

CONSULTANCY VACANCY

Final evaluation of the Emergency Grants Support to Human Rights Defenders in Afghanistan Programme

CONTEXT AND PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In order to respond to the challenges faced by human rights defenders in Afghanistan following the takeover of the country in August 2021, ProtectDefenders.eu, along with five of its partner organisations, worked jointly to deliver emergency grants support to Afghan Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), living in the country, in transit countries, and in exile.

The emergency grants support to Afghan HRDs programme started in August 2021. It is operated by a Consortium of 5 international NGOs namely, Front Line Defenders (FLD), Reporters Without Borders (RSF), World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)-Europe, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum-Asia)- with the support and under the coordination of the ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat established in Brussels, hereafter referred to as 'implementing partners'.

The overall objective of the programme is to "ensure that HRDs at risk in Afghanistan are empowered, resilient and enabled to continue their work". At a more interim, medium-term level the specific objective is to strengthen the resilience and protection of Afghans, by ensuring at risk HRDs had access to a package of support including urgent material and financial support to respond to the security threats they faced and build resilience.

This intervention was designed to be highly adaptable to the rapidly changing needs on the ground and flexibility was built into all the project and into the budget to ensure the focus of this Action could be rapidly adjusted. The programme prioritised the most at-risk and marginalised groups and actively tried to avoid contributing to established patterns of discrimination. An intersectional approach was adopted, taking into account the specific and additional risks faced by most at-risk HRD groups including women human rights defenders (WHRDs), LGBTI+ defenders, minority rights defenders, and less connected HRDs.

SCOPE AND FOCUS

The evaluation is to be carried out at the end of the Programme. It should focus on documenting the outcomes and the sustainability of the Emergency Grants Support to the Afghan Human Rights Defenders Programme and whether the implementing partners have delivered in accordance with the Project proposal and main objectives of the Project.

The evaluation should concentrate as far as possible on the support to Human Rights Defenders in its entirety. It is not the intention to evaluate the performance of the individual ProtectDefenders.eu Partners, although comparisons of practices can be used when relevant in order to draw lessons learned and contribute to improve overall performance.

The key areas that the evaluation should focus on (the questions below are not exhaustive):

Relevance and coherence:

- Did the emergency grants support programme respond to the needs of the defenders?
- Did interventions implemented reach the isolated and at-risk defenders, including women HRDs, HRDs working on LGBTI or minority rights, HRDs journalists or bloggers, and those HRDs with limited networks?
- Were the implementing partners' strategies well-adapted to the context where defenders operate ? And did it manage to adapt as the context evolved since August 2021, and through the course of the implementation?

Effectiveness :

- How effective has the programme been in realizing the outputs and achieving outcomes? To what extent has the project progressed and developed as planned at its onset?
- Are activities timely, relevant and sufficient for the targeted beneficiaries?
- What have been the most successful or unsuccessful interventions and why?
- What potential multiplying effects could be observed?

Impact :

- Are there external opportunities and challenges that have impacted the project positively or negatively?
- What has been the impact of the assistance provided on the security of the HRDs supported ?
- What has been the impact of the assistance provided on the ability of the HRDs supported to continue/strengthen their work in promoting human rights?
- Did the program generate any unintended outcomes (either positive or negative)?

Efficiency:

- How efficient was the Emergency Grants support to Afghan HRDs programme's set-up and strategy for achieving the programme's objectives (consortium structure, number of Partners, necessary resources (human, material, financial)?
- How does the implemented partnership model provide added-value to the programme's objectives?
- Given the resources at its disposal, did the programme target and reach an appropriate proportion of the defenders at risk?

Coordination:

- How effective was implementing partners' cooperation and coordination with other relevant stakeholders (EU institutions, Human Rights INGOs and NGOs, representatives of Protection mechanisms)?
- Did the EU Human Rights Defenders mechanism contribute to the strengthening of coordination mechanisms among human rights organisations? Does it offer increased networking opportunities for assisted human rights defenders and human rights organisations?
- How effective was the internal operational coordination and cooperation among implementing partners? What best practices can be identified and what lessons have been learned?
- How effective was the communication and coordination with the Donor?

