# TERMS OF REFERENCE

# Evaluation of The Project UAFM2004 Funded by BHA (2020 – 2022)

### Background

NRC has been present in eastern Ukraine since late 2014, implementing emergency and early recovery interventions through Shelter/NFI and ICLA programmes to support the most vulnerable conflict-affected communities. To enable target communities to secure meeting basic food needs and contribute to economic security, Livelihoods and Food Security (LFS) programming was added to NRC Ukraine operations in 2016, while another Core Competency – Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) was established in mid-2020 as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic replacing Shelter/NFI. NRC has a representative office in Kyiv and an area office in Severodonetsk. NRC also has field offices in Stanitsya Luhanska (Luhanska Oblast) and in Kurakhove (southern Donetska Oblast). As of January 2021, NRC Ukraine has 88 national and 4 international staff.

Funded by USAID/FFP, the Improving Food Security for Vulnerable Populations in Eastern Ukraine project UAFM2004 aimed at supporting the most vulnerable and severely food insecure conflict-affected populations in Luhansk and Donetsk GCA regions through the distribution of unconditional cash assistance intended to address food needs. Within this 15-month project funded by USAID/FFP with an overall budget of US$1.5 M, there were in total 9,300 people assisted, including 1,860 IDPs, in the target area. The project’s period is 29 September 2020 – 30 April 2021. NRC is planning to conduct an external evaluation to assess the overall implementation, relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the intervention focusing on all of its cash transfer components.

### Context

As the conflict in Eastern Ukraine enters into the seventh year, the crisis remains a daily reality for millions of people. The conflict has resulted in thousands of civilian casualties, significant destruction of property and the displacement of millions of civilians. According to the OSCE report[[1]](#footnote-2), by 31 July 2020, there are at least 3,367 persons killed and more than 7,000 injured since the beginning of the conflict. The crisis has generated one of the largest displacements in Europe since the Second World War; there are currently close to 1.45 million officially registered IDPs in Ukraine (as of September 2020[[2]](#footnote-3)), with the biggest displacement wave happening in 2014 and 2015. The 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview shows the following number of people in need: 1.5 M in need (54% women, 14% children, 51 % elderly, 14% people with disabilities) and 1.7 M (54% women, 14% children, 26 % elderly, 12% people with disabilities) in Government-controlled areas (GCA) and non-Government-controlled areas respectively. As of 2020, the conflict remains unresolved. Although the ceasefire agreement (Minsk-II) of early 2015 remains in place and negotiations continue (Minsk-process), localised hostilities along the contact line are constant. With little progress towards conflict resolution, it is widely acknowledged that the situation is moving towards or has become a protracted conflict. Conflict management will likely be the main focus, with little traction on comprehensive conflict resolution.

Localised hostilities along the contact line generate significant humanitarian needs in proximity to the frontlines. The conflict has had a negative effect on the overall food and economic security of the population driving many to resort to negative coping strategies. The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded the pre-existing food security and livelihood challenges of the conflict-affected population in both the Government-controlled area (GCA) and the non-Government-controlled area (NGCA) of Luhanska and Donetska Oblasts. In 2021, an estimated 1.5 million people are in need of food and livelihood assistance in the affected areas, and there is a 51 per cent increase compared to 2020. The most severe needs are in the areas close to the “contact line” and in NGCA (65 per cent), especially in Donetska oblast (NGCA), which accounts for 43 per cent (658,000) of the people in need.

After six years of conflict, humanitarian access to NGCA also remains a major concern due to the numerous restrictions of the de facto authorities and of the Government of Ukraine. Since autumn 2015, a formal authorisation process (“registration”) has been maintained by the de facto authorities for humanitarian actors; this has resulted in the suspension of the majority of international NGO actors in NGCA. As long as wide-spread access to humanitarian actors is denied and assistance/protection activities cannot be pursued, the humanitarian situation of the civilian population – notably the most socially vulnerable individuals living in NGCA – will remain precarious.

### Objectives

The overall objective of the evaluation will be to assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of NRC intervention under the FFP funded project implemented during 2020 –2022 in order to:

* Collate and analyse existing project data and documentation
* Create a forum to discuss programmatic and operational improvements for field staff,
* Identify best practices, lessons learned, strengths, and challenges in the activity design, including the LogFrame, and implementation for achieving project achievements;
* Produce evidence that can be used to promote the achievements gained and support pitching similar proposals to potential donors
* Help understand the outcomes of NRC’s Cash Transfer on households’ long-term food security

NRC Ukraine requires someone who can conduct the evaluation of this project and produce deliverables according to the ToR.

