

Invitation to Tender: Evaluation of the Nansen Framework and GFFO project Ukraine Response 2024 and 2025

BACKGROUND

Since the escalation of conflict in Ukraine in February 2022, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has implemented a large-scale humanitarian response across Ukraine, Moldova, and Poland¹, addressing both immediate and protracted needs arising from displacement, infrastructure destruction, and social disruption.

Building on its operational presence in Ukraine since 2014, NRC has become a key humanitarian actor in the region, combining direct delivery, digital modalities, and partner-led approaches to reach those most affected by the conflict. NRC is an active member of the humanitarian coordination mechanisms such as the Humanitarian Country Team and Protection, Shelter, Education, Food Security and Livelihoods clusters and the Cash Working Group (CWG) in Ukraine, and the Refugee Coordination Forum and its Protection, Education, Livelihoods and Cash WGs in Moldova. NRC actively participates in NGO Platforms and coordinates closely with national and local authorities, with MoUs with key ministries guiding cooperation at the national level. NRC has established partnerships with over 50 CSOs and CBOs across the three countries to deliver assistance, ensuring that local actors remain at the forefront of the humanitarian response and strengthen community-led solutions.

Through its country offices in Ukraine, Moldova, and Poland, NRC has supported over 1.3 million conflict- and displacement-affected people. With more than 300 staff in Ukraine and a dedicated team of 52 staff in Moldova, NRC delivers multi-sectoral assistance encompassing:

Ukraine: Shelter & Settlements (S&S) including WASH components, Information Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA), Livelihoods and Food Security (LFS), Education in Emergencies (EiE), Protection from Violence (PfV), Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA).

Moldova: S&S, ICLA, LFS, Education, PfV (was phased out in 2024), partnerships, and Cash Assistance.

Poland: S&S, ICLA, LFS, Education, PfV, Cash Assistance, partnerships and digital.

¹ We were also operational in Romania until 2024

In Ukraine, NRC has supported internally displaced, conflict-affected people and returnees in West, North, East and South Ukraine. NRC operates from area offices located in Dnipro, Kyiv and Odesa, with field offices in Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Chernihiv, Shostka, Mykolaiv, and Kherson. NRC phased out its operations in western Ukraine in mid-2025, with the closure of the area office in Lviv and the field office in Ternopil. NRC programming targets the most vulnerable populations in hard-to-reach areas close to frontlines and border areas, in de-occupied areas, and in more stable but still conflict-affected locations—focusing on access to shelter, education, legal aid, protection, cash assistance and livelihoods.

In Moldova, NRC has supported refugees from Ukraine and vulnerable host communities since March 2022 through integrated PfV, Education, Livelihoods, Legal Aid, and Shelter and Settlements programming. Operating from Chisinau, NRC's programmes reach communities across 30 districts and the Transnistrian region, with the organisation now among the leading actors in the refugee response. Funded by SDC, ECHO, AICS, the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), and Norad, NRC has focused on enabling economic inclusion, legal access, and durable solutions while strengthening national and local systems.

While NRC's Poland operation was phased out in June 2025, key local partnerships remain in place to ensure preparedness for potential new influxes

EVALUATION PURPOSE

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, and potential longer-term added value of NRC's response under the Nansen and GFFO-funded interventions in 2024 and 2025, focusing on Ukraine, Moldova, and Poland. The evaluation will examine how well NRC has met the humanitarian and recovery needs of conflict- and displacement-affected populations, and the contribution of Nansen and GFFO funding to NRC's broader response objectives.

Since the GFFO-funded project is aligned with and complementary to the Norad-funded programme, NRC will consolidate both evaluation commitments into a single exercise to reduce costs and enhance efficiency.

NRC has received funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Norad) - Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine to support our country operations in Ukraine and Moldova since the escalation of the war in 2022. As a strategic partner of NORAD, NRC benefits from the flexibility to prioritise the use of these funds based on the annual Country Programmes, rather than being tied to specific projects. The GFFO-funded project is therefore fully aligned with, and complementary to, the Nansen-funded initiative.

The evaluation will generate actionable lessons to inform NRC's programming, durable solutions and localisation efforts.

SCOPE AND FOCUS

The evaluation will cover activities implemented under the NRC Ukraine Crisis Response 2024 and 2025, across Ukraine, Moldova, and Poland, funded by Nansen and GFFO. This evaluation will consider interventions active at any time between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, with contextual reference to earlier years where needed.

Across the three countries, the scope includes:

- Interventions in shelter, ICLA, education and youth, cash assistance, livelihoods, and protection from violence.
- Cross-cutting themes: Emergency response, self-reliance/durable solutions, and digitalisation.
- The operational transition and sustainability of partnerships as NRC phases out or localises activities.

The evaluation will focus on the key programming areas across each geography, as outlined in the evaluation questions. A specific sampling strategy for each country will be agreed upon during the inception phase.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Overarching Evaluation Questions

To what extent has NRC's response under the Nansen framework and GFFO funding been relevant and delivered results (to the extent they can be established at this stage of programming) in line with key response priorities?

What key learning can be identified to inform the following stages of implementation?

Ukraine Evaluations Questions

- How effective has NRC been at meeting basic needs and contribute to the protection of vulnerable populations in communities close to the frontlines?
- How effective have NRC's interventions been in improving living conditions and access to services for people in more stable but conflict-affected areas?
- How effectively has NRC used digital channels and existing data systems (e.g. cash platforms) to collect data and manage programmes in hard-to-reach or frontline areas?
- What has been the impact of the rapid multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) and other interventions on meeting urgent needs of conflict-affected and newly displaced people?
- To what extent have partnerships and NRC's operational model enabled a flexible and relevant response in dynamic and hard-to- reach environments?

