



## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Evaluation of the Human Rights House concept and its advocacy component

### **A. Introduction**

Established in 1992, the Human Rights House Foundation (“HRHF”) supports the establishment of Human Rights Houses (“HRHs” or “Houses”) – communities of human rights NGOs – and facilitates the connection of these Houses in a network of Houses, the Human Rights House Network (“HRHN”). There are currently Houses in 13 countries, all in Europe, which are home to more than 100 independent NGOs. Houses play an important role in facilitating joint initiatives by their member and partner NGOs. Along with supporting the establishment of Houses and providing ongoing financial and other support, the HRHF has invested significant resources in supporting the Houses and their member and partner NGOs in undertaking international advocacy.

Twenty-five years on, in a different and fast changing world, do existing HRHs offer the needed response to the local needs? HRHF is commissioning an external evaluation of the HRH concept, supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We wish to determine whether different House models are still fit for purpose to serve the human rights cause, as part of the effort to strengthen civil society as a whole, including with regard to facilitating and supporting advocacy, and to identify recommendations to update the HRH concept to ensure that it continues to be relevant.

### **B. Background**

The HRHF supports the establishment of a HRH where certain criteria are met, especially demand for a HRH from local human rights NGOs. The HRH concept is designed to be flexible, but the overall purpose of every HRH is to serve the human rights cause, as part of the effort to strengthen civil society as a whole. This is achieved through stimulating collaboration between member NGOs on human rights education, legal aid, networking and advocacy for example; enhancing solidarity, cutting costs, further increasing member NGOs’ visibility including vis-à-vis decision makers, and making member NGOs more accessible to victims and human rights defenders.

The ‘classic’ HRH is a physical structure established and managed by a community of NGOs, co-located in the same premises. Such a House is usually locally owned and registered as a new joint legal entity, with a Board made up of representatives from the member NGOs. Two other HRH models have emerged: a ‘House with one NGO as leader’, with one NGO as the formal owner of the premises, providing others with access and opportunities to use the space; and a ‘resource House’, where all participating NGOs maintain their own offices elsewhere and the House serves as a joint space devoted to various purposes such as human rights education, training, events or the provision of legal aid. Where restrictions on civil society in any given country are severe, a HRH may be established in exile. A HRH may also combine elements of the above models.

For more information on the HRH concept and its history, please see the ‘Manual for Establishing a Human Rights House’, available on the HRHN website:

<http://humanrightshouse.org/noop/page.php?p=Articles/5215.html&d=1>

The Manual will be updated to incorporate learning from the planned evaluation, and in particular around ensuring that established Houses are sustainable.

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported an external evaluation of the HRH concept previously, in 2005–2006. This process was instrumental in informing the strategies of the HRHF and Houses from 2007 onward.

However, ten years on, the HRHF has invested in its advocacy programme to support the Houses, new Houses have been established, many of the Houses operate in different contexts, and new opportunities and challenges have emerged. For example, in many countries there are growing restrictions on civil society, while the communications and social media revolution are changing the way human rights work may be done, with new human rights actors emerging and challenging the dominance of established NGOs.

## **C. Rationale**

The planned evaluation is envisaged in the ‘HRHN Five-Year Strategy 2014-18’ and the related Results Framework, which will be provided to the evaluator.

The HRHF will use the learning from the planned evaluation to update the HRH concept so as to ensure that it is fit for purpose, can meet new challenges faced by the human rights community and wider civil society, and make the most of new opportunities. Specifically, this will mean:

- Updating the ‘Manual for Establishing a Human Rights House’, and in particular with regard to the sustainability of established Houses.
- Sharing and explaining the findings and recommendations of the evaluation with each House, including around governance, strategic planning and the role of Houses with regard to facilitating and supporting advocacy.
- Shaping the Foundation’s advocacy work with the Houses, including identifying new advocacy opportunities.
- Feeding the learning into the HRHN Five-Year Strategy 2019-23, to include support for existing and new Houses to incorporate the learning from the evaluation in to their design, operations and activities.
- Sharing the learning with donors and other stakeholders.

