

Independent Evaluation – Walking the Talk Project

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This Terms of Reference outlines the requirements of the end-of-project evaluation for the **Walking the Talk** project, to be conducted during January to March 2025.

Expressions of Interest - Deadline 17 January 2025

Please submit expressions of interest to sdoyle@actforpeace.org.au and include:

- A proposal including methodology
- Timeframe for undertaking the assignment (must be completed by April 2025)
- A quote/costing for completion of the work
- CVs for any consultants who will be involved in delivering the assignment

Contracting for the successful EOI will be completed by 31 Jan 2025.

Background

The "Walking the Talk: Shifting Power, Innovation, and Enhanced Agility to Displacement" project is an initiative focused on supporting people affected by displacement through innovative and evidence-based programmatic modalities. The primary objective of the project is to strengthen partner capacities, enhance agility and resilience in response to crises, and increase the financial sustainability of partners to resource locally-led initiatives addressing displacement challenges.

The project also aimed to test approaches to meaningful participation and leadership among displaced populations. The target groups included a diverse range of AfP partners, refugee-led initiatives, and networks working on displacement issues, such as APNOR and APRRN. The participation of partners was determined based on their interest in the activities outlined in the project plan.

The project's focus was on enhancing the agency of partners, improving their responsiveness to displacement-related needs, and integrating a rights-based approach to programming. By focusing on the flexibility, resilience, and sustainability of partners, the project aimed to make long-term, sustainable improvements in how displacement issues are addressed in the target regions.

It includes a focus on mutual learning between Act for Peace (AfP), local partners, and other stakeholders, ensuring that affected populations have a meaningful role in both the approach and outcomes. These initiatives aim to enhance local responses to displacement and improve the overall protection and assistance provided to displaced populations.

The project drew upon AfP's long-term engagement with partners in displacement contexts, policy dialogues, research, and advocacy. It aims to reduce displacement risks, strengthen assistance and protection, and work toward durable solutions by empowering local actors and communities. In doing so, the project addresses power imbalances by promoting locally led research, policy development, advocacy, and programming, with a strong emphasis on the meaningful participation of displaced persons.

The project's expected outcomes include enhanced learning and capacity-building, the development of tools and training resources, joint learning platforms, and knowledge dissemination in regional and

international forums. Learnings from this project will be shared through ACT Alliance, displacement networks, and other multi-stakeholder global and regional forums.

Act for Peace acknowledges the support of the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program for the Walking the Talk project.

Purpose of the Evaluation

Act for Peace is undertaking an end of project evaluation of the Walking the Talk project in its third year. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the progress, effectiveness, and impact of the project to date.

The evaluation should provide actionable insights into the project's achievements, challenges, and areas for improvement. The evaluation will also inform future strategic directions, enhance accountability to stakeholders, and identify lessons learned that can be used for scaling up or refining similar initiatives in the future.

The evaluation will be primarily used by Act for Peace, and shared externally with key stakeholders including partner organisations, networks and DFAT ANCP.

Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation will cover the first phase of the "Walking the Talk" project from 2022 to 2025:

- **35% of the evaluation focus will be on the overall design** and strategic contribution to AfP strategic priorities.
- **55% will focus on the participating partner level**, assessing their capacity building, participation, and how they have applied the project's lessons and approaches in their work.
- **10% will focus on the community level** for those partners who have implemented community-based activities, with an emphasis on the direct outcomes for displaced populations.

The evaluation will assess the project's performance in the following key areas:

- Strengthening programmatic modalities through innovation.
- Increasing partner agility and resilience in times of crisis.
- Enhancing partners' financial sustainability.
- Increasing meaningful participation and leadership from affected populations.

Objectives of the Evaluation

The evaluation will:

1. **Assess the effectiveness** of the project in achieving its stated objectives and outcomes.
2. **Evaluate the impact** at the partner level, particularly in terms of increased knowledge, capacity, and resilience, and at the community level for partners directly involved in community-based activities.
3. **Examine the sustainability** of the project outcomes, including the long-term viability of the initiatives and whether they will continue to benefit partners and communities after the project's conclusion.
4. **Assess the relevance** of the project's approach, including its alignment with the needs of the target groups and its consistency with ANCP outcomes and AfP's strategic priorities.
5. **Identify improvements** in inclusion, innovation, and the agility of partners during crises.
6. **Provide recommendations** for strengthening the project design and implementation in future

phases.

The evaluator is expected to develop practical recommendations and facilitate discussion for their validation. Act for Peace is responsible for the utilisation of the evaluation results and follow up, including communicating key findings to partners and stakeholders.

Suggested key evaluation criteria and evaluation questions are as follows:

Relevance: The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to project participants' global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.

- Does the project meet the needs of the partners and affected populations?
- How well does the project align with AfP's strategy and the broader global and regional displacement frameworks?
- Would stakeholders (partners, displaced communities) recommend changes or modifications to the project approach?

Effectiveness: The extent to which the intervention achieved its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.

- To what extent has the project achieved its intended outcomes? Did the project achieve the programmatic and capacity-building goals as described in the project's design?
 - To what extent has the project improved inclusion in both policy and practice, especially in terms of the leadership and participation of displaced people?
 - To what extent has the project contributed to community resilience, as related to specific project modalities?
 - To what extent have partners demonstrated increased agility and resilience in responding to crises (e.g., rapid response capacity, adaptability to changing contexts)?
 - How has AfP's support enabled partners to access additional donors and sources of funding?
 - To what extent have displaced people had meaningful participation and leadership in initiatives aimed at addressing displacement?
 - How effective were methods toward mutual learning?
- What were the barriers and enablers to effective and efficient project design and management?

