



# **Evaluation of the Norwegian Human Rights Fund**

## **Support to local organisations and strategy implementation**

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### **Terms of Reference**

**2018**

## **1) BACKGROUND**

The Norwegian Human Rights Fund (NHRF) has undergone frequent external evaluations of its operations and work. At the end of 2015, the NHRF underwent its last external evaluation, which was conducted by RightsHouse (Sweden) and commissioned by the NHRF board.

The NHRF has received support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) since 1988 and currently has a framework agreement for core support to its operations for the period 2016 - 2018. The agreement states that the NHRF shall undertake an evaluation at the end of the period. The main audience for the evaluation will be the NHRF donors, its owners organizations, and staff, but with an aim to strengthen the work and give feedback, if needed, on adjustments for the implementation of the current strategy.

The NHRF is seeking a review that can assess the support given to local human rights organisations in the period 2016 - 2018. It will look at the results and effects of NHRF support on individual organisations and networks. The review will also assess changes and effects experienced by the projects' target groups as results of NHRF support. The NHRF is seeking a process that is inclusive and participatory when it comes to interaction and feedback from the supported grantees and a very direct engagement with the grantees organisations.

In addition, the NHRF seeks a review that can provide input to the current ongoing implementation of its overall strategy (2016-2020).

## **2) INTRODUCTION**

### **About the NHRF**

The Norwegian Human Rights Fund's mandate is to promote and protect human rights. Since its inception, the NHRF has sought to be a flexible, courageous and global actor that provides direct support to local organisations working for the rights of vulnerable and marginalised individuals and groups. The NHRF prioritises initiatives where affected communities and people on the ground mobilise and take the lead in the struggle for their rights.

The NHRF was established in 1988 and sprung out of Norwegian civil society, academia and workers' unions. As of 2018, the following organisations and institutions contribute strategically, professionally, and financially to the NHRF's work and are represented in the NHRF's Board:

- Amnesty International Norway
- Norwegian Centre for Human Rights
- The Atlas Alliance
- The Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations
- The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions

The NHRF supports local initiatives and actors who know the local structures and work where human rights violations take place, so called front line organisations. The NHRF prioritises projects where vulnerable and marginalised groups mobilise and take the lead in the struggle for their rights. In addition, the NHRF supports professional human rights actors' in the frontline

that work for the protection of the rights of vulnerable and marginalised individuals and groups through initiatives such as legal assistance, advocacy work, documentation, and rights education.

The NHRF's funding scheme mainly involves the allocation of comparatively small grants (between 5 000 and 35 000 USD) to be utilised within a limited period, often 12 months. The NHRF has its own guidelines for grant allocation.

Over the last thirty years, the NHRF has established itself as a unique grant-making organisation that is firmly rooted in the Norwegian civil society and one that provides support to organizations, networks, and social movements that have the skills and commitment to their work and that can mobilise and support people affected by human rights abuse on the ground with small-scale grants. The NHRF can support initiatives that are nascent and new, and the kind of organisations and networks that can fall short of other (larger) donors. Between 2016-2017, a total of 93 % of the grantee organisations had less than 150 000 USD in annual budgets, and 59 % of the grantees had a budget under 50 000 USD. The NHRF's strength is its unique ability and mandate to support grassroots organizations, social movements, victims' families, and networks in a risk-willing, flexible, and non-bureaucratic manner while maintaining professional standards and relationships. The NHRF strategically utilizes local consultants in a selected set of countries to support the vetting of the organisations, to follow up with the grantees, and as resource persons to the NHRF implementation and strategic thinking. In addition, the NHRF works with a broad network of other human rights donors and organisations in the selection process.

When needed and possible, the NHRF also strategically utilizes its connection to its Board and owner organization's networks to link the grantees to key actors and international networks to lift their work. The NHRF has always sought to go beyond the traditional definition of "donor" and work as a contributor to the human rights movement on the ground based on their needs, their ability to influence change, and in the best way to respond to their locally determined priorities. For this reason, the NHRF also focuses on its added value as a supportive organisation and strives to provide meaningful support where and when needed in an organic and responsive way.

The NHRF can support an organization with a one-time grant, but can also provide support for up to five years. In this way, the NHRF is able to establish longer-term relationships and help visions of human rights work turn into concrete, systematic, and responsive action on the ground. Our long-term grantees build on each project and have made substantial progress in some seemingly impossible settings and areas. This ability has proven crucial to the work of the grantee organizations and HRDs.

The NHRF is financed by contributions from the owner organisations, the Norwegian government, and other donations.

