

DEVELOPMENTAL PERFORMANCE (MID-TERM) EVALUATION
OF
THE NETWORK FOR RELIGIOUS AND TRADITIONAL PEACEMAKERS
Terms of Reference (ToR)

1. BACKGROUND TO THE EVALUATION

The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers (the Network) was initiated in 2013 as a response to the growing awareness that religious and traditional peacemakers are vital, but underutilized, actors in peacemaking.

Since becoming operational in 2014, the Network has supported individual traditional and faith-oriented insider mediators, intra- and inter-faith dialogues, and the advancement of reconciliation efforts. Network activities are conducted as a collaborative effort between Network Members, Supporters, and the Secretariat, and are based on requests from local or international peacemakers or partners. These collaborative actions and processes enhance the ownership of actors involved, measurably reduce the duplication of efforts, and evolve strategic collaborative actions that are sustainable in the long run.

The Network efforts support religious and traditional actors – including women and youth – who are often the most familiar with the effects of violent conflicts on the population at large. They also have close ties to the community level and have vital knowledge about the local context and history as well as the needs on the ground. By engaging religious and traditional actors in mediation, dialogue, and peacebuilding process, the Network supports its crucial role in ensuring that peace efforts reach the wider population and are rooted in local ownership.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) as a large external financial supporter has been integrally involved in the development of the Network since its inception. The MFA support to the Network falls under Finland's overall pursuit and actions aimed to advance mediation as core to a more effective international agenda focused on peace and development.

The Network's mission statement is to enhance the effectiveness of efforts towards peaceful and inclusive societies by increasing the active collaboration between religious and traditional actors and other key stakeholders in conflict transformation. The work of the Network is carried out utilizing guidance from the Network strategic priorities. Those priorities have been informed by the last evaluation. Those priorities are:

1. Ensuring that the clarified Network structure enables the Network to fulfill its mission and serve its members and supporters.
2. Empowering local peacemakers and their local respective communities; bridging international, regional, and local mediation and broader peacebuilding processes.
3. Strengthening the leadership of women and youth in religious and traditional peacemaking and broader peacebuilding processes.
4. Supporting the positive role of religious and traditional actors in preventing violence at the local, regional, and international levels.
5. Creating opportunities and space for religious and traditional peacemakers to contribute to, and help shape international policy frameworks that are relevant to conflict prevention and peace.

2. RATIONALE, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

Evaluation objectives and criteria

This mid-term evaluation has the following dimensions:

1. Network Strategy period mid-term 2020-2025
2. Network MFA Center for Peace Mediation funding mid-term (project-midterm 2021-2024)

This evaluation falls into an age of uncertainty. The COVID-19 crisis transitioned into multiple crises caused or amplified by the Russian war in Ukraine and renewed violence in the Middle East, leading to massive shocks to European security, uncertainty, energy, and food crises.

Based on those dimensions, the purpose of this participatory, omni-partial, and independent mid-term evaluation is to provide evidence on the process of the Network's organizational and programmatic development since its last evaluation (beginning of strategy period), assess the progress of the Network and to obtain suggestions on how to further improve the work and its impact during the current implementation period, both on strategic and program operational level.

More specifically:

- ➔ this evaluation will also serve as a reflection exercise on what steps should be taken to renew and update the Network's strategy, based on the context and dimensions mentioned above.
- ➔ the evaluation falls also into the mid-term evaluation requirement of the funding received by the Center for Peace Mediation (CfPM) of the MFA Finland and therefore this evaluation ToR has been also shared, reviewed and accepted by the donor.

The evaluation results will be used to inform the implementation of the ongoing programme where necessary and to feed into the design of the Network future work. It may also provide initial input to strategic renewal.

The need for and benefit of an evaluation was reflected upon and outlined during the development of the Network. It is viewed as a valuable tool for management to enhance programme implementation and is expected to inform the Government of Finland and other funders, members and partners of progress made, and lessons learned to date, and towards necessary adjustments required. The evaluation will look at the Network and its work as a whole, but in addition, will pay attention to each focus area in lieu of its objectives and context.

The main purpose of the evaluation should be to benefit the Network in the design and implementation of its work in the future. Consequently, the assessment will determine if current activities carried out by the Network are appropriate in meeting the needs of the Network and its members, examine and assess if annual outputs and initiatives were achieved, and analyze the initiatives and Network activities to determine if it is inclusive, participatory, engaging and consultative. The evaluation process shall both review the implementation actions of the Network as well as engage directly with stakeholders, including the Network members, supporters and other partners and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, as well as those who have worked with, and/or participated in Network activities.