Impact: The extent to which the intervention has generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.¹

- What are the impacts at the partner level (increased capacity, resilience, ability to respond to displacement, etc.)?
- At the community level, what changes have occurred for those directly impacted by the project's activities (i.e. refugees, IDPs, host populations, etc.)?
- To what extent has the project contributed to improvements in specific project modalities?

¹ Note: **Impact** addresses the ultimate significance and potentially transformative effects of the intervention. It seeks to identify social, environmental and economic effects of the intervention that are longer term or broader in scope than those already captured under the effectiveness criterion. Beyond the immediate results, this criterion seeks to capture the indirect, secondary and potential consequences of the intervention. It does so by examining the holistic and enduring changes in systems or norms, and potential effects on people's wellbeing, human rights, gender equality, and the environment.

Sustainability: The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention are likely to continue.

- How sustainable are the initiatives supported by the project in terms of both financial sustainability and programmatic outcomes?
- To what extent have partners built the capacity to continue their work independently after the project concludes?

Learning: Knowledge and Programmatic Capacity

- In what ways has the project supported increased knowledge and programmatic capacity among AfP, partners and displaced communities?
- To what extent has AfP and partners used evidence-based learning and innovation to develop and implement solutions to climate displacement?
- To what extent has AfP been able to shift power to partners through the project approach?

Approach and Methodology of the Evaluation

The evaluation will employ a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. The evaluation team may utilise the following methods:

- **Document Review:** Review of project documents, reports, and monitoring data to understand the project’s design, implementation, and progress.
- **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including:
 - AfP program staff and management.
 - Partner organisations (including participants, host communities, and local leaders in selected sites).
 - Relevant networks and external stakeholders.
- **Surveys and Questionnaires:** Distributed to partners and participating communities to gather quantitative data on experiences and perceptions of the project’s effectiveness, relevance, and impact.
- **Focus Groups:** Conduct focus groups with affected populations (refugees, IDPs) to explore their level of participation and leadership in the project’s activities.
- **Case Studies:** Detailed case studies of selected partners, focusing on how they have applied the learning and innovation from the project to their own work.
- **Site Visits:** If feasible, site visits to project locations will be conducted to observe activities in action and interact directly with beneficiaries. This may include countries in Southeast Asia and the Middle East and North Africa.

Evaluation location

Flexible / Remote

Deliverables and Schedule

Deliverable	Tentative due date	Suggested days
Inception Report: Detailing the evaluation approach, methodology, and work plan.	31 Jan 2025	3
Draft Evaluation Report: Presenting preliminary findings and recommendations.	31 Mar 2025	12
Final Evaluation Report: A comprehensive report with conclusions and actionable recommendations for future programming.	18 Apr 2025	2
Presentation of evaluation	18 Apr 2025	1

Guiding Principles and Values

The evaluator/evaluation team will be required to adhere to, and be guided by, professional and ethical standards while contracted to Act for Peace. Evaluation managers are to ensure that evaluation team members and subcontractors have a copy of these standards. These standards include:

- Act for Peace Code of Conduct (to be signed)
- Act for Peace Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct
- Australian Evaluation Society Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations.

Safeguarding Risk Assessment:

Child Safeguarding	PSEAH
<input type="checkbox"/> Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
<input type="checkbox"/> Med	<input type="checkbox"/> Med
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High
<input type="checkbox"/> Very High	<input type="checkbox"/> Very High

Act for Peace prioritises the safeguarding of all people, including the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, and the protection of children. Engagement is conditional upon the outcome of an Australian Federal Police Background check, as well as an equivalent police background check for any country in which the applicant has lived for more than 12 months during the last five years and each country of citizenship and Working With Children Checks where possible. Our policies, including our Child Safeguarding Policy, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy and Code of Conduct can be found at: <http://www.actforpeace.org.au/our-policies>

Evaluator/Evaluation team

The evaluation will be conducted by an external evaluation consultant or team with expertise in displacement programming, partner capacity-building, and monitoring and evaluation. The team will work closely with AfP’s program management to ensure access to relevant data and stakeholders.

If applying as a team, please identify the team leader and roles of individuals in the team.

Applicants should be familiar with the Evaluators’ Professional Learning Competency Framework (AES, 2013) and DFAT’s Design and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Standards (2023).

Qualifications and competencies required:

- 5+ years of evaluation experience, preferably in international development
- Evaluation theoretical expertise: mixed methods and ensuring ethical conduct
- Familiarity with localization in aid/development in the Australian aid sector and international contexts
- Evaluation project management experience
- Interpersonal skills
- Delivery of clear and succinct evaluation reports and presenting data in visually interesting ways

Desirable:

- In-country or regional experience related to project sites
- Lived experience of displacement

Structure and Format of the Evaluation Report

Details will be provided to the successful applicant.

Expressions of Interest

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Enquiries regarding this consultancy should be directed to: Sarah Doyle sdoyle@actforpeace.org.au

Conditions

The evaluation team members will be required to be aware of and compliant with Act for Peace Code of Conduct and Act for Peace Child Safe Code of Conduct. If traveling to other countries, the evaluation team members will be required to adhere to security instructions and comply with the travel safety advice.

All documents and discussions relating to this evaluation are confidential and all products remain the property of Act for Peace to be shared only with their express approval.