#### Scope

**Period**: The evaluation will cover the whole project’s life period: 29 September 2020 – 30 April 2022

**Geographical coverage**: Eastern Ukraine, implementing NRC Area Office in Sievierodonetsk

**Donors**: Bureau Humanitarian Assistance (Former Food for Peace and OFDA, USAID)

#### Rationale

As NRC Ukraine will be finishing the FFP UAFM2004 project (in April 2022) and might continue delivering such type of assistance and proposal development for similar interventions, the evaluation is supposed to examine questions of efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the project’s activities in order to improve performance and implementation of similar activities in the future through identifying lessons from the project. This evaluation will be a learning experience for not only NRC Ukraine but might also be of relevance to NRC globally and to other humanitarian actors in Ukraine who organise similar interventions.

The evaluation deliverables will be shared with the NRC programme team and senior management for learning purposes. Moreover, a management response plan, that will be developed after the evaluation is complete, will be followed up and tracked by senior management. The evaluation report will be filed in NRC Global Evaluation Library, thus accessible by all NRC Country Offices over the world as well as by NRC Head Office and Regional Offices. It will also be accessible for NRC Technical Advisers and Specialists for their utilisation of findings and recommendations revealed in the evaluation. The report and its findings and/or recommendations will also be shared with external stakeholders such as Ukraine’s FSL Cluster, UN Agencies in Ukraine including, but not limited to, FAO, local/regional authorities of Eastern Ukraine, local communities, activists/volunteers, and community leaders.

#### Lines of Inquiry

The more specific question under efficiency, effectiveness and relevance for the evaluation will be:

* To what extent did we reach the ‘right’ beneficiaries in the targeted area taking into account the registration process, targeting criteria and its scoring mechanism? Did the modality of beneficiary registration via hotline allow to reach such people?
* To what extend did our activities correspond to the (actual) needs of the targeted population? To what extent did we meet those needs of the targeted population and objectives of this project, including outputs and outcomes? Is the intervention appropriate and effective for the target group?
* To what extent did the activity consider gender equity, protection, age, physical and emotional challenges of the participants, and risks to participation in various interventions in project design and implementation?
* How has management adapted the project design or implementation based on monitoring information and feedback from the target population?
* Did we work efficiently to deliver the project in terms of time/ budget? Can costs be cut? How has the new draft of SOP on registration and selection of LFS beneficiaries affected the project (pros and cons)?
* Do beneficiaries perceive that COVID-19 affected access to assistance? If yes, how?
* What kind of obstacles did COVID-19 create for target populations to obtain access to assistance? Did access to assistance improved or worsened during the duration of the project?
* How did COVID-19 affect NRC’s implementation of project? Did they way in which NRC adapt to the COVID-19 context was effective for the delivery of assistance as well as to reach out to reach out to target populations?
* To what extent did the pandemic impact the effectiveness of aid distribution and NRC’s overall performance of the activity?

**IMPORTANT NOTE: The following question has been identified for organisational learning in NRC for 2020 and 2021 and must be part of this evaluation: “*To what extent and how are we delivering appropriate and effective programming for persons with disabilities?*”**

In order to meet the intentions set out in the rationale section, we need to have the following discussions:

* What was planned?
* Identify the good and bad practices involved in the implementation of this project.
* Identify the elements in project delivery where NRC did or did not meet its expected quality and reasons contributing to its success or failure.
* Assess and document what worked (good practices) and what did not (poor practices) for the program
* Identify why things did or didn’t work
* Identify improvement recommendations for the programme

### Methodology

The evaluation will utilise a mixed-methods performance evaluation and should integrate a comparison of baseline and endline quantitative data where possible. It will also include a review of the performance monitoring data. The evaluation consultant is expected to propose a design and methods which will answer the key evaluation questions set out in the ToR.

The methodology should include:

* Desk research;
* Field research: focus group discussions (10 locations), interviews (10 locations), and direct observations;
* Workshop to present and validate findings before drafting the final evaluation report;
* Drafting the final evaluation report.

An evaluation matrix and questions (more specific), data collection methods tools and sampling options will be developed during the ‘Inception / Clarification Phase’ of the evaluation by the evaluation consultant/team, after the desk review and in close collaboration with the NRC team. NRC Steering Committee should validate the matrix and questions before the evaluation team start the field visit and data.

