

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

TO:

Qualified candidates

<b>Date of issue:</b>	6 September 2023
<b>RFP no.:</b>	2023-049
<b>Contract title:</b>	Research Consultancy
<b>Closing date:</b>	24 September 2023
<b>Contracting Authority:</b>	Norwegian Church Aid Contact person: Sara Tesorieri Email: <a href="mailto:sara.tesorieri@nca.no">sara.tesorieri@nca.no</a>
Please note that Proposals may be submitted to <a href="mailto:procurement@nca.no">procurement@nca.no</a> with subject title: HPD Nexus study	

### NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID INVITES YOU TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL FOR A RESEARCH CONSULTANCY

The Service is required for a research project on *HDP Nexus programming in politically estranged settings*, an intervention supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Please find enclosed the following documents which constitute the Request for Proposal:

#### A – Instructions

**Annex 1: Terms of Reference**

**Annex 2: Organisation and Methodology Form** (to be completed by the Candidate)

**Annex 3: Proposal Submission Form** (to be completed by the Candidate)

**Annex 4: General Terms and Conditions for Service Contracts**

**Annex 5: Code of Conduct for Contractors**

If this document is a PDF format, upon request, a complete copy of the above documents can be forwarded in a WORD format for electronic completion. It is forbidden to make alterations to the text.

## A. INSTRUCTIONS

In submitting a proposal, the Candidate accepts in full and without restriction the special and general conditions including annexes governing this Contract as the sole basis of this procedure, whatever his own conditions of services may be, which the Candidate hereby waives. The Candidates are expected to examine carefully and comply with all instructions, forms, contract provisions and specifications contained in this Request for Proposal.

### A.1. Scope of services

The Services required by the Contracting Authority are described in the Terms of Reference in Annex 1.

The Candidate shall offer the totality of the Services described in the Terms of Reference. Candidates offering only part of the required Services will be rejected.

### A.2. Cost of proposal

The Candidate shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of his proposal and the Contracting Authority is not responsible or liable for these costs, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the process.

### A.3. Eligibility and qualification requirements

Candidates are not eligible to participate in this procedure if they are in one of the situations listed in article 33 of the General Terms and Conditions for Service Contracts.

Candidates shall in the Proposal Submission Form attest that they meet the above eligibility criteria. If required by the Contracting Authority, the Candidate whose proposal is accepted shall further provide evidence satisfactory to the Contracting Authority of its eligibility.

Candidates are also requested to certify that they comply with the Code of Conduct for Contractors.

### A.4. Exclusion from award of contracts

Contracts may not be awarded to Candidates who, during this procedure:

- (a) are subject to conflict of interest.
- (b) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Contracting Authority as a condition of participation in the Contract procedure or fail to supply this information.
- (c) are at any time subject to security constraints of any kind.

### A.5. Documents comprising the Request for Proposal

The Candidate shall complete and submit the following documents with his proposal:

- a. Proposal Submission Form (Annex 3) duly completed and signed by the Candidate
- b. Organisation and Methodology using the structure in Annex 2
- c. CV highlighting the Candidate's experience in the specific field of the Services

The proposal and all correspondence and documents related to the Request for Proposal exchanged by the Candidate and the Contracting Authority must be written in the language of the procedure, which is English.

### A.6. Financial proposal

The Financial Proposal shall be presented as an amount in USD in the Proposal Submission Form in Annex 3. The remuneration of the Candidate under the Contract shall be determined as follows:

The Candidate shall indicate in his/her proposal his/her proposed global remuneration for the performance of the Services. The Candidate shall be deemed to have satisfied himself as to the sufficiency of his/her proposed global remuneration, to cover both his/her fee rate, including overhead, profit, all his/her obligations, sick leave, overtime and holiday pay, taxes, social charges, etc. and all expenses (such as transport, accommodation, food, office, etc.) to be incurred for the performance of the Contract with the exception of accommodation and transport expenses incurred for the required visit to the country of study for primary data collection. The proposed global remuneration shall cover all obligations of the successful Candidate under the Contract (without depending on actual time spent on the assignment) and all matters and things necessary for the proper execution and completion of the Services and the remedying of any deficiencies therein.

