Terms of Reference

# Learning Partner for 5-year Civil Society programme

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| **Consultancy title:**  | **Learning Partner for 5-year Civil Society programme**  |
| **Reporting to:**  | Beate Thoresen  |
| **NPA offices:**  | **Head Office: Oslo, Norway** **Country and Regional Offices:** * Programming in 17 countries across Latin America, Africa, Southeast Asia, MENA, and Ukraine
 |
| **Provisional timeframe:**  |  220 working days from June 2025 – December 2029 |
| **Tentative start date:**  |  1 June 2025  |

# Background

The Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA) is a non-governmental organisation with roots in the labour movement. NPA supports processes towards democracy and equitable distribution of power and resources through mobilisation, popular participation and collective organisation. We have extensive experience in supporting democracy and the equitable distribution of power and resources in cooperation with civil society organisations. Increasing inequality, the struggle over natural resources and increased levels of conflict throughout the world are also increasing the need to ensure democratic participation and an organised civil society that can represent all groups in society, especially those who are oppressed, marginalised or subject to discrimination. Strong civil societies are often a prerequisite for effective peace efforts and conflict resolution. We will therefore increase and further develop our civil society programmes in the coming years to strengthen people’s ability to organise themselves to enhance the struggle for fundamental rights and equitable distribution of resources.

NPA is embarking on a Strategic 5-year partnership with Norad, beginning in 2025 and building on previous programming. The programming as part of this partnership takes place in 18 countries across Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Europe. In the next iteration of this partnership, NPA is putting a greater emphasis on learning, research and evaluation, and developing a more rigorous evidence base from our work. We are seeking a partnership with a research institute, academic, institute, research and evaluation firm, etc. to provide the technical capacity to support us with the development and implementation of a research and learning agenda for the 5-year period.

# Purpose of the Learning Partnership

NPA has developed a new global Theory of Change (ToC) for our civil society portfolio (annexed below) that guides the design of all country programming within the Norad strategic partnership. We have also developed a set of global indicators to measure key results in the global ToC.

Using this conceptual global framework as a foundation for learning and measuring results, we are seeking a research partner to support us with the development of a learning agenda. The learning agenda should be developed in a participatory way with country offices. The research partner will facilitate the identification of strategic results and result pathways from the ToC to prioritize for learning in order to develop research questions that will be explored for the duration of the programming. The research partner will support the identification of strategic programming moments for data collection and analysis, and the production of learning products for internal and external audiences.

#### Key outputs:

1. A written learning agenda with research questions and learning plan; including a global learning agenda development workshop
2. Identifying key indicators within the global indicator set to support with tools and methods, as well as gaps in the results framework and developing global indicators as needed
3. Identifying and providing support and guidance to NPA country offices to use a variety of methods to collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data, based on prioritized indicators and result areas
4. Leading key, strategic data collection and analysis exercises (evaluations, after action reviews, case studies, etc) for the identified learning products
5. Leading at least 2 global learning workshops at the mid and end-point of the 5-year programme to collectively analyse global produced evidence, ensure cross-country knowledge transfer, identify trends and highlight key findings; producing to learning reports

#### Key Stakeholders

1. NPA colleagues and partners in country programmes. Partners and colleagues who are designing and leading programmes have the greatest need to learn about what works and doesn’t to achieve political and social change, as well as the ability to link their activities to higher-level change.
2. NPA colleagues in Head Office (HO). Head Office colleagues play an important role in facilitating cross-organisational learning, ensuring that learning is incorporated into new programme design, and communicating organisational learning and impact to important external stakeholders and audiences.
3. Donors and the broader development sector. There is a growing demand from donors to produce more rigorous evidence of what change is happening and why, and to link donor funding to positive results. In addition, development actors in and outside of Norway are working to better share knowledge and improve the standards, quality and approaches we use in our work.

#### Key Learning Themes

The overall goal of the five-year programme is to contribute to societies with reduced social, political and economic inequality. Our theory of change posits that to achieve this change we need to cooperate with our local partners to strengthen their organisations, community organising and awareness building, influence the public discourse, engage in advocacy with key decision-makers, strengthen local activism, and engage in strategic legal protection and peace-building activities.