### **The 2015 evaluation and the new strategy 2016-2020:**

The 2015 evaluation commissioned was a broad evaluation that focused on two main areas: the NHRF in (a changed) human rights context and in comparison with other similar organisations and funding mechanisms, as well as results of the NHRF strategy implementation 2011 - 2015. When embarking on a new strategy in 2011, a positive evaluation at the end of the period was set as a key indicator of success in terms of implementation of its strategy 2011 - 2015.

The evaluation came with a positive conclusion, among others that the NHRF has succeeded in meeting its objectives, with a high level of accuracy in selecting relevant and effective grantees.

Since the last evaluation, the NHRF has embarked on a new strategy for the period 2016-2020. The overall goal is a continuation from the previous strategy period: Increased respect for the human rights of vulnerable and marginalised individuals and groups through support to local human rights organisations. The new strategy outlines the NHRF's support to local human rights work in line with three strategic strands that cut across priority countries;

- Work against impunity and for access to justice;
- work against discrimination and/or marginalisation of vulnerable individuals and groups;
- Support to improved working conditions and security for human rights defenders at risk.

It also emphasises protection and security of local human rights defenders and organisations and on strengthening linkages between local human rights work and national and international mechanisms.

During the previous strategy period (2011 - 2015), the NHRF included support to new priority countries, as a result of an extensive mapping process and inputs from key donors and stakeholders. However, the NHRF's core budget has not increased, which poses a challenge in terms of requests versus available funding.

In 2017, the NHRF developed a new database to strengthen the aggregation of results and make the grant management smoother and more secure. While this development has been immensely helpful and beneficial for the organization, we keep the process of improvement open and in progress.

### **3) PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the support given to local human rights organisations in the period 2016 - 2018 and the implementation of the current overall strategy so far, including the added value of the NHRF.

The evaluation should:

- Focus on the inclusion, participation, and interaction of our grantees and consultants through, for example, interviews and groups discussions from at least 15 grantees and the country consultants. The selected grantees should primarily be organisations receiving support from 2016 – 2018. Some of these have received funding over several years prior to this, which should also be sampled to show whether discernible effects are more likely over a longer time period.

The study should also include interviews/dialogue with key NHRF stakeholders (including embassies) and networks

- Assess the results and effects, and added value, of NHRF support on individual organisations and networks in terms of the core activities listed in the strategy; 1) the

concrete financial support provided; 2) the supported organisations' ability to strengthen their own local human rights defenders security; and 3) connecting local human rights defenders and organisations with national and international human rights mechanisms and networks for increased visibility and influence.

- Assess changes and effects at different levels experienced by the projects' target groups as results of NHRF support across the NHRF's three strategic priority areas.

First, what are the intermediary results on a project level in terms of: capacity building, awareness raising, strengthening channels for engagement, participation of vulnerable groups, legal competency, and behaviour changes etc. across the three strategic areas; 1) work against impunity and access to justice; 2) work against discrimination and/or marginalisation of vulnerable individuals and groups; and 3) support to improved working conditions and security for human rights defenders.

Second, how do these intermediary results lead to or influence changes across the three strategic areas (e.g. law/policy changes, fulfilment of rights, experience enhanced security etc.). Although this evaluation will be conducted independently, we would seek constructive discussions on best methods and approaches to this assessment relative the size of the grants provided and the type of organisations supported.

- Assess the NHRF's added value to the NHRF networks in Norway and internationally and to its key stakeholders
- Provide inputs to the NHRF's future programme planning with regards to calls for proposals; follow-up and capacity building of the organisations; and facilitation of experience sharing between NHRF grantees within and across countries and continents.
- Provide recommendations to how the NHRF can strengthen its aggregation of results in a meaningful manner and the NHRF's goal hierarchy towards the main donor.

The evaluation's findings will provide inputs to internal planning and adjustments in the NHRF operations within the current strategy period and to the new MFA framework agreement for the period of 2019 - 2021.

## **4) METHODOLOGY**

The methodological framework should consist of the following elements:

1. Review of NHRF reports produced: Annual reports 2015, 2016 and 2017; selected travel reports 2016-2018; progress report submitted to the MFA in April 2018, report of the NHRF work in Liberia produced January 2017; internal assessment of the three strategic strands produced July 2018.

Review of relevant material about the NHRF's granting policies after the last evaluation in 2015 and during the period of 2016-2018, in particular the 2015 evaluation, strategy documents (Strategy 2016-2020); selected country strategies and the HRD strategy; fundraising strategy 2017-2020; and the NHRF's webpage, [www.nhrf.no](http://www.nhrf.no), and social media posts (Twitter/Facebook).

Review of selected reports/documents by grantee organisations and end evaluation reports where applicable.

