



Terms of reference

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE STRATEGY IN ISONGA II

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Contents

List of Abbreviations.....	2
1. Presentation of AFD.....	3
2. Context.....	3
3. Objectives of the consultancy.....	5
4. Main activities to be performed by the consultant.....	65
5. Deliverables and period of assignment.....	87
6. Methodology.....	8
7. Experts to be mobilized	98
8. Costing requirements	109

List of Abbreviations

AFD:	Agence Française de Développement
CNOS:	Comité National Olympique et Sportif
COPIL:	Comité de pilotage
EF:	Expertise France
FRSS:	Rwanda Federation of School Sport
GBV:	Gender-Based Violence
GMO:	Gender Monitoring Office
MIGEPROF:	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINALOC:	Ministry of Local Administration Government
MINECOFIN:	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MINEDUC:	Ministry of Education
MINISPORTS:	Ministry of Sports
MOU:	Memorandum of Understanding
NST:	National Strategy for Transformation
RNOSC:	Rwanda National Olympic and Sports Committee
FRSS	Rwanda School Sports Federation
SEAH:	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment
SPIU:	Single Project Implementation Unit

Commenté [m1]: The Ministry of Local Government

1. Presentation of AFD

Agence Française de Développement (AFD) group is a public institution that finances, supports and accelerates the transition to a more just and sustainable world. A French development aid and sustainable development investment platform, we build shared solutions with our partners, with and for the people in developing countries.

Our teams are involved in over 4,000 projects in France, in the overseas territories and in 115 other countries, for the common good of humanity – the climate, biodiversity, peace, gender equality, education and health. In this way, we are thus contributing to the commitment of France and of the French people to the Sustainable Development Goals. For a shared world.

Through grants, loans, guarantee funds or debt reduction and development contracts, AFD funds projects, programmes and studies and supports its partners in developing countries with their capacity building.

Its subsidiaries Proparco, provides support for private investments, and Expertise France, mobilize French public expertise.

AFD also works with French and international academic networks to feed into forward-looking discussions and debates on development.

Full information on AFD, and in particular its Code of Ethics, which the Service Provider is strongly encouraged to read, can be found at www.afd.fr.

AFD has committed in a “100% social link” approach, targeting in its funded actions social cohesion and well-being in the populations, particularly by increasing access to education and promoting gender equality. AFD gender equality objectives are based on France’s International Strategy for a Feminist Foreign Policy (2025-2030) and are monitored on a yearly basis through OECD’s DAC Gender Equality policy marker. At AFD project level, the Sustainable Development Analysis Framework guides and supports the integration of gender equality issues.

2. Context

2.1. [Background information on the context](#)

Sports within Rwanda’s education system are currently characterized by a lack of adequate infrastructure and equipment, particularly in rural areas. Youth coaching is limited and often poorly qualified. There are also significant disparities in access and use for girls, as well as weak linkages between sports, education, and talent identification. These issues are exacerbated by social and gender norms that discourage girls from participating in sports, especially in mixed-gender settings or outside regular school hours.

This situation stems from chronic underfunding in a context of competing priorities (such as classroom construction and teacher training), insufficient collaboration among relevant ministries (Sports, Education, and Gender), limited technical expertise on inclusive and gender-sensitive sports programming, and a lack of construction and equipment standards. Students, particularly girls, are the most affected by these imbalances. The lack of female coaches and role models in school sports further discourages girls’ participation.

2.2. [ISONGA Program Phase 2](#)

Rwanda is pursuing an ambitious transformation agenda driven by Vision 2050 and the National Strategy for Transformation, with a strong focus on education, social inclusion, and the empowerment of women and youth.

Through these different strategies and policies, the Government of Rwanda has recognized sport as a strategic cross-cutting lever and driver of economic development and social cohesion and seeks to position Rwanda as the Home of Sports on the continent.

The ISONGA program, launched in 2012 and supported by AFD in 2021, embodies this ambition by structuring a school-based sports performance pathway. Led by the Ministry of Sports (MINISPORTS), the program also involves the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) and the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), and is aligned with their respective strategic frameworks, including the National Sports Development Policy (2020–2030), National Gender Policy (2021) and the Education Sector Strategic Plan (2018–2024).

The second phase of ISONGA (2025–2029) aims to expand and consolidate this school-based sports system in 63 schools nationwide. It will pursue three core objectives: (i) increase inclusive access to school sport, especially for girls and students with disabilities; (ii) establish a gender-sensitive national talent identification and development pathway; and (iii) transform gender norms through the promotion of inclusive sport cultures. Through the program 63 sports facilities will be rehabilitated, quality equipment will benefit over 34,000 students and surrounding communities. The objective is to enroll more than 2,227 student-athletes – with at least 50% girls - into the talent development track. Students will be selected at the end of primary school and followed through annual academic and athletic evaluations.

