

EVALUATION OF SWISS SOLIDARITY'S APPROACH TO PROMOTING LOCALLY LED HUMANITARIAN PRACTICE

Terms of reference

1. Introduction/Background

Fondation Suisse de la Chaîne du Bonheur (Swiss Solidarity), created 79 years ago and based in Geneva, Switzerland, launches fundraising campaigns for the victims of major humanitarian crises, in partnership with the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SSR/SRG) and private media. With the funds raised, Swiss Solidarity supports relief projects in Switzerland and abroad. In 2024, Swiss Solidarity provided CHF 63 million to 172 projects.

Swiss Solidarity's standard operating modality is to fund Swiss organisations that implement projects in humanitarian contexts, directly or, partly or entirely, through local partners. In 2022–23, Swiss Solidarity piloted providing small grants ranging from CHF 20'000.- to CHF 50'000.- directly to local organisations in Moldova and Romania. Building on this experience, Swiss Solidarity developed a preliminary position on localisation, structured around two workstreams. Since 2024, these workstreams have been pursued as part of a two-year pilot phase. The underlying hypothesis is that pursuing the following two workstreams contributes to strengthening locally led humanitarian practice:

- 1) Support the quality of Swiss partner organisations' partnerships with local organisations
- 2) Finance local actors directly

For the first workstream - to support the quality of Swiss partner organisations' partnerships - Swiss Solidarity has commissioned a study on the quality of partnerships in Ukraine and Syria involving both local and Swiss partner organisations. One of the key deliverables of this study is a set of actionable recommendations for Swiss partner organisations and for Swiss Solidarity. For the second workstream - to finance local actors directly -, Swiss Solidarity has provided direct funding ranging from CHF 300'000.- to CHF 500'000.- to three organisations operating in Ukraine and three in Syria.

2. Aim

The principal aim of this evaluation is to test Swiss Solidarity's hypothesis that its two workstreams contribute to promoting locally led humanitarian practice and that they do so while maintaining the relevance and quality of funding. The evaluations should thus assess (i) the relevance and effectiveness of the measures that Swiss Solidarity plans to promote equitable and complementary partnerships, (ii) evaluate the modalities it uses for the direct funding and (iii) assess the advantages and disadvantages of direct funding of local NGOs compared to the standard modality of funding Swiss NGOs that partner with local NGOs. The evaluation should provide learnings pertaining to the measures and conditions that promote equitable and complementary partnerships, and to the situations, conditions and modalities under which direct funding is feasible and adds value.

3. Evaluation questions

- To what extent is Swiss Solidarity's approach to promoting locally led humanitarian practice relevant, effective, and aligned with key sectoral policies and recommendations?

- How relevant is Swiss Solidarity's focus on supporting the quality of partnerships, from the perspectives of Swiss and local partner organisations, and what effects has it had or is expected to have in the future?
- How relevant are the planned next steps and recommendations for strengthening the quality of partnerships?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of directly funding local organisations from the points of view of the concerned local organisations and of Swiss Solidarity?
- How relevant, effective, and efficient are Swiss Solidarity's risk management and due diligence processes pertaining to direct funding?
- How relevant, effective, and efficient is the monitoring mechanism for direct financing, and what adjustments or alternative approaches, if any, could be considered?
- Under what situations, conditions, and modalities does the approach of directly financing local organisations enable local partners to function effectively and deliver relevant, high-quality programming?

4. Scope

This evaluation covers Swiss Solidarity's approach to promoting locally led humanitarian practice during 2024–2025. It will examine whether the two workstreams, implemented since 2024, effectively contribute to advancing locally led humanitarian practice. This will involve reviewing a range of internal and external documents, as well as gathering perspectives from staff of local organisations, Swiss partner organisations, and Swiss Solidarity.

