

Call for Tender

Independent Progress Review (mid-term evaluation) of FARM-Africa and Self Help Africa's Programme Partnership Arrangement with the Department for International Development, 2011-2014

FARM-Africa and Self Help Africa are inviting expressions of interest from individuals and organisations with the relevant expertise to undertake an Independent Progress Review (IPR) of our consortium Programme Partnership Arrangement with the Department for International Development (DFID).

The document below outlines the terms of reference for the independent progress review and the evaluation criteria agreed by DFID and their Evaluation Manager, Coffey International Development.

FARM-Africa and Self Help Africa are inviting interested parties to submit expressions of interests by **5pm, Wednesday 25th April**. The expressions of interest should cover the following:

- An outline of the IPR approach and how it will meet the terms of reference detailed below;
- An indicative budget including a preliminary breakdown of time and resources required;
- Details of relevant experience, expertise and past work, as well as references that can be contacted.

Expressions of interest should be submitted to Laura Whitwell, Head of Programme Funding, FARM-Africa via email to lauraw@farmafrica.org.uk.

Please note that applicants who meet the relevant criteria may be asked to submit a full proposal or further details. The outline timetable is as follows:

25 th April	Deadline for submissions of expressions of interest
May	Independent evaluator appointed and contract signed
June – Aug	Independent Progress Review conducted
7 th Sep	Draft independent progress review submitted to the consortium for discussion
Mid-Oct	Final independent progress review submitted to DFID

Terms of Reference

Independent Progress Review of FARM-Africa and Self Help Africa's Programme Partnership Arrangement with the Department for International Development 2011-2014.

I. Background Information

DFID provides significant funding to civil society organisations annually in line with its overall strategy to alleviate poverty and promote peace, stability and good governance. The Programme Partnership Arrangements (PPA) and Global Poverty Action Fund (GPAF) are two of DFID's principal funding mechanisms. The current political climate and results-based agenda demand a rigorous assessment of the effectiveness of funds disbursed to ensure that they are managed to provide value for money. One of the key tools in the performance assessment is the Independent Progress Review (IPR).

FARM-Africa and Self Help Africa (the Consortium) successfully applied for PPA funding as a consortium. This is the first PPA received by either organisation.

2. Evaluation of the PPA

Coffey International Development is the Evaluation Manager for the PPA and GPAF and is responsible for assessing the performance of individual grantees and of the funding mechanisms as a whole. The Evaluation Strategy (see attached) lays out the approach and methodology to the Evaluation and should be read in full in preparation for the IPR.

In terms of the Consortium performance, the Evaluation is concerned with:

- a) the extent to which the consortium is performing against its objectives¹;
- b) the extent to which the consortium organisations and achievements align with DFID's theories of change;
- c) the impact of DFID's funding in terms of the additional benefits realised because of funding and its attributable contribution to organisational effectiveness and the results set out in the consortium's logframe. The impact assessment will consider the value for money the consortium derives from DFID funding.

The Consortium will be assessed according to standard criteria based on the OECD DAC criteria²: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and results.

3. Purpose

The purpose of the IPR is threefold:

1. To assess the extent to which comments provided as part of the Annual Review Processes have been acted upon by the consortium;
2. To verify, and supplement where necessary, the Consortium's reporting through the Annual Review Process, changing lives case study and the additionality report; and

¹ This is reflected in the FA-SHA's initial application, logframe and DFID business case available at <http://projects.dfid.gov.uk/project.aspx?Project=202624>

² http://www.oecd.org/document/22/0,2340,en_2649_34435_2086550_1_1_1,00.html

3. To independently evaluate the impact that DFID funding has had on the consortium organisations and projects and to assess the value for money of the funding. The IPR should answer the questions
 - *What has happened because of DFID funding that wouldn't have happened otherwise happened?*
 - *To what extent does the use of funding represent good value for money?*

4. Annual Review Process Actions

The IPR will have an important role in assessing the extent to which comments provided during the Annual Review Process (ARP) have been acted upon by the consortium.

