

25.9.2020

## **Terms of Reference**

### **Evaluation of the International Solidarity Foundation's Operating Model**

#### **1. Background to the evaluation**

The International Solidarity Foundation (ISF) is a Finnish development organization, founded in 1970. ISF has a vision of a world where no women suffer from violence and nobody lives in poverty. We implement the vision through our development cooperation programme by supporting ecologically and economically sustainable livelihoods and women's rights. The objectives of our 2018-2021 programme are:

- Local economies are dynamic and ecologically sustainable
- Women and men are empowered to prevent violence against women
- People and communities are empowered as instigators of global change

The 2018-2021 programme prevents violence against women and girls, specifically female genital mutilation (FGM). Our programme solves root causes of poverty: we empower local economies by building ecologically sustainable agriculture, small businesses and alternative livelihoods in Somaliland, Kenya and Nicaragua.

ISF's willingness to invest in fragile areas is emphasized in our programme: the largest portion of our budget is devoted for the development of new livelihoods and reducing violence against women in Somaliland. The annual budget for our



programme is about 3 million euros. It is funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Finland, United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women (UNTF) and private donors in Finland.

ISF **operating model** includes partner-led development projects and direct implementation, of which partner-led projects constitute the vast majority. Our partners are diverse actors, including private sector cooperatives (or similar conglomerations), large and small community-based local NGOs, and networks/umbrella organizations. A list of current projects is attached.

Local partners are responsible for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the projects. The projects support partners in the implementation of their own strategies. As such, partners are not only implementers of the projects, but owners of the related development processes together with the final beneficiaries. In some projects, especially when the partner is a cooperative, strengthening the partner's capacity is one of the main objectives of the project. Partners are strengthened for example by supporting skills development, strategic planning, organizational development and networking.

ISF works closely with partners in planning, implementation and monitoring of projects. We work closely with partners and other actors to find solutions to local problems and are therefore not only funding and administering projects. Strengthening partners' capacity to learn and innovate is at the center of our work. Furthermore, we support partners to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in their work.

Direct implementation includes advocacy, global education, volunteer work and communications in Finland. In programme countries, direct implementation includes limited advocacy work and one project managed directly by ISF (Mungaano Gender Forum in Kisii, Kenya).

ISF is now seeking for a consultancy to evaluate ISF's operating model and obtain recommendations for the development of its new 2022-2025 programme. The evaluation complements the previous impact evaluation from 2017 and project-level evaluations during the current programme period.



## 2. Rationale, purpose and objectives of the evaluation

Purpose of the evaluation is to assess ISF's operating model and obtain recommendations for how to improve it. The evaluation will feed into the planning of the next programme period (2022-2025) of ISF.

The objectives of the evaluation are:

- To obtain (critical) feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of ISF operating model (i.e. what works and what does not)
- To give concrete recommendations for improvement of ISF operating model

The findings are primarily intended for the use of ISF management and staff. They will, however, also be shared with key stakeholders (MFA, partners).

## 3. Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation covers the current programme period 2018-2021 and all programme countries Kenya, Somaliland and Nicaragua (Nicaragua is covered lightly with only a few selected interviews in Finnish and/or English). See section 5 for an indicative list of interviewees.

The evaluation focuses on ISF operating model and hence does not seek to assess and verify achieved results or collect results data. The evaluation excludes ISF work in Finland.



#### 4. Issues to be addressed and evaluation questions

The evaluation is asked to address, but not necessarily to limit to the following evaluation questions:

##### RELEVANCE

- 1) How relevant is ISF's **operating model** to achieve its programme objectives?
  - What are the strengths and weaknesses of ISF's project implementation modalities:
    - i. Direct implementation (1 project in Kenya)
    - ii. Partnerships with private sector (4 projects in Nicaragua and Kenya)
    - iii. Partnership with "large" NGOs (5 projects in Somaliland)
    - iv. Partnerships with small grassroots organizations (2 projects in Kenya)
    - v. Partnerships with networks/umbrella organizations (1 project in Somaliland).
  - What other types of implementation modalities and partnerships (e.g. multi-stakeholder consortiums, partnerships with women's organizations or partnerships directly with religious/political leaders, schools, research institutions etc.) could better serve the programme?
- 2) How relevant are ISF's and its partners networks and public relations at the regional/national/local level for advancing ISF programme objectives?



- With which actors/networks should ISF seek to strengthen cooperation?

### EFFICIENCY

3) How efficient is ISF in managing the programme?

- Are ISF's staff/management structures (incl. division of responsibilities) organized in the most efficient way (HQ, regional office, country offices)?
- What kind of expertise does ISF have or does not have to effectively manage the programme (HQ, field) and where is it most needed?
- How well does ISF programme management procedures and practices (incl. project planning and monitoring tools) support programme objectives?

4) How does ISF operating model and management practices enhance learning and innovation?

- Do the current practices promote self-criticism, learning and encourage to try new actions in ISF and among partners?
- How can learning and innovation be better promoted in ISF and among partners (incl. between programme countries)?

### SUSTAINABILITY

5) How sustainable is ISF operating model to maintain the benefits produced by the programme?



- Has ISF built the capacities of its partners and other target groups (community groups and businesses supported by the partners in Somaliland) in a sustainable way?
- How well does the ISF partnership model take into account when partnerships should end or transform from project partnership to another type of relationships?

### COHERENCE

6) What is the added value of ISF's operating model?

- What is ISF role in project implementation and how well does it adapt its role depending on the context and particular needs of each project?
- What is ISF's added value in project implementation and how does it complement partners' work?
- How does ISF's work complement other actors' work, especially those civil society actors who work with the same themes in the programme countries?