NRC welcomes suggestions to improve the TOR and methodological approach outlined for the evaluation. Innovative but proven methodologies are welcome.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: The evaluation must integrate the gender perspective at all stages in order to not miss a key dimension to understanding of what works, and does not work, for NRC’s targets group. Therefore, “Gender-blind” evaluations are not accepted.**

### Steering Committee

An evaluation Steering Committee (SC) will be established by NRC, with the following members:

* Steering Committee chair: NRC Ukraine Head of Programmes
* Evaluation manager: NRC Ukraine M&E Coordinator
* Steering committee members: Area Manager; Finance Manager

The Steering Committee will oversee the administration and overall coordination, including monitoring progress. The main functions of the Steering committee will be:

* Establish the Terms of Reference of the evaluation;
* Select evaluator(s);
* Review and comment on the inception report and approve the proposed evaluation strategy;
* Review and comment on all the evaluation deliverables, including a final evaluation report;
* Establish a dissemination and utilization strategy.

In addition to the SC, an Evaluation Reference Group will also be appointed. Members of the reference group include Regional M&E Manager, Protection and Advocacy Manager, LFS Coordinator. The main functions of the Evaluation Reference Group will be:

* facilitate the gathering of data necessary for the evaluation;
* participate in the validation of evaluation findings, and to ensure that they are factually accurate;
* contribute to the management response;
* act on the relevant recommendations.

### Deliverables

The evaluation team will submit three reports using NRC’s guidance and templates, and offer a presentation to NRC.

* **Inception report and plan**: Following the desk review and prior to beginning fieldwork, the evaluation team will produce an inception report for review and approval by the Steering Committee. This report will detail a draft work plan with a summary of the primary information needs, evaluation matrix, clear methodology to be used including quantitative and qualitative methods, and a work plan/schedule for field visits and major deadlines. With respect to methodology, the evaluation team will provide a description of how data will be collected and a sampling framework, data sources, and drafts of suggested data collection tools such as questionnaires and interview guides. Once the report is finalised and accepted, the evaluation team must submit a request for any change in strategy or approach to the NRC Evaluation Steering Committee.
* **Validation and feedback workshop with presentation slides**: At the end of the field research, the evaluation team will present key findings to management in the field. This will be a participatory validation process and opportunity for learning during this workshop. The presentation file(s) should be shared with NRC as part of the deliverables.
* **Draft report**: A draft evaluation report will be submitted to the Steering Committee, which will review the draft and provide feedback within two weeks of receipt of the draft report.
* **Final evaluation report**: The final evaluation report should be drafted within NRC’s report template and following NRC guidelines about the outline, length, language and content, and:
  + include a maximum two-page executive summary that summarizes the key findings and lessons learned and should also include best practices that can be shared with NRC’s technical and management staff;
  + Ensure that the evaluation answers the evaluation questions, provide evidence to support conclusions and recommendations; be coherent, clear and concise, present clear, evidence-based and useful conclusions and recommendations and identify who should implement them;
  + Be a maximum 30 pages (plus annexes);
  + Ensure that annexes must also be included.

All material collected in the undertaking of the evaluation process should be lodged with the Chair of the Steering Committee prior to the end/termination of the contract.

### Expected timeline and budget

**The key milestones and timeline**:

* 1 – 1.5 weeks for the inception phase: Desk review (remotely) and submission of 1st draft of the inception report and methodology/tools for data collection
* 3 weeks and 3 days + 2 days of traveling, including presentation of findings and recommendation/validation workshop
* 2 weeks for 1st draft report
* 1 week for finalisation of the report. The final evaluation report should be delivered and approved **by April 30th, 2022.**

The evaluation team is expected to provide a suggested timeline and work plan based on these scheduling parameters, the scope of the evaluation and the methodology proposed.

In the event of serious problems or delays, the (lead) evaluator should inform the Steering Committee immediately. Any significant changes to review timetables shall be approved by the Steering Committee in advance

**IMPORTANT NOTE: A flexible schedule ranging from January through the end of April is provided as during the data collection phase, it is possible that Covid-19 restrictions may interfere with the start and completion of the Assignment, i.e. according to the schedule and workplan, the respective timeframes may be shifted. The evaluator should account for this possibility, and it is recommended that the evaluator monitors regularly the epidemiological situation during and after the preparation of the procurement bid. Once the contract is issued any aforementioned change in the workplan should be agreed with NRC Ukraine in advance.**

**Budget and payment terms:**

1. The evaluation team is supposed themselves to arrange and cover their international flight tickets to Kyiv/Kharkiv (in case of international consultant team) and back, interpreter(s) and notes taker(s) services (regardless of whether they are recruited locally or are part of the evaluation team). In addition, visas costs are to be covered by the service provider. In case the evaluation team asks NRC to recruit/provide interpreter(s) and/or notes taker(s), this should not be included in the proposed budget by the evaluation team and should be indicated in the proposal’s documents.