The consortium is accountable to DFID for the use of the grant. The ARP is the process by which DFID holds the consortium to account and ensures that it is working towards their stated objectives. The feedback provided during the ARP is DFID's principle management tool, and as such, it is extremely important that this feedback be acted upon by the consortium.

The IPR will provide an independent assessment on the extent to which feedback has been acted upon.

5. Verification of the Consortium's Reporting

The Consortium will be assessed by the Evaluation Manager according to the criteria defined in appendix 8.1.1. The IPR will contribute to this assessment by:

- Verifying the consortium reporting related to the evaluation criteria; and
- Providing an independent assessment of the consortium organisations in relation to the evaluation criteria.

Some relevant assessment questions are detailed in Annex 1 – these questions are for guidance only. The Independent Evaluator should use their discretion in obtaining the information relevant to the assessment criteria but should cover the following areas.

Relevance: Representativeness and Targeting

Efficiency: Evidence of cost effectiveness

Effectiveness: Distinctive contribution and complementarity/adding value to DFID's portfolio; Learning and innovation

Sustainability: Results sustained and uptake of learning and innovation by others

Results: Performance against the logframe; Changes in lives; Changes in civil society; Access conditions that led to success and failure; Additionality of DFID's funding.

6. Impact Assessment of DFID Funding

This section, in conjunction with Annex 2, sets out the proposed approach to the assessment of the additional impacts achieved by the consortium as a result of DFID's funding. The purpose here is **not to prescribe that the Independent Evaluator should apply these and only these quantitative techniques**. The intention is to provide an overview of a robust approach that should be considered if appropriate, cost-effective and proportionate to do so. The section also stresses the **importance of a mixed-methods approach** to the impact assessment that uses qualitative research to provide an explanation of 'why' and 'how' the programme is affecting the type and scale of changes that are quantitatively assessed.

The annex provides guidance on contribution analysis, which adopts a theory of change approach to evaluation. This approach is informed by a wide range of evidence sources and perspectives brought together to produce a ‘plausible’ assessment of the ‘contribution’ of the consortium to higher level outcomes and impacts. DFID’s Evaluation Strategy is first and foremost concerned with ensuring that grantees are able to produce the most robust evidence possible by rigorously using evaluation approaches and research tools that best suit the variety of ways in which DFID funding has been used across both the PPA and GPAF portfolios.

Impact assessment for this evaluation is defined as the ‘net’ impact that an organisation or project intervention has in terms of the *additional benefits realised that are directly attributable* to the activities delivered by the organisation or project intervention. The *additionality* of the funding is of key importance for DFID as it is crucial to understanding the net impact of its interventions. Additionality is defined as “*an impact arising from an intervention is additional if it would not have occurred in the absence of the intervention*”.³ Typically, this requires a comparison between what actually happened (i.e. factually) and what would have happened in the absence of the intervention, otherwise called the counterfactual. The fundamental evaluation problem that all impact assessment faces is that we cannot observe what would have happened if the intervention had not happened to those already affected by the intervention. Therefore impact evaluation requires a rigorous approach to establishing the counterfactual. The most robust way to do this is to compare the outcomes achieved by those who benefited from an intervention with the outcomes achieved by a group of people who are similar in every way to the beneficiaries, except that they were not subject to the project intervention being evaluated i.e. by using a comparison or control group. This approach to the assessment of impact and additionality typically involves experimental or quasi-experimental approaches and methodologies.

It should be noted that depending on the level of expenditure and ‘evaluability’⁴ of the type of investment or intervention by the Consortium, the expectation is that the additionality and impacts of DFID’s funding should be quantitatively assessed as far as possible. It should be noted that this approach is not exclusive to qualitative methodologies, which are required to ensure that any evaluation of impact is firmly grounded in the context of the Consortium’s activities. Crucially, a mixed-method approach provides a qualitative explanation of ‘why’ and ‘how’ the programme is affecting the type and scale of change assessed through quantitative research.