Phase 2 of the ISONGA program seeks to build an inclusive, gender-transformative school sports system integrated into Rwanda’s education sector. It aims to ensure that every girl and boy has equitable access to sport as a means of personal development, academic achievement, and athletic excellence.

Beyond the gender-sensitive talent development as primary purpose, the project aims to reduce structural inequalities between girls and boys in terms of access to, participation in, and opportunities through sports. It also aims to use sport as a tool to transform social norms and empower youth, especially girls. ISONGA II seeks to make schools not only places of learning but also safe, inclusive, and empowering spaces where young sports talent can be identified and nurtured, so that girls and boys alike may become the champions and sports leaders of tomorrow in Rwanda.

The project aims to achieve this ambition in 63 schools across the country by 2029, through three specific objectives:

- Increase participation in school sports for all students by addressing specific barriers faced by girls to ensure truly equitable and inclusive access to sport;
- Establish a gender-sensitive school-based talent development pathway, ensuring that girls and boys have equal opportunities to pursue athletic excellence;
- Promote inclusive sports cultures by deconstructing gender stereotypes and elevating female role models (athletes, coaches, mentors) within and around schools, with the active participation of boys, families, and communities.

Through these efforts, ISONGA Program phase II aims to contribute to youth empowerment, national unity, the promotion of female leadership, and Rwanda's visibility in the regional and international sports arena.

A feasibility study funded by AFD in 2024-2025 laid the groundwork for the second phase of the ISONGA school sports program. The study helped define the technical scope of the program, particularly the scale and specifications of the infrastructure to be financed, and outlined the main components of the intervention. As part of this preparation phase, a dedicated gender diagnostic was conducted. It identified key gender inequalities in access, participation, and leadership in school-based sports in Rwanda, and provided initial recommendations for designing a gender-transformative approach. The study positioned gender equality not just as a cross-cutting issue, but as a primary objective of the ISONGA program (aligned with OECD DAC gender marker¹ level 2).

For this phase, the strategic partnership between MINISPORTS and AFD will combine a loan of 16 million € and a grant arrangement of 4 million € to expand the program nationally and strengthen its institutional foundations. In the framework of the grant, Expertise France (EF) will be mobilized to provide technical assistance (TA) to the Single Project Implementation Unit (SPIU) and its partners for the effective implementation of ISONGA Program phase II.

3. Objectives of the consultancy

The objective of the consultancy covered by the present terms of reference is to support the Government of Rwanda—through MINISPORTS, MIGEPROF, and MINEDUC—in operationalizing the gender-transformative ambition of the ISONGA program (Phase 2), in line with DAC gender marker level 2, National Gender Policy and strategies, and AFD's strategic framework for gender equality. While the TA provided by EF² will include advisory services to ensure gender mainstreaming along the project's implementation period, the present consultancy aims at providing gender specific expertise for strategic, operational, and institutional support during the inception of the project to ensure that gender equality is not only mainstreamed but structurally embedded across all levels of the program. The proposed consultancy corresponds to the first year of the project's implementation, with the purpose of laying solid foundations for gender-transformative implementation. Strong coordination with the TA provided by EF and the partners' cooperation system will be critical.

More specifically, the present consultancy aims to:

1. Map and engage key gender and sport actors, including institutional stakeholders, women's sport commissions, and civil society organizations, and define how they can be integrated into ISONGA's governance and implementation mechanisms (e.g. steering, technical delivery, community engagement).
2. Co-develop and finalize the project's gender outcome-level indicators that go beyond participation rates to assess changes in girls' and women's life towards more empowerment, including physical autonomy (e.g. safety, menstrual health), economic agency (e.g. aspirations, choices), and leadership/confidence (e.g. voice, visibility).

¹ The **OECD DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker** is a tool used to track aid and development activities that promote gender equality. The marker assigns each project a score based on the extent to which gender equality is a principal or significant objective. Level 2 means that gender equality is the main objective and drive the activity's purpose and design.

² Terms of reference for EF TA are in annex for referral.

3. Support the strategic planning and validation of gender-responsive activities, through participatory consultations with national and local actors identified as gender knowledge-holders and community champions.
4. Design and pilot a comprehensive gender capacity development approach for the ISONGA program phase II, aligned with its gender-transformative ambition and as a contribution to the national Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming in Sports. This approach will aim to equip all key stakeholders—across governance, implementation, and delivery levels—with the tools, skills, and systems needed to ensure the full integration of gender throughout the program’s 3-year cycle and beyond.

