

Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of the work of Minority Rights Group in capacity building from 2010 to December 2018

Date: April 2019

1. Evaluation object

The overall objectives of Minority Rights Group International (MRG) are to secure the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples and to improve cooperation and understanding between communities.

Under the agreement between the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and MRG (No 61070062), SIDA contributes towards financing the core activities of MRG in furtherance of the above objectives and implementation of MRG's Strategy 2017-2020. Sida is also financing this evaluation.

MRG now wishes to commission an independent evaluation of MRG's work.

The evaluation object is to **review and assess the work of MRG to build the capacity of partner organisations, community leaders and influencers and other allies (with particular attention to contexts involving declining or restricted civil space).**

2. Evaluation Scope

The evaluation will cover the sum of MRG's work, including programmes funded by SIDA's unrestricted contribution as well as unrestricted and restricted contributions from other donors. The work to be evaluated will be in the region of £500,000 to £1,000,000 per annum. The nature of this work is in all world regions in 40-60 countries many of which involve civil space restrictions, conflict or other security concerns. The evaluation should cover major projects and interventions over the previous 8 years 2010-2018. Key stakeholders will include minority, indigenous and inter-ethnic organisation staff and leaders, members of minority and indigenous communities, advocacy targets and allies, other allies e.g. journalists, academics, wider human rights activists and donors.

The focus of MRG's work is linked to its mandate and the desired beneficiaries of these capacity interventions were intended to be:

- Staff in minority or indigenous led organisations or inter-ethnic organisations – many of these organisations are small, some have limited capacity, all should have strong links to grassroots in minority and indigenous communities.
- Community leaders and influencers including traditional leaders, unofficial leaders, community organisers, paralegals and human rights activists and monitors
- Allies including elected officials, officials, journalists, religious leaders, staff in like minded NGOs and cultural actors.

Other than those that are still in progress, all or most of the interventions to be evaluated will already have been the subject of final external evaluations at the end of projects or project phases. However these are necessarily short term and cannot capture or comment on the existence of or lack of longer term effects, impacts and sustainability. The purpose of this evaluation is therefore not to review the minutiae of project delivery. Instead this exercise should focus on long term effects and impacts (if any), sustainability/transient nature of interventions and gains as well as the development of methodology (or lack of) within MRG over time, innovation (or lack of) and ways in which MRG has responded (or not) to changes in external circumstances.

The evaluator will be expected to offer an opportunity to provide feedback to individuals and partner organisations in all MRG project countries. This will be at a distance via questionnaires and phone interviews. Evaluation team members will be expected to make field visits to three countries (all ODA DAC list states) to look more in depth at particular interventions, their relevance, impact and

sustainability. The selection of countries will be made by the evaluator in liaison with MRG staff and SIDA and will be aiming to cover states with different levels of civil society activism and of civil space as well as a reasonable geographical diversity.

Much of the period to be evaluated concerns projects that were designed prior to the widespread elaboration and adoption of theories of change. However, some post hoc theories of change for intervention strategies will be drafted by staff and partners and beneficiaries to inform the evaluation exercise.

The evaluator should be aware that where civil space is limited or declining the trust of beneficiaries in external parties may be low and they may not respond to contacts or divulge information freely.

For further information, the approved strategy documents and matrices for the three strategic periods covered by this evaluation period are attached as Annex A.

The scope of the evaluation and the intervention logic(s) or theories of change of the capacity building work shall be further elaborated by the evaluator in the inception report as well as potentially developed further in the final report.

2. Evaluation rationale

The evaluation is being commissioned now because MRG will elaborate a new strategy during 2020 for the period 2021-25 (or beyond). The results of this evaluation will help determine priorities as well as ways of working going forward and will also help SIDA to decide whether it wishes its partnership with MRG to continue beyond the current contract end date of Dec 2020.

3. Evaluation purpose: Intended use and intended users

The evaluation will be used to inform ongoing learning within MRG, partners and allies on the best ways to achieve shared objectives, it will also inform the strategic review that MRG will undertake during 2019/20 with a view to setting strategic goals for the period 2021-2025. It may also inform MRG's methodological choices and intervention choices at the programme level when designing new programmes and deciding on areas of focus and ways of working. The results may also be used by partners, allies and influencers when considering capacity building priorities and intervention modalities in the future. It will also be used by SIDA (and potentially other donors) to inform their ongoing support for and partnership with MRG (as well as potential future cooperation). The results of this evaluation will be shared and discussed in detail with SIDA staff, MRG staff and interns, MRG's partners and allies, members of MRG's International Council, as well as disseminated more widely via MRG's evaluations webpage on its website.