7. IPR METHODS

The methods to be used in the IPR include:

7.1 Document review - this will include the assessment of the funding related documents:

- Consortium’s applications for funding
- DFID’s business case for funding
- Consortium’s MOU with DFID for funding
- Updated versions of consortium (PPA) logframes
- Consortium’s annual review reports and comments provided by DFID

³ HMT Green Book

⁴ *Evaluability* is defined in this context as the extent to which the consortium’s activities can be measured to produce reliable evidence-based judgements of performance, impact and value for money.

- *Changing Lives* case studies submitted
- Additionality reports
- The review should also consider other relevant organisational documents such as:
 - Organisational mission statement and strategy of consortium members
 - Organisational monitoring & evaluation strategy
 - Impact studies undertaken by the consortium organisations
 - Financial information / information on resources spent
 - Statement of experience
 - Information on synergies / collaboration with DFID country programmes, other actors etc
 - Published material (e.g. to demonstrate sharing of learning with others)
 - Additional documents as required and appropriate (e.g. information to assess changes in lives / changes in civil society)

7.2 Interviews and workshops with key stakeholders:

- Interviews and workshops with management teams to determine how funding is allocated and used
- Beneficiary interviews
- Interviews with staff at both consortium organisations involved in strategic aspects / delivery of work
- Interviews with partners looking at e.g. uptake of learning and innovation, partnerships built with civil society, governmental and international organizations, building capacity of southern actors etc
- Additional interlocutors as appropriate

The consultant or consulting firm commissioned to carry out the IPR and the PPA Manager are jointly responsible for choosing the methods that are the most appropriate for the purpose of this evaluation. The consultant or consulting firm is also required to present a detailed statement of evaluation methods including the description of data collection instruments and procedures, information sources and procedures for analyzing the data.

8. IPR CONSULTANT

The IPR shall be carried out by a suitably-qualified and experienced consultant or consulting firm (referred to as “IPR consultant” in the following). The consultant profile should include:

Expertise required: Intending service providers will demonstrate the following:

- A specialist with a minimum of seven years experience in programme/project delivery in an international development context
- Proven capacity and experience in development strategic planning, the use of programmatic approaches and the management of complex evaluations, particularly in an NGO environment
- Experience of results-based monitoring and evaluation
- Strong understanding of NGO and donor relationships in PPA type schemes

- Experience in mainstreaming cross-cutting issues (gender & environment)
- Availability within the time frame outlined

Consultants will be selected according to the following criteria:

- Understanding of the Terms of Reference, proposed methodology and planning of the assignment **(30%)**
- Experience with respect to the evaluation of complex development programmes, **(20%)**
- Experience with and understanding of the wider development NGO community **(10%)**
- Overall balance and complementarity of skills and experience with respect to the required expertise **(20%)**
- Overall cost **(20%)**

9. RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Consultancy days, including preparation and site visits;
- Travel and accommodation expenses will be reimbursed (economy class airfares, mid-class hotel);
- Vouched expenses (including travel at economy rates and mid-class hotel accommodation) and subsistence costs according to established rates per country (to be agreed in advance with the contracting party).

10. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Consortium's Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-Group plus FARM-Africa's Head of Programme Funding will be responsible for the recruitment and initial briefing of the IPR consultant, with the Head of Programme Funding as the point of contact within the Consortium for the duration of the IPR process. Led by the Head of Operations in FARM-Africa the Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-Group will provide logistical and technical support, including through the organisation of meetings and interviews.

11. QUALITY ASSURANCE

It is imperative that the evidence collected as part of the IPR be robust and reliable. Where high quality data is not available, the limitations of the data and any conclusions drawn from it must be clearly stated. Annex 3 provides a framework table for appraising the quality of evaluation evidence submitted to the Evaluation Manager. Grantees are responsible for quality assuring the IPR as it is undertaken. The Evaluation Manager will also undertake a quality assurance exercise and will provide comments in an *Evaluation Manager Report*.

12. DELIVERABLES AND TIMEFRAME

PPA grantees: the IPR consultant shall submit the finalised IPR to DFID following the timeframe below:

- at the mid-term evaluation stage (by October 2012)

Exact dates for submitting IPRs will be communicated by DFID to the Consortium in due course.