Finland has supported financially the Network of Traditional and Religious Peacemakers since 2014. The MFA funding has been 400 000 EUR per year in 2021, and 300 000 EUR in 2022-2023. Overall, the Network has had a core funding of 1-1,5 MEUR and overall funding of 3-4 MEUR per year on average (through project funding).

The specific objectives of the evaluation will be the following:

The purpose of this evaluation will be to learn about the progress, achievements and challenges experienced by the Network for religious and traditional peacemakers; and to provide recommendations for future development, programming and activities for the Network globally, both for program and strategy.

Specifically, this evaluation review will:

1. Assess the progress made toward strategic priorities and focus areas mentioned in the Network Strategy. Assess the expected and unexpected outcomes achieved in terms of needs, relevance, and appropriateness
2. Assess the sustainability of the Network and determine if the benefits produced can be maintained after the termination of external support;
3. Provide concrete proposals to enhance the relevance, outcome and impact of the Network's strategy; Assess if and how the Network can have more focus, geographically and /or thematically. Provide

- recommendations on broad and wide scope of the Network (global, peace-building [including peace making/ mediation] versus more targeted action (selected regions, focus on selected themes)
4. Assess how the strategy implementation, including cross-cutting issues as mentioned in the strategy, aligns with and supports the cross-cutting objectives in the Finnish development policy and cooperation, namely gender equality, non-discrimination, climate-resilient and low-emission development as well as environmental protection, with an emphasis on safeguarding biodiversity.

3. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION AND ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

The scope of this evaluation covers the period from the beginning of 2020 until 2023. Below are the milestones for the implementation of the evaluation, to be elaborated by the evaluators and the timing to be confirmed:

1. Procurement process and selection of evaluation team/consultants, based on technical proposal [January - February 2024]
2. Kick-off workshop with team/consultants and NRTP [February 2024]
3. Inception report (main evaluation framework, methods, evaluation criteria to be applied, key questions, background) by the evaluation team [February 2024]
4. Interviews with stakeholders [February-April 2024], online, and/or travel to Helsinki and/or other locations.
5. Draft evaluation submitted [April 2024]
6. Final evaluation submitted [April / May 2024]

The criteria below will be used, and the team will formulate evaluation questions. Together with the evaluator/evaluator team, it will be decided which criteria are most relevant to the nature of this evaluation. As part of the evaluation process, the evaluator shall specify, and amend, if necessary, the evaluation questions to fit the overall goal of the evaluation. Questions will form a guideline for semi-structured interviews and dialogues. The criteria used are:

- **Accountability**
- **Relevance**
- **Coherence**
- **Effectiveness**
- **Efficiency**
- **Sustainability**
- **Impact**

In line with OECD DAC evaluation guidance, those criteria are applied using the following principles:

Principle One: The criteria should be applied thoughtfully to support high-quality, useful evaluation. They should be contextualized – understood in the context of the individual evaluation, the intervention being evaluated, and the stakeholders involved. The evaluation questions (what you are trying to find out) and what you intend to do with the answers, should inform how the criteria are specifically interpreted and analyzed.

Principle Two: The use of the criteria depends on the purpose of the evaluation. The criteria should not be applied mechanically. Instead, they should be covered according to the needs of the relevant stakeholders and the context of the evaluation. More or less time and resources may be devoted to the evaluative analysis for each criterion depending on the evaluation purpose. Data availability, resource constraints, timing, and methodological considerations may also influence how (and whether) a particular criterion is covered.

In the application of the criteria, it is important to understand the nature of the Network and its main purpose and contextualize criteria accordingly.

Please find more details from here:

<https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

Questions for the semi-structured interviews will be prepared with the evaluation team and will be finalized in the kick-off workshop.

4. METHODOLOGY

The evaluator shall base observations and recommendations on relevant project documentation; comparison with projects of a similar nature, where relevant and appropriate; and best practice as it applies to the implementation of projects of this nature. Importantly the evaluator should carry out interviews and consultations with stakeholders to guide assessments, and to focus mostly on collecting qualitative data.

As the evaluation period covers also several corona-affected time periods, interviews with staff and key informants shall be used to complement written documentation, as during Covid-19 many plans have been adjusted frequently to be responsive to what program is feasible under severe restrictions. It is recommended that the evaluation will include a substantial amount of interviews. The evaluator shall visit or digitally include Helsinki, New York, and/or Washington and/or one program countries of the Network, to have participatory workshops and interviews with Network staff, the wider peacebuilding community and key stakeholders/networks as well as Network participants.

