Consultancy – HelpAge Network Platform (Two-Phased Approach)

About HelpAge

HelpAge International works with a diverse global network of over 200 organisations across 99 countries to promote the rights of older people to lead dignified, healthy, and secure lives.

Through collaborating with members of the HelpAge Network and strategic partners we work to ensure the inclusion of older people across society and strive to deliver a just and fair world for everyone as they get older. Our work is driven by our desire to achieve real impact for older people, to be inclusive, and to learn from our shared experience.

As countries prepare for and adapt to population ageing, we are seeking to make a difference at a critical juncture in how societies, economies, and institutions adapt to this change.

Our 2030 Strategy, Ageing in a just world sets out how we will work to shape the future we all share. By working together with network members and strategic partners, we aim to inspire a movement for change. By ensuring all our work promotes older people's wellbeing, dignity, and voice, we seek to transform the lives of older people now and in the future.

Guided by our commitment to our values of impact, learning, and inclusion, we partner with others to bring systemic change and impact at scale. By acting as a supporter, convenor, and thought leader, we want to make an impact that matters for older people and their communities.

Background and Context

HelpAge is developing a network platform to connect people and organisations across its global membership, spanning 99 countries. As the network grows in size and diversity, coordinated and inclusive mechanisms become increasingly important.

The new platform will operationalise HelpAge's Global Strategy 2030 and the Network Strategy. It is envisioned as a transformative, secure and inclusive digital ecosystem that will:

- Strengthen connectivity and collaboration across the global network by providing a shared space for interaction among members, partners and stakeholders.

- Enable continual learning and knowledge exchange through a central hub of resources, tools, research and peer-to-peer insights.

- Support coordinated advocacy efforts, enhancing the collective influence of older people's organisations at local, regional and global levels.

- Improve efficiency and alignment in communication and strategic engagement.

- Promote equity and inclusion, ensuring that members with varying digital access, languages or capacities can participate fully.

- Increase visibility and engagement by highlighting member activities, innovations and collaboration opportunities.

- Ensure a secure, user-friendly and GDPR-compliant environment that protects data and encourages responsible digital participation.

To ensure coherence and accountability, the consultancy will follow a two-phase approach:

- Phase 1 (Preparatory Phase): Scoping, stakeholder engagement, governance structure development and design preparation.

- Phase 2: Development, integration, testing and rollout of the network platform.

This structure ensures that findings from Phase 1 directly inform design and implementation, creating a cohesive end-to-end process.

Purpose of the Consultancy

To lead the full lifecycle of the HelpAge Network Platform development from scoping and stakeholder engagement through technical design, development, integration, testing and rollout ensuring the final platform is functional, secure, user-centred, scalable, and aligned with HelpAge's global strategies and the needs of network members.

Objectives of the Consultancy

Phase 1: Scoping, Stakeholder Engagement, Governance Structure Development and Design Preparation

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of user needs, platform requirements, governance expectations and data protection considerations, including a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA).

- Prepare detailed technical specifications, governance structures, data protection guidelines and the final Build TOR for Phase 2.

Phase 2: Development, Integration, Testing and Rollout

- Design, develop, configure, test and deploy a fully functional HelpAge Network Platform, integrating required features, user management systems, security standards, multilingual capability and interoperability with existing systems.

- Ensure smooth onboarding, training, documentation and handover to HelpAge International.

Scope of Work

Phase 1: Scoping and Design Preparation

The consultant will:

- Conduct a technical landscape review of community and network platforms.
- Facilitate stakeholder workshops and interviews with staff, network members, Healthy Ageing Platform members, supporting members and other relevant groups.
- Produce a user needs analysis covering feature expectations, accessibility requirements, multilingual needs, low-bandwidth considerations and workflow preferences.
- Review and map integration requirements with Microsoft 365, Teams, Salesforce, Mailchimp and other HelpAge tools.
- Engage with at least three external peer networks (e.g, GNDR, WHO Knowledge Action Portal, START Network, HelpAge Knowledge Platform) for benchmarking and insights.
- Assess data protection, governance, moderation and access needs in line with GDPR, and develop draft frameworks.
- Develop a platform architecture blueprint, outlining recommended configurations and functional modules.
- Ensure the Phase 2 scope and technical workplan are fit for purpose, including development requirements, user journeys, integrations, hosting, security and performance expectations.
- Provide an implementation roadmap with milestones, dependencies and risk analysis.

