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DISABLED PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATION OF BHUTAN

Registration No. CSOA/PBO-09

Terms of Reference (ToR) for Consultant – Development of Interpreter Services Framework and Agreements

Background

The Disabled People's Organization of Bhutan (DPOB) is leading an initiative to strengthen sign language interpreting services in Bhutan. This activity falls under the Project: Engagement of DPOB for National Level Advocacy and Awareness on Disability Agenda, Activity 3.1: Professionalisation and Institutionalisation of Bhutanese Sign Language Interpretation, funded by UNICEF Bhutan, and implemented in close collaboration with the Wangsel Institute for the Deaf and the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) Bhutan.

One of the key challenges faced by the Deaf community in Bhutan is the lack of individuals proficient in Bhutanese Sign Language (BhSL) and the shortage of professional interpreters who can bridge the communication gap between Deaf persons and the wider community. This communication barrier has led to their systematic exclusion from key areas of life, limiting their access to education, information, employment, and public services.

At present, the Wangsel Institute for the Deaf plays a vital role in bridging this gap, with teachers often serving dual roles as both educators and interpreters. However, this arrangement is not sustainable, as teachers cannot be continuously pulled out of their classrooms to provide interpretation services. This practice disrupts students' learning and overburdens teachers, while still leaving a growing demand for qualified interpreters unmet.

To address this challenge, DPOB, in collaboration with the BhSL research team of Wangsel Institute for the Deaf, has initiated the BhSL Interpreter Course Training, aimed at developing a pool of trained interpreters who can provide professional interpretation services when required. While the training is ongoing, identified teacher-interpreters from Wangsel will provide services as an interim measure.

This activity empowers DPOB to institutionalize BhSL interpretation as one of its core professional services, establishing systems for continuous training, assessment, and capacity building. In the long term, this will enable DPOB to respond efficiently to interpretation requests from government agencies, CSOs, private organizations, and international partners, positioning DPOB as both a service provider and a national advocate for accessibility and inclusion.

To ensure long-term sustainability, the project envisions developing a cost-recovery business model in the future, wherein partner agencies requiring interpreters for workshops, meetings, or events contribute service fees. These fees will be reinvested into training, evaluation, and professional development of interpreters. This approach will help reduce dependence on external funding and ensure continuity of high-quality interpretation services.



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Objectives of the Consultancy

The main objectives of this consultancy are to:

1. Develop comprehensive policy and governance documents defining the working modalities of teacher-interpreters in Bhutan, including Codes of Conduct and Terms of Reference (ToR) for interpreters.
2. Draft formal partnership and collaboration agreements establishing clear roles, responsibilities, and commitments between DPOB, Wangsel Institute for the Deaf, and relevant agencies (e.g., schools or education authorities).
3. Establish guidelines for recruitment, scheduling, and remuneration of teacher-interpreters to ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency.
4. Ensure inclusivity and alignment with Deaf community needs by engaging Deaf focal persons and stakeholders throughout the process.

Scope of Work / Key Tasks

The consultant will undertake the following tasks:

1. Stakeholder Consultations:

Conduct initial and ongoing consultations (e.g., focus group discussions, bilateral meetings) with key stakeholders, including Deaf community members, DPOB representatives, Deaf adults of Wangsel Institute for the Deaf and the Board of Deaf Organization of Bhutan, school principals, education officials, and development partners (e.g., UNICEF Bhutan).

2. Draft Partnership Agreement(s):

Develop and finalize a Partnership Agreement template for collaboration between DPOB and partner agencies (e.g., government schools, education departments), outlining shared objectives, commitments, and accountability mechanisms.

3. Draft MoU with Wangsel Institute:

Prepare a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between DPOB and the Wangsel Institute for the Deaf, defining collaboration scope in interpreter training, resource sharing, and joint responsibilities.

4. Working Modalities Policy and Code of Conduct:

Formulate a Policy on Working Modalities for teacher-interpreters, including a Code of Conduct and Ethics specifying professional standards and expected behaviors. The consultant should ensure cultural and contextual appropriateness through close consultation with Deaf community representatives and Wangsel Institute task group.

