



Terms of Reference

Best Practices for Pooled Fund Innovative Programming in Protracted Humanitarian Crises

Research Consultancy

Organisation: International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)

Duration: Approximately 30 days between September and 15 December

Starting date: ASAP

Location: Home-based

About ICVA

Established in 1962, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) comprises a worldwide network of more than 160 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in activities across 160 countries. Operating at global, regional, national, and local tiers, ICVA is dedicated to enhancing the principled and effective nature of humanitarian action. Through collaborative and independent efforts, the organization strives to influence policies and practices, fostering a collective impact on the humanitarian landscape.

The ICVA 2030 Strategy adopted by the ICVA's General Assembly in 2021 sets the framework for the direction and focus of ICVA's work from 2022-2030, as we evolve and transform our network. Rooting us more deeply in our mission of principled and effective humanitarian action, this strategy sets our collective values, our ways of working and our aspirational transformations. We work on focus areas (Forced Migration, Humanitarian Coordination and Humanitarian Financing) to best serve our members and the sector as a whole.

ICVA's distinctive strengths are embedded in our operational methodologies, which encompass analysis and explanation, convening, connecting, influencing and advocating, supporting, and collaborating. With a historical foundation in Geneva, the ICVA Secretariat extends its reach across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Background and Focus

Pooled funds (PFs) play a critical role in addressing global humanitarian crises by providing flexible and timely financial support to various humanitarian actors, especially local and national NGOs. With growing humanitarian needs and increasing contributions, PFs have grown in number and size, becoming an essential tool in the humanitarian financing toolbox, including to advance nexus funding and locally-led action.

In partnership with Aid Fund for Northern Syria, ICVA is launching this piece of work to document best practices among multi-donor pooled funds in integrated programming in contexts similar to the protracted crisis in northern Syria. Integrated programming includes improved inter-sectoral coordination, area-based approaches (ABA), and strategic integration between humanitarian, developmental, and peacebuilding initiatives (the triple nexus). Although recognised as a vital approach to managing complex humanitarian challenges, integrated programming faces significant challenges including:



- Overcoming programming silos, especially given funding challenges.
- Integrating peace building components in humanitarian programming.
- Pivoting to locally-led responses.
- Diversifying the funding base and investigating other funding streams, including potential “innovative funding” solutions.

By harnessing lessons learned from successful interventions by pooled funds in other protracted crises, such as in Colombia, Nigeria, and Yemen, ICVA looks to support the Aid Fund for Northern Syria (AFNS) develop and implement nuanced and effective strategies.

Objectives

- **Conduct a systematic review:** Undertake an analysis of best practices by multi-donor pooled funds in integrated programming across humanitarian response sectors, with a particular emphasis on protracted crisis contexts and solutions proven to be particularly effective and innovative.
- **Identify and evaluate models:** Pinpoint successful models of innovative programming managed by local partners or in partnership with local actors and that leverage multi-donor pooled funds. Analyse these models to understand their structure, implementation challenges, and measurable impacts on crisis response.
- **Document innovations and best practices:** Capture detailed examples of innovative programming and best practices that are specifically adaptable to the operational realities and strategic objectives of the AFNS.
- **Develop actionable recommendations:** Provide AFNS with clear, actionable recommendations for the adaptation and implementation of identified best practices.

Outputs and deliverables

The consultant is expected to produce the following key deliverables, in line with the agreed timeline and objectives:

- **Inception Report:** An Inception Report to be delivered following the initial desk review and the development of the analytical framework and semi-structured interview tools.
- **Draft Report:** A comprehensive Draft Report incorporating findings from the desk review, key informant interviews, and case studies.
- **Validation Workshop:** Conduct an online validation workshop to discuss the findings and recommendations of the Draft Report with key stakeholders.
- **Final Report:** The Final Report detailing all findings, recommendations and case studies and input from stakeholders.

Methodology (details to be agreed with ICVA)

1. Development of an Analytical Framework

- Work with the ICVA team to develop key indicators for assessing the effectiveness of integrated programming and the design of semi-structured interview tools and data collection templates.

2. Desk Research and Gap Analysis

- Conduct a desk review of pooled fund best practices in integrated programming across contexts similar to Northern Syria, including potentially Colombia, Nigeria, and Yemen, including deep dives into select specific projects or initiatives as case studies.



3. Key Informant Interviews (KIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGs)

- With the support of ICVA, identify a diverse group of stakeholders, including experts, practitioners, and representatives from humanitarian agencies, donor organisations and implementing partners and conduct online KIs and FGs discussions.

4. Reporting and Recommendations

- Compile findings into a comprehensive report that outlines best practices, innovative approaches, and actionable recommendations tailored for AFNS. The report should include vision representations of the data collected.
- Circulate the draft report among key stakeholders for feedback to refine and validate the findings and recommendations.
- Incorporate feedback and finalise the report, ensuring that it provides clear, practical, and evidence-based recommendations for AFNS.

Engagement with ICVA

The consultant will work closely with and report to the ICVA Humanitarian Financing Team.

Timeline (to be confirmed with consultant)

15 September: Launch Consultancy

16 – 30 September: Desk research, analytical framework, short inception report

1st to 30th October: Data Collection/ Key Informant Interviews/FGDs

Mid-October: Check in with initial findings and direction of future research

Mid November: Initial Draft Report and Validation Workshop

15th December: Final Report

Ethics and confidentiality

The research will adhere to the highest ethical standards, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, and data will be securely stored and used solely for the purposes of this study.

Consultant requirements

- Demonstrated experience in conducting evaluations and reviews of multi-donor pooled funds within humanitarian contexts.
- Knowledge of current humanitarian policy issues including localisation, humanitarian financing and pooled fund mechanisms.
- Proven contextual knowledge and operational experience in Syria, Ukraine, Yemen, and South Sudan, or similar protracted crisis environments.
- Expertise in integrated programming, specifically in designing, implementing, or evaluating cross-sectoral humanitarian efforts.
- Strong track record of engaging with humanitarian Clusters, ensuring collaborative and coordinated approaches in complex emergencies.
- Capability to innovate within the humanitarian sector, particularly in developing new methodologies or adapting existing ones to improve programme effectiveness and efficiency.
- Proficiency in qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, with a focus on conducting high-quality, rigorous field studies and interviews.
- Experience in producing detailed analytical reports that translate complex data into actionable insights and strategic recommendations.



- Excellent writing and communication skills with the ability to analyse complex information and transmit synthesised messages to various audiences.
- Excellent communication skills in English. French, Spanish and/or Arabic would be an asset.
- Proven ability to work autonomously and be flexible, including ability to cope with deadlines, multiple tasks, competing and changing demands.
- Understanding of ICVA's mission and NGO contribution to the humanitarian sector.
- Note: Throughout the work, the consultant must be registered in accordance with the legal requirements at their base and must be able to submit documentation that proves that she/ he is meeting all legal obligations for the consultancy, including full compliance with ICVA regulations including the safeguarding policy.

How to apply

If you have the required expertise and skills, please apply by sending your CV, any examples of relevant previous work, a short proposal (approx. 2-3 pages), including how you meet the criteria for the consultancy, outline of proposed approach and methodology, and requested day rate to recruitment_2@icvanetwork.org

Please mention **"Integrated Programming Best Practices"** in the subject line.

The deadline for applications is 9 September 2024.

Applicants from all countries are encouraged to apply and teams of consultants are welcomed.