Key internal documents to be analysed include:

- Internal positioning paper outlining the two workstreams
- Study on equitable and complementary partnerships
- Documents outlining the selection and monitoring of projects through the direct financing approach

In addition, the evaluation will consider relevant sectoral reference documents, frameworks, and policies. Where relevant, additional interviews with sector leaders and experts may be conducted.

5. Methodology

The detailed methodology should be proposed by the contractor in the inception report. The methodology can subsequently be revised, in accordance with Swiss Solidarity.

The following methods should be included:

- Review of documents
- Interviews with staff from Swiss Solidarity, Swiss partner organisations and local partners with the view of capturing challenges, shortcomings, good practices etc.
- Assessment of Swiss Solidarity's approach using, among others, international frameworks on best practices on localisation

The evaluation may also develop a theory of change to test the hypothesis *ex-post*.

6. Expected deliverables

The contractor will be expected to submit the following documents in English:

- 1) Inception report
 - a. The inception report must include: the work plan, description of the technical approach and detailed and clear methodology proposed, and the outline for internal and the external report.
- 2) Internal report (max. 20 pages without annexes)
 - a. This report will be confidential and only accessible to Swiss Solidarity.

- b. The report should highlight the main findings and elaborate recommendations of how to improve its way of promoting locally led humanitarian practice.
 - c. The section on recommendations must be detailed and outline actionable recommendations.
 - d. Annexed to the report should be summaries of key informant interviews, and any other data relevant for the report.
- 3) Online presentations
- a. The online presentations to Swiss Solidarity should be approximately one (1) to two (2) hours and include a summary of the findings, recommendations, and provide space for feedback and questions.
- 4) External report (max. 5 pages)
- a. This report is to be shared externally to Swiss Solidarity's partners, and the wider public. It should summarise the main findings, and outline recommendations useful for other donors or international organisations.

7. Timeline

Description	Deadline
Publication of call for interest	September 2025
Deadline submission	September 2025
Recruitment consultant	September 2025
Inception phase	October 2025
Data collection	October 2025
Draft internal report	November 2025
Final internal report	November 2026
Online presentations	November 2026
Draft external report	December 2026
Final external report	December 2026

8. Insurance

The contractor is responsible for its own insurance coverage.

9. Assessment criteria

The offers will be evaluated using the following assessment criteria.

Aspect	Criteria	Points
Technical expertise	The contractor has a thorough understanding of localisation approaches, key policies, and due diligence processes	20
	The contractor possesses a thorough knowledge of the landscape of Swiss humanitarian NGOs	5
	Previous experiences in evaluating theories of change and strategies	15
	Previous experience in assessing the direct financing of local organisations	15
	Team leader has excellent writing skills in English	5
Methodology	The proposed methodology and tools are fit for the purpose of responding to set objectives	25
Price	Score = $20 \times (1 - (\text{this bid} - \text{cheapest bid}) / (\text{most expensive bid} - \text{cheapest bid}))$	25
Maximum possible score		100

10. Cost

The maximum amount of working days for this consultancy is set at 18 working days, plus expenses.

11. Bid instructions

Bidders should submit the following:

- 1) A cover letter (max. one (1) page) outlining the motivation and qualifications to apply. It must be clearly stated that the contractor is able to respect the here above outlined timeline.
- 2) Summary table outlining how the bidder fulfils each of the assessment criteria
- 3) CV(s) of team member(s)
- 4) Samples of previous works
- 5) A short (no more than two (2) page) conceptual framework with the proposed methodology, including limitations and ethical considerations
- 6) A succinct workplan for the assignment
- 7) A financial proposal with a detailed breakdown of costs (in Swiss Francs) for the overall assignment. This should include:
 - a. The daily cost and number of days by task for each expert
 - b. All other costs for the evaluation

12. Submission of offers

Bids should be submitted by 23h59 (Geneva time) on 22.09.2025 to: jobs@swiss-solidarity.org with the subject "Evaluation of Swiss Solidarity's Approach to Promoting Locally Led Humanitarian Practice".