## D. Scope

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

1. Assess whether the HRH concept and the different House models are fit for purpose to serve the human rights cause, as part of the effort to strengthen civil society as a whole, including with regard to facilitating and supporting advocacy.
2. Identify recommendations to update the HRH concept and the different House models to ensure that they are fit for purpose, including with regard to advocacy – being actors for change in their countries and wider regions.

Specifically, the evaluator will consider the following questions:

### 1. Assess whether the HRH concept and the different House models are fit for purpose:

- In countries in which a House is located, what are the needs of the member NGOs and wider human rights community?
- Have these needs changed since the House was established, and in light of emerging opportunities and challenges?
- Is the House meeting these needs? Is it adapting to emerging opportunities and challenges? Specifically, including with reference to the ‘Manual for Establishing a Human Rights House’ (pages 5 to 8), is the House:
  - Creating an environment that stimulates active collaboration and cooperation through synergies?
  - Made up of diverse and active member organisations involved in a wide range of different activities?
  - Run and managed by equal participation and representation of the member organisations?
  - Perceived as being independent?
  - Facilitating and supporting joint advocacy? Linked to this, how do members in each House perceive the support provided by the HRHF on advocacy? Do they see this support as adding value and, if they do, in what way? Do member and partner NGOs of each House see the House-related advocacy as competing with their individual agendas and visibility? Do members in each House perceive the connection to other Houses as adding value in terms of advocacy? How do advocacy targets perceive the HRHF’s approach to advocacy (driven by the Houses/their members)? Have the international advocacy initiatives been grounded in national realities, focused on bringing change in the country of each HRH?
  - Making the partner and member organisations more visible to the public and decision-makers, for the purposes of advocacy?
  - Enhancing solidarity amongst member and partner NGOs in each House and amongst the Houses?
  - Cutting costs for members, releasing funds for activities?
  - Providing a stable and secure base for activities, providing protection?
  - A national (or sub-national) centre of human rights, drawing the attention of everyone engaged in human rights in the country?
  - Benefitting the wider human rights community as a whole, beyond the member NGOs?

- Accessible to victims of human rights violations and open (open space and open mind) to human rights defenders, beyond the partner and member organisations?
- Used and/or referred to by others, including non-member NGOs, youth movements, unions, emerging social movements, students, researchers, and other for meetings, activities, resources, and events?
- Meeting new needs, not envisaged in its original design?
- If the House is not meeting these needs, why not?
- Are there any examples of best practice, where a House is meeting all or most of the needs and/or has managed to adapt to meet new challenges and make the most of new opportunities?

## **2. Identify recommendations to update the HRH concept:**

- How can the House concept and different models be adapted to ensure that ongoing needs are being met?
- How can the House concept and different models be adapted to ensure that new needs are being met, including needs around advocacy at the international and national levels to impact domestic decision-makers, and with reference to emerging opportunities and challenges?
- Does the HRHF need to adapt its approaches to the establishment and support of Houses, including with regard to governance?
- Which such recommendations should be prioritised?

## **E. Methodology and Stakeholders**

The evaluator will be expected to develop a detailed evaluation methodology to ensure that findings and recommendations are based on a representative selection of samples and facts.

The evaluation methodology, process and outputs must adhere to the OECD Development Quality Standards for Development Evaluation. These standards include a requirement for the evaluator to be mindful of gender roles, ethnicity, ability, age, sexual orientation, language and other differences when designing and carrying out the evaluation.

The HRHF envisages that the evaluation methodology will include:

- Desk research/literature review on the external environment for the human rights movement, particularly in Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Balkans, including emerging opportunities and challenges. However, the evaluator will be expected to already have this knowledge and expertise.
- Desk research/literature review, to read background documents provided by the HRHF and Houses, to ensure familiarity with the House concept and its history.
- Interviews – in-person and remotely – with relevant stakeholders, to answer the evaluation questions.

The evaluator must conduct a participatory evaluation, which will involve some travel in Europe. While there will be some flexibility, the evaluator should be available for some travel to undertake the evaluation.

