

# Terms of Reference for a Community Centred Connectivity Projects Consultant

## Introduction

“Meaningful community-centred connectivity” is a project under the Local Networks (LocNet) initiative, a collective effort led by the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) and Rhizomatica, in partnership with people and organisations in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). It aims to directly support community networks and other community-centred connectivity initiatives, while contributing to an enabling ecosystem for their emergence and growth. It is part of a multi-year, multi-donor strategy envisaged to address human capacity and sustainability challenges, along with the policy and regulatory obstacles, all of which limit the growth of community-based connectivity initiatives.

## Main purpose of the position

The LocNet team is looking for a consultant to support the project coordinators who facilitate community-centred connectivity in four focus countries (Brazil, South Africa, Kenya and Indonesia). The specific activities to support will be based on current dialogues with stakeholders, community networks and support organisations, demanding some technological knowledge/proximity, as well as coordination skills. Therefore, the position foresees close collaboration with the coordinators of Local Services & Technology, Shaping Connectivity and Tech Adoption. This person will support Outcome Area 1, focusing on enabling community-centred connectivity and Outcome Area 2, dedicated to shaping meaningful community-centred connectivity. *In both areas, the position entails leading, monitoring and/or supporting community connectivity-related activities and research, and communicating the outputs from those activities through webinars, knowledge sharing sessions and communications pieces.*

The activities to be developed will take place at both regional/global and national levels. The regional/global level activities are research, mapping and documentation of best practices and most-used equipment. These activities will be mainly conducted by technical consultants with support from the LocNet team, involving the larger Community Networks and Community Centred Connectivity (CN/CCC) and the technology community at a regional and global level. At the national level, activities will take place in Brazil, Indonesia, Kenya, and South Africa, four of the LocNet Focus Countries. The activities will be led by community partners and/or support organisations and relate to thematic training labs and on-demand scholarships, in-country CN/CCC knowledge exchange, and micro-grants focused on

specific CN/CCC objectives.

The applicant should be familiar with community-centred connectivity and/or the community networks landscape, and must be interested in community initiatives, and keen to support collective learning and co-creation processes. Ideally, the candidate should have knowledge and/or experience with different aspects of community-centred connectivity, including first-hand knowledge of community networks and community-centred connectivity; gender, racial and ethnic inclusive approaches; and familiarity with technical aspects of connectivity and local services.

Overview of relevant outcome areas:

**Outcome 1:** Enabling community-centred connectivity: Viable community-centred connectivity is available in previously unreached and marginalised communities in LocNet focus countries.

- Effective support, capacity development and policy advice are available to local communities that need viable community-centred connectivity.

**Outcome 2:** Shaping meaningful community-centred connectivity: People and communities in focus countries shape, use and benefit from local services and digital technologies, catalysing meaningful community-centred connectivity.

- Effective support, capacities, tools and services enable communities to utilise local services and digital technologies to meet expressed community needs.

The LocNet project has other outcome areas focusing on policy and capacity building that are not central to the activities of this position. However, there is a cross-cutting outcome: **gender** is integrated into all LocNet outcome areas. Therefore, the candidate must be aware of power dynamics and gender disparities, especially in community networks and technical environments.

*For more information on the background and history of the LocNet project, see the information box at the end of this document or visit our website: <https://www.apc.org/en/our-work/themes/digital-inclusion>*

### **General profile of the Activities Consultant position**

- Promote and support emerging Communities of Practice (CoPs) primarily through organising and facilitating thematic webinars to disseminate CoPs' research findings, and promote knowledge exchange on CN/CCC best practices and themes of interest.
- Co-coordinate and monitor on-demand micro-granting in focus countries.
- Share and store presentations, workshops, training and the like, work with the APC Communications Associate in relation to communication outputs from

the activities conducted: training, public consultation and speaking opportunities.

- Attend team meetings, participate in communication channels and adhere to values and practices.
- Seek to advance the participation of women, Indigenous, Black and traditional populations in the CN/CCC environment.

## **List of specific activities/KRAs of the Community-Centred Connectivity Projects Consultant**

For the contract period (2 September 2024 to 2 May 2025) the main responsibilities of the Community-Centred Connectivity Projects Consultant will:

### Global and regional level

- Coordinate a research on mapping CCCs network infrastructure and local services (developed by technical consultants);
- Support the documentation and sharing of the below deliverables through organising public webinars, knowledge-sharing sessions and communication outputs from the research and activities conducted:
  - Comparative study and testing of self-hosting solutions (coordinated by the Technologies Adoption Coordinator);
  - Local content platforms and storage solutions for community networks (coordinated by the Technologies Adoption Coordinator);
  - Mapping of Community Interest Media (coordinated by the Local Services & Technology Lead).

### National level

- Co-coordinate and monitor country-specific activities in Brazil, South Africa, Kenya and Indonesia related to fostering knowledge and implementation of network infrastructure and local services, mainly through LocNet micro-grants as follows:
  - P2P mentoring and scholarships on network infrastructure and local services.
  - Community network laboratories - thematic capacity building sessions organised by CN/CCC.
  - CCCs exchanges between regions of a focus country.
  - National community network schools micro grants.