We have articulated 6 impact level results:

1. Organised civil society is resilient and mobilizes for change
2. Marginalized groups experience less discrimination
3. Policies and practices that protect, enable or improve equal access to rights and resources are passed and implemented
4. Policies and practices restrictive to civil society organizing are prevented or reversed
5. Local communities and marginalized groups claim and access their rights
6. Local communities and marginalized groups have greater access to and control over land and natural resources

# Research Partnership implementation

##### Timeframe

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| **Year** | **Projected activities** | **Key Deliverables** | **Projected working days** |
| 2025 | Proposal submitted and partner selected |  |  |
| 2025 | Inception report submittedKick-off workshop held in Q3/Q45 year learning agenda submitted by end of year | Inception reportLearning agenda with learning questions, 5-year workplan, and anticipated learning products | 30 |
| 2026 | Development of methodology guidance for country learning activitiesSupport to selected countries to develop learning products (2-5) | Guidance/toolkit produced (1-3)Learning products (2-5) | 40 |
| 2027 | Support to selected countries to develop learning products (2-5)Support to mid-term evaluations, country and global level | Learning products (2-5)Global learning reportMid-term evaluation reports (TBD) | 50 |
| 2028 | Support to selected countries to develop learning products (2-5) | Learning products (2-5) | 40 |
| 2029 | Support to final evaluationsFacilitation of final learning workshop | Final evaluation reports (TBD)Final global learning report | 50 |

Total estimated working days from 2025-2029: 220

# Qualities of the research partner

The research partner should have expertise in diverse, innovative and participatory, quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods which are suitable for development programming. The research partner should have extensive experience conducting research and evaluations of development programmes in diverse global contexts and specific experience with civil society, social movements, and policy and advocacy, is preferred. The research partner should have substantive knowledge of some of the countries and regions NPA works in.

The research partner must have strong facilitation skills with extensive experience designing and leading planning, reflection and learning workshops. They should be skilled in leading complex, global learning processes while excelling in supporting prioritization, and should have experience working with diverse stakeholders.

The evaluator should demonstrate ethical consideration including respectful attitude towards NPA partners and their constituency, as well as other stakeholders.

Individual members of the research team should have:

* Advanced degrees in Social Sciences, International Relations, Economics or other areas of relevance
* 10+ years of professional experience in a research institute, conducting and contributing to research related to international development and humanitarian action or other related thematic areas (5+ years for junior members of research team)
* Demonstrated expertise in quantitative and qualitative methods
* Experience working in countries/regions that NPA programming takes place is desired
* Fluency in English with excellent writing and presentation skills
* Fluency in additional relevant languages (Spanish, Arabic) an advantage

# Application requirements

1. The technical application should include:
	* Brief explanation about the lead and associate consultants with particular emphasis on previous experience in similar assignments.
	* Understanding of the terms of reference for this assignment in line with the overall and specific objectives.
	* Illustrative methodology and 5-year workplan
2. Financial proposal: This should be presented in NOK and should include the consultancy fees only. The number of consultants/researchers to be engaged in the assignment and their costs.
3. Examples of previous work conducted that relate to this assignment
4. Organizational capacity statement
5. Resume of the lead consultants/researchers

# Evaluation criteria

The applications will be evaluated against the following criteria:

1. Proposed methodology; the inclusion of both qualitative and quantitative methods and the level of participation incorporated
2. Extent of experience conducting research and evaluations in similar thematic and geographic areas
3. Extent of technical capacity and experience with diverse methods and approaches of collecting, analyzing, presenting and reporting quantitative and qualitative data
4. Capacity to facilitate planning and learning, and capacity to communicate to different audiences
5. Creativity and innovation in proposed approaches
6. Cost efficiency

# How to apply

Interested applicants should submit applications by email to **tenders@npaid.org** with the subject “Civil Society Research Partner” on or before **30th May 2025 at 4.00 PM CET time.** Any applications submitted after this date and time will not be considered.

# Annexes

Annex 1: **NORWEGIAN PEOPLE'S AID ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR PROCUREMENT, INVESTMENT AND FUNDRAISING**

Approved by the Board of Norwegian People’s Aid on 31st May 2013; revised on 20th September 2014, 10th June 2016, 24th September 2021 and 24th March 2023.

I - Introduction

These ethical standards are approved by the Board of Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and apply to our own employees, suppliers, investment managers, business partners and donors.

The standards are based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ILO Conventions, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, as well as the Transparency Act and other conventions on fundamental human rights and decent working conditions.

NPA considers responsible procurement practice to be one of our most important tools in working for sustainable business practices. NPA therefore adapts its own

procurement practices to strengthen, and not undermine, suppliers' ability to deliver on the requirements we set to ensure good conditions for people, society and the environment. Long-term supplier relationships, with suppliers that demonstrate a particular willingness and ability to work for positive developments in the supply chain, shall be facilitated.

Any cooperation between NPA and an external partner must comply with our overarching principles and statutes, and not undermine, or be detrimental to, NPA's core values, goals or projects. Expectations of compliance with the ethical standards shall be referred to in all contracts with external partners.

In the event of a breach of the ethical standards, NPA reserves the right to publicly criticise partners. Furthermore, NPA cannot be held responsible for, or used to legitimise, decisions made by partners on a commercial or political basis.

