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TERMS OF REFERENCE
YOUTH AND WOMEN EMPOWERED NETWORK
STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030

Terms of Reference
Empowerment & Amplification of voices of Youth and Women

1. Introduction

Youth and Women Empowered Network (YWEN) is a network established in 2024 by youth- and women-led organizations that participated in the Girl Get Equal project by Plan International Rwanda. Guided by a vision where women and young people in Rwanda are empowered to lead, drive change, and live their lives to the fullest, YWEN promotes meaningful participation of youth and women in decision-making spaces across society.

Since its establishment, YWEN has prioritized youth and women empowerment. It has implemented various programs across Gatsibo and Nyaruguru Districts, focusing on mindset transformation, promoting gender equality, challenging harmful social norms, and fostering socio-economic opportunities through participatory approaches.

2. 2025-2030 Strategic Plan Summary

To strengthen its institutional capacity and ensure evidence-based, inclusive programming, Youth and Women Empowered Network (YWEN) is undertaking the development of a comprehensive 2025–2030 Strategic Plan. This strategic planning process will be led by a qualified consultant and is designed to position YWEN as a key actor in advancing youth and women empowerment, gender equality, inclusive governance, and climate action in Rwanda.

The strategic plan will serve as a guiding roadmap for YWEN's future interventions, partnerships, and advocacy work. It will enable the network for its focus and scale its impact by aligning programming with national development priorities, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and International development partner's strategic directions.

Through this process, YWEN seeks to:

Conduct a thorough situational analysis to understand the evolving context, challenges, and opportunities in the youth and gender equality landscape; Engage key stakeholders including youth, women, community leaders, local authorities, development partners, and civil society actors—in participatory consultations to ensure that the plan reflects the voices and priorities of those it aims to serve; Assess its institutional strengths and gaps, including governance systems, policies, and resource capacity, to better align internal structures with its strategic ambitions; Define clear strategic objectives and thematic areas, supported by robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track results and promote accountability; and Promote inclusive, gender-transformative, and climate-

conscious strategies that respond to the realities of diverse youth and women, including those from rural areas and marginalized communities

Overall Objective:

To develop a comprehensive Strategic Plan that will guide Youth and Women Empowered Network (YWEN) in effectively empowering youth and women, promoting gender equality and Inclusion, ensuring meaningful participation in decision-making processes, decision making spaces and civic spaces engagement over the coming years; Combating GBV as well as taking actions on Climate change for sustainable development.

Specific Objectives:

1. **To conduct a situational analysis and baseline assessment** to understand the current context, challenges, and opportunities related to youth and women empowerment in YWEN's areas of intervention.
2. **To engage key stakeholders** (including youth, women, partners, state actors and non-state actors, and civil society actors — both nationally and international development partners) in a participatory data collection process to inform the strategic planning. This refers primarily to secondary data, meaning data that has already been collected and analyzed, such as relevant reports and evaluations, research studies, sectoral assessments, lessons learned, and best practices.

When engaging with international development partners, the consultant's role will be limited to:

- (i) Accessing and reviewing existing documentations and data voluntarily shared by the partners.
-Participating in consultative meetings as needed to gather contextual insights; and relying on publicly available and/or officially provided information.
- (ii) The consultant will not assume responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or timeliness of data provided by international actors. Any data delays or gaps will be transparently noted, and recommendations will be based on the best available evidence at the time of reporting.

3. **To assess YWEN's institutional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT)** to ensure strategic alignment with its mission, vision, and operating environment.
4. **To define clear strategic priorities, objectives, and results frameworks** for YWEN's programming that reflect the needs and aspirations of youth and women in all their diversity.

3. Strategy, approaches and activities

YWEN centers on the opening up of spaces for inclusivity, equal power among youth and women in all their diversity, thereby connecting all societal levels for a significant and sustainable socio-economic impact in Rwanda. The activity, through participatory approaches, engages constructively with local and national government officials to ensure that they not only understand the purpose of youth and women participation but also that they support the activity's efforts.

Strategic Approach:

- **Participatory Planning:** Engage youth, women, and key stakeholders at all levels to ensure the Strategic Plan reflects their realities, needs, and aspirations.
- **Evidence-Based Decision-Making:** Ground the strategic direction in data collected through situational analysis and baseline assessments.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Ensure the strategic plan is gender-transformative and inclusive of marginalized voices, including rural youth, young women, Historically Marginalized Communities and persons with disabilities.
- **Alignment and Integration:** Align the strategy with national development priorities, SDGs, and Plan International Rwanda's strategic directions.

Key Activities:

1. **Inception Report (Consultant):**
 - a. Develop and submit inception report
2. **Conduct Situational Analysis and Baseline (Consultant):**
 - Desk review of existing documents and data
 - Field data collection (surveys, interviews, focus group discussions)
 - Mapping of existing programs, gaps, and opportunities
3. **Stakeholder Engagement and Consultations (Consultant):**

The consultant will be responsible for organizing and facilitating inclusive and participatory engagement processes to gather input that will inform the strategic planning.

