rights in Action is an OPD advocacy project funded by the Finland Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which will run from February 2025 to 31 December 2026.

The overall goal to which Rights in Action aims to contribute to is that persons with disabilities in Africa no longer experience discrimination, their human rights are realised, and they enjoy equal participation in political and public affairs.

The project will address intersectional discrimination and human rights violations which persons with disabilities face. This will be achieved by addressing root causes in legislation, customs, norms and practices, in line with human rights standards in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), African Disability Protocol (ADP), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

➤ **CRPD inclusive budget analysis and amplifying voices during the G20**

With the support of DRF and in collaboration with Center for Inclusive Policy (CIP), ADF will strengthen the capacity of OPDs in three countries to conduct disability inclusive budget analyses and produce reports that can be used for their own advocacy, while also contributing to the collection of budget analyses compiled by CIP.

The project also includes a component to ensure the effective representation of OPDs, that are members of ADF in the G20 processes, thereby amplifying their voices on key global policy issues.

2. Purpose of the Assignment

The purpose of this consultancy is to enhance the visibility, outreach, and strategic communication of the SPADRA project by building inclusive and accessible communication systems, strengthening consortium-wide capacity in advocacy and digital engagement, and amplifying SPADRA's impact through targeted platforms and publications aligned with the ADF Strategic Plan (2024–2028).

3. Scope of Work

The consultant will undertake the following tasks:

a) Development of Communications Guidelines

- Review ADF's Strategic Plan, Advocacy Policy and Strategy, SPADRA proposal, and existing communication practices.
- Ensure communication aligns with ADF's Strategic Plan (2024–2028), Advocacy policy and strategy and SPADRA's objectives on visibility and outreach.
- Develop user-friendly **communications guidelines**, accompanied by a practical toolkit/manual, to standardize internal and external communication within the SPADRA consortium. The guidelines shall cover:

- Branding, messaging, and visual identity.
- Use of inclusive and accessible language (disability- and gender-sensitive).
- Media engagement and advocacy positioning.
- Internal communication protocols (consortium members, ADF secretariat).
- Social media and digital storytelling strategies.
- Create an online platform with the following functionalities:
 - Showcasing the achievements of the SPADRA project.
 - Tracking of programs led by UN agencies, INGOs, or states in the four target countries that contribute to advancing the rights of women with disabilities.
 - Outreach to consortium members
 - Tracking the progress of legal frameworks on gender and disability rights, domestication of the African Disability Protocol, etc. in the four target countries.

b) Mentorship and Capacity Building

- Provide one-on-one mentorship to ADF and SPADRA media focal points.

c) Knowledge Transfer and Sustainability

- Conduct two training sessions on media and outreach (virtual and in-person).
- Recommend systems and tools for sustained communication and outreach beyond consultancy.

4. Expected Results

The consultancy will deliver clear, accessible communications guidelines and a toolkit to standardize outreach, an online platform to showcase SPADRA's impact and track progress on rights frameworks and strengthened staff capacity through mentorship and training. They will also provide a report documenting processes, lessons learned, and recommendations. These outcomes will ensure inclusive, consistent, and sustainable communication aligned with ADF's Strategic Plan, Advocacy Policy and Strategy and SPADRA objectives.

5. Methodology of Consultancy

The consultant will adopt a participatory, results-driven approach to ensure that communications guidelines, toolkits, and capacity building efforts are tailored to the needs of ADF and the SPADRA consortium. The assignment will begin with an inception phase comprising a desk review of ADF's

Strategic Plan (2024–2028), Advocacy Policy and Strategy, the SPADRA proposal, and current communication practices, followed by consortium members consultations to identify gaps and priorities. Based on these insights, the consultant will develop practical, accessible guidelines and a toolkit grounded in inclusive, disability- and gender-sensitive principles. To promote uptake and sustainability, the consultant will deliver hands-on mentorship and structured training (virtual and in-person) for media focal points, integrating real-time feedback and applied learning. In parallel, they will lead the co-design of an online platform with ADF's IT and Communications team to showcase achievements, amplify advocacy, host community blogs, and track legal progress.

The methodology will center on co-creation, accessibility, and knowledge transfer, culminating in stakeholder validation and a final report with recommendations for sustaining communication and visibility beyond the consultancy period.

6. Implementation, Reporting and Supervision

This consultancy is expected to be completed **within 20 working days**. The consultant will report to the ADF Head of Advocacy and Communications and the SPADRA Program Director/Consortium Coordinator, in close coordination with the Senior Communications Officer. Regular check-ins will be held to review progress, validate deliverables, and provide feedback to ensure alignment with ADF's Strategic Plan, Advocacy Policy and Strategy and SPADRA objectives.

7. Qualifications and Experience

- First degree in Communications, Public Relations, Media Studies, Journalism, International Development, or a related field with more than 10 years' professional experience in strategic communications, media engagement, and advocacy within NGOs, international organizations, or regional bodies; or
- Second degree in Communications, Public Relations, Media Studies, Journalism, International Development, or a related field with 10 years' professional experience in strategic communications, media engagement, and advocacy within NGOs, international organizations, or regional bodies.
- Demonstrated expertise in developing communications guidelines, strategies, or toolkits.
- Proven experience in mentoring and training staff, including delivery of webinars and in-person workshops.

- Strong skills in media relations, digital storytelling, social media management, and visibility campaigns.
- Excellent writing, editing, facilitation, and interpersonal skills.
- Commitment to inclusive and accessible communication, with an understanding of disability- and gender-sensitive approaches.
- Fluency in written and spoken English.

Desirable

- Experience designing or managing digital platforms, websites, or online knowledge hubs.
- Prior experience working with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), disability rights organizations, or civil society in Africa.
- Knowledge of French or other widely used African languages.
- Familiarity with African Union processes, UN systems, or regional advocacy networks.

8. Modality of payment

The contract payment shall be as indicated below:

- a) 10 percent of the agreed amount upon signing of the contract agreement
- b) 90 percent after finalizing the training, mentorship and agreed materials after approval by the client.

9. Obligations

1. ADF shall provide all contacts and necessary documents to the consultant.
2. The consultant shall carry out the work according to the terms of reference and in keeping with accepted standards. The consultant shall take all necessary steps to ensure that the assignment entrusted is executed properly and within the time agreed upon in the contract.
3. The consultant shall pay all taxes and duties.
4. The consultant shall agree to read, sign and adhere to the ADF Code of Conduct and policies in carrying out the terms of reference.

10. Application Process

Interested applicants should submit the following to jobs@adf-secretariat.org

- A technical proposal outlining approach and methodology.
- A financial proposal with budget breakdown.
- CV and examples of similar work.
- At least two references

Due to the high volume of applications received, only shortlisted consultants will be contacted.

Deadline to submit the proposal: Friday 10 October 2025, on or before 5:00 pm East African Time (EAT)