NPA will at all times take into consideration the exclusion lists of fund managers who are leaders in ethics and sustainability, as well as the company databases of organizations and institutions that monitor business, human rights and international law. NPA shall give priority to companies that are not included in these lists and company databases in their procurement, investment or fundraising activity. The same applies to companies that are subject to global campaigns, in which NPA participates, or companies that NPA, independently or as a result of assessments made by our partner organizations, believes to be contributing to violations of human rights or international law.

NPA shall give priority to companies that have collective agreements, and shall not use companies that do not respect the right of workers to organize and negotiate.

Supplier means the contractual partner responsible for the product, process or service provided to NPA.

Subcontractor means the business unit in the supply chain that directly or indirectly supplies the supplier with goods or services.

II - Principles

NPA's suppliers and business partners shall deliver goods and services that are produced in accordance with our ethical standards. Enterprises shall carry out due diligence in accordance with the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. This includes the following:

A) Embedding accountability in company policies;

B) Mapping and assessing actual and potential negative impacts on fundamental human rights and decent working conditions that the business has either caused or contributed to, or that are directly linked to the enterprise's business activities, products or services through supply chains or business partners;

C) Implementing appropriate measures to cease, prevent or limit negative impacts, based on the enterprise's priorities and assessments pursuant to subparagraph (b);

D) Monitoring the implementation and results of measures pursuant to subparagraph (c);

E) Communicating with affected stakeholders and rights holders about how negative impacts have been dealt with pursuant to subparagraphs (c) and (d);

F) Providing or facilitating remedy where required.

Due diligence shall be carried out regularly and in proportion to the size of the enterprise, the nature of the enterprise, the context in which the activity takes place, and the severity and likelihood of negative impacts on fundamental human rights, decent working conditions and the environment.

Boycott of individual countries

NPA will follow up all international sanctions that are part of Norwegian law or that are expected from our donors. NPA will also avoid procuring goods and services from countries where there is broad international agreement to boycott trade because of the country's human rights situation.

Corruption and bribes NPA does not accept the use of bribery in any form to provide unfair benefits to customers, agents, contractors, suppliers, employees or government officials. Reference is made to NPA's guidelines for anti-corruption and whistleblowing routines available on our website www.npaid.org.

III - Ethical Standards

WORKPLACE CONDITIONS

1. Forced labour/slave labour (ILO Conventions 29 and 105)

1.1 There shall be no form of forced labour, slave labour or involuntary

work.

1.1.1 Workers shall not be required to submit deposits, identity papers or passports to the employer and shall be free to terminate the employment relationship with a reasonable notice period.

2. Trade unionism and collective bargaining (ILO Conventions Nos. 87, 98 and 135 and 154)

2.1 Without exception, workers shall have the right to join or establish

unions of their choice, and to bargain collectively. The employer shall not interfere with, obstruct or oppose the establishing of local trade unions or collective bargaining.

2.2 The employer shall not discriminate against trade union representatives, or prevent them from carrying out their union work.

2.3 If the right to free organisation and/or collective bargaining is limited by law, the employer shall facilitate and not impede alternative mechanisms for free and independent organization and negotiation.

3. Child labour (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ILO Conventions Nos. 138, 182 and 79, ILO Recommendation No. 146)

3.1. The minimum age of workers shall not be less than 15 years and in line with

(i) the national minimum age for employment, or

(ii) the minimum age for compulsory schooling, with the highest age as applicable. If the local minimum age is set at 14 years in accordance with the exception in ILO Convention 138, this may be accepted.

3.2 New recruitment of child labourers in contravention of the aforementioned minimum age shall not take place.

3.3. Children under the age of 18 shall not perform work that is detrimental to their health, safety or morals, including night work.

3.4. Action plans shall be established for the speedy phasing out of child labour that is in contravention of ILO Conventions 138 and 182. The action plans shall be documented and communicated to relevant staff and other stakeholders. Support schemes shall be facilitated where children are given the opportunity to study until the child is no longer of school age.

4. Discrimination (ILO Conventions Nos. 100 and 111 and UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women)

4.1 There shall be no discrimination in terms of employment, remuneration,

training, promotion, dismissal or retirement based on ethnicity, caste, religion, age, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, trade unionism or political affiliation.

4.2.1 Protection shall be established against sexually intrusive, threatening, abusive or exploitative behaviour, as well as against discrimination or dismissal on unfair grounds, e.g. marriage, pregnancy, parenthood or HIV status.

5. Brutal treatment

5.1 Physical abuse or punishment, or threat of physical abuse, shall be prohibited. The same applies to sexual or other abuse and other forms of humiliation.

6. Health, safety and environment (ILO Convention No. 155 and Recommendation No. 164)

6.1 Efforts shall be made to ensure workers a safe and healthy working environment.

Dangerous chemicals and other substances shall be handled properly. Necessary measures shall be taken to prevent and minimise accidents and damage to health as a result of, or related to, conditions in the workplace.

