

Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA)

CALL FOR CONSULTANTS – BASELINE STUDY ON STATE OF WOMEN'S ACCESS AND USE OF THE INTERNET AND PARTICIPATION IN DIGITAL SPACES IN TOGO

1. Introduction

The Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) is a regional, independent, non-partisan, non-governmental organisation that works to promote freedom of expression and media development across West Africa. In the last 27 years, the MFWA has worked with both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and partners at the national, regional and international levels to contribute to improving the media and freedom of expression landscape (offline and online) in West Africa. More details about the MFWA can be found on our website www.mfwa.org.

2. Background to the assignment

Digital transformation is on the rise in Togo and internet penetration is gaining grounds in the country. Data from DataReportal indicate that as of January 2025, Togo's internet penetration rate stood at 37.0 percent. With the growing internet penetration, digital spaces are emerging strongly as platforms for expression, engagements, civic activism, mobilisation, information sharing and personal development. However, access remains costly and unequal, especially for women and rural populations.

According to the ITU, 16.3 percent of the internet users in Togo are males, compared to 8.61 percent female users; a situation that is forcing many women to lose out on the opportunities the internet and digital technologies offer. Thus, although the internet can serve as the equalising tool that offers opportunities to both men and women, digital gender gap is adversely affecting women's ability to tap into the endless opportunities made possible by the internet and digital technologies.

To inform advocacy and policy interventions on improving women's internet usage to assert their rights online, contribute to public discourses and governance processes in Togo and pursue personal ambitions, the MFWA, with support from the Dutch Foreign Ministry is implementing a project aimed at ***promoting the digital rights of women and empowering them to safely use and take advantage of digital spaces.***

The MFWA is, therefore, seeking the services of an experienced Consultant to undertake a **baseline study on state of women's access and use of the internet and participation in digital spaces in Togo.** Findings from the baseline study will be used to engage policy makers and other relevant stakeholders in Togo, raise awareness on challenges women face in accessing and using the internet, and inform strategies to empower women to participate in online and digital spaces.

3. Purpose of the Assignment

The **Consultant** shall be responsible for *conducting a baseline study to assess women's access and use of the internet and their participation in digital spaces in Togo* and presenting a report on the findings of the study to the MFWA. The **Consultant** shall also present the findings of the study and offer capacity building on advocacy strategies on the issues identified at a training workshop for female journalists, women's rights groups and other civil society organisations in Togo.

4. Scope of Work

The consultant will:

- map out women's accessibility to the internet and digital spaces – including but not limited to, access to relevant devices, data, relevant content, etc.
- assess women's use of the internet and other digital spaces – including but not limited to, what they use the internet and digital spaces for, etc.
- assess the level of their engagement/participation in online/digital spaces – including, but not limited to the kind of issues or subject matter they engage in, etc.
- map out the challenges or underlining factors that hinder women's access, use and participation in online/digital spaces – including but not limited to regulatory and policy environment, economic and socio-cultural issues, literacy challenges, online safety issues, etc.
- map out ongoing interventions targeted at improving women's access and use of the internet and other digital spaces.
- map out the key stakeholders in the women's internet access and use, and women's rights online landscape
- make recommendations on the way forward

5. Methodology

The specific details of the study's design and methodology will be discussed and agreed upon with the project implementation team at the start of the consultancy. However, in general the assignment will involve a desk review to assess existing regulatory and policy framework; and engagements with industry players, women in the urban, peri-urban and rural areas (if possible); women's rights advocates and experts, academics and other relevant stakeholder groups, to gather insights on women's access and use of the internet and digital spaces in Togo. The report will be used to engage policy makers and other key stakeholders to inform and shape interventions aimed at promoting women's access and use of the internet.

6. Deliverables

The consultant will be expected to:

- Submit a draft report
- Finalised report based on inputs/feedback from the MFWA

- Present findings at a training workshop; and build capacity on advocacy strategies to address issues identified

The Baseline Report should be **submitted in French or English**.

7. Consultant's Profile

The consultant should meet the following criteria:

- Advanced degree (Master's or PhD) in the intersection of gender and digital technologies, gender studies, digital rights, women empowerment, human rights, communications studies, or a related field.
- Experience in digital rights, women's online rights issues, gendered use of the internet and digital technologies, women empowerment, and technology for empowerment/ social development.
- Strong understanding of gender issues in the context of Togo.
- Expertise in research, communication and facilitation skills.
- Strong understanding of digital rights issues.
- Familiarity with the digital rights landscape in Togo is a strong advantage.
- Ability to work independently and meet deadlines.
- Excellent analytical and report-writing skills.
- Working knowledge of English.

8. Timeframe & Duration

The assignment will be conducted within six weeks from the date of engagement. The consultant is expected to work closely with MFWA and key stakeholders throughout the process.

9. Application Process

Interested qualified consultants should submit:

- Expression of Interest (EOI) outlining relevant expertise and approach.
- Curriculum Vitae (CV) detailing qualifications and experience.
- Technical Proposal, including proposed methodology for conducting the analysis and sample reports.
- Financial Proposal detailing consultancy fees.

All applications should be sent to applications@mfw.org with a copy to melvine@mfw.org on or before **October 31, 2025**. However, applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis, and the process may close once a suitable candidate is selected.

10. Terms & Conditions

- The consultant will work under the supervision of the MFWA project team.
- All intellectual property rights of the reports will belong to MFWA.

- Confidentiality of all data and findings must be maintained.