2.1 NRC will arrange/book accommodation during the field visit period (in Kyiv/Kharkiv and other towns/villages) according to the following thresholds:

Severodonetsk/Slovyansk/Kramatorsk/Kurahove/Stanytsiya Luhanska – up to 1000 UAH;

Kyiv/Kharkiv – up to 1800 UAH.

If the evaluation team decides to stay in more expensive accommodation or stay longer (for personal reasons) in the settlement to which they have travelled for this consultancy work, NRC will not reimburse accommodation costs for these days.

2.2 NRC will arrange/book train tickets from Kyiv/Kharkiv to Lysychansk/Rubizhne/Slovyansk and back (from Lysychansk/Rubizhne/Slovyansk to Kyiv/Kharkiv), and taxi-related arrangements during the field visit period. NRC will cover taxi services upon the provision of a receipt.

If the evaluation team decides to travel to some locations (for personal reasons) during this consultancy work, NRC will not reimburse these travel costs.

3. NRC will cover the expenses mentioned in article 2.1, 2.2 upon submission of all mandatory documents according to NRC requirements. To collect the required documents is the responsibility of the evaluation team. The documents for reimbursement must be submitted in one batch no later than 10 workdays after the evaluation team fulfilled its obligations according to the contract.

4. NRC will arrange and provide transportation from/to Lysychansk/Rubizhne/Slovyansk/Kharkiv railway station and to other settlements during field visits to beneficiaries, communities, government and local authorities representatives, and to other relevant stakeholders according to the workplan of the evaluation team, primarily, through NRC vehicles.

5. The payment for the evaluation service, as well as reimbursement, will be implemented as a lump sum through the NRC Head Office in Oslo in USD by bank transfer within 10 workdays after submission of all required documents and deliverables by the evaluation team to NRC Ukraine.

### Evaluation consultant team

NRC seeks expressions of interest from people (an individual evaluator or a team), who are external to NRC, with the following qualifications, skills and competencies:

* University degree in evaluation, economics, (agro)-economics, development studies, or another related field;
* At least 10 years of experience in relief / developmental context, with experience in deployment in insecure/volatile environment;
* Experience in the contexts of East Europe and/or the former Soviet Union will be an asset;
* Ability to be deployed in Ukraine and willingness to travel within Ukraine subject to security clearance and protocols;
* A minimum of 5 years of relevant experience in leading project evaluations;
* Proven hands-on experience in evaluations in the sectors of Food Security and Livelihoods, Nutrition;
* Demonstrated experience in conducting high-quality research/data collection and analysis or similar assignments;
* Expertise in participatory qualitative data collection techniques;
* Experience in evaluation report writing;
* Previous experience working with USAID BHA (formerly named FFP and OFDA) projects would be an asset;
* Good familiarity with Ukrainian cultural, political and socio-economic context will be an asset;
* Fluency in English (excellent written and spoken); knowledge of Russian/Ukrainian will be an added advantage;
* Excellent analytical, reporting/communication, and organisational skills.

### Application process and requirements

**Application Deadline**: 22 November 2021 (Midnight, Kyiv time)

**Interview dates**: end of October.

**Bids must include the following**:

* Proposal including, the outline of an evaluation framework and design/approach with the indication of the scope of data collection methods (number of interviews, FGDs, surveys, etc.), including comments on the ToR, proposed time frame and work plan (bids over 3 pages will be automatically excluded);
* Proposed evaluation budget including an estimation of the expected working days over the entire period between starting the work and the approval of the final draft by the Steering Committee. The proposed budget should also include logistical costs only covered by the service providers such as indicated in the paragraph ‘Budget and payment terms’ in the articles 1, but not include the costs indicated in the articles 2.1 and 2.2 of the ‘Budget and payment terms’ paragraph as they are supposed to be reimbursed by NRC.
* CVs: should include both technical, country and evaluation experience for each team member (max 2 pages)
* At least one example of a previous evaluation or research report most relevant to this assignment;
* Cover letter clearly summarizing experience as it pertains to this assignment and three professional references (max 1 page).

**Submit completed bids to** : ua.procurement.sdo@nrc.no

1. OSCE, ‘Trends and Observations from July to Sept 2020’ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Humanitarian Needs Overview [↑](#footnote-ref-3)