Sustainability:

- What is the level of sustainability in the project interventions? How will the project ensure the sustainability of interventions after the end of the project?
- How did the Emergency Grants Support to Afghan HRDs programme work alongside complementary interventions for the protection of HRDs led by other organisations working on Afghanistan.

METHODOLOGY

The consultant should use the following methodologies to conduct the assessment :

1. **Desk review:** The desk review should include all available internal documentation (proposal, Project strategies, interim and final reports from ProtectDefenders.eu to the Donor).
2. **Key Informant Interviews and field visits :** Interviews should take place with the donor, with the implementing partners, with grantees. Interviews must be organised via secure online platforms.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the overall supervision of the Secretariat of ProtectDefenders the consultant is expected to:

- Prepare a methodological note with a workplan for the implementation of the assignment;
- Provide an update on the evaluation's progress in the regular meetings;
- Deliver the following deliverables during the evaluation assignment/process:
 - i. Comprehensive evaluation report (30 pages excluding annexes) including:
 1. Executive summary (including main findings and recommendations)

2. Introduction
3. Methodology
4. Evaluation of the Emergency Grants Support to Afghan Human Rights Defenders Programme including a presentation of the findings and their analysis
5. Lessons learned and good practices
6. Recommendations
7. Annexes

ii. Two presentations to be delivered summarizing methodology and findings:

1. Presentation of the draft report
2. Presentation of the final report

CONTACT POINT

The evaluation will be facilitated by and carried out under the supervision of the ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat. The Secretariat will provide all necessary material for the desk review, as well as contacts for key informants.

TENTATIVE TIMELINE

The final report must be available by 30 September 2023.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Payments will be scheduled against deliverables:

- Signed Contract – 30% up-front.
- Draft Evaluation Report including first presentation – 40%.
- Final Evaluation Report - 6 hard copies -1 PDF soft copy - Second presentation – 30%.

All deliverables should be provided in English.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Advanced University degree in Human Rights, International Relations, Law, Political Science or related field;
- At least seven years of work or academic experience in a professional capacity in Human Rights, International Relations, Law, Political Science or related field;
- Extensive experience in conducting evaluations of human rights projects preferably involving multiple partners and the European Union as a donor, including designing and employing both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, which are participatory and sensitive to the needs of the target group;
- Deep understanding of non-governmental organisations, human rights organisations, call for proposals procedures, legal and practical aspects of funding frameworks and Project management;
- Deep understanding of the human rights situation in Afghanistan ;

- Experience liaising with different stakeholders, including individuals, governmental and international entities and civil society;
- Advanced critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis skills required to draw conclusions from several sources of information and data;
- Fluency in written and spoken English. Knowledge of Dari and/or Pashto is an advantage;
- Ability to express clearly and concisely ideas in written materials and presentations;
- Proven skills in interpersonal communication and networking.

SUBMISSION OF OFFERS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants are requested to send their submissions to recruit@protectdefenders.eu, with the subject "Evaluation consultant" by 10 June 2023 (**deadline extended**)

Applications must include:

- A cover letter
- A statement (10 pages maximum) detailing the understanding of the task, the proposed study methodology, a work plan and the proposed evaluation team (CVs annexed)
- A detailed financial proposal in Euros including consultancy fees and other eligible costs (transport and accommodation for field visits, printing, etc) □
- 1 sample abstracts of previous relevant research/work.

The review of the submissions will take into account the following criteria:

- Understanding of the ToRs (10%)
- Suggested methodology (30%)
- Experience of the suggested team (30%)
- Quality of submitted samples (10%)
- Financial offer (20%)

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information presented, obtained and produced concerning the Comprehensive Support to Human Rights Defenders Project, the Partners and beneficiaries during the Evaluation process/Consultancy is to be treated as confidential. The selected consultant will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement upon signature of the contract.