

# Terms of Reference for Thematic Evaluation of Sign Language Component in DDL's International Projects

## 1. Background

The right to sign language throughout all stages of life is the overarching theme of all the Danish Deaf Association's current and past international projects. Currently, the Danish Deaf Association (DDL) has active project partnerships in nine countries, all funded by the Disability Fund managed by the Disabled Peoples Organisations Denmark (DPOD) on behalf of The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Danida). After meeting the necessary preconditions, DDL has been invited to submit a proposal for a program consolidating all current projects effective from January 2025.

In accordance with DDL's International Strategy, the projects utilise the "Development Triangle+" approach consisting of four pillars: Capacity Building, Advocacy, Empowerment, and Strategic Service Delivery. The sign language component, part of the Strategic Service Delivery pillar, focuses on improving access to sign language through **recognised sign language (SL) and sign language interpreter (SLI) training courses** with our partners and local educational institutes. **This training targets deaf individuals, their families, educators, and service providers**, aiming to establish recognised SL and SLI training courses. **Furthermore, DDL's advocacy efforts are directed toward achieving official recognition of a common sign language in each respective country.**

The sign language component accounts for 10% to 40% of the South partner's budget, depending on the country. **DDL also provides professional support to advocacy efforts that promote official recognition of a common sign language.** Given the relatively high budgetary and time investment from both DDL and our partners, DPOD has requested a thematic evaluation of this component to assess its efficiency and sustainability.

**The sign language components generally follow several key steps across partner countries:**

1. Needs assessment of local sign language needs and existing structures.
2. Development or adaptation of training curricula for SL and SLI training.
3. Capacity building through training sessions for deaf individuals, families, educators, and service providers.
4. Advocacy efforts to promote the official recognition of a common sign language.
5. Monitoring and evaluation to assess progress and impact.

**DDL's role involves offering technical support in developing training materials, overseeing capacity-building activities, providing professional support in advocacy efforts, and ensuring alignment with international standards for SLI training and sign language recognition.**

This evaluation will focus on one past project country (Uganda 1992-2006) and four current project countries (Ghana 2007-, Ivory Coast 2016-, Rwanda 2017-, and Vietnam 2016-), where the sign language component represented a significant investment. Among the current projects, Ghana is considered a showcase country due to its wealth of experience and knowledge in this area, and the other countries are adopting materials developed in Ghana.

## 2. Objectives

The evaluation has three primary objectives:

1. **Effectiveness:** To assess the achievements and impact of the sign language components focusing on results achieved and the added value of DDL's professional support.
2. **Efficiency:** To evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the interventions, determining whether resources (financial and human) were allocated appropriately. This includes identifying feasible, cost-effective alternatives, such as using local consultants.
3. **Sustainability:** To assess both the institutional and financial sustainability of the sign language components, exploring how benefits can be maintained beyond project funding. The evaluation will consider whether the projects built sustainable capacities in partners and identify drivers and barriers for long-term sustainability.

A cross-cutting aspect to be considered in all three objectives will be the feasibility and relevance of the intervention methods and approaches, focusing on their impact on effectiveness, costs, and sustainability.

## 3. Scope of work

The evaluation will only focus on three OECD DAC criteria: Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Sustainability. The evaluation will explore how well the sign language components have achieved their objectives, whether they were cost-effective, and whether the benefits will continue to endure in the project countries. The evaluation will also assess the feasibility and relevance of the interventions and approaches, in terms of their impact on effectiveness, costs, and sustainability.

The evaluation report must provide an overall assessment of the extent to which these three evaluation criteria have been achieved. It should explain reasons for successes or failures, and capture key lessons learned. The report should also include suggestions for improvements to be implemented in a future program, expected to be commenced by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025, where the sign language component will remain a key pillar of DDL's international cooperation.

Data collection for those questions will be drawn from project documents, reports, and interviews with key stakeholders and beneficiaries.

### Key questions to be addressed include:

#### Effectiveness:

- Were the interventions cost-effectively achieving their objectives?
- Did the ambitions behind the objectives align with the capacity and context of each country?
- To what extent have the projects achieved their intended objectives and results?
- What was the added value of the professional support provided by DDL?

#### Efficiency:

- Could more cost-effective approaches (e.g., using local consultants) have been used to build capacity for providing sign language training and interpreter programs?
- Was the allocation of resources (financial and human) reasonable in the context of each project?

### Sustainability in institutional and financial terms:

- Will the benefits of the sign language components last beyond the project's end?
- Have the projects built sustainable capacities within partner organizations, particularly deaf associations and universities in Ghana, Rwanda, Vietnam, and Ivory Coast?
- What were the key drivers for sustainability in previous projects, such as the sign language research and interpreter training at Kyambogo University after DDL's exit from Uganda in 2006, and have these factors been replicated in other countries?
- What barriers exist that prevent sign language teaching programs from becoming sustainable sources of revenue for deaf associations?
- Is it realistic that sign language interpreter training programs can continue to attract students without scholarships from the projects? How can potential dependency on scholarships be best avoided?
- Are universities the appropriate choice as strategic partners for delivering sign language interpreter training programs?

## 4. Methodology

The evaluation will adopt a comprehensive approach, combining desk studies and field activities.

Data collection will involve reviewing project documents, reports, financial statements, and interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries. **Key documents to be studied will include:**

- Project proposals, status reports, and financial documents (2020-2024).
- Internal mid-term review reports and evaluation reports from the project countries.
- DDL's concept note on sign language work, including the Finnish manual on doing sign language work.

The evaluation will also include field visits to Ghana, Uganda, and potentially Rwanda. Methods for data collection will include key informant interviews, group discussions, and workshops to gather nuanced feedback from stakeholders.

