

Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Zambia Devolution Support Program (ZDSP) Communication Specialist (Consultant) Position

1. Background

The Government of the Republic of Zambia embarked on a comprehensive devolution strategy aimed at decentralizing governance and enhancing service delivery being actualised through the implementation of the Zambia Devolution Support Program (ZDSP) running from 2022 to 2026. This strategy is a core element of the government's approach to counter the historically centralized nature of political power and institutions in Zambia. While the devolution strategy is designed to empower local authorities (LAs), through increased resources and capacity building, it is meant to bring citizens at the core of decision making of functions operated by local authorities - both under their conventional as well as newly devolved mandates. The ZDSP is being implemented through the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) with support from the World Bank.

The Local Authorities (LAs) have significant responsibilities around the delivery of essential services at local level as prescribed by relevant legal and policy instruments. The ZDSP supports local authorities and central agencies to enhance their budgeting and planning processes in a manner that ensures that stakeholders are effectively engaged. The Program encompasses multiple activities aligned with its objectives through increase in resources, capacity support, and monitoring & evaluation (M&E) efforts.

It is therefore essential to maximize program impact through effective communication and engagement with all stakeholders for the achievement of desired results. The Communication Specialist (CS) will work with and coordinate activities that will be undertaken by the participating institutions using the Government and World Bank policies and regulations for the PforR and IPF component activities respectively.

General Program management and administration

The CS will take the lead on coordination of all communication for the successful execution of the Programme and will include but not limited to the following:

- Stakeholder engagement
- Implementation monitoring and reporting
- Communication and networking
- Any other duties as may be required and requested by the ZDSP Program Manager in MLGRD

2. Objective of the Assignment

The Communication Consultant will develop and implement a communication strategy that sensitizes central agencies and local authorities about the Program's objectives, activities, and benefits; facilitates continuous feedback; and promotes the integration of communication with ongoing Program efforts. Additionally, the consultant will facilitate the communication between the Bank and the program to meet the reporting requirements of both the PforR and the IPF components of the ZDSP.

3. Scope of Work

The consultant will:

- Map key stakeholders within central agencies, local authorities and citizen groups relevant to the program.
- Identify communication requirements with the World Bank team in terms of timely and quality reporting, updates, and consultations.
- Assess current communication practices based on the mapped program stakeholders and identify gaps and entry points for communication.
- Work closely with MLGRD and other stakeholders to develop tailored communication approaches and relevant key messages, for each stakeholder group, in alignment with the ZDSP objectives.
- Design tools and materials for effective communication including consensus building activities, information dissemination and establishing communication channels such as workshops, info-sessions, newsletters, and digital engagement platforms to keep stakeholders informed and involved.
- Develop and implement communication plans, including timelines, responsibilities, and resource requirements and align this with the program's training, engagement, and M&E activities. This should reflect the need to have communication as an integral part of all other activities to ensure consistency between the messages and activity execution/outputs.
- Establish feedback mechanisms to gather continuous input, lessons learned, and suggestions from relevant stakeholders, agencies and local authorities.
- Collaborate closely with other consultants in the Program Management Unit (PMU) and other relevant department teams to ensure complementary messaging and knowledge sharing.
- Prepare regular reports on communication activities, feedback received, impact assessment and recommendations for iterative improvements.
- Provide recommendations for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the communication strategy
- Collaborate with LA's and key stakeholders on information dissemination and publicity of the ZDSP projects, stressing its key objectives;

- Coordinate capacity building programmes across the continuum of municipal service provision.

4. Capacity building program

The CS shall work with the LAs and all stakeholders on information dissemination and publicity of the ZDSP projects, stressing its key objectives and assist LAs to effectively communicate with local stakeholders

Engage with Public Relations Officers (PROs) in the LAs to understand capacity gaps and recommend training, coaching or mentorship needed to bridge the gap.

Deliver targeted capacity building to PROs in the LAs

5. List of reports and Deliverables

- Inception report outlining methodology and work plan
- Stakeholder analysis report
- Communication strategy
- Draft communication strategy document including the following:
 - Detailed outline and templates of periodic communication materials (e.g., press releases, social media content, newsletters, briefing notes, presentations, stakeholder's engagement plan/templates, program 's reporting requirements).
 - Mechanisms for the documentation of feedback and lessons learned from stakeholders inclusive of success indicators designed to assess the success of the delivery of key messages in relation to the execution of the implementation/communication plan.
- Implementation plan and monitoring framework.
 - The plan should clearly outline mechanisms and responsible bodies for communication addressing the 5 Ws and 1H (who, what, when, where, why, and how) to ensure structured information flow.

5. Duration and level of effort

The assignment duration will be for 6 months.

6. Qualifications and Experience

Professional experience:

- A minimum of a bachelor's degree in a relevant communications or public relations field;
- At least 5 year's professional experience in the field of communications and/or public relations or a related field;

- A minimum of five (5) years proven experience in engagement with public sector in Zambia, specifically with Local governments;
- Strong knowledge of local government systems and multi-stakeholder engagement;
- Experience facilitating communication in programs involving training and M&E components;
- Proven editorial experience, ideally also for (internal) social media or online formats; and
- Strong conceptual, strategic, organizational and creative mindset.

Additional competences:

- Ability to quickly familiarize with different topics and to present complex issues in a simplified manner
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Excellent organizational skills as well as prioritization capabilities in a fast paced, dynamic environment
- Ability to work effectively in a diverse multicultural team
- Ability to work independently and pro-actively in a results-oriented manner
- Good working knowledge of ICT technologies and computer applications (MS Office, Adobe, etc.)

7. Reporting and Supervision

The consultant will report to the ZDSP Program Manager in MLGRD and closely collaborate with the teams in relevant departments of MLGRD and the implementing agencies. The CS will also closely collaborate with the Public Relations Unit in the MLDRD and the World Bank Communication Office, to ensure alignment of Project's key messages with the government and World Bank key messages.