Moldova Evaluation Questions

- To what extent did the project implemented in 2024 and 2025 in Moldova meet the needs of conflict and displaced populations? To what extent has NRC's programming contributed, or is likely to contribute, to self-reliance/durable solutions for displaced populations in Moldova?
- How can Moldova's ongoing business grants and start-up work inform future programming aiming to contribute to sustainable outcomes/durable solutions?
- What are the primary enablers and barriers to sustainability and localisation within NRC's partnerships and programme design in Moldova?

Poland Evaluation Questions

- What is the status of NRC's work with partners in Poland, particularly in transitioning responsibilities as NRC ends its direct operational presence?
- What lessons can be drawn from NRC's withdrawal from Poland?

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation will employ a **mixed-methods approach**, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection, with a focus on contribution analysis. Importantly, the evaluation will, to the extent possible, explore dimensions of equity in terms of different cross sections of society experienced NRC programmes (men/women, older people, etc.) Suggested approaches include:

- **Document review** of project documents, MEAL data (including two previous evaluations on Cash Assistance in Ukraine, and one on partnerships in Moldova and Poland), donor reports, and lessons learned.
- **Key informant interviews** with NRC staff, partners, authorities, representatives from relevant clusters and donors.
- **Qualitative and Quantitative data collection** with project participants (IDPs, refugees, host communities, conflict-affected but not displaced, and recently displaced).
- **Case studies** illustrating NRC's areas of response (to be identified during the inception phase)
- **Contribution analysis** for selected outcomes. The evaluation will explore both unintended positive and negative effects.

Data collection will occur in **Ukraine and Moldova**, with some virtual consultations for Poland. The Evaluation must consider the results frameworks and relevant global ToCs when exploring results. NRC has more than 20 global theories of change (ToCs) that articulate the underlying causal logic of our main areas of work. These ToCs clearly describe how the goods and services we provide are expected to contribute to key outcomes and impacts. They serve as a useful reference for considering how and why change may, or may not, have occurred in a specific context. As such, they should be

used as part of this evaluation to help unpack and explore the results framework. This should be further unpacked in relation to the evaluation questions during the inception phase.

Consultants may propose an alternative or complementary approach as part of their proposal. NRC expects the proposal to include an initial outline of the potential ethical constraints for this evaluation, which will be further elaborated during the inception phase.

DELIVERABLES

1. **Inception Report** – including detailed methodology, a mapping of existing evidence, an evaluation matrix, sampling, data collection tools, and workplan.
2. **Preliminary Findings Presentation** – for NRC's Steering Committee
3. **Draft Evaluation Report** – integrating evidence across the three countries.
4. **Final Evaluation Report** – including executive summary, conclusions, lessons, and actionable recommendations per country.
5. **Learning Brief** – a concise 2-page summary per country for external sharing.
6. **Presentations** - 3 to 4 presentations to management at the country, regional and head office to discuss findings and recommendations. One of the presentations will be to the donors.

QUALIFICATIONS

NRC seeks expressions of interest from individuals/small teams and consultancies with the following skills and qualifications:

- A high level of English language proficiency. Knowledge of local languages would be an asset, and/or the ability to facilitate data collection in local languages.
- Strong ability to present findings clearly and succinctly.
- Excellent communication skills, with the ability to engage effectively with diverse audiences across NRC.
- Extensive experience in managing complex, multi-country evaluations.
- At least 10 years of experience conducting humanitarian evaluations.
- Demonstrated experience working with Norad and GFFO-funded projects would be an asset.
- Proven experience with a range of evaluation methodologies.
- Previous experience working with NRC is considered an asset.

TIMELINE

It is anticipated that this evaluation will last six months. The indicative dates are:

- Contracting: January to February 2026
- Inception Phase: February to March 2026
- Data collection and analysis: March to April 2026
- Report finalisation and presentations: May to June 2026

A more specific timeframe will be agreed upon with the selected consultants during the inception phase.

MANAGEMENT OF THE EVALUATION

The person responsible for ensuring that this evaluation takes place is the Chair of the Steering Committee, supported by the Evaluation Manager. An Evaluation Manager has been appointed to coordinate the process internally and will serve as the main focal point for the evaluation team.

NRC will establish an Evaluation Steering Committee (SC) to oversee the administration and overall coordination of the evaluation, including progress monitoring. The main functions of the Steering Committee will be to:

1. Establish the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation
2. Select the evaluator(s)
3. Review and comment on the inception report and approve the proposed evaluation methodology
4. Review and comment on the draft and final evaluation reports
5. Develop a management response

APPLICATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

Application deadline: January 28th

Interview dates: Early February

The available budget for consultancy fees is approximately 50,000 USD.

Bids must include the following:

- A proposal, including an outline of the evaluation framework and methods, comments on the ToR, a proposed timeframe, and a detailed work plan.

(Proposals exceeding 10 pages – not including annexes - will be automatically excluded.)

- A proposed evaluation budget that covers all consultancy fees, including international and local travel, accommodation, visa, insurance, taxes, etc.
- A sample of previous relevant completed work
- CVs of proposed team members

Completed bids should be submitted to: **Greg Gleed**

Email: Gregory.gleed@nrc.no