Call for Consultants: Independent evaluation of 'Sub-Saharan Africa Digital Rights Advocates Project II' – Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

About MLDI

MLDI's Vision

A world where journalists no longer face legal challenges that threaten their ability to report freely and independently on issues of public interest, allowing citizens to be better informed, able to hold those in power to account.

MLDI's Mission

To ensure legal protection of journalists and media workers under threat for reporting on issues of public interest, in the belief that freedom of expression is essential to hold those with power to account.

Purpose of the consultancy contract

MLDI is looking to engage an experienced evaluation consultant to carry out an interim and final evaluation of our Digital Rights Advocates Project. We are also aiming for the consultant to conduct final research using baseline research (completed in 2017) to measure the impact of the project on the digital rights landscape in selected African countries where the project has been engaged in.

The Project

MLDI's Digital Rights Advocates Project II (DRAP II), a two-year project titled 'Sub-Saharan Africa Digital Rights Advocates Project II', started in October 2019 and is expected to end in September 2021.

DRAP I (2017-2019) sought to contribute to improving digital rights in East and Southern Africa through strengthening the capacity of lawyers to advocate and coordinate initiatives effectively. These objectives were reached by 1) hosting specialist litigation surgeries to build the capacity of lawyers to defend digital rights and freedom of expression online; 2) networking amongst these lawyers and with broader civil society advocacy networks, both at the international and regional levels; 3) granting Sub Awards to civil society organizations with a view to improving local access to legal assistance for online media; 4) developing training materials to be disseminated to lawyers across Africa and universities to enhance understanding of freedom of expression online.

DRAP II is a two-year cost-extension to DRAP I and seeks to foster a legal and regulatory environment with reduced restrictions capable of violating the right to freedom of expression online by building and strengthening a network of digital rights litigators that litigate on a wide

range of digital rights issues & to ensure that bloggers, online media and online activists are protected, supported and defended by skilled lawyers when facing legal action. Specific objectives include:

1. Lawyers across Sub-Saharan Africa have enhanced specialist legal expertise to litigate on a wide range of digital rights cases at the national, regional and international level and in-depth knowledge on priority digital rights issues;
2. An active and collaborative network of lawyers that proactively engage in and take legal actions to promote digital rights is developed and strengthened;
3. Bloggers, online media and online activists that face legal threats and legal action have better access to free, quality legal defense and support.

These objectives will be achieved through the following activities:

- In each target region, twelve lawyers will participate in intensive litigation surgeries;
- The development of advanced training manuals for Eastern and Southern Africa and updating and translation of existing training manuals for West Africa;
- Three organizations, selected through an open, competitive application process, will be contracted to provide national media defense center support.
- Structured regional networking events with a substantive digital rights induction event for training participants;
- A training for trainers and peer-to-peer learning event with 18 individual lawyers to facilitate peer-to-peer learning on digital rights and litigation;
- Five of these lawyers will be given a capacity-building grant enabling them to organise a training for lawyers working in their country.

As a consequence of COVID-19, our litigation surgeries are to be held online instead of in person. The ability of our attendees to bring digital rights cases forward will also be impacted because of continued court closures. If evaluators require it, we can arrange interviews/focus groups remotely.

Evaluation Requirements

Phase 1: Evaluation planning and set up

- Develop a capacity building measurement framework to measure organisational growth in grantees (media defence centres)
- Using the existing project log frame, evaluation narrative and other relevant documents provide detailed evaluation plan and protocol for the project
- MLDI's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer will prepare and organise resources for evaluators including survey results from surgeries, key indicators and data on grantees
- Carrying out research where relevant/identifying metrics or standards

Phase 2: Interim Evaluation (October 2020 completion)

Independent analysis of evaluation data/year one project data (collected by MLDI)

- Review with project staff on project to date focusing on internal processes and observations of the project – this could be via a project workshop, staff interviews or other appropriate methodology
- Interim evaluation report produced (including recommendations and changes for year two)

Phase 3: Final Evaluation (Tentative, Autumn 2021)

Independent analysis of all evaluation data/project data at the end of the project (collected by MLDI)

- Final evaluation plan and methodology to be decided on. Should include independent data collection activities such as focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders (where bias would be introduced if MLDI were to carry out)
- Some independent data collection where bias would be introduced if MLDI was to carry them out e.g. key informant interviews, focus groups etc. (some travel may be required, to be agreed with MLDI, any travel and associated costs will be covered by MLDI).
- Final report produced will highlight the project's key successes, assess how objectives have or have not been met, and provide recommendations for future iterations of project and analysis on replicability and scalability of the project.

Governance and accountability

MLDI's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer, Naz Kafai, will be the key contact for this consultancy and will be responsible for day-to-day communications and support with the evaluation consultant. Other key stakeholders will include:

- Project Coordinator
- Donor representatives

Qualifications and experience

The consultant should:

- have demonstrable experience in the monitoring and evaluation sector (at least 3 years' experience)
- have demonstrable experience of carrying out evaluations for NGO's and charities, preferably involving projects in Sub-Saharan Africa
- have demonstrable experience of developing tools, instruments and evaluation frameworks
- have demonstrable experience or are comfortable with conducting interviews and focus groups for evaluations remotely
- Experience of carrying out evaluations with human rights organisations, would also be beneficial.

Deliverables

- Finalised data collection tools
- Interim Evaluation Report
- Final Evaluation Report

Useful resources

- DRL Project proposal
- Project Evaluation narrative
- Project logic model (log frame)
- Project Indicator Table
- Interim and Final Evaluations from previous project (2017-2019)
- Baseline Research Report

Further Documents available on request.

Application and selection

Please send your proposal, including:

- Methodology and approach
- Timeline
- A summary of relevant experience of the agency and/or individuals involved
- Examples of previous relevant evaluations carried out and tools developed
- Provide a plan on how the evaluation will be undertaken during COVID-19
- Consideration of ethics and risks
- Detailed cost breakdown

To naz.k@mediadefence.org no later than 19 July 2020. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview in late July 2020.

When selecting the consultant, MLDI will consider:

- Past experience of the consultant
- Value for money
- Suitability of the approach and proposed methods
- Innovativeness of the approach
- Communication and presentation skills
- Consideration of risks and mitigation
- Understanding of MLDI's work and objectives

Key Dates

Deadline for proposals	19th July 2020
Interviews	Late July 2020/Early August 2020
Appointment of Consultant	No later August 2020
Set up (phase 1) complete	Mid-September 2020 *
Interim Report due	October 2020
Project End	September 2021
Final Report due	Autumn 2021*

*dates are approximate only and will be decided and agreed with the selected consultant and will take into account the current situation with COVID-19

Contact information

For questions, further information or a discussion about the evaluation, please contact Naz Kafai on naz.k@mediadefence.org