**VAT and/or any sales tax applicable to the purchase of services shall be indicated separately in the proposal.**

**A.7. Candidate's proposed personnel**

In the Organisation and Methodology Form, Annex 2, the Candidate shall include a detailed description of the role and duties of each of the key experts or other non-key experts, which the Candidate proposes to use for the performance of the Services. The key experts are those whose involvement is considered instrumental in the achievement of the contract objectives. The CV of each key expert shall be provided highlighting his/her experience in the specific field of the Services and his/her specific experience in the country/region where the Services are to be performed. The Candidate whose proposal is accepted shall provide, if so requested by the Contracting Authority, copies of diplomas and employers' certificates or references proving the key experts' education, professional experience and language proficiency.

In the Proposal Submission Form, Annex 3, the Candidate shall provide detailed information about key experts' actual availability for the performance of the Contract.

If, before the signing of the Contract, a key expert proposed in the proposal is no longer available the Candidate shall inform the Contracting Authority immediately and the proposal will in such case be considered invalid.

**A.8. Validity**

Proposals shall remain valid and open for acceptance for 30 days after the closing date.

**A.9. Submission of proposals and closing date**

Proposals must be received at the address mentioned on the front page not later than the closing date and time specified on the front page.

**A.10. Evaluation of Proposals**

The evaluation method will be the quality and cost-based selection. A two-stage procedure shall be utilised in evaluating the Proposals; a technical evaluation and a financial evaluation.

Proposals will be ranked according to their combined technical (*St*) and financial (*Sf*) scores using the weights of 80% for the Technical Proposal; and 20% for the offered price. Each proposal's overall score shall therefore be:  $St \times 80\% + Sf \times 20\%$ .

**Technical evaluation**

For the evaluation of the technical proposals, the Contracting Authority shall take the following criteria into consideration, with the indicated weights:

Technical evaluation		Maximum Points
1	Candidate's relevant academic qualifications	5
2	Candidate's relevant experience in the field of assignment	15
3	Candidate's demonstrated experience and knowledge of design and execution of research methodologies, including in challenging contexts	15
4	Candidate's demonstrated experience and production of analytical writing	15
5	To what degree does the proposal show understanding of the task?	20
6	Is the strategy and indicative methodology proposed appropriate for the task?	20
7	Is the sequence of activities and the planning logical, realistic and promising efficient implementation to the Contract?	10
<b>Total Technical Score</b>		<b>100</b>

**Interviews**

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to call to interview the Candidates having submitted proposals determined to be substantially responsive.

**Financial evaluation**

Each proposal shall be given a financial score. The lowest Financial Proposal (Fm) will be given a financial score (Sf) of 100 points. The formula for determining the financial scores shall be the following:

$Sf = 100 \times Fm/F$ , in which  
Sf is the financial score  
Fm is the lowest price and  
F is the price of the proposal under evaluation

**Negotiations**

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to contact the Candidates having submitted proposals determined to be substantially and technically responsive, in order to propose a negotiation of the terms of such proposals. Negotiations will not entail any substantial deviation to the terms and conditions of the Request for Proposal, but shall have the purpose of obtaining from the Candidates better conditions in terms of technical quality, implementation periods, payment conditions, etc.

Negotiations may however have the purpose of reducing the scope of the services or revising other terms of the Contract in order to reduce the proposed remuneration when the proposed remunerations exceed the available budget.

**A.12. Award criteria**

The Contracting Authority will award the Contract to the Candidate whose proposal has been determined to be substantially responsive to the documents of the Request for Proposal and which has obtained the highest overall score.

**A.13. Signature and entry into force of the Contract**

Prior to the expiration of the period of the validity of the proposal, the Contracting Authority will inform the successful Candidate in writing that its proposal has been accepted and inform the unsuccessful Candidates in writing about the result of the evaluation process.