The evaluator shall produce a report of approximately twenty (20) pages which should cover the following areas:

Executive summary: The task, brief description of the methodology, main findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.

Introduction: Evaluation purpose, objective, scope and main questions, the methodology used, data collection and analysis including indicators.

Key findings: Overall progress of the implementation of the Network; impact, effectiveness, sustainability of results achieved, efficiency, relevance and compatibility; utilization of Network funds in the implementation of planned and unplanned activities; impact (anticipated and spin-off) of the work of the Network during the period under review.

Recommendations: Key areas of modifications; recommendations for improving policy/implementation and management; recommendations to maximize the impact of the work of the Network throughout the remainder of the Network cycle; recommendations with regard to the possible extension and continuation of the Network. Initial input on the Network strategic renewal.

Lessons learned: General conclusions that are likely to have potential for wider application and use.

Conclusions: Overall performance, achieved results compared with applied evaluation criteria, policy issues, etc.

The Network Secretariat shall facilitate the evaluation in a participatory manner, including the validation and dissemination of the final conclusions and recommendations.

Annexes: Terms of Reference, stakeholders interviewed, semi-structured interview questions, documents reviewed, etc.

(Quality standards: The evaluation report shall observe the OECD/DAC development evaluation quality criteria, which can be reached in the web-page of the organization (<http://www.oecd.org>). Special attention should be paid to guidance relating to support in fragile, at-risk and crisis affected contexts, including do no harm principles.

6. MANAGEMENT OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation is to be carried out between January 2024 and May 2024.

Selection and Appointment of Evaluators

An evaluator/evaluation team will be recruited through a transparent procurement process. The evaluator will be appointed based on procurement process recommendation, both by the Network Secretariat and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. The bidder shall have sufficient economic and financial standing, technical capacity and professional ability to deliver required services. The bidder shall be legally registered in the country of location. The following expertise shall be required by the evaluator for the successful conduct of the evaluation:

- Evaluators work as a team or as individuals, with at least one member/consultant coming from Finland / has demonstrated very strong expertise in the Finnish policy context and Finnish stakeholders.
- Significant expertise (minimum ten years) in areas of mediation and mediation support, peacemaking, peace and security, conflict, religion, comparative politics, and international relations;
- Experience in the evaluation of Networks and a sufficient understanding of peacebuilding through religious and traditional actors
- Experience with and knowledge of programmatic conceptualization, planning, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation;
- Experience and methodological expertise in evaluating interventions in the field of peacebuilding and conflict resolution;
- Previous experience with undertaking evaluations of this nature and demonstrated ability to produce professional reports.
- Working knowledge of English and Finnish is required, with knowledge in French and Arabic being a desirable additional consideration.

Selection criteria

Qualitative award criteria	
Expertise& Experience	55
Organization & Methodology	35
Price factor: cheapest tender / this tender	10
Total score	100

Evaluation Management

The Secretariat of Traditional and Religious Peacemakers will assist the evaluator in organizing meetings with relevant stakeholders and will provide them with the necessary Network documentation. Secretariat will facilitate the evaluation in a participatory manner and recommends interviews with the Network Secretariat team members, founding organizations of the Network, key partners and religious and traditional peacemakers. The evaluator is expected to arrange her/his own travel arrangements.

Final output is expected in report format, which should adhere to the MFA's evaluation instructions. The report should be submitted in English language. Additional outputs include a PowerPoint presentation on key findings and a final report to be circulated in stakeholder meetings.

Mandate

The evaluator is entitled and expected to discuss matters relevant to this evaluation with pertinent persons, organizations and stakeholders. However, the evaluator is not authorized to make any commitments on the behalf of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland or Finn Church Aid.

Submission of proposal

The consultant(s) is (are) requested to submit a brief technical proposal, CV(s), budget, name referees with contact details and/or provide references of similar consultancies. References shall include a description of the service provided, lengths of contract and contact details of the customer. Please submit your proposal to **Matthias.wevelsiep [at] kua.fi by 13.2.2024, 16:00 (EET, Finnish winter time)**

The total duration of the consultancy has a range of 25-35 person days. The assessment may be conducted by an individual consultant or a team. A maximum number of consultant work days of 35 applies in either case.