

Terms of Reference - Consultancy

Clarifying NRC's Role in Supporting Local Leadership in Coordination Mechanisms

1. Background

As part of its strategic commitment to localisation and strengthening locally led systems, NRC is reflecting on its role in promoting and enabling local leadership within humanitarian coordination mechanisms. NRC is a key actor in many coordination structures across contexts and has accumulated significant experience in coordination leadership, co-leadership, and technical support roles.

Some NRC Country Offices (COs) have already taken context-specific steps to integrate or support local leadership within coordination mechanisms. At the same time, NRC is seeking to position itself more clearly as an enabler of localisation, ensuring that its engagement supports — rather than substitutes — national and local leadership.

This consultancy will provide the analytical foundation and practical recommendations required to clarify NRC's strategic positioning and to develop operational guidance for Head Office, RTs and COs. The outputs will inform NRC's 2026 pilot phase and contribute to the next strategic planning period.

2. Objective

Main Objective

To clarify NRC's strategic and operational approach to supporting local leadership in coordination mechanisms, positioning NRC as an enabler in line with its localisation commitments.

Specific Objectives

- Analyse the broader sector landscape and assess existing initiatives promoting local leadership in coordination mechanisms.
- To provide NRC's Global Lead on Local Actors and Head of Interagency Coordination with an actionable plan to strengthen NRC's support to local leadership in coordination.
- To develop some initial tools to support NRC COs and coordinators in developing a tailored plan for how they will support local leadership in coordination at national and sub-national level

3. Scope

The consultancy will include:

- Mapping of key sector actors promoting local leadership in coordination mechanisms (INGOs, national NGO platforms, UN agencies, donors, networks).
- Analysis of gaps, overlaps, risks of duplication
- Identification of emerging donor interest
- Review of NRC's current and recent involvement in coordination mechanisms.
- Analysis of roles played (lead, co-lead, support, guide, advocate...).
- Interviews with key external and internal interviewees at HO and CO level.
- Drafting of practical operational guidance and decision-making tools for COs.

The scope should remain proportionate to the estimated level of effort (**20–25 working days**) and focus on strategic relevance rather than exhaustive research.

• Exclusions

- Evaluation of programmatic impact of coordination mechanisms.
- External assessment of coordination performance of other agencies.
- Direct negotiation or representation of NRC with donors

4. Stakeholders

- Consultant
- NRC Head Office
 - Global Lead Collaboration with Local Actors (Project Lead)
 - Head of Policy and Advocacy - Interagency coordination, Protection and Solutions
 - Relevant Advocacy or Localisation and Partnership Advisors/Focal Points
 - Regional Office representatives (as relevant)
 - Selected thematic and coordination focal points
- NRC Country Offices
 - Representatives from five (tbc) selected COs engaged in coordination mechanisms
 - Additional COs as relevant for light consultation

Roles and Responsibilities

Consultant:

- Leads the sector mapping and analysis.
- Conducts interviews and synthesises findings.
- Develops the strategic positioning framework.
- Drafts operational guidance and decision-making tools.

Project Lead (NRC):

- Oversees the consultancy and ensures strategic coherence.
- Coordinates internal inputs and stakeholder engagement.
- Reviews and validates deliverables.

HO and CO Stakeholders:

- Provide documentation, insights, and feedback.
- Participate in interviews and validation discussions.

5. Methodology

The methodology may include:

- Desk review of internal and external documentation.
- Key informant interviews with HQ stakeholders and selected 5 COs (tbc)
- Light-touch consultation with selected external actors
- Validation discussion/workshop with NRC stakeholders.

Tools and Resources

- Internal NRC documentation and survey findings.
- Access to selected CO focal points.
- Dedicated engagement time from HQ stakeholders.