Within 5 days of receipt of the Contract, not yet signed by the Contracting Authority, the successful Candidate must sign and date the Contract and return it to the Contracting Authority. On signing the Contract, the successful Candidate will become the Contractor and the Contract will enter into force once signed by the Contracting Authority.

If the successful Candidate fails to sign and return the Contract within the days stipulated, the Contracting Authority may consider the acceptance of the proposal to be cancelled without prejudice to the Contracting Authority's right to claim compensation or pursue any other remedy in respect of such failure, and the successful Candidate will have no claim whatsoever on the Contracting Authority.

**A.14. Cancellation for convenience**

The Contracting Authority may for its own convenience and without charge or liability cancel the procedure at any stage.

**A.15. Data Protection and Privacy**

The Contracting Authority may collect and process personnel data such as names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, banking details and CVs. Such data will be used for the sole purpose of managing the procurement process and any subsequent Contract issued as a result of the procurement process, including transmission to bodies charged with monitoring and or inspecting procurement processes, in accordance with applicable EU, international and national law on data protection. Data may be stored for as long as a legitimate reason remains for its storage and up to a period of seven years.

Submission of any bid, proposal, quotation or offer and acceptance of any subsequent Purchase Order or Contract signifies the bidders consent to such data collection and its processing

The General Terms and Conditions provide reference to the specific rights, and regulations related to the data that is stored.

## ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

- **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)

NCA implements humanitarian, development, and peace-building programmes both directly and through local partners. NCA aims to deliver results through a holistic approach, including preparedness and resilience in long-term development programmes and protracted crises, strengthening transition to early recovery in humanitarian responses, and addressing structural inhibitors to solutions.

### HDP Nexus programming in “politically estranged” settings: experience from Afghanistan

The DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus “aims to enhance the impact of international engagement in fragile and conflict-affected settings.” However, a recent report has found that nearly half of people living in such situations are in countries where, in addition, relations between the authorities and major donor governments have been disrupted or suspended. As a result, some of the basic elements of the HDP Nexus, such as joint analysis and planning, as well as broader principles underpinning development cooperation, such as mutual accountability, are difficult to apply.

In such settings aid actors can still apply an HDP Nexus approach to programming, calibrating humanitarian, development and peace interventions based on a single analysis. However, effectively achieving a collective outcome, especially one that will show sustainable impact over time, is subject to additional challenges. When the fundamental macro-level conditions for development – including both internal governance and external support – are not in place, this also limits the scope for success in promoting sustainable local development, particularly when humanitarian needs are also present and levels of social cohesion are variable.

In Afghanistan, which is in a situation of severe fragility as well as subject to the constraints of political estrangement from the international community, the UN has identified the creation of value chains in rural areas, focused on agricultural food systems, as the key to driving “grassroots economic recovery”. However, there is relatively little research available on how to support value chains in fragile settings. A set of case studies has found that “value chain analysis must take into account the socially-embedded nature of economic life” while recommending that “the market should be the central driver in the development of sustainable value chains.”

While it therefore seems clear that there are some important prerequisites for successful value chain interventions and other livelihoods programming -- including a certain level of social cohesion, economic circularity, and coping ability at household level -- significant questions remain, including: how to identify “tipping points” for such fundamentals that reasonably predict success; what level of geographic precision is needed based on the context; how to shore up such fundamentals where they are inadequate; and how to work within significant macro-level constraints.

NCA in Afghanistan is taking an HDP Nexus approach to contribute to a collective outcome of “complementing short-term life-saving assistance with the safeguarding of livelihoods and the strengthening of community resilience.” NCA is designing its intervention with reference to the unique characteristics of each province and its diverging economic activity, geography and demographics. This work presents an opportunity to examine further some of the questions linked to calibrating value chain and other livelihoods interventions with social cohesion and humanitarian assistance efforts in a fragile, politically estranged context.

- **CONTRACT PURPOSE AND EXPECTED RESULTS**

**Overall objective:**

The overall objective of the project is to explore how levels of community social cohesion and household/individual level resilience correlate to successful outputs/outcomes of value chain and livelihoods interventions, and what lessons can be derived to inform future programming with an HDP Nexus approach.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this contract is to conduct primary and secondary research on the topic and produce a report that includes a comparative analysis and conclusions relevant to improved understanding of how to optimise an HDP Nexus approach to programming.

