



**MEANINGFUL CONNECTIVITY EVIDENCE
AND ADVOCACY POLICY BRIEF**

**REQUEST FOR QUOTATION (RFQ)
AUGUST 2026**

1. INTRODUCTION

The Connectivity Coalition (“the Coalition”) is a multi-stakeholder initiative convened by the DG Murray Trust (DGMT) and Kagiso Trust (KT), which together serve as the Secretariat. The Coalition brings together civil society, public institutions, and private sector actors to advocate for universal meaningful connectivity in South Africa.

A significant portion of the population continues to face barriers to affordable and meaningful access to reliable internet and the services it enables. While supply and infrastructure dimensions of this challenge are comparatively well documented, the demand side and civil society dimensions, which are largely the reasons that many people who could connect do not and the question of what organised civil society should be demanding, remain under-examined. Consistent with the Connectivity Coalition’s Steering Committee, the goal is to develop a shared evidence base for the Coalition’s advocacy by commissioning research to produce a concise synthesis of the state of connectivity, an evidence base examining barriers to connectivity, and a civil society advocacy agenda. All this would additionally be distilled into an advocacy ready policy brief.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the assignment is to produce a current, practical and advocacy ready account of meaningful connectivity in South Africa that equips the Coalition to advocate with evidence. The objectives are to:

- a) Produce a concise, standalone synthesis of the state of connectivity in South Africa, framed to the Coalition’s priorities and suitable for public use, launch and advocacy
- b) Map the barriers to meaningful connectivity, including disability, gender, online safety, language, literacy, affordability, relevance and trust
- c) Foreground online safety, particularly for children, as a distinct dimension of meaningful connectivity
- d) Distil the evidence into a concise, advocacy-ready policy brief with clear and actionable recommendations
- e) Support the Coalition’s launch, advocacy and legislative engagement with tangible and quotable outputs

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The assignment will develop a practical evidence base on meaningful connectivity in South Africa and translate it into an advocacy agenda for the Coalition. It should examine why many people remain unable to access or use the internet in ways that are affordable, reliable, safe and useful. This includes barriers linked to disability, gender, language, literacy, geography, income and age. Online safety should be treated as an integral part of meaningful connectivity, particularly for children, women and other vulnerable groups. The consultant is not expected to undertake original infrastructure or investment analysis, but should draw on current and credible research, distinguish between gaps in availability and gaps in use, and identify clear priorities for civil society advocacy leading up to 2030.

3.1. Evidence base on meaningful connectivity

- **Disability.** Assess the barriers faced by persons with disabilities across access, affordability, assistive technology, and the accessibility of digital services and content, and review the relevant standards and the state of their implementation.
- **Gender.** Examine the gender digital divide across access, affordability, safety and meaningful use.
- **Language and literacy.** Assess language barriers to digital content and services, and the role of digital literacy as both a barrier to, and an enabler of, meaningful use.
- **Other demand side factors.** Consider the relevance of content and services, trust, and awareness, to the extent that they bear on meaningful use.

3.2. Advocacy agenda and recommendations

- Develop a clear advocacy agenda that translates the evidence into practical demands, identifies the institutions and actors responsible for action, and sets out realistic priorities and timelines to 2030
- Identify the policy, regulatory, funding, platform accountability and public engagement levers available to organised civil society
- Ensure that the recommendations are aligned with the Coalition's advocacy roadmap, Theory of Change and priority focus areas

3.3. Online safety and cross-cutting analysis

- Analyse online safety as an integral part of meaningful connectivity, including harms and safety barriers affecting children, women and other vulnerable groups, and the policy responses required
- Draw on current published research and avoid duplicating existing analysis where a reliable evidence base already exists
- Use selective international examples where they strengthen the recommendations, and identify the principal actors relevant to connectivity, safety and civil society advocacy.

4. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The assignment is primarily a desk-based synthesis of existing research and data, complemented by a limited number of key informant interviews and/or consultations with organisations representing affected communities, including organisations driving children's online safety. Given the demand heavy focus of the assignment, meaningful engagement with representative organisations is encouraged. The assignment will begin with a short inception discussion to confirm the methodology, workplan and sources. Primary data collection, including surveys or fieldwork, is outside the scope of this assignment unless separately agreed in writing. Sources must be current, clearly referenced, and verifiable.

5. DELIVERABLES

The consultant will produce the following:

REF	DELIVERABLE	INDICATIVE TIMING
D1	Summary of State of Connectivity. A concise, standalone distillation (indicative 1-3 pages) of the state of connectivity in South Africa which is aligned to the Coalition's priorities and suitable for public use, launch and media.	Week 2
D2	Draft Meaningful Connectivity Evidence and Advocacy Report. A concise, advocacy-ready distillation with clear recommendations and the advocacy agenda.	Week 4
D3	Presentation of key findings. A slide deck for the Steering Committee and/or the Coalition launch.	Week 5
D4	Final synthesis, report and policy brief, incorporating consolidated feedback and recommendations for future research opportunities	Week 7

All written deliverables are to be submitted in editable formats. Indicative page lengths are guidance and not targets.

6. DURATION AND TIMELINE

The assignment is expected to run for approximately eight weeks from the date of contracting and must be completed before the Coalition launch, which is expected to take place in October 2026. Final written outputs and launch materials should allow sufficient time for Secretariat and Steering Committee review, final revisions, and preparation for public use prior to the coalition launch. Shortlisted consultants will be asked to confirm their availability and ability to meet this timeline.

7. REQUIRED EXPERTISE AND CONSULTANT PROFILE

This is a digital inclusion and advocacy assignment, rather than a telecommunications regulatory or infrastructure investment study. Applicants should demonstrate:

- a. Expertise in online safety and digital safety, including the safety of children and other vulnerable groups
- b. Experience in advocacy strategy and a demonstrable civil society orientation
- c. The ability to consult meaningfully and ethically with representative and lived-experience organisations
- d. Strong analytical and policy writing skills, including experience producing advocacy-oriented outputs, and familiarity with the South African digital inclusion context

8. REPORTING AND COORDINATION

The consultant will report to the Coalition Coordinator, under the oversight of the Secretariat. The consultant may also be required to engage with the Coalition's Steering Committee. The consultant may also be required to coordinate with other service providers, which will be managed by the Coalition Coordinator. The Coalition will provide substantive input and review at key milestones, including the inception, draft and final stages. The consultant is expected to align outputs with the Coalition's advocacy roadmap and Theory of Change to ensure that the outputs serve as a coherent evidence base for the Coalition's advocacy.

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Applicants must declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest, including any current membership of, or advisory relationship to, the Coalition's Steering Committee or Secretariat.

10. BUDGET AND PAYMENT

Submissions should include an itemised budget, **up to R250,000.00**, covering professional fees, estimated days, and any disbursements, inclusive of applicable taxes. Payment will be linked to milestones, namely the acceptance of the synthesis, the acceptance of the draft deliverables, and the acceptance of the final deliverables, with the exact proportions to be confirmed on contracting.

11. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

In line with the Coalition's Terms of Reference, the research outputs and submissions arising from this assignment will be made available for public use under open licensing, and the intellectual property in the deliverables is licensed to the Secretariat for public benefit use.

12. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants should submit a quotation, the curricula vitae of the proposed personnel, a sample of relevant published work, an itemised budget, and a statement of availability against the required timeline. **Submissions should be sent to Sibongakonke Dlamini, sibonga@dgmt.co.za, by 28 August 2026.**