4. Main activities to be performed by the consultant

The consultant will be responsible for implementing the following activities:

1. Mapping and engagement:

- Get familiar with ISONGA II and its context through documents (e.g. evaluation of phase I, feasibility study, gender diagnosis, project description) and exchange provided by the SPIU and AFD teams
- Identify key gender and sport stakeholders at national and local levels, including public actors, CSOs, school-level gender focal points, women’s commissions within sport federations, etc.
- Conduct interviews with identified stakeholders as needed inside Kigali or outside.
- Propose modalities for their meaningful involvement in the project’s governance structure, implementation (in the form of potential partnerships or programs synergies) and community outreach.
- Facilitate initial coordination meetings and propose roles/responsibilities based on institutional mandates and capacities, and facilitate validation of the revised governance structure.

2. Development of the gender-responsive outcome indicators:

- Get familiar with existing national policy and strategic frameworks for gender mainstreaming in sports, and their level of implementation, including the institutional mechanisms supporting gender mainstreaming (e.g. gender focal points, committees)
- Review the existing logframe and revise or complete gender-specific outcomes, indicators, and means of verification in coordination with SPIU, main stakeholders (e.g. MIGEPROF, MINEDUC) and AFD
- Ensure that objectives, indicators and gender-disaggregated data collected through the project’s implementation also contribute to national engagement and accountability frameworks on gender (for example: any relevant data on participation of women/men girls/boys at all levels, proportion of women and men in leadership and decision-making positions)
- Ensure that the framework includes qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure changes in girl’s agency (physical, educational, economic, political), access to resources and opportunities of the project (training, funding, facilities, equipment etc.), women’s leadership in sport structures and effectiveness of safeguarding and gender-responsive activities.
- Develop an outline for the gender data-collection processes and related tools, including participatory tools

3. Technical support for the operational planning of gender specific measures:

- Analyze the proposed key activities for gender equality in ISONGA programme phase II (in particular, but not limited to, the 3rd component of the program “Promote inclusive sports

cultures by challenging gender stereotypes and highlighting female role models – athletes, staff, coaches – within and around schools, with the active involvement of boys, families, and communities”) in relation to the program’s transformative objectives on gender, stakeholder engagement and available budget to ensure a strategic prioritization of activities to be implemented.

- Translate the analysis and related recommendations into a detailed implementation plan with activities, timelines, budget and responsibilities.
- Ensure alignment synergies with national frameworks (e.g. MIGEPROF’s Gender Strategy, Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming in Sports and Culture) and ongoing initiatives (e.g. “Toutes en Sport” by Play International).
- Propose a risk matrix from a gender perspective (e.g. resistance, SEAH and GBV risks, underrepresentation of women) and related mitigation measures.

4. Development and piloting of the Gender capacity development strategy for the ISONGA Program phase II:

- Design a multi-level gender capacity development strategy, aligned with the gender priorities and activities co-defined in the third workstream of the consultancy. This strategy should cover (indicative – to be further developed/ adapted based on the prioritized activities): (i) National and decentralized governance actors (e.g. COPIL, technical committees); (ii) Implementing institutions and technical staff (SPIU, federations, line ministries); (iii) Coaches and other staff, including through integration of gender modules in coach training curricula; (iv) Mentoring schemes to support emerging female leaders and coaches; (v) Awareness/training packages for schools and communities, targeting students, parents, and local leaders.
- Assess capacity building needs of the SPIU, relevant ministries (MINISPORTS, MIGEPROF, MINEDUC), and implementing partners to tailor training content and delivery methods.
- Develop and deliver targeted training and coaching sessions: e.g. introductory sensitization for high-level decision-makers; deep dives for technical teams on gender-transformative approaches, gender-responsive M&E; SEAH/GBV prevention; Capacity reinforcement of local implementers and federations.
- Co-develop training content and tools together with SPIU and MIGEPROF (e.g. co-facilitation, peer-to-peer learning), to promote ownership and internalization, e.g. practical toolkits: checklists, SOPs, facilitation guides, modular training packages that can be replicated or institutionalized.
- Pilot selected training and mentoring modules during the first year of implementation, document lessons learned, and refine content with the objective of scaling up during the remaining years of the program implementation by stakeholders.
- Establish a feedback and learning system with trained stakeholders (e.g. pre/post assessments, follow-up interviews or group reflection), to adapt and improve training formats over time.
- Ensure that all materials and tools are integrated into the program’s knowledge management system and shared with relevant institutions for long-term use.

The Ministry of Sports has already integrated gender mainstreaming. The consultant must build on what already exists, identify any gaps or challenges in implementation, and support MINISPORTS in improving the implementation process, including proposing innovative approaches to ensure effective execution.

