

Annex 1 Terms of Reference

1. Consultancy assignment background

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is undertaking an internal audit on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Data Quality. This audit aims to provide assurance on the accuracy of data reported through NRC's MEAL systems and assess the consistency and effectiveness of current data quality audit practices.

As part of the audit, NRC will engage an external consultant to support the country selection, planning, fieldwork, and reporting phases. This consultancy will contribute to ensuring reliable evidence of NRC's impact, in line with NRC's 2022–2025 Strategic Objectives and 2030 Ambition.

2. Objectives and scope of work

Objectives

This consultancy includes a range of smaller pieces of work, detailed out below. These are:

#	Piece of work	Estimated days
1	Review existing MEL frameworks, guidelines, and tools.	3
2	Assess data quality audit methodologies, standardisation, and outputs.	4
3	Identify gaps and opportunities for improvement.	5
4	Conduct interviews and site visits for verification of data	8
5	Provide advisory notes to strengthen internal controls related to MEL.	5
6	Draft technical inputs for the Audit Working Paper and Report	5

This consultancy is home-based with provision to travel to NRC country offices where needed.

Piece 1: Review existing MEL frameworks, guidelines, and tools

The consultant will conduct a structured document review of NRC's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) frameworks, policies, and guidance materials. This will involve benchmarking the existing control design against recognised standards (e.g., Global Internal Audit Standards and donor requirements), with a view to assessing adequacy, clarity, and completeness. Particular emphasis will be placed on identifying the extent to which the MEL tools facilitate consistent data capture, verification, and reporting across country offices, as well as whether guidance is sufficiently operationalised to mitigate risks of misreporting.

The review will also assess alignment between policy intent and practical implementation by mapping MEL tools against actual audit criteria and internal control objectives. The consultant will highlight areas where procedures are outdated, inconsistent, or fail to adequately address inherent risks, thereby establishing a baseline for subsequent audit testing and recommendations.

Piece 2: Assess data quality audit methodologies, standardisation, and outputs

The consultant will evaluate NRC's current methodologies for conducting data quality assessments (DQAs), reviewing the underlying sampling approaches, error-tolerance thresholds, and validation procedures. This will include testing the methodological rigour of existing tools against assurance principles such as reliability, accuracy, completeness, and validity of data. The consultant will also review whether there is an adequate level of methodological standardisation across regions and projects to ensure comparability of outputs.

Outputs of prior DQAs will be examined as audit evidence, with a focus on consistency, traceability, and integration into management decision-making. Gaps in documentation, audit trails, and quality assurance

processes will be flagged, and recommendations will be provided on how to strengthen methodology so that findings meet assurance requirements and withstand scrutiny from donors, regulators, and governing bodies.

Piece 3: Identify gaps and opportunities for improvement

The consultant will synthesise findings from the framework and methodology reviews to prepare a control gap analysis. This will involve mapping existing MEL processes against risk registers, internal audit objectives, and recognised best practices to determine areas where current controls are insufficient, redundant, or inefficient. Gaps will be prioritised according to their impact on data integrity, compliance risk, and decision-usefulness.

Building on this analysis, the consultant will provide a structured set of improvement opportunities, framed as audit recommendations. Each recommendation will include a risk rating, root cause identification, and proposed mitigating action. Opportunities will cover both corrective actions (closing existing control deficiencies) and developmental actions (enhancing value-added advisory support, strengthening monitoring culture, and embedding continuous improvement).

Piece 4: Conduct interviews and site visits for verification of data

The consultant will undertake structured interviews with key stakeholders—including programme staff, MEL officers, and management—using audit interview protocols to corroborate documentary evidence. The aim is to validate whether reported processes are in fact operationalised and whether there are unreported deviations or informal practices. Evidence will be triangulated across sources to ensure reliability.

In addition, the consultant will conduct targeted site visits (or remote verifications where travel is not feasible) to perform substantive testing of data quality. This may involve tracing data points from source documents through to aggregated reports, reviewing sampling frames, and conducting spot checks. The purpose is to establish the existence and accuracy of reported data, thereby providing independent assurance over MEL systems.

Piece 5: Provide advisory notes to strengthen internal controls related to MEL

Following assurance work, the consultant will prepare targeted advisory notes designed to enhance MEL-related internal controls. These will be drafted in line with audit recommendation formats, ensuring that advice is actionable, prioritised, and aligned with NRC's control environment. Areas expected to be addressed include segregation of duties in data collection, automated validation checks, supervisory review processes, and escalation pathways for anomalies.

Each advisory note will set out the control weakness observed, the risk exposure it presents, and recommended control enhancements. The consultant will also highlight opportunities for embedding continuous monitoring mechanisms into MEL processes, so that data quality assurance is not confined to periodic audits but becomes part of routine management oversight.

Piece 6: Draft technical inputs for the Audit Working Paper and Report

The consultant will consolidate findings into draft audit working papers, ensuring each is fully referenced, cross-indexed, and supported by sufficient, reliable, relevant, and useful evidence. The working papers will follow NRC's internal audit methodology, documenting procedures performed, evidence obtained, and conclusions reached. This will support the overall assurance opinion and provide an audit trail for quality review and external scrutiny.

Technical contributions to the final Audit Report will include drafting sections on scope, methodology, detailed findings, risk implications, and recommendations. The consultant will ensure that language adheres to audit reporting standards—clear, concise, and risk-focused—while also providing management with practical, implementable recommendations. Draft inputs will be structured to facilitate review by the IA Specialist Adviser and inclusion in the final report to the Board.

3. Institutional and organisational arrangements

The consultant will report to Thokozani Kasinja, IA Specialist Adviser, who will be the consultant's primary point of contact for this project.

NRC will own the intellectual property rights to all materials submitted by the consultants under the contract. The consultants must therefore ensure that they have possession of any materials provided to NRC as a part of the deliverable. The rights to reproduce the reports will fall to NRC and its contracted agents. NRC will be free to reproduce the materials at will and to grant reproduction rights.

Deliverables of the consultant

- Documents of work papers detailing the work processes
- Documents of any Interview notes
- A document of the data quality audits templates that will be created jointly
- A document audit report of audit findings that will be done jointly in the format:
 - Condition: What is the problem/issue? What is happening?
 - Cause: Why did the condition happen?
 - Criteria: How do we, as auditors, know this is a problem? What should be?
 - Effect: Why does this condition matter? What is the impact?
 - Recommendation: How do we solve the condition?

Duties of the consultant

Final reports should be submitted in Microsoft Word format, in UK English, formatted using the NRC standard MS Word template.

Duties of NRC

NRC will make available any internal MEL documents necessary for the consultant to review, as well as identify any key contacts necessary.

Some additional costs may be incurred for travel where needed.

4. Implementation schedule and estimated inputs

This consultancy is expected to take 30 working days and should be finished by 31st March 2026.

A timeline for each individual piece of work will be developed in collaboration with the consultant directly.

5. How to apply

Manner of submission of the consultancy proposal

The consultant or consultant's company will submit the consultancy proposal (bid) in accordance with the requirements below:

NRC will only accept complete bid documents presented on electronic format (preferably PDF for signed documents), and submitted by email to logistics@nrc.no

The price proposal shall be provided on a separate sheet, as a quotation in signed PDF format. The price must be net and include all taxes and fees. The consultant will be paid in the quoted currency.

All documents must be signed, either electronically or manually.

The entire bid shall preferably be delivered in one single email (whenever possible). The subject of the email will be presented as such: GSC/REF tender 2502 - Bid - <NAME OF THE BIDDER>

The deadline for submission is: 28th of October 2025 at 23h59 (Oslo time)