Phase 2: Development and Rollout

Upon approval of Phase 1 deliverables, the consultant will:

- Build the HelpAge Network Platform according to the approved architecture and requirements. Priority areas include:
    - Single Sign-On
    - Integration with Microsoft 365, Teams, Salesforce and Mailchimp
    - Knowledge Hub and resource library
- Conduct testing cycles, including user acceptance testing (UAT) with staff and network members.
- Provide training materials, onboarding guides and platform documentation.
- Support pilot testing, rollout and early adoption.
- Ensure a sustainable handover, including maintenance expectations, technical manuals and a support setup for post-launch continuity.

Deliverables
Phase 1 Deliverables

- Inception report (methodology, tools, workplan and roadmap)

- Scoping and stakeholder engagement report
- Governance, data protection and compliance frameworks
- Peer review report
- Build workplan/roadmap
- Presentation to the platform advisory group

Phase 2 Deliverables

- Fully developed network platform
- Testing reports (UAT, security and performance)
- User guides, admin manuals and training materials
- Pilot testing and deployment
- Final handover package and sustainability plan

Timeline

Estimated duration: 6–9 months.
Shortlisted consultants/agencies will be invited for interviews in the first or second week of March.

Budget and Payment Terms

Payment will be made in instalments as follows:

- 30% upon completion of Phase 1 inception and scoping deliverables
- 40% upon completion of core Phase 2 development milestones
- 30% upon final delivery, testing and handover

Budget guidance: Up to £35,000 for both phases.

Qualifications and Experience

The consultant/agency should have:

- 5+ years' experience in digital ecosystem scoping, user journeys and platform architecture.
- Proven experience in designing, developing or implementing community or membership platforms, ideally for INGOs or international networks.
- Expertise in platform configuration, user management, multilingual navigation and mobile-friendly design.
- Strong technical knowledge of Salesforce integration (HelpAge Connect), Teams, APIs and Single Sign-On solutions.
- Experience with live chat, discussion forums and content repositories, including moderation and access tiering.
- Understanding of GDPR compliance, data privacy, safeguarding and consent management for global user groups.
- Ability to integrate external tools such as Power BI dashboards, Microsoft Teams/live chat and document-sharing systems.

- Experience designing digital portals for low-bandwidth or low-data mobile contexts.

- Strong communication skills and the ability to translate technical concepts into clear recommendations.

- Experience facilitating remote multi-region consultations and readiness to travel if required.

- Prior experience with platforms used by INGOs (preferred).

Compliance and Safeguarding

The consultant must adhere to HelpAge policies on data protection, confidentiality and safeguarding. Breaches may result in termination of the contract.

Governance and Reporting

The consultancy will be overseen by the Platform Advisory Group, which will provide strategic guidance, ensure transparency and review key deliverables. The consultant will work closely with, and report through, the Network Platform Manager, who will coordinate engagement and support alignment across internal teams.

Collaboration

The consultant will work closely with:

- The Platform Advisory Group

- Heads of network development

- Network members

- Operations and IT teams

- Communications teams

- Regional and thematic advisers

Application Process

Interested consultants are invited to submit their application to jobs@helpage.org with the email subject: Consultancy- Network Platform. The application should include:

- A technical proposal, proposal not exceeding 10 pages (excluding annexes), detailing the proposed approach, methodology for both phases and a roadmap

- A financial proposal with detailed cost breakdown

- A company/consultant profile, CVs and evidence of similar assignments

- Proposed team composition

Applications should be submitted by Sunday, 22 February 2026. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.