- The main body of the IPR (draft and final version) must be limited to 30 pages, excluding annexes. One of the annexes should consist of a table which summarises the findings according to the criteria listed in section 3 above.

13. UTILITY

Coffey will analyse the information generated by the IPR process at individual grantee level and in aggregate format at meta/fund level. The analysis of the information from the IPR process will represent one source on which Coffey will base the performance assessment at both grantee and fund level.

13.1 Dissemination

According to transparency guidelines, grantees are asked to publish the IPR report. PLEASE NOTE however, that the IPR report should not be published until after it has been reviewed by the Evaluation Manager and comments have been provided. Grantees are asked to publish the report together with the Evaluation Manager Report which contains comments on the quality of the evaluation.

Annex I – Verification of The Consortium’s Reporting

This annex has details of some relevant questions for the verification process - these questions are for guidance only. The Independent Evaluator should use their discretion in obtaining the information relevant to the assessment criteria.

5.1 Relevance

- Representativeness: Do the planned interventions and outcomes (as expressed in the logframe) reflect the needs of the target population?
- Targeting: To what degree do the planned interventions and outcomes reach the poorest and most marginalised? To what degree do these interventions maximise the impact on the poor and marginalised? Is the balance between these two targeting principles appropriate to the situation? (Note: where the consortium is not working directly with beneficiaries an assessment should be made of the implicit or explicit results chain that links the outcomes to changes for the beneficiary population).

5.2 Efficiency

- To what extent is the consortium able to provide evidence of its cost effectiveness and as such demonstrate an understanding of our costs, the factors that drive us, the linkages to our performance and an ability to achieve efficiency gains?

5.3 Effectiveness

- Distinctive offering: What is the distinctive offering of the consortium and how does it complement or add value to DFID’s portfolio? Examples here might include:
 - The consortium has distinctive expertise in a particular area of work;
 - The consortium provides support and advice in this area and/or builds the capacity of DFID and others;
 - The consortium’s programmes fill a gap in DFID’s portfolio, complementing existing work in country programmes, or offering a channel to provide support where DFID has no presence;
 - Linking together different levels of operation; and
 - Networking and bringing together other actors.
- Learning and innovation
 - How has the consortium’s organisational culture promoted or impeded learning and innovation?
 - Assess the extent to which the consortium organisations have learned from their work and has incorporated the lessons into improved performance. Examples and case studies should be provided. A distinction should be made between two types of learning. Firstly, learning that improves the consortium organisations’ capacity (for example improved capacity to monitor and evaluate). This learning is essentially organisational development. Assess the degree to which this learning has demonstrably improved programming, in the intervention from which it arose and beyond. Secondly, learning that provides contextual knowledge, for example learning about the situation of a target population. This learning is largely specific to a particular context and will have little scope for general application. Assess the degree to which this learning has demonstrably improved programming, in the intervention from which it arose.
 - Assess the extent to which consortium organisations have produced generalisable learning that has been incorporated into its own practice and shared with others. Assess the degree to which this learning has demonstrably improved programming. Describe the strategy for communicating this learning and assess the extent to which

others took up the learning in changed policy and practice. Examples and case studies should be provided. This type of learning overlaps with innovation.

- Innovation is a special type of learning. It is distinguished from learning in general by novelty. Assess the extent to which FA-SHAs develop, test, and achieve the adoption by others of new knowledge, such as in techniques, approaches, and design of interventions. Describe the consortium's strategy for communicating the innovation and the extent to which it was taken up by others. If it has not yet been taken up by others, provide evidence indicating the potential for replication and scale-up. Two levels of innovation should be distinguished. Firstly, incremental innovation. This is innovation that applies or develops existing knowledge in new ways. For example, it might involve elaboration and improvement of an existing method. Secondly, radical innovation. This is innovation that produces entirely new knowledge. For example, it might involve the development and testing of a new method for vulnerability mapping.
- Monitoring and evaluation. Assess the consortium's monitoring and evaluation capacity, and in particular its ability to measure results (focusing on the quality of reported results and lessons learned rather than an assessment of M&E systems themselves). Indicate with clear examples of the trajectory of change. Identify and assess any impact assessment studies and clarify what part they play in the consortium organisations' monitoring and evaluation systems.