Reporting and consolidation of the approach:

- In consultation with EF, propose a system for coordination/ validation with MINISPORTS (SPIU), MIGEPROF, MINEDUC and AFD, including monthly technical meetings and milestones validation mechanism.
- Engage with SPIU team, EF team and AFD staff in regular exchange regarding the gender approach.
- All steps of the process need to be conducted in a participatory, gender and context-sensitive manner and in close coordination with SPIU, EF and AFD staff.
- Draw lessons learned, recommendations, and reflection sessions as needed.
- Develop operational recommendation to ensure further quality implementation of the gender approach for ISONGA II, including recommendations for further TA and capacity building strategy beyond inception phase (scaling-up approach for piloted activities).

5. Deliverables and period of assignment

Deliverable	Deadline	Cost
Inception report with the detailed methodology, a suggested process outline and roadmap, based on initial analysis and initial workshops, minutes of coordination meetings	1 month after contract signature	
1st Interim Report including: (i) stakeholder and policy analysis (ii) initial revision of the logframe and draft outline for the gender data-collection processes and related tools (iii) SPIU and actors gender capacity needs assessment and capacity development strategy, minutes of coordination meetings	3 months after contract signature	
2nd Interim Report including: (i) adopted recommendations for project's governance (ii) finalized logframe and data collection system for gender (iii) revised gender key activities, prioritized, budgeted, etc. (iv) training/ coaching reports and capacity development strategy for program's implementation, minutes of coordination meetings	6 months after contract signature	
Final report , following dedicated validation and dissemination workshop, minutes of coordination meetings	12 months after contract signature	

Depending on the target audience, some of the reports could be translated into Kinyarwanda to enhance their accessibility and dissemination. Period of assignment: From the 1st of Oct 2025 until the 30th of September 2026.

6. Methodology

In its offer, the consultant is required to show how the objectives of the consultancy (section 2) will be achieved, and what will be the technical-methodological concept. The offer will present and justify the strategic approach and management system to implement the activities. The offer will also present the

relevant stakeholders for the implementation of the consultancy and how the cooperation will be ensured with them, including approach to steering of activities with the program's partners.

The offer will describe the key activities of the consultancy and provide a schedule, including work steps, experts involved, and contributions of other stakeholders when relevant.

AFD promotes a gender context sensitive approach, with the principles of intersectionality, inclusion and Do No Harm at the core of its gender DAC2 supported programs. The consultant is required to describe how these principles will be integrated in its strategy and in the implementation with related partners and stakeholders. The consultant reports regularly to AFD in the form of meetings, and minutes of meetings in addition to the reporting described in the deliverables section.

The consultant makes available equipment and supplies (consumables) and assumes the associated operating and administrative costs, including workshops, missions etc.

7. Experts to be mobilized

Team leader

Tasks of the team leader

- Overall responsibility for the consultancy (quality and deadlines)
- Coordinating and ensuring communication with AFD, partners and others involved
- Team management, in particular identifying the need for short-term assignments within the consultancy
- Managing the available budget, as well as planning and steering assignments
- Regular reporting in accordance with deadlines

Qualifications of the team leader

- Master's degree or equivalent in gender studies, public administration, sociology, social work, policy studies, communication studies, education studies or relevant fields
- English and French, Kinyarwanda must be spoken by at least one person of the team.
- 15 years of proven practical experience in organizational development, gender mainstreaming and management of inclusion and/or gender projects
- Professional experience in gender and sports for development and support to national institutions
- 5 years of management/leadership experience as project team leader or manager in an organization
- Experience in the East Africa region, of at least 2 years in projects in Rwanda
- Development Cooperation experience, knowledge of AFD cooperation frameworks is an advantage
- Proven track record of developing new ideas, approaches and innovative ways in change management, transformative approaches and organizational development

Expert pool with minimum 2 experts

Tasks of the experts' pool

- Provide technical support relevant for the implementation of the activities and complementary profiles (e.g. SEAH and GBV prevention in Rwanda expertise, public institutions capacity development measures, monitoring and gender data collection, sports in education, positive masculinities, local expertise)

- Develop and produce tools and knowledge management products feeding into the deliverables of the consultancy

Qualifications of the pool of experts:

- University degree in education, social sciences, organizational development, and/ or change management.
- Very good language skills in Kinyarwanda and English
- Experience in supporting gender mainstreaming, sports in education, gender in sports, gender sensitive monitoring, data collection
- Experience in SEAH and GBV prevention in Rwanda, working with government entities in Rwanda and sport federations
- Experience in facilitating organizational change and capacity development

Soft skills of experts

In addition to their specialist qualifications, the following qualifications are required of the experts:

- Excellent interpersonal and team skills.
- Cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability.

Admin Staff:

Tasks of the Admin:

- Provide admin, finance, and logistical support for the implementation of the activities (capacity development measures, workshops)
- Responsible for proper invoicing and financial management

8. Costing requirements

The total budget for this consultancy is 100,000 EUR all costs included.