This includes: Organizing and facilitating at least three (3) participatory workshops and/or focus group discussions with the following key stakeholder groups, ensuring inclusive representation across age (17-30), gender, and geographic location:

- **Youth and Women:** Engage youth-led and women-led groups or individuals (where deemed necessary) through structured sessions to understand their priorities, challenges, and recommendations related to the strategic context. Ensure participation from both rural and urban areas.
- **Community Leaders and Local Authorities:** Conduct consultative meetings with district-level authorities, sector and cell leaders to align the strategic plan with local development priorities and ensure buy-in.
- **Partner Organizations and Donors:** Hold targeted sessions (online or in-person) with key development partners, NGOs, Rwanda Government high-level institutions and agencies, and funding agencies that align with YWEN mission as well as what it envisions to gather insights, shared goals, and identify opportunities for collaboration and resource mobilization.

Therefore, the consultant will document and analyze feedback gathered from each engagement session and incorporate key findings into the strategic planning framework. Most importantly, ensure that stakeholder voices are reflected in the strategic priorities, and that the consultation process adheres to principles of inclusivity, transparency, and respect for diversity.

4. Institutional Capacity SWOT Analysis (Consultant):

- Review YWEN's internal systems, structures, policies and procedures, governance, and resources
- Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

5. Strategic Framework Development (Consultant):

- Define the strategic vision, mission, values, goals, and objectives
- Develop thematic pillars and result areas
- Outline indicators and success measures
- Designing an M&E framework for the Strategic Plan

6. Drafting and Validation of the Strategic Plan (Consultant):

- Prepare first draft and share it with YWEN Leadership
- Incorporate input from stakeholders involved and update the draft strategic plan.
- Conduct a validation workshop with Executive Committee YWEN, member organizations and stakeholders involved in designing the strategic plan.
- Integrate feedback and finalize the document

7. Reporting and Dissemination (Consultant):

8.1 Submit final Strategic Plan

8. Deliverables, reporting and feedback

- **To provide a comprehensive implementation, monitoring, and evaluation (IME) framework** that outlines clear strategies, timelines, indicators, and responsibilities to guide effective program delivery, ensure accountability, and track measurable progress throughout the lifespan of the strategic plan.
- **To produce a comprehensive final Strategic Plan document** that is evidence-based, inclusive, and practical for guiding YWEN's work from 2025 onward.

10. Supervision and Working relationships

The Consultant will report to the YWEN Office. To accomplish his / her tasks, s/he will work closely with YWEN entirely.

11. Contract and payments

Youth and Women Empowered Network (YWEN) will sign a consultancy contract with the qualified expert. The payment modalities will be discussed between the merit consultant and YWEN Team.

12. Desired professional competencies/qualifications and experiences

- A well-grounded consultant with a good record of accomplishment of working on Strategic Plans in Rwanda and/or the East Africa Region; with strong knowledge and understanding of gender equality, women's empowerment, youth engagement, and social inclusion frameworks.
- Advanced degree (Master's or PhD) in Social Sciences, Development Studies, Gender Studies, Public Policy, Strategic Management, or a related field.
- Proven experience (typically 5+ years) in leading or facilitating organizational strategic planning processes, especially within NGOs/civil society organizations.
- Ability to engage diverse groups, including rural youth, marginalized communities, and people with disabilities.
- Strong skills in conducting situational analyses, SWOT assessments, and synthesizing secondary data.
- Ability to interpret complex information and translate it into strategic priorities and actionable plans.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Fluency in English required; working knowledge of Kinyarwanda
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- Strong facilitation skills with ability to lead workshops, focus groups, and consultative meetings.
- Familiarity with national policies, SDGs, and international development frameworks relevant to gender, youth, and civic participation.
- Experience in developing Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) frameworks, results-based management tools, and implementation plans.
- Ability to turn around the assignment and deliver within the set deadlines Capacity to provide a range of services across different specializations as required in the task definitions above.

13. Instructions for Applications

For individual consultant / consultancy firms, please submit your expression of interest (no longer than 4 pages and inclusive of understanding of Terms of Reference, the proposed methodology for the Strategic Plan, framework for youth and women, and civic participation, financial proposal detailing all costs involved (in francs), and an updated CV for lead consultant and proposed team members.

For consultancy firms, on top of your expression of interest (of no longer than 4 pages describing understanding of Terms of Reference, your capacities, experience in carrying out strategic plan, the proposed methodology, framework for youth and women, and civic spaces participation, work plan), financial proposal detailing all costs involved (in

francs), updated CVs of proposed team/staff, Company registration certificate, RRA tax clearance certificate, and RSSB clearance certificate.

Kindly submit your application documents by 25th June 2025 (**not later than 5:00 pm**) via email info@ywen.org/youthwomennet@gmail.com. The selected consultant/firm should be available right after the Strategic Plan contract signing.

14. Property Rights and Confidentiality

All materials produced or acquired during the Strategic Plan development shall remain the property of YWEN, unless otherwise explicitly relinquished in writing by YWEN (in whole or in part). YWEN retains the exclusive right to publish or disseminate findings and reports arising from such materials. All outputs of the work, materials produced during the work, and all by-products shall remain confidential unless YWEN authorizes its release.

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