6. Timeline (Indicative)

- End May/June 2026:
 - Kick-off meeting and confirmation of methodology
 - Sector mapping and NRC engagement review
 - Interviews and analysis
- July 2026:
 - Submission of Draft Framework and Operational Guidance
 - Validation and finalisation of deliverables

7. Deliverables

1. Mapping and Landscape Analysis Brief

A concise analytical brief providing an overview of existing initiatives, guidance, and actors supporting local leadership in humanitarian coordination mechanisms. The brief should include:

- Mapping of key organisations, networks, and initiatives promoting local leadership in coordination (INGOs, national NGO platforms, UN agencies, donors, and coordination bodies).
- Review of existing tools, frameworks, and guidance related to localisation in coordination mechanisms.
- Identification of emerging practices and relevant examples from different contexts.
- Analysis of gaps, overlaps, and potential entry points for NRC.
- Initial reflections on NRC's potential comparative advantage and positioning.

2. Strategic Report and Workplan

A report for the Global Lead on Local Actors and Head of Interagency Coordination with:

- An analysis of what is needed for NRC to deliver on its ambition of supporting local leadership of coordination
- A suggested workplan for strengthening NRC's capacity to support local leadership of coordination, which includes:
 - Steps to take in the next 24 months
 - Identification of existing resources that can be drawn upon
 - Identification of additional tools or guidance that may need to be developed by NRC
 - Practical options for rolling out the relevant guidance/building the capacity of NRC's coordinators at country level (including collaborative options that would allow us to benefit from/contribute to the capacities of other organizations)
- An analysis of opportunities for collaboration and/or funding for this work

3. Practical Tool for NRC Country Offices / NRC Coordinators

A practical tool that:

- Supports Country Offices in identifying the status of localisation in coordination structures led or co-led by NRC
- Assists them in identifying priorities for strengthening the role of local actors in coordination mechanisms, including options for enabling local leadership

This may take the form of a **decision tree, flow chart, or structured diagnostic tool accompanied by an annotated guide**. The precise format will be agreed with the consultant.

All deliverables must be concise, analytical, practical, and directly usable by COs.

8. Working Methodology and Final Reporting

- Regular check-ins between the consultant and the Project Lead.
- Iterative review of key outputs with relevant NRC stakeholders.
- Timely delivery of all deliverables with a strong focus on clarity, usability, and strategic coherence.
- Final consolidated package including written synthesis and presentation materials.

9. Procurement and Selection Process

• Selection Timeline

- Publication of ToR: April 28, 2026

- **Deadline for submission of proposals: May 21, 2026**
- Shortlisting and interviews (if applicable): End May 2026
- Selection and notification of successful applicant: End May 2026
- Expected contract start date: Early June 2026

Late submissions will not be considered.

• Required Profile of the Service Provider

The consultant must demonstrate:

- Proven experience in humanitarian coordination systems.
- Strong expertise in localisation and locally led systems.
- Demonstrated understanding of power dynamics and partnership approaches.
- Experience conducting strategic reviews and producing operational guidance.
- Excellent analytical and drafting skills in English. Additional language is a plus (specifically, Arabic, French, Spanish)
- Demonstrated experience working with international NGOs in multi-country settings and/or direct engagement with national NGOs across different contexts.

• Technical Proposal Requirements

The proposal must include a clear and concise description of the proposed methodology for delivering this assignment, including:

- Consultant profile details
- Understanding of the assignment and its strategic relevance
- Indicative workplan and timeline aligned with the deliverables

• Financial Proposal Requirements

Proposals must include:

- Daily rate
- Estimated number of working days
- Total contract value (inclusive of all costs). The financial proposal must include all applicable taxes, fees, and any other related costs. No additional costs will be covered beyond the agreed contract amount. Confirmation that all applicable taxes and specific expenses are included. No travel is expected under this assignment. Location: Home-based.

• Payment Schedule

- Payments will be linked to the satisfactory completion and approval of agreed deliverables.
- The detailed payment schedule and instalment structure will be defined during the contracting phase and formalised in the consultancy agreement.
- All payments remain subject to formal approval of deliverables by NRC.

• Submission and questions:

- Questions and submission to be sent to: HO.Procurement@nrc.no
- With as subject: "NRC Local Leadership in Coordination Consultancy – Submission"
- Maximum 10MB