6.2 Workers shall receive regular and documented training in health and safety

measures. Health and safety training must be repeated for new employees and relocated workers.

6.3 Workers shall have access to clean sanitation facilities and clean drinking water. If relevant, the employer shall also provide access to facilities for the safe storage of food.

6.4 If the employer provides lodging, this shall be clean, safe and adequately

Ventilated, and with access to clean sanitary facilities and clean drinking water.

7. Wages (ILO Convention No. 131)

7.1 Wages of workers for a normal working week shall at least be in line with

national minimum wage regulations or industry standards, whichever is the highest. Wages shall always be sufficient to cover basic needs, including some savings.

7.2 Salary conditions and payment of wages shall be agreed in writing before work

commences. The agreement should be understandable to the worker.

7.3 Deductions from wages as a disciplinary action shall not be allowed.

8. Working hours (ILO Conventions 1 and 14) 8.1 Working hours shall be in accordance with national laws or industry standards, and not exceed working hours in accordance with applicable international conventions. Normal working hours per week shall usually not exceed 48 hours.

8.2 Workers shall have at least one day off in every 7 days.

8.3 Overtime shall be limited and voluntary. The recommended maximum overtime is 12 hours per week, i.e. total working hours of 60 hours per week. Exceptions to this may be accepted if regulated by a collective agreement or national law.

8.4 Workers shall always receive overtime pay for working hours over and above normal working hours (see section 8.1 above), minimum in accordance with applicable laws.

9. Regular appointments

9.1 Obligations to workers, in line with international conventions,

national laws and regulations relating to regular employment shall not be circumvented through the use of short-term contracts (such as the use of contract workers, casual workers and day labourers), sub-contractors or other labour relations.

9.2 All workers are entitled to an employment contract in a language they understand.

9.3 Any apprenticeship programme shall be clearly defined in terms of duration and content.

CONDITIONS OUTSIDE THE WORKPLACE

10. Marginalised populations

10.1 Production and use of natural resources shall not contribute to the destruction of resources and income base for marginalised population groups, for example, by seizing large areas of land, irresponsible use of water or other natural resources on which the population groups depend.

10.2 Every business partner, subcontractor or its subsidiaries shall, in their own production, activity, investment or commercial projects, respect the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) which states that an indigenous community has the right to give or withhold its consent to proposed projects that may affect the land it normally holds, occupies or otherwise uses.

11. Environment

11.1 Measures to reduce negative impacts on health and the environment throughout the value chain. In line with the precautionary principle, measures shall be implemented to continuously minimise greenhouse gas emissions and local pollution; the use of harmful chemicals; pesticides; and to ensure sustainable resource extraction and management of water, oceans, forests and land and the conservation of biodiversity.

11.2 National and international environmental legislation and regulations shall be complied with and relevant emission permits obtained.

12. Supplier routines and follow-up

Management systems are central to the implementation of ethical standards. NPA emphasizes the importance of suppliers having systems that support their implementation. Our expectations are made clear by the following:

· Suppliers should designate a responsible person, central to the organisation, for the implementation of the ethical guidelines in their own operations;

· The supplier shall make the guidelines known in all relevant parts of its organisation;

· The supplier shall obtain consent from NPA before all or part of a production process is outsourced to a subcontractor/contractor where this has not been agreed in advance;

· The supplier must be able to explain where goods ordered by NPA are produced.

13. Respect for human rights and international humanitarian law

In line with these principles, NPA expects all suppliers to respect internationally recognised human rights. The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights specifically state: "Moreover, in situations of armed conflict, businesses should respect standards of international humanitarian law." NPA expects our suppliers to respect the standards of international humanitarian law in situations where these apply.

14. Corruption

Any form of bribery is unacceptable, such as the use of alternative channels to ensure illegitimate private or work-related benefits to customers, agents, contractors, suppliers or their employees, as well as any government officials.

15. Animal welfare

15.1. Animal welfare shall be respected. Measures should be taken to minimise negative impacts on the welfare of farmed and working animals.

15.2. National and international animal welfare legislation and regulations shall be complied with.

IV – Audits and Monitoring In order to assess suppliers' compliance with these standards, NPA will make use of audits, either conducted by its own employees or by approved third parties. We reserve the right to monitor compliance with the standards by means of systematic, unannounced or announced inspections, conducted by NPA personnel or independent auditors. Any known censurable conditions can be reported via the website of NPA.

V - Corrective Action and Non-Compliance NPA is committed to adhering to the highest standards of ethical behavior. Failure to comply may result in termination of business relationships. NPA recognizes that its own business practices may also have potential negative impacts on people, society and the environment, and undertakes at the same time to implement its own corrective actions and remedy damage caused by its own activities.

Annex 2: Global Civil Society ToC