5.4 Sustainability

- Assess the extent to which an intervention or its results are likely to be sustainable. This should include an examination of the outcome of the uptake of learning and innovation by others. It should also include the nature of partnerships built with civil society, governmental and international organisations and their impact on sustainability. Elements of sustainability might include leveraging funds for continuation, securing policy adoption of an intervention or approach, or building capacity of southern actors to deliver a service or to monitor service delivery.

5.5 Results

- Performance against the logframe: To what extent is the consortium achieving (or progressing towards) the intended outcomes?
- Changes in lives. Assess the information about what changes these outcomes are making in people's lives and how many people are affected.
- Changes in civil society. To what extent are citizens doing things for themselves (for example community organisations managing and delivering services)? To what extent is civil society enabled to hold government to account?
- Assess what conditions led to success and failure – external, internal combination of interventions.
- To what extent does DFID funding achieve additionality, i.e. enable the consortium to achieve things it would have otherwise not been able to achieve? Assessment of additionality will be covered during the impact assessment as described below.

Annex 2 - Impact Assessment of DFID Funding

1. Acknowledging the impact attribution problem

The higher level objective of PPA funding is to alleviate poverty by strengthening civil society and in doing so, contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and good governance. These goals are at the highest level and DFID's investment through PPA to achieving them is relatively insignificant in the context of the global corpus of interventions aimed at alleviating poverty. Moreover there are a large number of very important factors external to DFID's and the consortium's involvement which varies according to circumstance and which will influence the results achieved. For these reasons, experimental or quasi-experimental approaches to credibly assessing the attributable effects and impacts on observed changes may be difficult to achieve and quantify. Under these conditions it is necessary to consider alternative methods for assessing the funds 'contribution' to change that do not solely rely scientifically quantifying 'attributable' change⁵.

2. Contribution analysis

Whatever the evaluation design or research methodologies used to evaluate the impact of DFID's funding it is essential that a rigorous assessment of the consortium's additionality is undertaken. At the very least this should result in a 'plausible' account of the difference that DFID's funding has made to the effectiveness and performance of the Consortium. Contribution analysis is an approach that can help the Consortiums overcome the attribution problem by systematically constructing an evidence-based and plausible assessment of changes that would not have happened without the support of DFID's funding.

Contribution analysis⁶ involves assessing the 'contribution' that the funding is making or has made to results through a 'theory of change' based approach. Essentially this requires an evidence-based approach to verifying the plausibility of theories of change that underpin the rationale for the different ways in which the consortium has used DFID funding to either:

- indirectly 'enhance' the delivery of results (in the logframe) in the majority of cases for PPA grantees; or
- directly delivery results (in the logframe) in the majority of cases for GPAF grantees.

Contribution analysis entails a more pragmatic, inclusive and iterative evaluation process than more experimental methods that may not be feasible or practical given the variety of ways in which DFID funding is being used.

Contribution analysis involves the following 6 steps⁷ that typically would be followed:

Step 1: Develop a theory of change and the risks to it

Establish and agree with stakeholders a 'plausible' theory of change that accurately reflects the ways in which DFID funding has been used to deliver or enhance the delivery of planned results. Specifically focus on the type and nature of cause and effect relationships at each stage in the

⁵ Please see the Key Evaluation Terms document and the NONIE paper on impact evaluation for more guidance

⁶ Mayne, J., (2008) 'ILAC Brief 16 – Contribution analysis – an approach to exploring cause and effect', ILAC

⁷ Mayne, J., (2008) Ibid

impact logic of the theory of change. The Three 'circles of influence' (Montague et al., 2002) are useful in this respect⁸:

direct control – where DFID funding has fairly direct control of the results, typically at the output level;

direct influence – where DFID funding has a direct influence on the expected results, such as the reactions and behaviours of its target groups through direct contact, typically intermediate outcomes; and

indirect influence – where DFID funding can exert significantly less influence on the expected results due to its lack of direct contact with those involved and/or the significant influence of other factors.