During the inception phase, the evaluator and MRG will agree on who will be responsible for keeping the various stakeholders informed about the evaluation. In summary the intended users and potential users include

- MRG (staff and Council)
- MRG's partners, allies and influencers
- Sida
- Other donors (future & existing)

4. Evaluation criteria and questions

The objective/objectives of this evaluation is/are to evaluate the relevance, impact and sustainability of the selected capacity building interventions and formulate recommendations on how to adjust design of future interventions and to inform MRG's whole strategy moving forward in this area.

The evaluation questions are:

- Relevance: To what extent have MRG's capacity building interventions helped secure the rights of its beneficiaries, and has MRG been able to respond to the needs and priorities of its beneficiaries.
- Impact: What is the overall impact of MRG's capacity building interventions in terms of direct or indirect, negative and/or positive results?
- Sustainability: Is it likely that the benefits (outcomes) of the project are sustainable?

Additional questions at a more detailed level could include:

1. How effective has MRG been in working with partners, allies and influencers to assess gaps in their capacity to influence change? What capacity building interventions have worked well and should continue? What capacity building interventions did not work well but should be strengthened? What capacity building interventions did not work well and should be discontinued?
 2. How do partners, allies and influencers perceive MRG? Do they see MRG as open to feedback and criticism? Do they value MRG's expertise as well as MRG's ability to help them secure funding? Do they feel equal and able to steer projects and programmes in line with their communities needs and priorities even against MRG's advice when necessary?
 3. How do MRG's capacity building interventions support women within minority and indigenous communities to develop their skills and abilities to ensure that issues are taken up with their communities and by MRG?
 4. MRG is conscious that minority activists who have disabilities are rarely present. There may also be age imbalances and other barriers to participation (statelessness, rural/urban) that MRG has not been able to overcome. MRG would appreciate a review of our work in overcoming these and other imbalances and recommendations as to how MRG can improve our efforts.
 5. Some gains can be made by developing the skills of individual activists. Other gains can be made by ensuring that organisations have in place the systems needed to function effectively. How has MRG balanced these two aspects of capacity building? What consequences has this had for any gains made?
 6. In situations of shrinking civil society space, MRG is seeing that conflicts can arise between organisations as they are not able to operate and communicate sufficiently openly and routinely to coordinate among themselves. How can MRG encourage partners, allies and influencers at local level to strengthen their cooperation and work together? What should MRG's role be, if any, in strengthening conflict-resolution capacity and mediating such tensions, and how best should MRG proceed?
- Methods currently envisaged to be used in the evaluation include desk research and analysis (including review of online training course materials); interviews (telephone/internet or face-to-face) with key stakeholders; e-mail and/or online questionnaire to NGO partner organisations, activists and former trainees; and field visits. It is envisaged that the evaluator will travel to 3 destinations to assess MRG's role in building capacities among partner organisations at grassroots level. The destinations will be ODA countries in which MRG capacity building interventions have taken place selected by the evaluation team after desk research has begun.

They will need to include a range in terms of geography, type of intervention and degree of civil space. Security implications of visiting some locations will affect the sample.

It is expected that the evaluator will describe and justify an appropriate evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection in the tender. The evaluation design, methodology and methods for data collection and analysis are expected to be fully developed and presented in the inception report.

In addition it will be expected that the evaluators, in their tender, present i) how intended users are to participate in and contribute to the evaluation process and ii) methodology and methods for data collection and the presentation of findings that create space for reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

Evaluators should take into consideration appropriate measures for collecting data in cases where sensitive or confidential issues are addressed, and avoid presenting information that may be harmful to some stakeholder groups.

6. Organisation of evaluation management

A representative group of intended users of the evaluation form a steering group, which has contributed to and agreed on the ToR for this evaluation. The steering group is a decision-making body. It will evaluate the tenders, approve the inception report and the final report of the evaluation. The steering group will participate in the start-up meeting of the evaluation and in a debriefing/validation workshop where preliminary findings and conclusions are discussed. (The latter is in addition to the main presentation of the findings to intended users including MRG's International Council).

7. Evaluation quality

The evaluation shall conform to OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation¹. The evaluators shall use the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation². The evaluators shall specify how quality assurance will be handled by them during the evaluation process.