At the conclusion of the desk studies, an Inception Note will be prepared. This will outline the next steps in the evaluation, identify key contacts, and propose a methodology for data collection and field visits (e.g., key informant interviews, group interviews, and workshops). The note will include a blend of quantitative and qualitative methods and will guide the collection of data and field visits.

The Inception Note will also provide detailed guidance on the methodology, stakeholder engagement plan, and data collection strategies. It will serve as a roadmap for the field studies and will be developed in collaboration with DDL and partner organisations. The **evaluation will identify and validate project achievements**, assess the approach to sign language work, and highlight challenges and potential improvements. The **achievements of the projects will be identified, validated, compiled, and assessed**. Dialogue with target groups, key stakeholders, and project staff will help assess challenges and improvements to the sign language component. A **debriefing note** will be discussed and shared with DDL and selected Southern partners after the data collection phase to summarise the findings.  
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**Documents to be studied should include:**

- Project proposals for projects in Ghana, Rwanda, Vietnam, and Ivory Coast
- Annual status reports 2020 - 2024
- Relevant 6-month progress reports 2020 - 2024
- Project accounts for 2020 - 2024
- Internal Mid-term Review reports from Ghana, Rwanda, Vietnam, and Ivory Coast
- Evaluation reports for the projects in Ghana, Rwanda, Vietnam, and Ivory Coast
- End of project reports for projects in Ghana, Rwanda, Vietnam, and Ivory Coast
- Available materials about the projects in Uganda
- DDL’s concept note on Sign Language Work
- Finnish manual on Sign Language Work

**5. Outputs/deliverables**

**Inception note (5-10 pages):** This document will present the approach and methodology for the evaluation, detailing the methods for assessing effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. It will include an interview list and a draft interview guide.

**Debriefing note (3-5 pages):** A brief presentation summarising findings and recommendations, to be presented to DDL and Southern partners in beginning of January 2025 for discussion and validation.

**Evaluation report (max. 30 pages excluding annexes):** The final report, to be presented by the end of January 2025, will include an executive summary and a detailed section for conclusions and recommendations.

All outputs will be presented in English.

**6. Time plan**

A detailed time plan will be developed during the inception phase. This plan will ensure a realistic allocation of days for each consultant to effectively cover all necessary activities. A more specific time plan will be agreed upon once the evaluation commences.

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>Inception phase</b> Desk studies, initial interviews, and the development of the Inception Note.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meet with DDL to clarify the methodology and timing of the field study. Conduct a preparatory desk study to analyse key documents. Based on this, the team will draft an inception note outlining the approach and methodology of the field study.</li><li>• Collect data and conduct initial interviews with key staff and resource persons from DDL and GNAD in Denmark and Ghana.</li><li>• Hold a meeting between the</li></ul>	Inception note	End of November 2024

	Evaluation Team, DDL, and relevant South partners to discuss the inception note. Plan the field studies and meetings.		
<b>Field studies and data collection</b> Field visits to Ghana, Uganda, and potentially Rwanda, along with meetings with DDL, South Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct meetings, interviews, and discussions with southern partners, DDL, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders to assess achieved results, performance and lessons learned.</li> <li>• Undertake field trips to Ghana, Uganda, and possibly Rwanda data collection.</li> <li>• Conduct desk study for the countries not visited.</li> </ul>	Debriefing note	Mid December 2024
<b>Analysis and report writing</b> Presentation of preliminary findings, draft report preparation, and finalisation based on feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present preliminary findings.</li> <li>• Prepare a draft report for feedback and discussions.</li> <li>• Finalise the report based on the feedback and discussions.</li> </ul>	Draft report in English	Beginning of January 2025
<b>Submission and presentation</b> Submission of the final report and presentation to DPOD, DDL, and Southern partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit the report.</li> <li>• Presentation of the report.</li> </ul>	Final report and PPT in English	Submission and presentation of the final report by the end of January 2025

It is estimated that the total number of working days will be 35, to be shared between the two consultants. Based on the scope and travel involved, the allocation of working days per phase will be further detailed during the inception phase to ensure that the estimated time allocation is feasible.

## 7. Qualifications required

### Evaluation Team Composition:

The evaluation team should consist of two consultants with a combination of different profiles complementing each other, both possessing solid experience with civil society organisations, international cooperation, and capacity building of persons with disabilities.

1. A **Team Leader**: This consultant will be familiar with Danish Development Aid, particularly Danida's guidelines, policies, and priorities. They should have in-depth knowledge of Danish civil society organisations and experiences with projects or programs under DPOD, CISU, CKU, DUF, and/or similar entities. The Team Leader must also be skilled in evaluation methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, and uphold a rights-based approach to development.

2. A **Sign Language Expert**: This consultant will have extensive experience in sign language work including training, interpreter training and the development of curriculum and teaching materials. Knowledge of sign linguistics and advocacy for the right to sign language is also crucial.

Consultants will apply separately to DDL, which will form the evaluation team. **Applicants should clearly indicate which of the two profiles, they are applying for.** This setup ensures that each consultant's strengths are utilised effectively, enhancing the overall quality and impact of the evaluation. This strategic approach aims to maximise the benefits derived from each consultant's unique expertise and experience, contributing significantly to the thoroughness and effectiveness of the evaluation process.

## 8. Budget

A total of 242.000 DKK will be allocated for the evaluation, covering travel, accommodation, per diems, and meeting expenses in Uganda, **with projects in Ghana and Rwanda covering local expenses.** The total number of working days to be distributed between the consultants should not be less than 35. Negotiations between DDL and the consultants will settle the exact allocation of working days and remuneration exact allocation of working days and end days is expected during the field visits.