## **5. Methodology**

The evaluation team is expected to use its professional skills and experience in defining the most relevant approach and methodology for the evaluation. However, the proposed methodology for the evaluation is recommended to include:



- Desk review and analysis of documents (*ISF programme document, ISF Theory of Change, ISF annual reports, project documents, previous programme and project evaluations*)
- Interviews, discussions and meetings with key informants and relevant stakeholders, including ISF staff at HQs and in the field, ISF local partners (one in Nicaragua, four in Kenya, five in Somaliland), local authorities (line ministries) in Kenya and Somaliland, selected beneficiaries in Kenya and Somaliland (e.g. representatives of cooperatives and other community groups supported by the programme) and other stakeholders, such as MFA in Helsinki, Finnish embassy in Nairobi, Mungaano Gender Forum steering committee members in Kenya, selected international actors in Somaliland (Norwegian Development Fund, Kindernothilfe, Action Aid, UN Women).
- field trip to Kenya and Somaliland (if Covid-19 allows)

## 6. The evaluation process and time schedule

The International Solidarity Foundation will select the evaluators based on their proposals of interest. The proposal should include evaluation methodology, work plan, budget, CVs of the evaluators (max. 3 pages each) and at least one example of an evaluation work on similar development cooperation programme undertaken in the past 5 years.

**The proposal should be submitted by 21 October 2020 by e-mail to [robert.salin@solidaarisuus.fi](mailto:robert.salin@solidaarisuus.fi), with the title “Programme Evaluation of the International Solidarity Foundation“.**

Time schedule for the evaluation:

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Date</b>
Contracting of evaluators	<i>October 2020</i>
Kick-of meeting	<i>Early November 2020</i>
Inception report	<i>27 November 2020</i>
Inception report meeting	
Field Trip (Kenya and Somaliland)	<i>December 2020 / January 2021</i> <i>- If COVID-19 allows</i>
Draft Report	<i>1 February 2021</i>
Presentation of the report	<i>Week 6, 2021</i>
Final Report	<i>15 February 2021</i>

Note: The schedule may have to be modified due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. The engagement may also have to be done remotely without the field visit. The deadline for the final report cannot be extended beyond end-February.

## 7. Reporting

The evaluators are asked to deliver the following reports in English language and submit them in electronic format to Robert Salin, [robert.salin@solidaarisuus.fi](mailto:robert.salin@solidaarisuus.fi):





1. Inception report: On the basis of the desk study, the evaluators shall present an inception report. The inception report should consist of the initial findings of the desk study, an evaluation matrix with the focused evaluation questions, a detailed and updated work plan and elaboration of methodology
2. Draft final report for comments
3. Final report: A maximum of 30 pages long report (excluding summary of max. 3 pages long and annexes)

## 8. Expertise required

The evaluation will be conducted preferably by an evaluation team. If needed, ISF can provide contact details for potential local evaluators in Kenya and/or Somaliland to complement the evaluation team. Required expertise and qualifications are:

- A good understanding on global civil society, especially the civil society context in the South and in Somaliland and Kenya
- A good understanding of women's economic empowerment and gender-based violence, preferably FGM
- Solid experience in conducting evaluations in the development cooperation field and preferably programme evaluations of civil society organisations
- Excellent writing skills in English and command of the Finnish language. Knowledge of Somali and Spanish are assets.
- A good understanding of the programme support modality of the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs is an asset.



## **9. Budget**

The maximum budget for evaluation is 22 000 euros excluding taxes and costs for field trip(s). Costs for the field trip will be covered separately by the contractor.

## **10. Mandate**

The evaluation team is entitled and expected to discuss matters relevant to this evaluation with pertinent persons and organizations. However, it is not authorized to make any commitments on behalf of the International Solidarity Foundation.

ISF PROJECTS IN 2019							
Country	Area	Project name	ISF partner	Project period	Beneficiaries		Expenditure (EUR)
					Direct	Indirect	
Kenya	Kisii county	Preventing violence against women and girls	CECOME	2018 - 2021	1,843	9,186	130,622
Kenya	Nyamira county	Preventing female genital mutilation	Manga Heart	2018 - 2021	3,989	25,636	91,293
Kenya	Nyamira county	Context assessments and planning of livelihood work, selection of two new partners	NNWS and Bosinya CBO	2020 - 2021	-	-	65,246
Kenya	Kisii and Nyamira county	Muongano Gender Forum	none (ISF-led)	2018 - 2021	248	4,990	47,780
Nicaragua	North Nicaragua	Enhancing farmers' climate resilience in Madriz and Estelí Districts	COMCAVEM	2018 - 2020	296	1,940	88,712
Nicaragua	North Nicaragua	Personal and commercial empowerment of women and men handicraft entrepreneurs	COMCAVEM	2018 - 2021	115	300	208,577
Somaliland	Togdheer region	Enhancing agro-pastoral communities' livelihood resilience	ADO	2018 - 2021	400	2,720	156,256
Somaliland	Sheikh District	Supporting sisal value chain development and women's entrepreneurship	Candlelight	2018 - 2021	280	1,680	161,953
Somaliland	Sahil and Awdal region	Empowering communities to resist female genital cutting	Candlelight	2018 - 2022			95,520
Somaliland	All 6 regions of Somaliland	Enhancing the coordination and advocacy to eradicate female genital mutilation	NAFIS	2018 - 2022	475	2,510	62,589
Somaliland	Togdheer region	Preventing sexual and gender-based violence and supporting women's economic role	SOYDAVO	2018 - 2021	800	4,800	148,262
Somaliland	Togdheer region	Formulation of ISF Health and Business Manual	ISF project, all partners participate	2018 - 2020	16	-	27,746