- **SCOPE OF THE SERVICES**

This is an external consultancy focusing on producing a report that details a comparative analysis of the conditions for success of HDP Nexus programming approaches across program locations in Afghanistan, with the aim of shedding light on how activities across the three pillars (humanitarian, development, peace) can be calibrated to achieve sustainable results.

The consultant(s) will report to NCA's Humanitarian Policy Advisor in Oslo and the work will be supervised by an NCA Research Team.

The report should provide answers to the following draft research questions (the questions below may be modified by agreement between the consultant and the Research Team for this project):

- To what extent do levels of social cohesion correlate to levels of household/individual coping ability and resilience across identified program areas? To what extent do these change during the program period?
- To what extent do levels of social cohesion and coping ability/resilience correlate to positive outcomes from economic empowerment activities, including livelihood and value chain interventions?
- Can "tipping points" be identified where a minimum level of fundamental social cohesion/coping ability/resilience are prerequisites for the economic empowerment activities examined?
- What is the level of alignment of local authorities with the national authorities in the areas examined, and how does this correlate with the other measures described above?
- In view of the limits on women's public participation, which approaches/activities examined can succeed in improving their economic situation?

To approach the questions above, methodology for this research is expected to mix quantitative and qualitative measurements and include analysis of primary data (from NCA programs and potentially related projects by other actors) as well as secondary data where relevant. The analysis required is essentially comparative, drawing conclusions where possible from differences in results from different locations, but should be contextualised within the national setting, as well as accounting for the specific situation of women.

Methodology for this research must account for the challenges in gathering data in Afghanistan and likely gaps, particularly the inclusion of women. The methodological approach should therefore include a certain level of "triangulation" that is respectful of local norms and practices. For example, where data from households is relevant (e.g. to measure cohesion and coping ability), surveys may be incomplete due to lack of women's participation. This should therefore be supplemented by KIIs, and potentially secondary data from other sources.

Methodology may include:

- A literature review of materials relevant to the research questions.

- Comparative analysis of primary program data, including baselines and final assessments, and additional secondary data where available, across identified geographic areas.
- Supplemental baseline and/or impact surveys to address identified gaps in data. Where needed, NCA will contract these separately with a local provider.
- Direct gathering of qualitative data, particularly KIIs/FGDs.
- A desk analysis of the national politico-economic situation in Afghanistan with respect to constraints affecting efforts aimed at improvement of value chains at a microeconomic level to provide report context.

The consultant shall commit to protect the rights and confidentiality of informants and abide by “do no harm” principles. Data and information collected during the assignment will be used for the purpose of the assignment only and handed over to NCA once the assignment is completed.

- **TIMING, LOGISTICS AND FACILITIES**

This consultancy will require travel to NCA areas of operation in Afghanistan. Such travel will be facilitated by NCA. Consultants must abide by NCA security rules, etc. when travelling.

Travel to Afghanistan for primary data collection must be concluded by end of November 2023.

The consultancy is expected to take place beginning October 2023 and ending May 2024. Direct qualitative data collection, e.g. KIIs/FGDs and other direct data gathering in country must conclude by end of November 2023. Initial data analysis and identification of gaps in data requiring follow-up data collection should conclude by mid-January to allow for further data collection either remotely or, if relevant, by third parties contracted locally by NCA.

NCA expects this consultancy to represent approximately 400 hours of work.

- **DELIVERABLES**

1. An **inception report** detailing the proposed methodology, work plan and approach. The inception report must include a more detailed description of the methods, measures, analyses, and research output planned. It is due fifteen days after the signing of the consultancy.
2. A **final report on HDP Nexus programming in politically estranged settings**, max 30 pages, excluding annexes, written in English, and providing the information detailed above in addition to:
  - An executive summary of 2 pages (template provided by NCA).
  - A section of specific conclusions related to the research questions.
  - A methodology section that includes identified data gaps and an explanation of how the analysis accounts for them.
  - The list of sources reviewed should be listed as an annex.
  - The list of key informants should also be included as an annex.