2. Provide an inception report before the project implementation.
3. Group discussions/meetings and interviews/ possible survey with grantee organisations (This should be prioritized in the methodological framework.)
4. Interviews with NHRF staff, board members, local consultants, possibly advisory board members, networks in Norway, and MFA including staff at the embassies in a selected number of NHRF priority countries.
5. Interviews/survey/inputs from specialists on support to human rights defenders such as the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, Front Line Defenders, Amnesty Fund in Sweden, Rafto Foundation, KIOS, SWEFOR Colombia, PBI Norway (Colombia/Mexico), the Human Rights Funders Network in New York, Forum Asia, Memria.org and possible networks in Norway.
6. (Travel) Presentation in Oslo for the board in November 2018

## **5) REPORTING**

The report shall be written in English and should not exceed 25 pages (excluding appendices). It should, inter alia, include an executive summary, conclusions, and recommendations and be available in both printed and electronic formats.

A draft report should be presented electronically to the NHRF no later than October 22. Written comments on the report by the NHRF should be provided no later than October 28, 2018. The final evaluation report should be presented no later than November 20.

## **6) TEAM**

The review should be conducted by 1-3 people. The team can be comprised of independent individuals located in different countries/regions, but the NHRF would prefer one primary contact person. The NHRF would look positively on a team that consists of people with extensive work experience from Asia and Latin America. The NHRF would look positively on an internationally composed, gender-balanced team and would prefer consultants from the regions where the interaction/groups discussions and interviews with the grantees will be conducted.

Qualifications needed:

- English and Spanish speaker(s) (an understanding of Norwegian/Scandinavian language by one of the team members is preferable, but not a requirement).
- Demonstrated strong knowledge of human rights work and NGO organisational development
- Extensive experience with evaluation, monitoring, and learning work, ideally including human rights
- Demonstrated strong knowledge of working with local human rights groups

Experience with grant management organisations/foundations

- Ideally the consultants will have knowledge of the field of protection of human rights defenders' work

**The NHRF requires a 3-5 page project proposal that includes the elements listed below (budget and timeframe) and a brief statement of qualifications and motivation by Wednesday the 8<sup>th</sup> of August. In addition, a CV for each team member is required. Please send your application to Sandra Petersen at: [sandra.petersen@nhrf.no](mailto:sandra.petersen@nhrf.no)**

## 7) TIME FRAME AND BUDGETS

The review process should start in August and the first draft of the report should be submitted to the NHRF no later than October 20.

The NHRF has a budget **NOK 150 00** for the assignment that needs to include travel costs for the team and will require a suggested budget and timeframe. In addition, the NHRF has set aside NOK 100 000 for cost related to the group interaction in Asia and possible travels for grantees in Latin America. It is estimated that the evaluation team would use between 20-30 working days for the assignment.

Components including:

- Daily rates and overview of estimated expenses
- Group discussion and field visits: one in Asia (possible group meetings with selected grantees from Asia in Bangkok or Jakarta in September to be coordinated with NHRF staff's travel), and one country visit to Latin America (Colombia or Mexico). There could also be other field visits and interaction with grantees dependent on the team and where it is based. The evaluators must cover their own travels and stay, and this must be included as part of the budget. The NHRF will cover cost and give logistical support when it comes to grantees' travel and meetings for the group discussion.
- Meetings with NHRF local consultants and selected representatives from the NHRF network (some could be done on skype)
- 1-2 day meeting(s) with the NHRF's donor, board in Oslo and NHRF staff (could also be done by skype.)
- Report writing
- Travel to Oslo in November for meeting with the board, and presenting the report in November at the Norwegian Center for Human Rights where key stakeholders will be invited to participate (obligatory)

**Attachments:**

\*Please contact us to request documents on the list that are not available on our website.

**Available on our website: [www.nhrf.no](http://www.nhrf.no)**

- Mandate and guidelines for the Norwegian Human Rights Fund (<https://nhrf.no/what-we-are>)
- Annual Reports 2015, 2016 and 2017 (<https://nhrf.no/our-impact/annual-reports>)
- Strategy 2016-2020 (<https://nhrf.no/what-we-are/strategic-plan>)
- Strategy on protection of Human Rights Defenders at risk 2016-2019 (<https://nhrf.no/what-we-are/strategic-plan>)
- Internal report on NHRF support to HRD 2013-2015, Produced June 2016 (<https://nhrf.no/assets/documents/Support-to-HRD-2013-15.pdf>)
- Internal report "Support to Liberia" January 2017 (<https://nhrf.no/article/2017/changes-in-local-communities-in-liberia>)

**Oslo, 29 June 2018**