

13.01.2025

Request for Expression of Interest

Subject: Restricted tender with open competition for the Stocktaking of the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action

Dear Sir or Madam,

Humanity & Inclusion, also known as Handicap International, and its German National Association Handicap International e.V., are successfully implementing in consortia with CBM Christoffel-Blindenmission Christian Blind Mission e.V. the project [Phase 4 – Leave no one behind](#) (LNOB). Funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) and in collaboration with International Disability Alliance (IDA) and African Disability Forum (ADF), the project aims to strengthen disability-inclusive humanitarian action by enhancing the uptake of the IASC Guidelines through localization, side-scaling of tools, capacity strengthening of stakeholders, and inclusive coordination mechanisms at both global and country levels in six countries in East and West Africa.

The LNOB project, on behalf of the global [Disability Reference Group](#), is commissioning a comprehensive stocktake of the 2019 published [IASC Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action](#). This stocktake shall be conducted by highly qualified consultants or a consultancy team with proven expertise in disability inclusion, humanitarian action, and rights-based approaches.

Further information on the background and all details of this call can be found below. This call for expression of interest is part of a restricted tender with open competition. All bidders' expressions of interest will be evaluated based on predefined eligibility criteria and shortlisted bidders will be requested to submit a detailed technical and financial quote based on a detailed term of reference.

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1) Context / Background

In 2016, the IASC commissioned the development of the [IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action](#)¹ to contribute addressing gaps in meaningful participation and access of persons with disabilities to humanitarian action and coordination. Over three years, a time-bound IASC Task Force facilitated its development and led a global process of consultation with all humanitarian actors and representatives of persons with disabilities affected by humanitarian emergencies at its centre. This inter-agency collaboration brought together Organization of Persons with Disabilities, UN Agencies, Governments, Humanitarian Leadership, cluster and sector coordinators, researchers as well as programmers to review and identify key evidence and good practice, as well as to draft system-wide, cross-sectorial guidelines on disability inclusion in humanitarian action. The

¹ Thereafter referred to as 'the IASC Guideline on disability inclusion'.

process of its development was supported by more than five institutional donors². It was launched at the end of 2019 and has four objectives:

- Provide practical guidance on including persons with disabilities in humanitarian programming and coordination,
- Strengthen capacity among stakeholders to develop and implement quality programmes that are inclusive of persons with disabilities,
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of humanitarian stakeholders to include persons with disabilities in humanitarian action, and
- Increase and improve the participation of persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities in preparedness, response and recovery.

Around the same time when it was launched, several other key policies³ promoting disability inclusion in humanitarian and development contexts were adopted by donors, NGOs and UN agencies. The majority favour a rights-based approach and have similar overarching goals around the realization of the commitments and promoting the principles contained in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).

Since the launch of the IASC Guidelines, in 2019, some advances were made with regards to the uptake of its considerations in different sectors and on responsibilities at individual and inter- agencies' level.

The [Disability Reference Group \(DRG\)](#) is a globally recognized, multi-stakeholder initiative established in 2020 to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action, following the endorsement of the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action in 2019. Officially recognized as an associated entity of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the DRG brings together a diverse coalition of over 500 stakeholders and individuals—including Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), UN agencies, NGOs, academia, and donors—to promote disability-inclusive humanitarian responses. Through its tripartite co-chair structure (comprising the International Disability Alliance, UNICEF and HI), the DRG facilitates collaboration, disseminates guidance, supports the operationalisation of the guidelines and holds the humanitarian system accountable for delivering inclusive and rights-based humanitarian responses.

2) Purpose

Given the severity of needs experienced by persons with disabilities and their households during crisis, the increase in intensity and duration of humanitarian crises and therefore increasing number of persons with disabilities affected, there is renewed urgency to ensure

² The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian Permanent Mission's Permanent Development Fund, ECHO, Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, German Federal Foreign Office, Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

³ UNDIS, DG ECHO Operational guidance on inclusion of persons with disabilities in EU-funded Humanitarian Aid Operations, Humanitarian Inclusion Standards, etc.

and accelerate action towards a disability-inclusive programming and coordination at global and most importantly at local level.

Additionally, given the humanitarian reset⁴ and increasing resource constraints, this stocktake aims to understand what essential efforts will be required in the next years to ensure persons with disabilities are reached by humanitarian responses and their needs met, how remaining gaps in disability inclusion can be addressed, what role different actors, including OPDs can play therein, and how OPDs can effectively contribute to and guide decision-making processes related to persons with disabilities in humanitarian responses.

Hence, a stocktake is being undertaken by the DRG in collaboration with the IASC secretariat and funded by the German Federal Foreign Office to understand how far the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities have been taken up, by whom (type of humanitarian actor, sector), how, for what and to what impact. Further, hindering and supporting factors shall be identified. The outcome will support operational actors to close remaining gaps and identify key priorities to reach the most at risk in a time of major shifts, including resource constraints and simplification of the humanitarian system. Given the focus in the humanitarian reset on localization, this stocktake will include a particular focus on the role of local actors.