A draft report should be submitted to NCA for review and inputs at the latest 20 working days before the due date of the report. This report is due 30 weeks after the signing of the consultancy.

- **QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

- Advanced university degree in a relevant field (e.g., Development Studies, Economics, Social Sciences, organizational sciences).
- Experience from working in the field of humanitarian and/or development aid.
- Previous documented experience with research and written analysis projects, including research design.
- A strong grasp of and experience applying mixed methodological approaches. Experience doing so in challenging contexts highly desirable.
- Excellent analytical, communication and report-writing skills.
- Self-starter with an ability to work with minimal supervision.
- Excellent oral and written skills in English.



- A track record of research/writing on the topic of the HDP Nexus highly desirable.
- Previous experience in Afghanistan is desirable.
- Ability (including visa eligibility) and willingness to travel to Afghanistan while abiding by NCA security protocols and comfort guidelines.

## **ANNEX 2: ORGANISATION AND METHODOLOGY**

**To be filled in by the candidates, in compliance with the following instructions:**

### **Rationale**

- Any comments on the Terms of Reference of importance for the successful execution of activities, in particular its objectives and expected results, thus demonstrating the degree of understanding of the Contract.
- An opinion on the key issues related to the achievement of the Contract objectives and expected results.

### **Strategy**

- An outline of the approach and indicative methodology proposed for contract implementation.
- A list of the proposed activities considered to be necessary to achieve the contract objectives.
- In the case of a proposal being submitted by a team, a description of the input from each of the team members and the distribution and interaction of tasks and responsibilities between them.

### **Timetable of activities**

- The timing, sequence and duration of the proposed activities taking into account mobilisation time.
- The identification and timing of major milestones in execution of the Contract, particularly those stipulated in the Terms of Reference.

### ANNEX 3: PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FORM

My financial proposal for my services is as follows:

	Currency	Amount
Global price (fees and expenses)		
VAT or other tax on services		
<b>Total price incl. taxes</b>		

CANDIDATE OR COMPANY INFORMATION	
Company (legal name)	
Street name and no.	
City	
Postal code	
Country	
Phone no.	
Email	
Website	
Director (name)	

REFERENCES				
Name and country of customer	Type of contract	Value	Contact name	Phone/fax and email

WORK SAMPLES	
Include at least two samples of written work that demonstrate your research, analytical, and writing skills.	
Title of work	Link (or indicate "attached")

Include details of the experience and past performance on contracts of a similar nature within the past five years and information on other contracts in hand and/or future commitments including details of the actual and effective participation in each of such contracts, description of the Candidate's assignments and periods of engagement.

Additional documents can be attached to the above form.

The proposal is valid for a period of 30 days after the closing date in accordance with the article A.8. Validity.

After having read your Request for Proposal no. 2023-043 for a Research Consultancy dated 27/07/2023, and after having examined the Request for Proposal, I/we hereby offer to execute and complete the services in conformity with all conditions in the Request for Proposal for the sum indicated in our financial proposal.

Further, I/we hereby:

- Accept, without restrictions, all the provisions in the Request for Proposal including the General Terms and Conditions for Service Contracts
- Provided that a contract is issued by the Contracting Authority I/we hereby commit to perform all services described in the Terms of Reference, Annex 1
- Certify and attest compliance with eligibility criteria of article 33 of the General Terms and Conditions for Service.
- Certify and attest compliance with the Code of Conduct for Contractors in Annex 5.

The above declarations will become an integrated part of the Contract and misrepresentation will be regarded as grounds for termination.

Any subsequent Contract related to this Proposal will be subject to the Contracting Authorities General Terms and Conditions for Service Contracts and the Code of Conduct for Contractors available through the below link. Printed versions are available on request.

<https://www.kirkensnodhjelp.no/en/about-nca/for-contractors/>

Signature:

---

Signed by:

**The Candidate**

Name of the company

Address

Telephone no.

Email

Name of contact person