The following stakeholders should be involved in the evaluation:

- At least five (5) different Houses, to include: at least two ‘classic’ Houses, such as HRH Zagreb, of which one is in exile, such as Belarusian HRH; one House owned by one NGO, such as HRH Warsaw (Polish Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights); one ‘resource centre’, namely Educational HRH Chernihiv; and HRH Azerbaijan:
  - Board members;
  - Management/Coordinator;
  - Staff of member and partner organisations.
- External stakeholders, including advocacy targets:
  - Individuals using the House who are not members;
  - Representatives of other human rights NGOs;
  - Key international human rights actors (INGOs, intergovernmental organisations’ human rights mechanisms, such as UN special rapporteurs, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights) that have worked with Houses and/or HRHF;
  - Donors;
  - Diplomats in embassies in countries of at least the five (5) above-mentioned HRHs, as well as diplomats representing countries identified by HRHF as advocacy targets, in Brussels, Geneva, New York, and Strasbourg;
  - Decision maker(s) in the countries in which HRHF works, such as heads of National Human Rights Institutes and municipalities;
  - Parliamentarians and elected government officials.
- At the HRHF:
  - Board members;
  - Director;
  - Managers and other staff.

## F. Schedule and Deliverables

The evaluator will prepare:

1. An evaluation workplan, to include a detailed evaluation methodology.
2. An evaluation report.
3. A presentation on the evaluation report and its main findings and recommendations.

The evaluator must prepare these deliverables in English and submit them to the HRHF by email to the designated contact point. The evaluator will be provided with a contact point at management level within the HRHF.

The evaluator will adhere to the following schedule:

<i>Draft Evaluation Workplan</i>	A draft detailed workplan will be submitted within two (2) weeks of the signing of the contract. It is envisaged that the contract will be signed by the end of August 2017.
<i>Final Evaluation Workplan</i>	Within one (1) week of receiving HRHF's comments on the draft detailed workplan, the evaluator will produce a final evaluation workplan.
<i>Draft Evaluation Report</i>	The evaluator will submit a draft evaluation report for review by HRHF within eight (8) weeks of producing the final workplan. For the avoidance of doubt, the draft report must be submitted by the end of November 2017.

<i>Final Evaluation Report</i>	Within two (2) weeks of receiving HRHF's comments on the draft report, the evaluator will submit a final evaluation report, including an evaluation abstract/executive summary.
<i>Presentation</i>	The evaluator will be required to give a presentation on the main findings and recommendations. This is likely to be required in December 2017.

## **G. Budget**

The project is budgeted with an input of up to 50 consultant days.

The tenderer shall quote a total price for the assignment exclusive of costs for travel and related expenses. Travel and related expenses will be covered by the HRHF, in accordance with its rules and procedures on travel.

## **H. Evaluator – Required Experience, Skills and Qualifications**

The evaluator will need the following experience, skills and qualifications:

- Extensive experience in conducting evaluations and a proven record in delivering professional results.
- Experience undertaking evaluations of complex human rights programmes.
- Experience working in civil society and preferably in the human rights field, with strong knowledge of the human rights movement.
- Knowledge of the human rights situation and environment for civil society in Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Balkans.
- Experience working in at least one of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Balkans is desirable.
- Experience undertaking evaluations for European funded programmes is desirable.
- Fluent in English and Russian (the evaluation report must be written in English).

## **I. Call for proposals**

Any individual or firm interested in undertaking this evaluation should submit a proposal by the end of 31 July 2017 to Rupert Abbott, HRHF: [rupert.abbott@humanrightshouse.org](mailto:rupert.abbott@humanrightshouse.org)

They should include:

- Technical proposal, including the proposed evaluation methodology and brief workplan (no more than two (2) pages);
- Financial proposal, including the proposed fee and breakdown (no more than one (1) page);
- CV(s), including examples of other evaluations undertaken by the individual(s) (no more than two (2) pages each);
- A list of at least three referees for each individual, including contact details;
- Information on their legal form and ownership structure where applicable;

- Confirmation of their good standing and that they are an eligible tenderer as defined in the rules and principles for procurement for projects funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (template to be sent by request); and
- Confirmation that they are not aware of any conflict of interest that may arise in undertaking the evaluation (template to be sent by request).

The HRHF will reject any proposal should it suspect any illegal or corrupt practices have taken place in connection with the same, and may terminate any contract to undertake the evaluation should it find that illegal or corrupt practices have taken place.

For any questions, please email Rupert Abbott, as above.