Grantees should identify and articulate the assumptions that have been made in order to establish a set of cause and effect linkages between DFID funding, how it has been used and how this relates to the delivery of activities and ultimately the achievement of results set out in the logframe. In parallel, grantees should identify external influencing factors that could affect these linkages.

To be clear, in the case of GPAF grantees where the link between DFID funding, outputs and outcomes is relatively direct these linkages may be expressed in the logframe. However, in the case of PPA grantees where DFID funding has been used in an unrestricted /indirect way these linkages and a theory of change will need to be developed that specifically focuses on how DFID funding has been used e.g. to improve organisational effectiveness through strengthening human resource management to ultimately enhance the delivery of results – in these instances this is a distinctly different theory of change or impact logic that is presented in the grantee's logframe.

Step 2: Set out the attribution problem to be addressed

- Grantees should determine the specific cause and effect questions that each grantee needs to assess through the evaluation process; assess the nature and extent of the attribution problem by asking:
- What do we know about the nature and extent of the contribution expected?
- What would show that DFID funding has made an important contribution?
- What would show that DFID funding has 'made a difference'?
- What would indicate that DFID funding has had the effects envisaged in the theory of change underpinning the way in which the grant has been used?
- How difficult is it to evidence these effects and why?

Step 3: Gather existing evidence on the theory of change

Grantees should gather evidence through routine monitoring /management data as far as possible. Whatever the nature of the theory of change underpinning how DFID funding has been used it is advisable to establish a baseline position in order to benchmark the progress made. For example, if DFID funding has been used to enhance human resource management of a grantee then a simple survey could be undertaken of a sample of project offices in order to establish the current state of human resource management from the perspective of those that benefit from it. Further questions could elaborate on the extent to which this enhances the capacity of project offices to deliver their activities and ultimately achieve their results.

⁸ Mayne, J., (2008) 'ILAC Brief 16 – Contribution analysis – an approach to exploring cause and effect', ILAC

Step 4: Assemble and assess the contribution narrative and challenges to it

From the outset it is important to validate whether the theory of change and the assumptions that it depends on holds true. This validation process should be undertaken systematically and regularly in order to iteratively build up a convincing and plausible evidence-based narrative of the effects DFID funding is having in direct and/or indirect ways. It is also essential that this process involves relevant external stakeholders who are in a position to externally verify that the original theory of change and future observed changes are plausible and credible.

Step 5: Gather additional evidence

This Evaluation Strategy provides guidance, tools and templates for gathering different types of evidence that could be required to supplement monitoring and management data. The type of evidence gathered will largely depend on the ways in which DFID funding is being used. Ideally the evidence base would consist of a combination of quantitative and qualitative data focused on testing and proving a plausible theory of change that is specific to DFID funding.

Step 6: Revise and strengthen the contribution narrative

This is a continuous process of testing and revising the theory of change that underpins the central argument that DFID's funding is making a difference. In this way contribution analysis has a formative effect in that it enables grantees to quickly understand whether or not DFID funding is being used in an optimal way to deliver the changes envisaged at the outset.

There are several analytical approaches that could be used to assess the additionality of DFID funding in addition to contribution analysis. However, the key reason for presenting this approach is to demonstrate that this Evaluation Strategy is fully committed to gathering the best possible evidence concerning the impact and value for money attributable to DFID funding however great the challenge is. Even if a scientific approach to impact evaluation is not possible or is inappropriate then at the very least the approach to assessing the additionality of DFID funding should be as plausible and rigorous as possible, including evaluation designs and activities that entail predominantly qualitative research methodologies.

While responsibility for assessing and reporting on the additionality of DFID funding rests with grantees, the independent evaluators who will undertake the independent progress reviews (IPRs) will be involved with the impact assessment. Where feasible, they should be involved as early as possible by grantees so that they can provide technical support to design the assessment or carry out the steps described above.