8. Time schedule and deliverables

The evaluation shall be carried out between May 2019 and November 2019

Evaluation Deliverables

- Organisation of kick off meeting involving evaluation team members and steering group
- Inception plan (outlining initial sample, all main methods to be used, beneficiary visit locations and any other details to be agreed at this stage which could not be determined during the selection phase e.g use of translation team members etc). The inception plan should include a target for completion of each main task or phase of the evaluation process. To be received by MRG one month after signature of contract.
- Questionnaire administered to >150 partners, trainees, former trainees and allies via survey monkey or similar as well as word document sent by email. (Contact details to be supplied by MRG). At least two reminders sent to each recipient who does not respond by an interim deadline. If response rates are still low, it may be necessary for the evaluation team to make phone calls to individuals to solicit responses. (Evaluator should note that MRG's server was

¹ DAC Quality Standards for development Evaluation, OECD, 2010.

² Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Sida in cooperation with OECD/DAC, 2014.

partially hacked in 2015 which resulted in the corruption of some data. We were able to retrieve some but not all data which may affect our ability to supply contact details for all past trainees in particular)

- A follow up conversation with 15-20 questionnaire respondents to delve into issues raised by them in more detail.
- Interviews carried out with at least 30 advocacy targets, other stakeholders (donors, journalists), like minded organisations or allies (e.g. staff in UN agencies, bodies, African Court, Commission, Union, OSCE, Council of Europe, EU etc)
- Visits to 3 project locations to meet with project beneficiaries and assess the impact of the project on indirect and direct beneficiaries. At least one such visit to be unmediated by partners (security permitting). Beneficiaries may not speak any international language and may not be literate.
- A statement of preliminary findings (approx. 5 pages) should be received by MRG on 6th September. MRG will respond by 20th September 2019.
- A draft full report (including 2-3 page Executive summary) (30-40 pages excluding annexes) by 30th September 2019. MRG will respond by 15th October 2019.
- Presentation of key findings to steering committee as validation workshop
- A final full report (including 2-3 page executive summary) (30-40 pages excluding annexes) by 30th October 2019. Complementary materials in other formats suitable for wider dissemination are welcome as part of the tender proposals.
- The evaluation must disaggregate responses by gender and mainstream gender in all aspects of the evaluation. It must also be aware of and mainstream wherever possible other intersectional discriminations including age, disability and sexual orientation. It must conform to OECD/DAC's quality standards for evaluations. It must use the OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and the evaluators must specify in a manner deemed satisfactory to SIDA and MRG in both the proposal (and the inception plan if anything changes) how quality assurance in line with the OECD/DAC standard will be maintained during the entire evaluation.
- A member of the evaluation team will also need to present the findings and discuss the learning in person with MRG's senior staff and International Council members at a meeting tentatively scheduled for 21st and 22nd November in Geneva and at this event will discuss with the Council the findings and implications for future directions for the organisation.
- Two additional sessions whereby members of the evaluation team present the key findings and discuss learning with MRG staff members (either face to face or virtually) should be organised.

The evaluation report will be published on MRG's website. The lead evaluator will make him or herself available for an interview to be recorded on the main findings to be uploaded as an audio file to encourage a broader range of users to access the findings.

It is expected that a time and work plan is presented in the tender and further detailed in the inception report. The evaluation shall be carried out between May 2019 and November 2019. The timing of any field visits, surveys and interviews need to be settled by the evaluator in dialogue with the main stakeholders during the inception phase.

The inception report will form the basis for the continued evaluation process and shall be approved by the steering group before the evaluation proceeds to implementation. The inception report should be written in English and cover evaluability issues and interpretations of evaluation questions, present the evaluation approach/methodology, methods for data collection and analysis as well as the full evaluation design. A clear distinction between the evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection shall be made. A specific time and work plan, including number of hours/working days for each team member, for the remainder of the evaluation should be presented. The time plan shall allow space for reflection and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

The final report shall be written in English, with the Executive Summary translated into at least French and Arabic. The final report should have clear structure. The executive summary should be maximum 3 pages. The evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection used shall be clearly described and explained in detail and a clear distinction between the two shall be made. All limitations to the methodology and methods shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed. Findings shall flow logically from the data, showing a clear line of evidence to support the conclusions. Conclusions should be substantiated by findings and analysis. Recommendations and lessons learned should flow logically from conclusions. Recommendations should be specific, directed to relevant stakeholders and categorised as a short-term, medium-term and long-term. The report should be no more than 40 pages excluding annexes (including Terms of Reference and Inception Report). The evaluator shall adhere to the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation.