Stocktakes by protection and gender actors of IASC Gender Handbook and IASC Protection Policy have contributed in the past to accelerate action to integrate those cross-cutting themes from an evidence base. This stocktaking builds on the lessons learned by them in the last years.

3) General information

1.1. Scope of stocktake

- Desk review of global and selected local response specific research, policies, evidence/ research and guidance to understand changes towards disability inclusion within the key policy frameworks, programming and coordination;
- Online survey, written submissions and exchange sessions with key stakeholders targeted by the IASC Guidelines on disability inclusion to:
 - Pre-identify good and promising practices and hindering factors that need to be explored further in the deep dives and
 - Identify three response contexts, reflecting a diversity of sectors/ cluster and key actors for a deep dive, that can help illuminate most promising practices, derive recommendations as well as compounded hindering factors;
- Deep dives in three selected humanitarian responses through key informant interviews and focused discussion sessions with representatives of global, country level and local humanitarian stakeholders (including country visits).

⁴ In the humanitarian reset, agreed inter-agency coordination, approaches and roles and responsibilities of humanitarian actors are reviewed, while at the same time most humanitarian actors are facing massively reduced financial resources to implement their mandates and support crisis affected population. Led by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, the humanitarian reset aims to transform the humanitarian system towards responses that are locally led, globally protected, efficient and effectively driven by people affected by crises.

1.2. Expected key deliverables:

- A full narrative report with key findings per level of inquiry, and recommendations addressed to different stakeholder groups and levels of operation of the humanitarian system, with annexed promising cases and good practices;
- An executive summary including a summary of institutional practices and procedures that facilitate or hinder implementation of the guidelines with recommendations;
- Power point (or similar) presentations adjusted per stakeholder group to share main findings;
- Easy-to-read version of the executive summary.

1.3. Target audiences of the stocktake

- Governments
- Humanitarian leadership at global and response level
- Coordination actors, i.e. clusters, ABC and sector leads
- Donors
- Programming actors at local and international level
- OPDs at global, regional, national and local level

1.4. Languages

- English (UK)
- English Easy-to-Read version of the executive summary

4) Accessibility policy

All deliverables shall adhere to international accessible standards (WCAG 2.2).

This includes the production and testing of accessible pdf and pptx files (among others but not limited to screen reader accessibility and easy navigation, alternative texts for graphics and photos, accessible design and formatting), and the production and testing of accessible ePUB and /or HTML files of the report and executive summary.

5) Data Protection & Security

The Contractor must ensure data protection rules and informed consent are applied. Data protection rules are those followed by the institutions of the European Union.

<https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/news/new-data-protection-regulation-eu-institutions>

6) Contract & Sub-contracting

HI intends to conclude one contract for the described services in this Call for Expression of Interest. An award in form of separate lots is not envisioned.

Sub-contracting for specific works like e.g. data collection & analysis, accessibility checks, or translation work is allowed but needs to be disclosed to and approved in writing by HI and has to be coordinated by the main contractor. Disclosure of intend to sub-contract certain parts should already be stated in the expression of interest. A later detailed bid will need to

include more details of sub-contracting agencies and works. In case a consultant team intends to submit, a lead consultant shall be identified in the expression of interest with whom the contract will be signed.

Note, that sub-contracting does not release the winning bidder from its responsibility to HI and the winning bidder needs to ensure that any sub-contract adheres to the agreed upon standards, code-of-conduct and other contractual agreements.

7) Application Process and Assessment Criteria

a) Expression of interest

Please submit your expression of interest in English inclusive of the following:

- Expression of interest including confirmation that such services can be provided within the time frame and description of the required expertise for the service;
- Disclosure if sub-contracting and/ or a consultant team is envisioned and possible including confirmation that bidder is fully responsible for all sub-contractors;
- 3 examples of comparable works done incl. references of the commissioned entity, at least 1 done within the last 2 years;
- Proof of experience and/ or proof of sufficient knowledge in required accessibility standards;
- A detailed portfolio of the consultant including credentials of consultant's team/ sub-contractors if applicable
- Proof of valid registration of bidder in the residing or operating country
- Filled out and signed version of the Declaration of Non-Conflict of Interests form
- Filled out and signed version of the Acceptance of Contracting Rules form

b) Assessment of Expression of Interests:

- All expression of interest are assessed according to the following criteria and points:
 - o Full set of documents as listed above:
 - Incomplete set of documents: exclusion
 - o Quality of comparable services done:
 - 0 comparable references: exclusion
 - 1 comparable reference of high quality: 10 points
 - 2 comparable references of high quality: 20 points
 - 3 comparable references of high quality: 30 points
 - o Proof of experience and/ or proof of sufficient knowledge in required accessibility standards
 - No proof: exclusion
 - Certificates of professional training on accessibility or only list of accessible reports: 10 points
 - Provision of accessible reports in pdf and ePub or html: 15 points
 - o Estimated team size, composition, and workload distribution based on the information provided in this call (please note that the composition can be adapted based on the detailed ToR if bidder is selected to submit a technical and financial quote) :
 - Team size, composition, or workload distribution is unrealistic, unclear, or inadequately justified for the project's scope: 0 points

- Team size and composition are generally appropriate, but gaps and/or imbalances exist in distribution or role clarity: 15 points
- Team size and composition are appropriate and justified and each member's role is clearly defined and aligned with their expertise and the service's requirements: 30 points

c) Request for a detailed technical and financial quote:

- After the assessment of the express of interest according to the point system above, agencies with the highest points will be requested to submit a detailed technical and financial quote. HI reserves the right to determine after the assessment if 3 or 4 bidders will be invited to submit a full proposal.
- The selected bidders will receive a detailed Terms of Reference.
- If deemed necessary, online meetings are set-up to discuss further questions relevant for the development of a technical and financial quote in a fair manner to all selected bidders.

8) Assumed timeframe

- Within two weeks after the deadline of submission, all applications will be assessed and every candidate will receive a decision (positive or negative). Selected candidates will then be invited to submit a full proposal based on a detailed Terms of Reference.
- The time to develop the full quote will be roughly 2 weeks including possibilities to ask questions (see 7c above);
- HI aims to start the service contract the first week of March 2026;
- HI aims to have a final draft report ready by beginning of September, including 2 rounds of feedback and 1 red-line review, undertaken by the established workgroup of the DRG;
- HI aims to have all deliverables, incl. accessible versions finalised 3 weeks after the final draft version was validated by the workgroup of the DRG.

9) Terms of Payment

HI strives for payment on account 30 days after submission of invoice. The payment schedule is planned as following:

- 30% upon contract signature
- 40% upon submission and validation of draft report
- 30% upon validation of all deliveries.

If these proposed terms of payment are not possible, please indicate the best possible terms of payment including a rough payment schedule.

10) HI Policies: Code of Conduct, Good Business Practices, etc.

Applicants shall commit to comply with all Protection Policies, Code of Conduct, Good Business Practices, General Purchasing Conditions available for consultation on [HI's website](#). HI's data protection policy can be viewed via [this link](#).

Intellectual Property and Copyright: All intellectual property rights, including but not limited to copyrights, data, reports, tools, and any other deliverables produced under this contract, shall be the sole and exclusive property of Humanity & Inclusion (HI). The successful bidder agrees to transfer all rights, title, and interest in the produced work and collected data to HI upon completion and submission of the deliverables. Any use, reproduction, or dissemination of the materials by the contractor or third parties requires the prior written consent of HI.

11) Request for Clarifications:

All questions shall be submitted by e-mail to Sophie Allin (s.allin@hi.org), Haakon Spriewald (h.spriewald@hi.org) AND Helen Lederer (h.lederer@hi.org). We cannot guarantee an answer to your questions if send to only one of the above, please ensure to include all three email addresses. **Deadline for questions is 21. January 2026, 10:00 CET.**

Answers that are deemed necessary for all interested parties will be **published anonymously on 21. January 2026** on [HI's tender website](#) to ensure a fair and competitive process.

12) Deadline for submission of expression of interest

Please submit your complete expression of interest no later than Monday, **25. January 2026, 09:00 CET by email to tender@deutschland.hi.org**. Submissions not received via this email will be automatically excluded and deleted.

For questions, please see paragraph 11 on communications.

Amendment or withdrawal of expression of interests and bids: Tenderers may amend or withdraw their bids by written notification before the closing date stated in the call. No amendments may be made after this date. Withdrawals shall be firm and final and will terminate any participation in the tendering process.

Costs of preparing expression of interests and bids: None of the costs incurred by tenderers in preparing and submitting their expression of interest and proposals shall be reimbursable. All these costs shall be borne solely by the tenderers.

13) Cancellation of a restricted tenders procedure with open competition

In the event of the cancellation of a restricted tender procedure with open competition, tenderers shall be informed by Handicap International by email or by public notification.

If the call for tenders' procedure is cancelled before the submission deadline all received files will be deleted.

A cancellation may occur when:

1. The tendering procedure has been unsuccessful, i.e. Handicap International has received no valid or financially viable bids, or no bids at all;
2. The project's economic or technical parameters have been fundamentally modified;
3. Exceptional circumstances or force majeure makes the normal execution of the project impossible;

4. All technically compliant bids exceed the available budget;
5. Irregularities have occurred in the procedure, especially if these have prevented fair competition.

In no circumstances shall Handicap International be liable for damages of any kind (in particular damages for loss of profits) in the event of the cancellation of a call for tenders, even if Handicap International has been warned of the possibility of damages.