- On request from coordinators of Local Services & Technology, Shaping Connectivity and Technology Adoption, the job included contributing to the identification of community connectivity experts at country level and accompaniment and documentation of the participatory assessment of local needs and resources for the supported community-centred connectivity projects.

## Requirements

- Physically based in or having experience with at least one of the focus countries: Brazil, South Africa, Kenya or Indonesia. Alternatively, candidates with relevant work on community-centred connectivity in the global South can be considered.
- Spoken and written English.
- Be available in the time zone required: -4utc to + 4utc
- Embedded in or well versed on the community-centred connectivity space, its challenges, opportunities and contacts with key stakeholders.
- Previous experience in civic tech projects and/or community-based work.
- Experience in research and project design activities, ideally from a participatory action research point of view.
- Should understand power dynamics, be able to work in intercultural environments, and be able to create good relationships with local partners.

Women, LGBTQIA+, gender diverse people and members of Black, Indigenous, traditional and marginalised communities are encouraged to apply, even if they don't entirely meet all the requirements.

## Additional consideration

- It is a plus to be attached to an organisation working in the CCC or digital rights environment.
- It is a plus to have specific technical skills on networking or network infrastructure.
- Fluency in any of the languages spoken in focus countries is a plus (such as Portuguese, Afrikaans, Swahili, Bahasa).

Start date: **2 September 2024**. Please note that given the short timeline in this project, any postponement of this start date is not a possibility. The selected consultant will be notified by the last week of August 2024.

**Submission deadline for expressions of interest postponed to: 25 August 2024**

## **Reporting**

The person chosen for position will report to the Outcome 1 and 2 co-coordinators of the Local Networks initiative and work closely with other members of the project team.

## **Remuneration and duration of contract**

The consultant will receive up to **USD 16,800**. This fund should cover a minimum 0.5 full-time equivalent (or 20 hours of weekly engagement), required to coordinate and contribute to the above-mentioned activities during the eight-month contract. The consultant is expected to work from **2 September 2024 until 2 May 2025**.

A contract between the successful candidate and/or host institution and APC will be drawn up, detailing the specific terms and the disbursement process.

When the consultancy contract ends, an evaluation will take place to determine whether an internal position can be offered, renewable by mutual agreement, based on funding availability and an adjustment of activities in relation to the project's multi-year plan.

## **Submission requirements**

Please submit the following by email to [locnet@apc.org](mailto:locnet@apc.org) [SUBJECT LINE: **[Community Centred Connectivity Projects Consultant]**]

- A cover letter indicating relevant experience of the applicant in the community-centred connectivity spaces, their challenges, opportunities and contacts within this space, and other skills required for the position, e.g strong experience in coordination and research, such as from a participatory action research point of view; and technical skills and digital rights knowledge related to community-centred connectivity. Please also include the reason for your interest in the position, and your availability for the eight-month period and beyond.

## **Please also provide**

- CV of the applicant
- Examples of any relevant, similar work that back the candidate's experience requirements.
- Mention three names for reference from individuals involved in community-centred connectivity.

## **Background of the LocNet initiative**

Since 2017, LocNet has conducted several studies to support knowledge of community-centred connectivity initiatives, their business, operation and ownership models, and their gender implications. In addition, LocNet has worked with more than 40 communities and institutions in 22 global South countries, fostering close relationships with them and building their capacity to be part of a global, connected cohort that has become the foundation of a growing community network movement helping to address digital exclusion. With the support of UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office's (FCDO) Digital Access Programme (DAP) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), LocNet has enabled partners in Brazil, Indonesia, Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa to create national community network school programmes impacting over 120 communities with nearly 600 participants.

LocNet has also contributed to an enabling policy and regulation environment for community networks through supporting changes in policy in selected countries and fostering CCC in global spaces. In the particular case of Kenya, LocNet, together with KICTANet, provided technical assistance to the Communications Authority (CA) of Kenya to develop the Licensing and Shared Spectrum Framework for Community Networks, and has, together with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), provided training to CA Kenya for its implementation. In Brazil, through an MoU between FCDO and national telecommunications regulator Anatel, LocNet delivered a policy brief, a community network manual and support videos, with oversight from a national committee of experts. This group, initially formed by LocNet, was the seed to a National Community Network Committee that kept ongoing advocacy and policy work, and still counts on the support of LocNet LAC (Latin America and the Caribbean) and Brazil policy coordinators. Progress of varying degrees has also been recorded in Indonesia, Nigeria and South Africa.

APC, Rhizomatica and the LocNet initiative are committed to transparency in their work. All LocNet studies, profiles and reviews are publicly available on the APC website.

Please consult the LocNet project webpage for more information: [apc.org/locnet](https://apc.org/locnet)

## **About APC**

[APC](#) is a global network of civil society organisations whose mission is to empower and support organisations, social movements and individuals in and through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to build strategic communities and initiatives for the purpose of making meaningful contributions to equitable human development, social justice, participatory political processes and environmental sustainability.

## **About Rhizomatica**

[Rhizomatica](#) is a civil society organisation whose mission is to increase access to and participation in telecommunications by supporting communities to build and maintain self-governed and owned communication infrastructure. Rhizomatica's approach combines regulatory activism and reform, critical engagement with technology and the development of decentralised telecommunications infrastructure, and direct community involvement and participation.