5. Terms of Reference for Teacher-Interpreters:

Draft detailed ToR for Registered Teacher-Interpreters, outlining their roles, responsibilities, scope of work, and reporting relationships.



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Registration No. CSOA/PBO-09

6. Contract Agreement Template:

Develop a Contract Agreement template between DPOB and individual teacher-interpreters, specifying payment terms, engagement period, confidentiality, and adherence to the Code of Conduct and policy framework.

7. Recruitment and Remuneration Guidelines:

Create structured guidelines for recruitment, scheduling, and remuneration of interpreters, with standardized criteria and fair pay scales (hourly, half-day, full-day rates), suitable for education sector budgets.

8. Finalize Draft ToR for the Deaf Organization of Bhutan:

Review and finalize any existing ToR for the Deaf Organization of Bhutan, ensuring alignment with the new Interpreter Services Framework and stakeholder feedback.

9. Documentation and Reporting:

Submit all draft documents for review and revision, incorporating feedback from DPOB, Wangsel Institute task group, and stakeholders. Provide a brief report summarizing consultations and how feedback was addressed.

10. Consultation Plan and Summary of stakeholder engagements and key inputs.

Deliverables

- i. Draft the Final Partnership Agreement between DPOB and partner agencies.
- ii. Draft and Final MoU between DPOB and Wangsel Institute.
- iii. Working Modalities Policy and Code of Conduct for teacher-interpreters.
- iv. Terms of Reference (ToR) for Teacher-Interpreters.
- v. Contract Agreement Template for engagement of teacher-interpreters.
- vi. Recruitment and Remuneration Guidelines.

Methodology

The consultant shall adopt a participatory and inclusive approach, ensuring that Deaf leadership is central to the process.

Key approaches include:

- Active engagement with Deaf focal persons and community members.
- Consultations with education stakeholders, NGOs, and development partners.
- Collaboration with Wangsel Institute for technical and contextual insights.
- Coordination with the DPOB project focal person to align with ongoing initiatives
- Preparation of clear, accessible, and plain-language materials suitable for all stakeholders.

Duration and Schedule

This is a short-term consultancy to be completed within one month of project initiation.



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Indicative Timeline:

Week	Activity
Week 1	Inception meeting, finalize work plan, and initial stakeholder consultations.
Week 2	Draft key documents (Partnership Agreement, MoU, Policy, Code of Conduct, ToRs).
Week 3	Submit drafts for review and incorporate feedback.
Week 4	Finalize all deliverables and handover.

Institutional Arrangement and Reporting

The consultant will work under the overall guidance of the DPOB Project Focal Person in collaboration with the Wangsel Institute for the Deaf task group and identified Deaf focal persons.

- Drafts should be shared with DPOB and the Wangsel Institute task group for review.
- Regular progress updates will be communicated via meetings or email.
- A final presentation and handover of deliverables are expected at the end of the consultancy.

Qualifications and Experience

Educational Background:

- Background in law, public policy, social sciences, or a related field.

Experience:

- Proven experience in developing legal or policy documents (agreements, codes of conduct, ToRs) for NGOs, educational, or government institutions.
- Prior experience in disability rights, inclusive education, or working with Deaf communities is highly desirable.

Skills:

- Excellent analytical and writing skills.
- Ability to facilitate consultations with diverse stakeholders.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills.

Language:

- Fluency in English (required); knowledge of Dzongkha or local languages is an asset.

Personal Attributes:

- Respect for Deaf culture and language.
- Sensitivity to inclusion and collaboration principles.



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Budget and Remuneration

- The consultancy is short-term and deliverable-based.
- Interested applicants should submit a lump-sum financial proposal covering all deliverables, consultations, and (if applicable) travel expenses.
- The payment schedule will be linked to deliverable submission and approval.

Proposal Submission

Interested and qualified candidates should submit the following documents:

- i. Cover Letter outlining relevant experience.
- ii. Curriculum Vitae (CV) with references.
- iii. Brief Methodology or Work Plan describing the approach to the tasks.
- iv. Financial Proposal (professional fee and expenses).

Proposals should be emailed to Project Focal Person Disabled People's Organization of Bhutan (DPOB) at program@dpobhutan.org by 07 December 2025.