Where inclusion of details in the report could lead to additional security risks for partner organisations, their staff, trainees or beneficiaries or for MRG staff or for MRG continued operations, the evaluation team may produce two versions of the report. The first version of the report will be used for internal learning purposes only. The second version of the report may have security sensitive materials redacted or removed or amended so as to avoid increasing risks to any party. This redaction should not alter in any way the findings, recommendations or conclusions of the evaluation but should allow those to be stated with some of the risk related detail of evidence supporting those conclusions omitted.

9. Evaluation Team Qualification

MRG and SIDA expect that a ‘core team member’ (i.e. a senior consultant with high level of evaluation competence) shall lead the evaluation team. We would expect this person to have a degree in a relevant subject, at least 10 years experience of senior roles in similar evaluations, significant experience in at least two regions of the Global South, as well as at least 10 years experience of work in human rights or social inclusion or development.

The evaluation team shall include the following competencies:

- Very strong understanding of minority and indigenous rights, including at least 5 years work with or experience evaluating projects whose beneficiaries are experiencing active exclusion or repression.
- Very strong understanding of gender and other forms of intersectional discrimination within minority and indigenous communities, impacting on women, the elderly, those with disabilities, younger people, LGBTQI and other multiply discriminated groups. At least 2 years experience with a very central focus on at least two of these intersectional discrimination factors (not necessarily at the same time,)
- Very strong understanding of capacity building. This should include experience of using and/or evaluating a wide range of methods (including experience of online and face to face training, mentoring, learning by doing, organisation strengthening, and leadership building). We expect at least one team member to have at least 10 years experience of training and/or capacity building. That experience should encompass all of the above methods.
- Significant experience of capacity building and advocacy work in contexts where civil space is restricted and/or diminishing. (At least 5 years encompassing work in more than one setting)

- Significant experience in capacity building work or evaluation of work within very small and low capacity organisations in remote regions with poor infrastructure. (At least 3 years encompassing work in more than one setting.)
- The team will need to administer a questionnaire and analyse responses in at least the following languages: tender, French, Spanish, Russian.

It is desirable that the evaluation team includes the following competencies:

- Work experience in all regions of the Global South
- A wide knowledge of the practice of other INGOs in capacity building for comparative purposes.

A CV for each team member shall be included in the call-off response. It should contain a full description of relevant qualifications and professional work experience.

The evaluators must be independent from the evaluation object and evaluated activities, and have no actual or perceived stake in the outcome of the evaluation.

10. Tender process

The budget amount available for the evaluation is (including all fees, translation, travel, workshops, all costs arising is) between 18,000-24,000 Euros.

To apply, please send to claire.thomas@mrgmail by midnight on 9th of June:

- Brief (max 4 page) CV of each evaluation team member.
- Cover letter – indicating relevant experience and knowledge and how the proposed team meets the experience and knowledge requirements. This should also state the total budget amount proposed.
- At least one, and if possible two, similar completed evaluation reports.
- Workplan including methodology, timetable, budget for the evaluation (this does not need to exceed 5-6 pages). (This should include indicative plans for visits to the project community locations based on two trips long haul from evaluator’s base, and one trip within region from evaluators base. The travel budget will of course be subject to minor changes when the destinations are finalised and the inception report is submitted and approved.)
- The names of 2 references who can comment usefully on the core evaluation team members’ experience and suitability.

Please note that we hope to shortlist by/on 30th May and that we plan to invite selected teams to attend an interview on skype on 4th, 5th or 6th June.

The contact person at MRG is Claire Thomas, MRG Deputy Director, contactable at claire.thomas@mrgmail.org/c.thomas@mrgmail.org. Claire should be consulted if any problems arise during the evaluation process.

The evaluator will be required to arrange the logistics for all interviews, questionnaires, visits including any necessary security arrangements.

Annex A: List of key documentation

Strategic priorities and results for three periods

Reports to SIDA

Annual reports

Project proposals and reports for capacity building work

Online training courses and training programme agendas and materials

Evaluations of completed projects involving capacity building

List of MRG partner organisations with contact details

List of current and former trainees with contact details

Advocacy target potential contactees and contact details

Internal learning documents and meeting minutes pertaining to capacity building